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Hybridity and Globalization in Mpe's Welcome to Our Hillbrow

Abstract

This paper examines how Mpe Phaswane's Welcome to our Hillbrow interrogates notions of urbanization, Hybridity and globalization as witnessed in the contemporary society. Though the setting of the text is in Johannesburg and Oxford, I read the same as representative of other regions experiencing the same social issues globally. The focus in the paper is placed on the experiences of characters as they move from different regions into Hillbrow in Johannesburg and the other places they come into contact with. As such, the journeys that characters undertake and the spaces they inhabit in the city influence their choices and identities they form thereafter. Through the city space, Mpe grapples with social realities in the contemporary society thus evoking a mixture of identities which characters assume to survive in the city and globally. Of significance is the fact that the characters in the text influence and are influenced by others probably from other cultures other than theirs as part of the city's mode of operation. This paper explores different ways in which the urban character borrows from foreign cultures through his/her mobility and exposure to different environments and foreign cultures other than his/hers.

Key Words

Globalization, Urbanization, Hybridity, Space, Identity, Mobility, Culture

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