

South Africa's Post-Apartheid Film Narratives of HIV/AIDS: A Case of 'Yesterday'

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Abstract : The persistence of HIV/AIDS infection rates in SA has not only been a subject of academic debate but a mediated narrative that has dominated SA's post-apartheid film space over the last two decades. SA's colonial geo-spatial architecture still influences migrant labour patterns, which the Oscar-nominated (2003) SA film 'Yesterday' has erstwhile reflected upon, yet continues to account for the spread of HIV/AIDS in SA society. Accordingly, men who had left their homes in the rural areas to work in the mines in the cities become infected with HIV/AIDS, only to return home to infect their wives or partners in the rural areas. This paper analyses, through Social Semiotic theory, how SA geo-spatial arrangement had ruptured family structures with both men and women taking new residences in the urban areas where they work away from their homes. By using Social semiotic theory, this paper seeks to understand how images and discourses have been deployed in the film 'Yesterday' to demonstrate how HIV/AIDS is embedded in the socio-cultural, economic and political architect of SA society. The study uses qualitative approach and content/text/visual semiotic analysis to decipher meanings from array of imagery and discourses/dialogues that are used to mythologise the relationship between the spread of HIV/AIDS and SA migrant labour patterns. The findings of the study are significant to propose a conceptual framework that can be used to mitigate the spread of HIV/AIDS among SA populace, against the backdrop of changing migrant labour patterns and other related factors

Keywords : colonialism, decoloniality, HIV/AIDS, labour migration patterns, social semiotics

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