

POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE, PLURALISM AND TOLERANCE IN THE NARRATIVES OF J.M COETZEE AND ZOE WICOMB

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ABSTRACT

Most Postcolonial writers in their narratives present characters who are interested in seeing a racially unified society and not a fragmented one, thereby creating space for cultural pluralism in these societies. This situation is glaring in postcolonial societies where the end of the colonial encounter did not terminate the influence of the colonial culture which is still co-habiting with the indigenous culture of the colonial subjects. This paper aims at projecting the link between postcolonial narrative discourse and pluralism. Put differently, this paper shows how the authors under study, though from different socio-political and cultural back grounds, participate in their narratives to reconcile identities and encourage pluralities instead of polarities in the postcolonial multicultural and multiracial world. From the prism of postcolonial theory, this paper, therefore, hinges on the premise that Coetzee and Wicomb in their narrative fictions believe that cultural and racial negotiations and arbitrations are the panaceas for harmony in the postcolonial socio-political space.

Keywords: *postcolonial, postcolonial narrative, identity, pluralism, cultural pluralism, postcolonial theory, and multiculturalism.*

Pluralism is one of the bench marks of postcolonial societies because the end of the colonial encounter in postcolonial societies did not put an end to the influence of the culture of the colonialists in the various societies in which the colonialists set feet on. In this case, the colonial culture has to co-habit with the indigenous culture of the colonial subjects. In *Understanding Race, Ethnicity and Power*, Elaine Pinderhughes opines that: “Recently, the significance of pluralism and the importance of appreciating cultural difference have been further reinforced by the influx of immigrants and refugees from Southeast Asia, Central America, and the Caribbean” (5) This scenario can be compared to the situation in Southern African countries and most postcolonial societies where the presence of Europeans is still felt. This cohabitation encourages pluralism thereby enabling people of different cultural backgrounds to interact and coexist despite all odds. George F. Mclean in “Culture, Pluralism and Globalization” argues that:

Multiple realities are not contradictory to one another, but essentially complementary; that is to say, each provides an element of the whole which is missing to all the others. Thereby each helps the others to live

more fully; the particulars are enhanced by the whole and each of the other members of the whole. (2)

Here, Mclean suggests that multiple identities or realities in any society are complementary because they provide an element that is missing to all the others. As such people can learn from each other. It is a “give and take” situation which enables everybody to fully integrate into any given context. In “The Intercultural Perspective and its Development Through Cooperation With the Council of Europe,” Micheline Rey-von Allimen contends that: “Every life, every relationship is dynamic, every culture is diverse, gets adjusted to changes and gets transformed. In one way or another we are all migrants, creoles, hybrid, of mixed origin” (34). While George feels that pluralism helps or enables us to learn from each other, Micheline thinks that relationship and culture is dynamic and therefore, we are subject to changes and transformation. In *The Intercultural Performance Handbook*, John Martin supports Micheline’s argument in the following words: “The last hundred years have seen cultural awareness and cultural realities change more radically than ever before. We now live in a world where people of different cultures and ethnicities meet and mix freely, creating a dynamic space for re-assessment of our identities, and opportunities...” (1).

Wu Xiaojiang in his article entitled “The Integration of Cultures: Facing the Tides of Modernization and Postmodernisation” states that: “In the long run, I believe this globalization of culture does not mean that one culture with the most powerful influence will dominate, but rather that integration and coexistence of the various cultures of the world will become possible” (147). Here, Xiaojiang believes that no culture is superior to the other and that people are free to mix freely without any complexity. Thus, it could be argued that intercultural relationship is possible. Xiaojiang further contends that:

Cultural identity and diversity are essentially forces that promote various national approaches to progress and prosperity, as well as harmony of coexistence among nations. This is especially important within the present horizon of globalization. A unilateral stress on identity is not beneficial to innovation, competition and development; a [...] cultural globalization calls for the integration of cultural diversity and identity within a context of cultural pluralism. (170)

Maddalena Colombo in “Introduction, Pluralism in education and implications for analysis” defines pluralism as “the existence of diverse and competing interests as the basis for a democratic equilibrium, which is crucial for the possibility of individuals to obtain goals (2). Also commenting on Pluralism, Colombo states that pluralism “indicates a certain choice

towards integrating those pluralities, *which affirms that difference is better than uniformity, that is, the difference is a value in itself and the system (or the single actor) will profit more from the presence of variety than from homogeneity*" (2-3).

PLURALISM AND TOLERANCE IN THE NARRATIVES OF J.M COETZEE AND ZOE WICOMB

Due to the plural nature of the post-apartheid South Africa as reflected in *Disgrace*, *Youth*, *David's Son*, and *Playing in the Light*, the authors under study have adopted Pluralism and Tolerance as a state of ideology to permit the different races to co-exist without much problems. In J.M Coetzee's *Disgrace*, it should be noted that unlike in the past, folks can interact in South Africa without much ado. To confirm this, the narrator states that: "[...] a comedy of new South Africa set in hairdressing flamboyantly gay, attends to two clients, one black, one white" (23). In the new South Africa, whites have learned to tolerate non-whites a white hairdresser can attend to a black and white in her saloon. During the apartheid dispensation, it would not have been possible for blacks and whites to sit in the same place to do their hair and this is the message that J.M Coetzee intends to pass across.

Again, the idea of pluralism and tolerance is also seen in the novel when Lucy and David are taken to the hospital after the attack on Lucy's house by unknown gun men. While at the hospital "[...] two hours pass before a nurse calls him, and there is more waiting before his turn comes to see the sole doctor on duty a young Indian woman" (101). It is interesting to note that the person that is going to take care of Lucy and her father is an Indian doctor who happens to be a woman. The fact that it is an Indian woman who is in charge is a clear indication that pluralism and tolerance are encouraged in the post-apartheid dispensation during which discrimination has become a thing of the past. If it were during the apartheid dispensation, for example, an Indian doctor who who a woman would not be been allowed to treat whites.

Furthermore, another instance of pluralism and tolerance is seen in the character traits of Bill Shaw and Bev Shaw. When Lucy is discharged from the hospital, Bill Shaw volunteers to take her to their house for the main time. The narrator states that:

[...] when David emerges with his head dressed and bandaged, his eye covered with an ice-pack strapped to his wrist, in the waiting room he is surprised to find Bill Shaw. Bill, who is a head shorter than he, grips him by the shoulder shocking, absolutely shocking, he says. Lucy is over at our place. She was going to fetch you herself but Bev wouldn't hear of it. How are you? (101)

The gesture by Bill Shaw and Bev Shaw proves that they do not see the difference as an opportunity for separation because they have decided to identify with him unlike in the past when non-whites and whites were not able to agree on anything. It should be noted that David acknowledges the kind gesture by Bill Shaw and tells him that: “I am sorry we’ve ruined your evening” (101). Responding to him Bill says: “Nonsense! ...what else are friends for? You would have done the same” (102). Whether David would have done the same or not, is not the issue, the most important thing is the fact that this gesture by Bill Shaw and his wife is commendable and encourages pluralism and cultural tolerance.

Moreover, it is difficult to say whether David would have been there for Bill Shaw if the same thing happened to him. The narrator states that:

Bill Shaw believes that if he, David Lurie, had been hit over the head and set on fire, then he, David Lurie, would have driven to the hospital and sat waiting, without so much as a newspaper to read, to fetch him done. Bill Shaw believes that, because he and David Lurie once had a cup of tea together, David Lurie is his friend, and the two of them have obligations towards each other. Is Bill Shaw wrong or right? Has Bill Shaw who was born in Hankey, not two hundred kilometers away and works in a hard work shop, seen so little of the world that he does not know there are men who do not readily make friends, whose attitude toward friendships between men is corroded with scepticism. (102)

From the above passage, we are made to understand David Lurie would find it difficult to reciprocate the gesture of Bill Shaw. The rhetorical question in the above quotation justifies the fact that David is an individual who does not make friends easily. However, talking about the dreadful things that happen around, Bill Shaw opines that: “Atrocities. It’s bad enough when you read about it in the paper but when it happens to someone you know he shakes his head – that brings it home to you. It’s like being in war all over again” (102). From the above lines, one can say that Bill is being portrayed as one who is tolerant and also as one who encourages cultural coexistence. The problem of his neighbour irrespective of his race is also his problem and this is the message that J.M Coetzee wants to pass across as far as the post-apartheid South Africa is concerned.

Furthermore, another aspect of Pluralism and tolerance can be seen in the character trait of Petrus who has chosen to be helpful to Lucy, irrespective of the attitude of David. The narrator states that:

[...] As far as the actual trading, there is little for him to do. Petrus is the one who swiftly and efficiently lays out their wares, the money, makes the

change, Petrus is in fact the one who does the work, while he sits and warms his hands. Just like the old days: baas en klaas. Except that he does not presume to give Petrus orders. Petrus does what needs to be done and that is that. (116)

Petrus has decided to be of great use to Lucy and her father even though David has proven several times that he does not like him. He is the one who has decided to sell Lucy's products in the market given that Lucy is ill and he does it "swiftly and efficiently." While he is helping them, David can only sit down and watch because he can no longer command him around as was the case during the apartheid period. Here, Petrus also owns a land unlike in the past and can only help Lucy and her father if he feels like doing so.

Another instance of Pluralism and Tolerance can equally be seen in the character traits of Petrus when he acquires a piece of land and decides to organize a party to celebrate his achievement. When David sees two young sheep, tethered in Petrus's house he asks him why he bought them and he tells him that: "They are for the party... on Saturday I will slaughter them for the party, You and Lucy must come! He wipes his hands clean. I invite you and Lucy to the party" (123). The exclamation mark in the above quotation explains the seriousness of Petrus who wishes that David and his daughter should attend the party. Why Petrus insists David and Lucy must attend the party is because he is interested in cultivating a cordial relationship with them. In other words, he is equally encouraging cultural pluralism and coexistence. It should be noted that David does not affirm that he would come for the party but he thanks Petrus and asks him the following question: "[...] if the sheep is for the party, don't you think they should graze" (123). The fact that David Lurie doubts whether he would attend the party or not creates suspense as one is eager to read further to realise whether he will finally make up his mind to be part of the party,

On the day of Petrus's Party, Lucy and her father are very happy to be part. The narrator states that: "This is a big day in Petrus's life, she carries a tiny flashlight. They walk up to Petrus's house, father and daughter arm in arm, she lighting the way, he bearing their offering" (128). The fact that Lucy and David are heading for the party "arm in arm" shows they are happy to honour Petrus's invitation and are ready to enjoy the party. In fact, in the new South Africa, we realise that whites can now attend a party organized by a non-whites. Petrus is a black but it should be noted that he has been able to pull a reasonable crowd to his party. The narrator says that: "Preparation to Petrus's festivities begin at noon on Saturday with the arrival of a band of women half a dozen strong, wearing what looks to him like church going finery. Behind the stable, they get a fire going" (127). Folks are dressed properly, especially women, to attend this very important party of Petrus. It is equally possible that all those present at Petrus's party are both whites and nonwhites.

During the party, Petrus tries as much as possible to make his guests feel at home. As such, “Petrus and his wife are spending a lot of time. Kind people he thinks” (131). The pronoun “him” refers to David who feels that Petrus and his wife are very kind; they are up and doing all just to make sure the food that is served during the occasion reaches everybody.

Another example of pluralism and Tolerance is seen when David Lurie visits Melanie’s father in his office. When he gets to his office, he poses the following questions to him “Do you remember me? David Lurie from, from Cape Town” (165). “Oh, says Isaacs and sits down again” (165). When he sees him and decided to sit down without paying much attention on him, David tells him that: “If you don’t want to see me, I will leave at once” (165) responds in the following words: “[...] sit. I’m just checking attendances. Do you mind if I finish first?” (165). When he finishes checking the register, he closes it and asks David the following question: “To what do I owe this pleasure?” (165). Responding to his question, David said he was “passing through George today, and I thought I might stop and speak to you. I remember our last meeting as being... heated. But I thought I would drop in anyway, and say what it is in my heart. (165). The last time David meets with Melanie’s father he was very upset but now that he is calm he tells him that: “You have heard Melanie’s side of the story. I would like to give you mine, if you are prepared to hear it” (165). The fact that he has the courage to talk to Melanie’s father about this issue is a clear indication that he is sorry for what happened and is ready to keep the past behind him.

Talking to Melanie’s father about what happened, he tells him that: “It began without premeditation on my part. It began as an adventure... Excuse me for talking in this way. I am trying to be frank.” (166). Here, one can say that David is gradually realizing that things are no longer the way they used to be and that keeping malice would not be a good thing in the New South Africa in which everyone is eager to live in peace. Again, Mr. Isaacs is equally tolerant because one would expect him to send David away from his office considering what he did to his daughter. After discussing with Mr. Isaacs and there is nothing more to say, they exchange pleasantries and as David is heading for the door, Mr Isaacs calls him back and asks him whether it would be possible for him to come have a dinner with them in the evening. Though surprised at the invitation, he accepts to come but tells Mr Isaacs that: “I don’t think you’re your wife would welcome that” (167). Responding to him, Mr Isaacs tells him that: “Perhaps, perhaps not. Come anyway. Break the bread with us. We eat at seven” (167). The idea of pluralism and tolerance is seen here because Mr Isaacs has decided to invite David to the house oblivious of how his wife and probably his children would feel about it. Here, it is clear that his main aim is to reconcile with David at all cost.

When David finally visits Mr. Isaacs, to his greatest surprise, he is given a warm reception by Mr. Isaacs. While in Mr Isaacs’s house, the narrator states that: “Mr Isaacs gives a smile in which, to his surprise, there is a hint of gaiety. ‘Sit down, sit down! We’ll be right! We do it!’ He leans closer. You have to have to be strong!” (169). The fact that, Isaacs smiles

when he sees David shows that he is welcomed. Again, Mr Isaacs also welcomes him and they all have dinner on the same table and during the meal, David “tries to be a good guest, to talk entertainingly, to fill the silences. He talks about Lucy” (170). While at the table, David also thinks about what he did to this humble family and addresses Mr Isaacs in the following words: “I am sorry for what I took your daughter through. You have a wonderful family I apologize for the grief I have caused you and Mrs Isaacs. I ask for your pardon” (171). The fact that David has finally apologized for his wrong doing shows that he is ready to embrace pluralism and tolerance. To justify this claim, David tells Mr. Isaacs that: “I came to George for one reason: to speak to you. I had been thinking about it for one time” (171). It is obvious that David’s conscience has not allowed him since he offended this family and one of the reasons why he came to Mr Isaacs is to free his mind to live in peace and harmony with them and everyone around him.

When David leaves Mr. Isaacs’ house, the former calls him and informed him that: “I am phoning to wish you strength for the future.” (173). After telling him this on phone, he pauses and asks him the following question: “You are not hoping for us to intervene on your behalf are you with the university?” (173). Responding to him, David poses the following question: “To intervene?” (173). Yes. To reinstate you, for instance (173) is his response. To this, David tells Mr Isaacs that “The thought never crossed my mind. I have finished with the university.” (173). When David informs Mr Isaacs that he has finished with the university, he tells David that they are ready to intervene on his behalf because the path he has taken “is one that God has ordained” (174). Mr. Isaacs and his family are ready to intervene so that David can be reinstated because they believe that he is a changed person and that is why they are ready to help him.

Again, the idea of pluralism and tolerance is seen when David tells Bev Shaw that he cannot leave Lucy alone on the farm because it is not safe. He equally tells Bev Shaw that he is persuading Lucy to hand over the operation of the farm to Petrus. However, Bev Shaw tells David that: “It will be alright. Petrus will take her under his wing” (140). Instead of encouraging David to go with Lucy, Bev Shaw thinks Petrus is a very good person and will take good care of Lucy. He also tells David that: “You underestimate Petrus. Petrus slaved to get the market garden going for Lucy. Without Petrus Lucy wouldn’t be where she is now. I am not saying she owes him anything, but she owes him a lot (140). From the above quotation, we realise that Petrus is a very good person. Even though Lucy is a white person, Petrus, who is a black, has decided to help Lucy in the market and we are made to understand that without Petrus, Lucy wouldn’t have been where she is now and therefore, she owes Petrus a lot. To justify the fact that Petrus is good, Bev Shaw tells David that: “Petrus is a good chap. You can depend on him” (140). David can depend on Petrus who encourages cultural coexistence.

Again, when it is clear that Petrus is serious with the idea of settling down with Lucy, David informs his daughter that: “I have no doubt that in some sense he is serious. The question

is in what sense? Is he aware that you are..." (203). The incomplete question in the above quotation means that David intends to ask Lucy whether Petrus is aware that she is pregnant. However, responding to her father, she states that: "You mean, is he aware of my condition? I have not told him. But I am sure his wife did and he will have put two and two together" (203). The "condition" as seen in the above quotation is Lucy's pregnancy but according to Lucy, that would not affect the relationship she has with Petrus because Petrus and his wife will readily accept her even with the pregnancy. The reason for this is because Petrus and his wife are ready to coexist with their white neighbours despite all odds. Talking about Petrus, David asks Lucy the following question: "And that won't make him change his mind?" (203). David feels that Petrus will change his mind because Lucy is pregnant but responding to David, Lucy tells him that: "why should he? It will make me all the more part of the family" (203).

When David realises that Lucy is bent on marrying Petrus, he becomes upset and tells Lucy that: "[...] this is preposterous, Lucy! He is already married! In fact, you told me there are two wives. How can you even contemplate it?" (203). David feels that Lucy should not contemplate marrying Petrus because he has two wives already but since Lucy is in the process of reconciliation, she has decided to tolerate her neighbours and the most interesting thing is the fact that she has made up her mind to marry Petrus who is a black. Her father is not happy with Lucy's decision because he feels that he is superior to the black man.

Furthermore, explaining to David why she has decided to marry Petrus, Lucy informs her father that Petrus is not offering her "[...] a church wedding, followed by honeymoon on the wild coast. He is offering an alliance, a deal, I contribute the land, in return for which I am allowed to creep in under his wing. Otherwise, he wants to remind me, I am without protection, I am fair game." (203). Even though Lucy thinks that she is a fair game and that Petrus is offering her an alliance, one can say that the most interesting thing is that a black man and a white woman can at least agree on something unlike in the days of apartheid when the blacks could not own land and were considered as *persona non grata*.

When Lucy informs her father that Petrus is offering her an alliance, protection and fair game, he asks her daughter the following questions: "And that isn't blackmail? What about the personal side? Is there no personal side to the offer?" (203). The above rhetorical questions are a clear indication of the fact that David is not happy with Lucy's decision. The "personal side" referred to by David in the above quotation is an insinuation on his part that apart from the fact that Petrus is struggling to marry Lucy because of the land, the decision to marry her is also because he is interested in having sex with her. Responding to her father, Lucy tells him that: "Do you mean, would Petrus expect me to sleep with him? I'm not sure that Petrus would want to sleep with me, except to drive home his message. But, to be frank, no, I don't want to sleep with Petrus. Definitely not" (203). From the above quotation it is clear that Lucy is not interested in the relationship with Petrus because she is sexually attracted to him but because of the love, she has for him and equally since she is convinced that David can take care of her

the way he supposed to however, David advises his daughter thus: “No! wait before you get on your high horse with Petrus, take a moment” (204). David thinks that Lucy should be careful with Petrus not because she loves his daughter but because he hates Petrus who is a black. That Lucy has decided to settle down with Petrus despite all odds justify the fact that she encourages pluralism and tolerance.

Again, to show that Lucy encourages pluralism and tolerance, she informs her father he should go back to Petrus and propose the following to him: “[...] say I accept his protection. Say he put out whatever story he likes about our relationship and I won’t contradict him. If he wants me to be known as his third wife, so be it. As his concubine ditto. But the child becomes part of his family. As for the land, say I will sign the land over to him as long as the house remains mine. I will become a tenant on his land.” (205). From the above quotation, one can say that the narrator decides to use the first person narrative point of view to explain Lucy’s decision to marry Petrus. Lucy finds herself in the post-apartheid context where power is now in the hands of the blacks and is ready to forfeit her land to Petrus. All she needs from Petrus is that he should keep her house and equally accept to take care of the child she is carrying in her womb. The most interesting thing here is that Lucy understands that to forge ahead in a country like South Africa in the post-apartheid dispensation is to accept others and live in peace with them despite their cultural differences and beliefs.

To justify the fact that Lucy is tolerant she addresses her father who wants her to leave South Africa in the following words: “No, I’m not leaving. Go to Petrus and tell him what I have said. Tell him I give up the land. Tell him that he can have it, little dead and all. He will love that” (205). After listening patiently to his daughter, David states that: “How humiliating... such high hopes and end like this” (205). The high hopes David is referring to in the above quotation has to do with the fact that he thought the whites will continue to rule South Africa for eternity. However, Lucy who has accepted that things are no longer the way they used to be, addresses her father in the following words: “Yes, I agree, it is humiliating. But that is a good point to start from again. Perhaps that is what I must learn to accept. To start at ground level with nothing. Not with nothing but with nothing. No cards, no weapons, no property, no rights, no dignity” (205). Again, the fact that Lucy feels that it is necessary to start at ground level with nothing is her way of saying that equality and tolerance should be the watch word in the post-apartheid context.

Pluralism and tolerance are equally expressed in J.M Coetzee’s *Youth*. In the text, there are instances that explain this idea. Talking about John’s Sandals, the narrator states that they cost shillings and are made “somewhere in Africa, Nyasaland perhaps” (3). The fact that John who is a white uses shoes made in Africa explains the fact that he has an open mind and is ready to embrace pluralism, unlike other whites who would reject these sandals simply because they are made in Africa and Nyasaland for that matter.

The idea of Pluralism and tolerance is also seen in the character of John's friend Norbert who "was born in Czechoslovakia, came to South Africa after the war and speaks English with a faint German lisp" (20). The fact that Norbert was born in Czechoslovakia and decides to come to South Africa after the war and is living in peace with all and sundry without any problem, justifies the fact that he has been accepted in South Africa and this is the message that J.M Coetzee is struggling to pass across as far as *Youth* is concerned.

Again, the idea of pluralism is seen when John is fade up with life in London and contemplates on leaving London for France. The narrator opines that even though "there are two, perhaps three places in the world where life can be lived at its fullest intensity: London, Paris, perhaps Vienna. Paris comes first: city of love, city of art" (41). From the above quotation, it is obvious that Paris is the city that encourages pluralism and tolerance because it is one of the places in the world where people are ready to love all and sundry irrespective of where you come from.

Moreover, the idea of pluralism is equally seen in Caroline, one of the characters in the novel, whom the narrator claims that she is in London just for two weeks but "[...] she has already found her feet. She has a job; her C V has gone out to all the theatrical agents; and she has a flat in a fashionable quarter which she shares with three English girls. How did she meet her flat-mates, he asks? Friends of friends, she replies" (69). Caroline is a black but having been in London for just two weeks, she already has a job and on top of that, she has equally found where to live. This echoes the idea of pluralism and tolerance because she is qualified unlike other places around the world where one is given a job based on where you come from. The fact that she shares a flat with English girls in a fashionable quarter equally shows the fact that they love and tolerate her despite all odds. To further justify this, the narrator explains that: "London is full of beautiful girls. They come from all over the world: as an pairs, as language students, or simply as tourists" (72).

Pluralism is equally portrayed in Zoe Wicomb's *David's Story*. In the text, the narrator explains that that Sally "[...] had once found a beautifully carved wooden crow in the gutter, had taken it home and painted it black, which David called a waste of time and Mrs January swore would bring bad luck. Why one bird should be better than another she did not know, but nowadays, it was the guinea fowl with its white and black speckles that were in fashion" (16). It should be noted that the guinea fowl that is in fashion symbolises unity and integration. The guinea fowl is an extended metaphor of the South African society where all and sundry must live together without problems, despite all odds.

Again, the idea of pluralism in the novel is seen when David's father tries to stop David from looking after his "communist kaffirs" (22). Responding to him, David tells him that "people in the liberation movement don't need looking after. We look forward to toppling this government, to a better country where everyone will have a share of the good life. Just a matter

of months now, he currently predicated” (22). The movement as seen in the above quotation is the ANC that will soon have independence and allow everyone to “share a good life” unlike the apartheid regime that decided to relegate non-whites to the background. According to David, he has given life “fighting for a nonracial democracy” (150) because he envisages a society void of racial segregation.

Furthermore, talking about pluralism, in a communication by Dulcie and Sally, the former tells the latter that “we are what we are, a mixture of this and that and a good thing too, so we don’t have to behave like Boers...” (28)

The idea of pluralism is also seen in *David’s Story* when the narrator talks about an ANC rally in the following words: “There will be an ANC rally on Thursday in the centre of Cape Town Buses from the townships will arrive by ten A.M and toyi-toying of the parade is scheduled to settle down by midday when the crowds will be addressed by Bishop Tutu and Joe Slovo. You are most welcome to attend” (206). That Bishop Tutu and Joe Slovo will address the crowd echoes the idea of pluralism. Tutu represents the black race, while Slovo represents the white race in the post-apartheid era during which everyone is are struggling to live as one. The narrator confirms the fact that Desmond Tutu is interested in unity and tolerance when he affirms that Sally:

may not catch all speech making, but knows that they are very, very good. Bishop Tutu, say what you like, is a fine, fine speaker, cutting a grand figure in his purple frock, a colour straight from heaven as she has always said, his voice like the engine of a train through a hilly landscape just gathering steam and beauty as he speaks of those very good things of rebuilding the country, of food and health and housing for all, of the forthcoming elections, and oh, even her Joop-would not have minded his saying and clapping like an Apostolic, for there comes a season, a time and a place, when even apostolic bahavoieur must be overlooked. (208-209)

Desmond Tutu is one who is interested in cultural coexistence. That Tutu is interested in rebuilding the country and providing housing for all is a clear indication he is interested in bringing everybody under one umbrella.

Moreover, pluralism and tolerance is also seen in Zoë Wicomb’s *Playing in the Light*. The novel begins with a clear picture of pluralism in post-Apartheid South Africa as the protagonist, Marion Campbell, is seen relaxing on her balcony where “[...] the space both inside and out where she spends much of her time at home [...]” and “A bird, a sparkled guinea fowl, comes flying at a dangerous angle, just missing the wall and falls dead with a thud at Marion’s feet. Amid scattered cushions and a coffee tray and a smell and roar of the sea, it lies on the brown ceramic tiles” (1). This weird incidence creates suspense and anxiety that one is

eager to read the story to realise what this event symbolises. As the story progresses, the narrator comments thus “That someone would have to hold it by its feet, head hanging, so that the feathers billowed, the guinea fowl declassified by the ruffling of its black-and-white patterned plumage” (1). The multi coloured nature of the plumage of this bird is symbolic as far as pluralism in the post-Apartheid society is concerned. This bird therefore, becomes an extended metaphor of South Africa. Also, The fact that Marion is seen relaxing on the balcony without much a do explains the fact that in post Apartheid South Africa, people can now relax where ever they wish to without fear of harassment or brutality.

Pluralism in South African society is also found in the behaviour and expressions of the characters in the novel. In the post-Apartheid era, the characters are free to visit any touristic site, bars, or restaurants of their choice without any impediment or racial bias. When Geoff Geldenhuys and Marion go to Steenberg, which is the oldest wine farm in the Cape, they discover that the environment is a haven for tourists. It is visited by people of all races without any restrictions. The only restriction is whether those coming for visits pay the bills or not. The narrator remarks that:

They strolled through the aromatic terraced gardens of Seenberg – he has taken her hand again – and listen to the strains of the jazz band, colored men in suits and bow ties bent to their instruments ...or black men, she doesn't know what people call themselves these days, now it's one thing then another. (44)

From the above quotation, one realises that in this touristic site, the different races intermingle. This is to confirm the fact that in this society, there are no restricted places any longer. The South African people, whatever their race, are free to go anywhere without restriction.

Again, pluralism is found in the character traits of Geoff Geldenhuys, – Marion's boyfriend. In his dialogue with Marion after she has come back from her search in Wuppertal, he makes it clear to her that his thinking goes beyond racial lines. Though he is from the white race, he makes Marion to understand that he goes [...] along with the entire country has got beyond all the old stuff about race, and that she too should put it behind her” (105). This shows the fact that there is a degree of racial tolerance in the post-Apartheid era. In this light, the narrator states that “They've just had the first democratic elections. It's a New South Africa, almost a new century, a new groove, so what is she fretting about?” (105). The repetition of the word “new” in expressions such as “New South Africa”, “new century”, and “new groove” depicts and emphasises a total break away from the past and a move towards pluralism and cultural diversity.

Besides, Geoff Geldenhuys continues his relationship with Marion even after it has been established that she is coloured. This illustrates that Geoff admires Marion for what she

is and not for what he would have loved her to be. He even consoles her when she is almost traumatised as she discovers that she is coloured. This discovery comes when she had before now been brought up to in the false consciousness that she is white. The fact that Geoff does not separate himself from Marion after it has been confirmed that her identity is non-white, shows that he is not a racist. In other words, he appreciates the fact that it is not only the white race that should exist in the post-Apartheid era; other people from the different races should also be given spaces in the society. This explains why Geoff accepts Marion's invitation to have lunch with her family even after knowing that she is coloured (178).

The idea of pluralism and tolerance in the novel is also reflected in Marion's family. The behaviour of most of the members in her family shows that they do not have any xenophobia against the white race or any other race in South Africa. When Marion notifies her father that Geoff will be visiting them, he does not reject the visit even though he is from the white race. John Campbell's only complaint is whether their compound is clean enough to harbour such a guest – who happens to be his daughter's business associate. The omniscient narrator says Marion telephones her father, from her office, to inform him that “[...] Geoff will join them for lunch, he [John] is confused, alarmed even” (179). This statement puts the reader in suspense since he does not know yet the clear reaction of her father – whether he will accept the visit or not. However, the preceding utterance, by her father, shows that he is not at all against the visit. “Ag, liefie, he says, the place isn't so tidy, he isn't feeling very well, and the garden is a mess. The boy she sent around was no good at all, held the spade like a piece of cutlery, so that he told him not to come back” (179). The cleaning up of the compound, in preparation for Geoff's visit, shows that Marion's father is willing, without any racial predisposition or bias, to welcome Geoff. However, she consoles her father in these words: “But Marion soothes: it doesn't matter, she's got some nice pickled fish and a bottle of Oude Meester and her friend, Geoff – no, he is an Afrikaner – Geldenhuys – yes he's a business associate – he wouldn't even notice the untidiness. And no, he isn't interested in gardening” (179). These words of consolation portray the intimacy that exists between Marion and Geoff. It shows that Marion knows the things Geoff likes and what he hates.

The behaviour of Geoff during the visit portrays the idea that he is also in harmony with Marion's family. He does not respond to the visit empty-handed. This means that while Marion's father was preparing for the visit, he was also prepared without their knowledge. This explains why on the day of the visit, he comes with a bottle of wine called Nederberg. This bottle of wine is a symbolic gesture that he has no racial grudge against Marion Campbell's family – which in turn shows racial and cultural tolerance in the post-Apartheid period. It is probably this gesture that pushes Marion's father to think that Geoff is not just a mere visitor but his daughter's suitor. This is seen in their conversation when Geoff tells John that he is not interested in farming, not even as an investment (180). Nevertheless, John Campbell advises him that he should indulge in farming if he intends to create an impact in the world. He says:

No, it can't be helped, John sympathises, if you want to advance in the world you have to citified and certificated. Did Geoff say Geldenhuys? Well, who could have a better name than that, and only in the city could you keep making a houseful of money. But when you marry, - and he winks meaningfully, for he has registered the guest as a suitor – make sure that you have a patch to garden. (180-181)

The advice above shows that John is eager to see Geoff succeeds in life. He cautions him, however, that one should be flexible in life and not stagnant. In other words, in as much as he is the child of the city, he should not overlook the fact that he also needs to know what obtains in the suburban areas.

Moreover cultural tolerance, which is the result of pluralism, is also portrayed in the impromptu party organised by the Campbells in honour of Marion when she returns to South Africa after her vacation in Europe. During the party, Marion's father intones a Boere song and his sister, Elsie, rebukes him for trying to desecrate the occasion by enchanting what she considers as "Boere nonsense" (213). Elsie's comment shows that she is still living in the past and unconscious that South Africa is changing from cultural and racial bigotry to one of non-racialism and cultural acceptance. John, notwithstanding, reminds her that "Man, in this New South Africa we can play at anything, mix'n match, talk and sing any way we like. Because of freedom, he explains" (213). His response to Elsie's invective or a diatribe against the Boere rhythm confirms that in the New South Africa, nobody has the right to despise and suppress the culture of another – since there is freedom and liberalism for all.

The post-Apartheid South Africa is also very receptive to foreign cultures. Cultural acceptance is seen at Wally's bar when the members of the MCTravel Agency assemble to celebrate Boetie's success. While in the bar, the music of the Black American pop star Michael Jackson is played. Playing Michael Jackson's songs shows that the post-Apartheid era is opening up to the spirit of globalisation to include other cultures. The narrator remarks that:

At four-thirty, Wally's is already heaving with people. From the speaker just above Marion's head, Michael Jackson booms out his badness. They are perched uncomfortably on bar stools, as the tables are all taken. Marion has difficulty concentrating; it is an effort listening above the loud music. (50)

However, the narrator and Boetie criticise Michael Jackson for changing his colour or complexion from black to white. According to Boetie, changing his colour shows that he is suffering from an inferiority complex – he thinks that the white colour is better and more beautiful than the black colour. The narrator says:

Boetie is on his way back to the bar. He grinds his hips and swings a jerking arm above his head. That's now a crazy guy, that Michael Jackson. Can't be so bad being white, hey 'cause you know what he's gone through to have a white skin and a straight hair and a moffie nose? Have you seen recent pictures? Looks beaten up, like one of our own mad terrorists. (51)

In this respect, every race has to live with and respect people of other races. Again, also talking about pluralism and tolerance, one can say that Wicomb presents the post-Apartheid society in which the characters are struggle to put the ills and animosity of Apartheid behind them and work towards social and racial harmony. The MCTravel agency is a microcosm of post-Apartheid South Africa. In this company, Marion who be the owner of the company has a mistaken identity; she is from the coloured race but has been brought up to think that she is white. Nonetheless, in her company, she employs workers from different races; she does not practise racial segregation as it was in the days of Apartheid. The policy of inclusion in this agency depicts the idea of negotiating social integration and racial harmony in South Africa.

Also, the facilities of the company are used by everyone. This is to show that all the members of the company are equal and no member is racially superior to the other. The narrator affirms this in the following words: "The private room that leads from the office serves as a storeroom, as well as kitchen and sitting room for those who work at MCTravel. There is a kettle and a microwave oven. A number of chairs in matching covers all the clustered around the coffee table where they eat their lunch" (34). The narrator is indirectly asserting that racial politics and class distinction do not form part of the ideological framework in post-Apartheid South Africa. Besides, there is an admirable degree of friendliness among the workers of this company. The workers take lunch together as the narrator in his own words says that:

The kitchen is a comfortable room with primrose-yellow walls. Marion knows how to make a place homely: she followed a recent style feature in Cosmopolitan to the letter, right down to the shallow earthenware bowl of pebbles on the coffee table. The coffee table is a wooden chest that doubles up as a halfway station for brochures that can't yet be thrown out, but it is covered with a red and ochre kikoi to achieve a rustic look. The staff took their lunch in two shifts." (35)

Moreover, to keep the unity and harmony in the agency, Marion refuses political discussions and debates. The probable reason is that political disputations may degenerate into conflicts and acrimony and eventual hostilities amongst the workers. In a discussion between Boetie and Brenda, "Marion comes in quietly and whispers, "That's enough. We can hear you two out there, and anyway, I've told you that politics is not allowed in this office" (37). This is

because, according to Marion, politics is an agent of conflict and disharmony – especially in South Africa where the past is replete with hatred and disgust. When Boetie and Brenda insist on political discussion which they had begun, Marion hushes them in a firmer tone: “Marion hisses, that’s enough. I mean it. No politics in this office, not even here. Do you understand?” (38). By refusing that the workers should not discuss politics in her company it is Marion’s way of negotiating for unity and harmony among races in the post-Apartheid era.

While in the dance hall at Steenberg, the different races intermingle without any enmity. This would not have been the case in the days of Apartheid. Geoff Geldenhuys, a white in the novel, has no problem dancing with those from other races. This explains why he encourages Marion in the hall to dance when the music is played. However, Marion refuses to dance, not out of any racial bias but because she feels shy when they notices Brenda is in the hall. Geoff says:

We should dance, he says and her hand freezes; she wouldn’t dream of it; she feels conspicuous enough as it is. She tries not to look at a large, noisy table at the far end, where people are rising to dance. But when she raises her eyes again, squinting in the brightness, someone waves through the noisy laughter. It is Brenda, who has remained seated. (44)

Similarly in the post-Apartheid era, Geoff Geldenhuys understands what the new South Africa is all about unlike in the days of Apartheid when nobody cared about the other, in the post-Apartheid era he is conscious of the fact that everybody should be the other’s keeper. The narrator authenticates this view when he says that “Issuing vigorous instructions instead may well do the trick, but no, as Geoff Geldenhuys says, it is best to go with the times, and this is the time of the new: a time of hypersensitivity that requires you to recognise the special needs of others, to don your kid gloves, to tread gingerly in the New South Africa” (25). This shows that Geoff is selfless and cares not only for him but also for others. In connection to this social morality, the idea of collective consciousness is realised in the post-Apartheid South African society – this being the fruit of social synchronization.

Moreover, there is inter-family unity and harmony in post-Apartheid South Africa. Comparatively, families are more united and harmonious. A clear example is unity that exists between the members of Brenda’s family. This unity is felt when Shirley (Brenda’s sister) and her husband, Neville, pay a visit to their family residence at Bonteheuwel. The narrator also ascertains that “Tomorrow their De la Rey cousins and all their children are coming for lunch, which is why her mother has started cooking the night before” (66). This shows the social harmony and ties that exists between the family in post-Apartheid South Africa. This is a metaphorical translation of what exists in South Africa; in general. Marion is received, in their

family, warmly and affectionately when she visits them. She is even asked to have dinner with them. Her acceptance to dine with them shows that she is for political, racial, and class socialisation and interaction in post-Apartheid South Africa.

In addition, the idea of pluralism and tolerance is also found in the Clanwilliam Hotel in Cape Town. This is the hotel Brenda sits and waits for Marion so that they can journey together to Wupertal to begin the search for her real biological parents. The narrator describes the hotel as

[...] a charming old German place, redolent of colonial times. There are elegant nineteenth-century pieces of furniture in the public spaces, starched, embroidered linen, and sepia photographs of buttoned-up bourgeois families: handsome ladies and bearded explorers line the generous staircase.” (82)

Unlike in the days of Apartheid when even hotels were sites of discrimination, the Clanwilliam hotel is open to all regardless of race. While in the hotel, there is no trace of anybody who has been refused entrance or access because of his or her colour.

The fruits of pluralism and tolerance are further illustrated through Geoff who socialises with the non-white community and has no problem living with members of this community. He pulls on well with Marion, who is a white, just as he does with Brenda. When Marion comes back to Cape Town, after her long vacation in Europe, Brenda and Geoff cheerfully wait for her at the airport. The narrator comments that:

Brenda and Geoff are at the airport to meet her. They struggle with the luggage across the car park against the wind and the driving rain; they say how well Marion looks, how radiant. A word reserved for brides she thinks, drawing her coat closer. It is bitterly cold; she does not remember Cape Town ever being so cold, but they say that the temperature is not unusual. (208)

The peaceful co-existence between Geoff and the non-white community sounds a positive note that South Africa is on the way to racial harmony. The narrator comments that Geoff and Brenda had planned that they would drop Marion at home and then Geoff would get Brenda back to work and finally have dinner with her in the evening (208). This attitude shows the conviviality that exists between Geoff and the non-white world. It shows his degree of interaction with the non-white world and his admiration of the non-white race.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper set to discuss the fact that pluralism and tolerance are the motivating factors behind the success of building an intercultural dialogue in the novels under study. The paper argued that intercultural interaction is successful because those involved are tolerant and are ready to get what they want despite all odds. Finally, this paper based on the premise that pluralism and racial negotiations and arbitrations are the panaceas for harmony in the postcolonial socio-political space.

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