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SANNI



National liberation movements are social movements in amplified form. The disaffected: (those compelled to act) are virtually entire 'nations', using not merely extra-institutional means but anti-institutional action for a political objective that is nothing short of the elimination of the existing state. The convergence of multiple movements of workers, peasants, women, students, professionals, and others produce this collective action on a grand scale. The clarity of the collective grievance renders the convergence of disparate class forces possible, generally over several generations: freedom from domination by a population that sets itself apart on the basis of national identification. Conquest in the name of one nation stimulates an unprecedented convergence of classes within the other... .

This definition, which has much to offer, also suggests why the NLM model tends to endanger pluralism. The notion of a NLM as representing the nation tends to lead to the treatment of other organizations as ancillary to that effort or as temporary contributors to this national effort, where they 'stand in' for an absent NLM or occupy terrain, which will ultimately be occupied or fully occupied by the NLM itself. Once that happens the role of these other organizations is to exit from the stage of history (as happened in the case of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in South Africa, admittedly through its own volition (Cf.. Suttner, unpublished 2003, Neocosmos, 1998, Mamdani, 1990).

In line with this emphasis, the early years of African independence saw widespread clampdowns on organizations established on a regional or ethnic basis. There was a tendency in independent African states

to see organization outside the umbrella of the NLM as divisive and even aiding enemies of national unity. In many situations this was the case, with connections between external forces and regional, separatist parties, especially in a country like Congo/Zaire.

Also, in the name of building unity, various ethnic movements were suppressed and a variety of complex forms and identities in which people saw themselves were not allowed to find outlets in the political arena. This may have found classic expression in Samora Machel, independent Mozambique's first president's statement that for the nation to live, the tribe must die:

[O]ur struggle killed the tribe. It was the first thing we killed because the enemy's strength is tribalism. So we had no hesitation in acting against tribalists, racists and regionalists. We killed the tribe to give birth to the nation. This is not a nation of tribes, it is not a nation of races. So when the lice reach the underwear, one must boil some water and put all one's clothes into it (Machel, 1985: 77-78).

There was an overriding conception of the nation, embodied by the NLM/ruling party. That was the atmosphere within which most NLMs were formed, whether they attained power through negotiations, arms or peaceful handover.

Similar processes developed over time in the ANC. Pixley ka Isaka Seme, on the eve of the formation of the ANC, advanced a counter-conception of the nation to that of the Union of South Africa. His version referred to a 'native union', a nation that at first



embodied only African men (Seme, 1972). Over the decades that followed, this conception of the nation was widened, but what is significant for our discussion is that the ANC presented itself as the bearer of a potential nationhood, realisable once apartheid was removed.

The ANC as a liberation movement, and allied organizations like the Mozambican liberation movement, FRELIMO, spent decades in an atmosphere of intolerance of regionalism and ethnic difference on the African continent. They also absorbed Marxist-Leninist notions, which converged with the NLM model in stressing the need for a centralizing, co-coordinating party.

National liberation movements engaged in wars of liberation also claimed and often received recognition as the sole and authentic representative of particular peoples. There was reason for this in the context of resisting apartheid and colonialism and colonial rulers' denying the vote. But what did this status signify after liberation when most NLMs won ensuing elections? The danger is that some may have treated these elections as constituting a formal confirmation of what had already been earned, and seen themselves as already enjoying a right of representation that had been permanently conferred.

This quality of being the nation, that was ascribed to or claimed by the parties that led countries to independence, became one of the bases on which one-party states were advanced and opposition parties systematically suppressed. It also became one of the reasons why national liberation movements, turned ruling parties, were reluctant to consider exiting from

government, as in contemporary Zimbabwe. This does represent a tendency, but whether a tendency is irreversible or realizable depends on the capacity for contestation, which varies in different countries and situations.

The NLM model may be in crisis in the continent, as the basis on which most political parties were formed at the time of independence and their popular support has eroded. But the model may not be in crisis for the ANC as a political organization. Its viability may still relate to a reaction against a particular type of politics, 'normalization' or establishing a 'normal' political party, where elections are everything and the organization's popular character is nothing. While that may remain part of the ANC's official self-characterization, the notion is under stress. The ANC, in becoming the dominant force in government, has entered into processes of operation that require different modalities from its previous roles and relationships to its membership. And there are certainly people within and (not only) outside the ANC who would like this stress to be resolved through a break with the national liberation past, shedding this 'nostalgia'. The outcome cannot be predicted. It depends on a variety of factors within and outside the ANC, what strength may be commanded by one or other trend or can potentially manifest itself organizationally.

But the relevance of the question whether the NLM model is in crisis relates, as elsewhere, also to politics beyond the ANC and its membership. This is because the model depicts the national liberation movement as 'the nation', or as 'the nation in the process of becoming'.



Having attained representative democracy since 1994 the ANC has secured overwhelming electoral support and is predicted, at the time of writing, to be likely to retain or increase that support in the 2004 election. But here is where the dangers of the national liberation model may arise. It does not arise from the fears of the proponents of the 'dominant party' model that dominance is in itself incompatible with democracy, but because of notions deriving from the NLM model, in particular, its purporting to embody the nation as a whole.

The ANC and for that matter no political party or organization can ever be equated with the nation, no matter how popular it may be. There are interests within the nation that require representation outside of the national liberation movement. The consolidation of democracy in South Africa is not the task of the ANC as majority party alone.

This is not merely a question of multi-party democracy but relates to wider issues. The ANC (and the NLM in general) is a recent convert to pluralism in South Africa. This aversion to pluralism is not a product of exile, but was very much the trend among activists in the UDF in the 1980s (Cf. e.g. Cherry, unpublished 2000). It should be recalled that arguments for pluralism in South Africa were generally propounded by people resisting majority rule. In this context, those associated with the national liberation movement tended to see pluralism representing an attempt to dilute the impact of democracy. Many people remain uncomfortable with the concept or do not wish to probe its full dimensions, in particular the legitimacy of organizations formed outside of the ANC's sway.

But it is essential for the consolidation of democracy that pluralism be embraced in both the narrow constitutional and electoral sense of multi-party democracy and also in encouraging the formation of a variety of independent organizations representing a range of social interests – outside the ANC.

Some of these organizations, like COSATU, may be allied to the ANC. Others may be independent or hostile. That is their right and it is essential for democratic development and consolidation that people be free to relate to organizations that advance their interests in whatever manner suits them best. Obviously this must be within the constitution. Some of the newly formed organizations, while exercising the right to occupy the 'public sphere' have not always abided by the law. This may be related to many of these social movements denying the significance of representative democracy. In fact, one of these activists has said 'We don't want the fucking vote!' (Quoted by Sachs, 2003).

Beyond the need to recognize the right of existence and operation of social movements, a substantial role in ensuring sustainability and legitimacy of that democracy may relate to the existence and viability of opposition parties as vehicles for some people to express themselves politically. The Democratic Alliance (DA), currently the strongest opposition party, does provide an outlet for some people. They may make ambiguous statements about 'fighting back', capable of racist interpretations. But they nevertheless remain a choice for many people who might otherwise not be absorbed in the political system. That some new members are from a right-wing background is healthy considering that they are voting DA rather than engaging in illegal resistance.



# OLDER PEOPLE VOTING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1994



For similar reasons, in the 19th-century Cape, certain liberals advocated enfranchisement of black people, especially 'Coloreds', as a safeguard against warfare. William Porter, the attorney-general once said, 'Now, for myself, I do not hesitate to say that I would rather meet the Hottentot at the hustings, voting for his representative, than the Hottentot in the wilds with his gun upon his shoulder' (Simons and Simons, 1969: 23).

That goes for all the current opposition parties. They provide a voice for segments of the citizenry, which the ANC cannot be. That contributes to stability and the consolidation of democratic rule. Paradoxically, then, the consolidation of the democratic state for whose creation the ANC claims main responsibility, depends also on the viable existence of its opponents, no matter how repugnant the ANC may consider them.

But the 'consolidation of democracy' theorists ask for more than this, that there be a potential in the foreseeable future of an 'alternation of elites'. Then and only then, it is claimed, would the opposition be of sufficient strength to be able to expose what a corrupt government may wish to hide, and have the power to prevent the conflation of political organization/party and state and similar abuses (Jung and Shapiro, 1995, Giliomee and Simkins, 1999, introduction).

This requirement has no scientific basis as a test for democratic consolidation. It may be, as indicated, that some of the constitutional mechanisms in place currently provide a far sounder basis for monitoring abuse and ensuring accountable government than an opposition with some potential to become ruling party (Cf. Cachalia, 2003).



Let us be clear that the value sought is the preservation of democracy, the defence of constitutional rights so long denied under apartheid, the body of universal human rights, which are found in international instruments and enshrined in South Africa's constitution. For consolidation, there must be the establishment of the 'rules of the game', by which everyone abides. This means trust in these institutions. It appears that the current political order is providing a basis for trust in these institutions to develop. This is manifested in an important way in the willingness of the government to abide by decisions of the courts, even where these have been very inconvenient.

There is no doubt that not all of the constitutional institutions have worked perfectly, for a variety of reasons. Sometimes decisions have been ineffectual and may have evaded what many see as critical issues. In some cases efficacy is impaired by budgetary conditions, the institution's location and a variety of other factors. But most of these institutions, and particularly the Constitutional Court, have made a major contribution towards the consolidation of democracy in South Africa. It is doubtful whether any political party in opposition could have gone nearly so far in achieving this consolidation, precisely because opposition is not the same as professional scrutiny by bodies charged with specific constitutional tasks.

None of these points are aimed at denying the importance of a powerful opposition. But there are specific historical factors to which many authors seem curiously blind, factors that make the rise of a powerful opposition party unlikely at this moment, though by no means precluding its rise some time in the future. Apart from the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania

(PAC) and sections of the newly formed Independent Democrats, most parties were either opposed to the creation of the contemporary democratic order, associated with apartheid, or had a very ambiguous relationship to the creation of democracy. Others, like the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), led by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, were closely associated with extensive violence perpetrated in collusion with the apartheid regime in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Cf. Cachalia, 2003 on the DA). These are undoubtedly factors that limit the appeal these parties have for an electorate which is overwhelmingly black, and African; who remember apartheid very well and who see the ANC as the bearer of democracy and liberation from apartheid. There is no escaping from that history. No doubt whatever mistakes the ANC may have made, it will enjoy some patience and tolerance from the electorate because of what they have done before liberation and are doing now. Whatever the unevenness of delivery by the ANC, a great many people believe the party has changed their lives fundamentally. They accept that other changes will take time to be adequately implemented.

This is definitely not to suggest that elections are a 'racial or ethnic census' as some authors have claimed, with black people, mainly Africans, voting for the ANC and whites for the opposition (e.g. Giliomee and Simkins, 1999, 346). The IFP also derives almost all its support from Africans, but it has a history that sets limits on the extent of its potential support.

Habib and Taylor have suggested that because of the importance of viable multi-party democracy and a potential change of ruling party, one needs to look



elsewhere for the emergence of a credible opposition. They argue that electoral polls indicate overt dissatisfaction that could be the basis for a 'viable opposition'. It cannot, however be provided by existing parties which are hamstrung by their inability 'to think outside of a racial prism' (Habib and Taylor 2001, 216-217). They see the possibility of a left-wing party formed mainly from COSATU and the SACP, which could challenge the ANC through voicing the real concerns of the poorest of the poor. They respond to critics who point to majority support for the tripartite alliance among COSATU members, by saying that 'progressive scholars should not make a fetish of the majority viewpoint' (op cit, 221).

Majorities may be wrong, they say. They may, it is feared, not yet have the insight of Habib and Taylor into the failure of the alliance to realize their aspirations. They need to appreciate that they may be destined to be the core element on which a new opposition is formed in the future.

That may be what some scholars are seeing. In 2004, neither the SACP nor COSATU seemed likely to heed this advice or leave the ANC in large numbers. In fact, many branch chairs and other officials of the ANC come from these organizations so that the ANC itself, despite some pronouncements against its alliance partners (ANC, 2001, Moleketi and Jele, 2002), also fears the electoral consequences of a split. It does not mean that it will remain that way forever.

Whether democracy is consolidated depends also on the extension and deepening of democracy, the

involvement of people in politics during and between elections, the viability of participatory democracy and the existence of autonomous organizations of civil society, the organs of direct democracy. They may relate to the state but may simply be organs of self-empowerment in relation to issues that matter to people, organized in street committees and similar structures. This was a common phenomenon in the 1980s but exists unevenly in the present period, partly because of the ANC's ambiguity over pluralism and because some of its members sense that involvement in social movements would be construed as 'disloyal'.

This involvement in self-empowering organs of direct and participatory democracy is important not only as a manifestation of pluralism, but as extending the range of meanings given to democracy and to the opening clause of the Freedom Charter which reads, 'The People Shall Govern!' (See Suttner and Cronin, 1986). One of the reasons coups were so regular a feature in the early decades of independent Africa is that ordinary people were demobilized and felt no stake in the political system. It is important to create vehicles for popular participation going much wider than periodic voting. That is the most powerful way of consolidating democracy in the broadest sense.

Beyond this, if consolidation refers partly to the public seeing themselves as stakeholders, socio-economic transformation is an important way of developing that sense. The extent to which excluded and marginalized sections of the population have their concerns addressed also impacts substantially on the sustainability of democracy. Undoubtedly, current





unemployment and inequalities are part of the wider obstacles that need to be confronted in the process of maintaining this democratic order.

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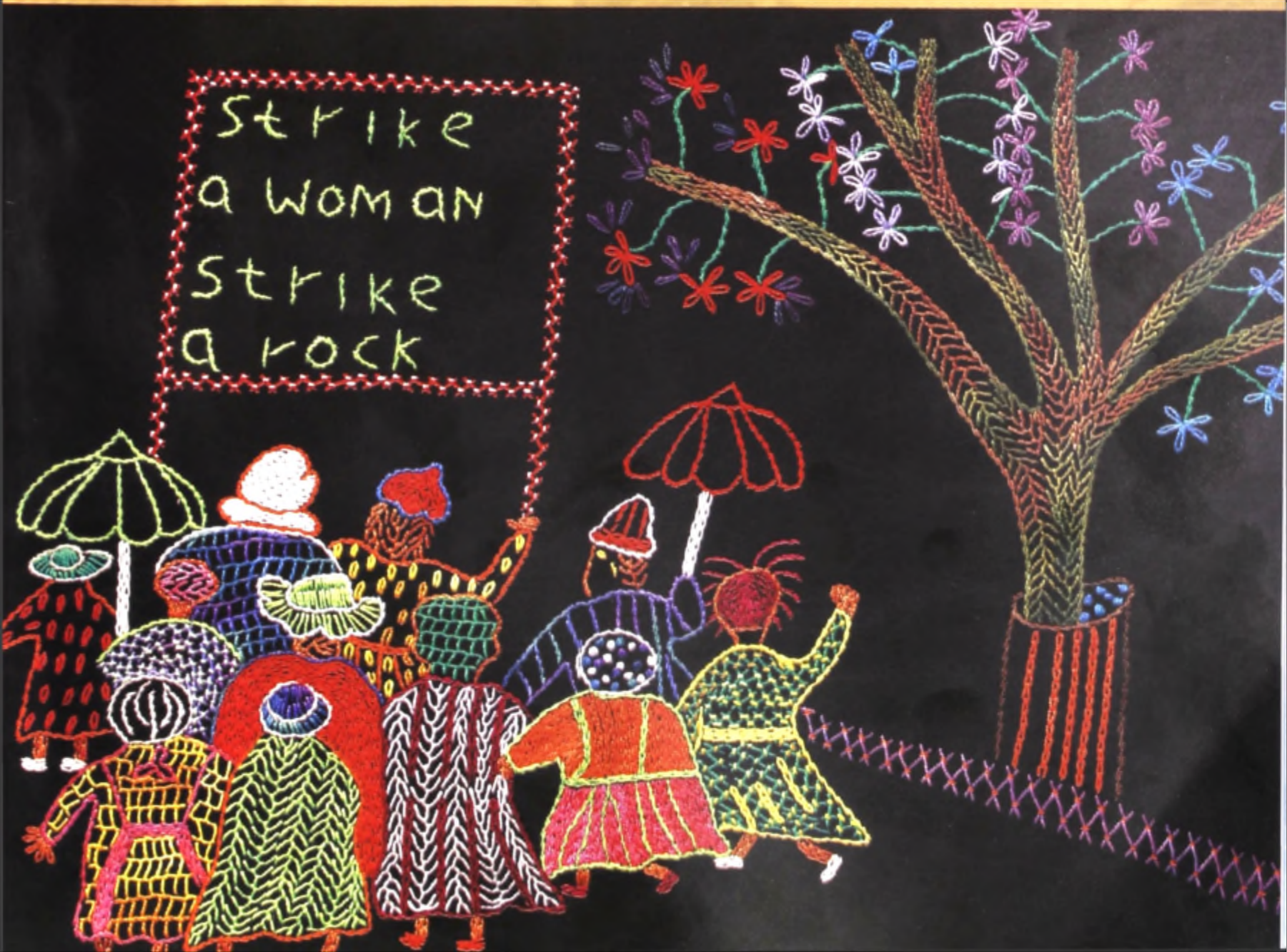
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# Journey to Freedom

## Conference papers 3



# Re-imagining community: The Unisa community psychology experience

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Blanche

In our paper we describe exciting new developments in how community psychology is taught, practised and researched at the University of South Africa. We present our experience as community psychology teachers, practitioners, and researchers in the form of a journey, showing how a particular point of departure (the current climate of innovation in South African psychology) has enabled us to travel to three interesting 'destinations' (in the form of three student-centred initiatives we are involved in).

## Departure

Much has been written (e.g., Cloete, Muller, & Orkin, 1986; Hayes, 1987; Nicholas, 1993) on South African psychologists' complicity with, and sporadic opposition to, apartheid. During the apartheid years community psychology played an important role, especially among academic psychologists, as a rallying point for those who recognized psychologists' obligation to join the struggle for freedom. However, despite its symbolic importance to progressive psychologists,

community psychology was slow to develop under apartheid. On a practical level, community psychology projects were often primarily focussed on trying to ameliorate the mental health damage inflicted by the state (as described in Foster, Davis, & Sandler, 1987), and therefore rarely attended to broader preventative and community-building imperatives. On an academic level, much energy was diverted into important, but ultimately not very productive, debates about psychology's 'relevance' to the South African situation (e.g. Anonymous, 1986; Dawes, 1985, 1986; Nell, 1990).

As also happened in so many other spheres of South African society, the coming of democracy in 1994 heralded a period of rapid, if uneven, innovation in psychology – and particularly in community psychology. Unlike some of its predecessors, the new psychology association (PsySSA) recognised the importance of speaking out on social justice issues, and of participating in the post-apartheid project of national reconciliation. Among other social-justice oriented



initiatives, psychologists actively participated in the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Dowdall, 1996; Godobo-Madikizela, 1997). Importantly, there was also a renewed emphasis on community psychology.

In part, the turn to community psychology was a response to the fact that there are far too few qualified psychologists (approximately 8000 according to Louw, 2002) to meet the mental health needs of South Africa's 40 million plus population. However, on a professional practice level, the rise of community psychology in post-apartheid South African psychology has been sporadic and uneven. Efforts to provide postgraduate training aimed specifically at prospective community psychologists, and to define categories of registration that would allow for more effective community-based practice, have had limited success (Cf. Elkonin & Sandison, 2006).

On the level of academic scholarship and of undergraduate training, however, community psychology has thrived during the first decade of democracy – and this is the context, the climate of innovation, which has enabled us to embark on the journey described here. The climate is perhaps best reflected in a sudden sharp increase in locally authored textbooks, almost all of which have a more socially and politically aware slant than the mainly Euro-American texts that they replace. Of particular importance to us have been new texts on critical psychology (Hook, 2004), social psychology (Ratele & Duncan, 2003), and community psychology (Duncan, Roos,

& Pillay, in press; Ratele et al., 2004; Seedat, Duncan, & Lazarus, 2001; Visser, 2007). These texts differ from most of the relatively small number of local texts published during the apartheid era in that black South Africans have taken a leading role as editors and authors. These texts are also very much less in thrall to Euro-American conceptions of psychology as an academic discipline and as a profession. Whereas, in the past, issues such as structural oppression, poverty, globalization, and patriarchy received scant attention, in the new crop of textbooks individual subjectivity and group processes are consistently understood as embedded in larger political and ideological systems.

In keeping with community psychology's non-pathologizing orientation, these texts also focus on the many examples of individual and collective agency that characterize modern South African communities, and that go beyond traditional 'Western' political and social structures.

In addition to student-centred textbooks, there is also an increasing number of scholarly texts (e.g., Duncan, van Niekerk, de la Rey, & Seedat, 2001; Durheim, 2006), as well as the forthcoming *Psychology in society* series (see Figure 1) under the editorship of Kopano Ratele, which will be aimed at the general reader. Concomitantly, a number of new networks have also been established among academic psychologists with an interest in community psychology, and between academics and community organizations.





Figure 1

In short, South African psychology, and in particular South African community psychology, is now more vibrant than ever before, and there has been a rapid and fundamental transformation in how knowledge is generated and disseminated in the discipline.

## Destination 1: Re-imagining community

Our first 'destination' was inspired by a realization that old styles of knowledge production and transmission were no longer viable. Our challenge was to develop an undergraduate community psychology module at second year level, and to do so in a way that would inspire students to share our excitement about the upsurge of creativity in South African community psychology.

As traditionally trained academics our first inclination was to build a module around one or more of the new community psychology texts, to provide students with structured guidance, and to evaluate them in terms of how well they could master key concepts in (South African) community psychology. However, we soon realised that such an approach, however well-intentioned, would go against the very spirit of creative engagement which we are so keen to share with students. Just as South African community psychologists have redefined the discipline for themselves, so too should we trust our students to create their own understandings.

We called the module *Re-imagining community*, and tried to structure it in such a way as to invite students to become active participants in re-imagining their local and global communities. In collaboration with the publishers and authors of some of the texts listed above, we compiled a new volume (Ratele et al, 2004) containing a collection of what we considered key readings in South African community psychology. However, we strongly emphasise that academic texts represent only one type of knowledge source available to students. Of equal importance are their own past experiences, knowledge they already have, and the knowledge and experience they can gain by doing independent thinking and investigation of their own. This investigation entails reading academic texts, but also exploring their communities and connecting with themselves and their families, 'culture', and history. We emphasize both the geographical communities where people live and work, and the many 'communities of interest' that we all occupy.





Thus students are invited to bring many different kinds of understanding into the module, and to find their own ways of integrating these. They are also encouraged to work on their own, but also to invite others (inside and outside of academia) to work with them in reflecting on how communities (and society as a whole) function, and how our personal subjectivities and identities emerge from this.

We believe that the process of learning is just as important as the content of learning. Therefore an experiential learning approach is followed with an emphasis on experiences, stories, attentive listening, and continuous reflection and sharing of learning with others. Activities form an integral part of the experiential learning cycle by introducing a theme and (hopefully) arousing personal interest and involvement – and this also serves as preparation for the next experience. Students are invited to perform all kinds of activities, such as revisiting their childhood years, family and community, writing essays, creating maps, sharing their thoughts and stories, while celebrating their re-imagining of self, families, culture, and communities.

Starting with the self, students are asked to explore their own names, surnames, and nicknames and what they might mean – both ‘objectively’ and to them personally. They are further invited to remember a place that was magical and special to them as a child. Students continuously engage with the reading, and in the first unit amongst other things they have to create a mind-map where they diagrammatically show the discourses that emerged from two case studies on HIV/AIDS as reported in the reading.

Moving to family, culture, and history, students are invited to remember a family meal, and to share these memories with a family member or friend. After reading a chapter on *Psychology: An African perspective*, issues of culture and worldviews are explored. Students are invited to create a mind-map where they explain what they see as their culture and worldview, using food and a funeral of a family or community member and the rituals involved.

Making and mapping community forms the third unit, where students are invited to go on a ‘walkabout’ and to describe and reflect on the things experienced and





sensed during the walkabout, by making a map of the geographical community through which they walked, as well as of the wider community within which it is embedded. They are invited to expand their horizons by looking and listening to different voices and theoretical understandings of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Students are then invited to revisit their story and map and to develop them further in light of the understanding gained through the readings and activities. They are also asked to consider alternative pathways through the story and map, that is, positive ways in which people in the community interact with each other, resources that are available to people, and future possibilities that are open to them.

In the next unit, *Community psychology: the philosophy of ubuntu*, students are invited to list ubuntu practices in their community (i.e. practices that reflect unconditional respect, dignity, value, and acceptance). While joining with the reading on *Critical reflections on community and psychology in South Africa*, students are asked to reflect on the values of liberatory community psychology.

In the final unit, *Celebrating community*, students are invited to organize an event to celebrate and share what they have done and learnt through this journey

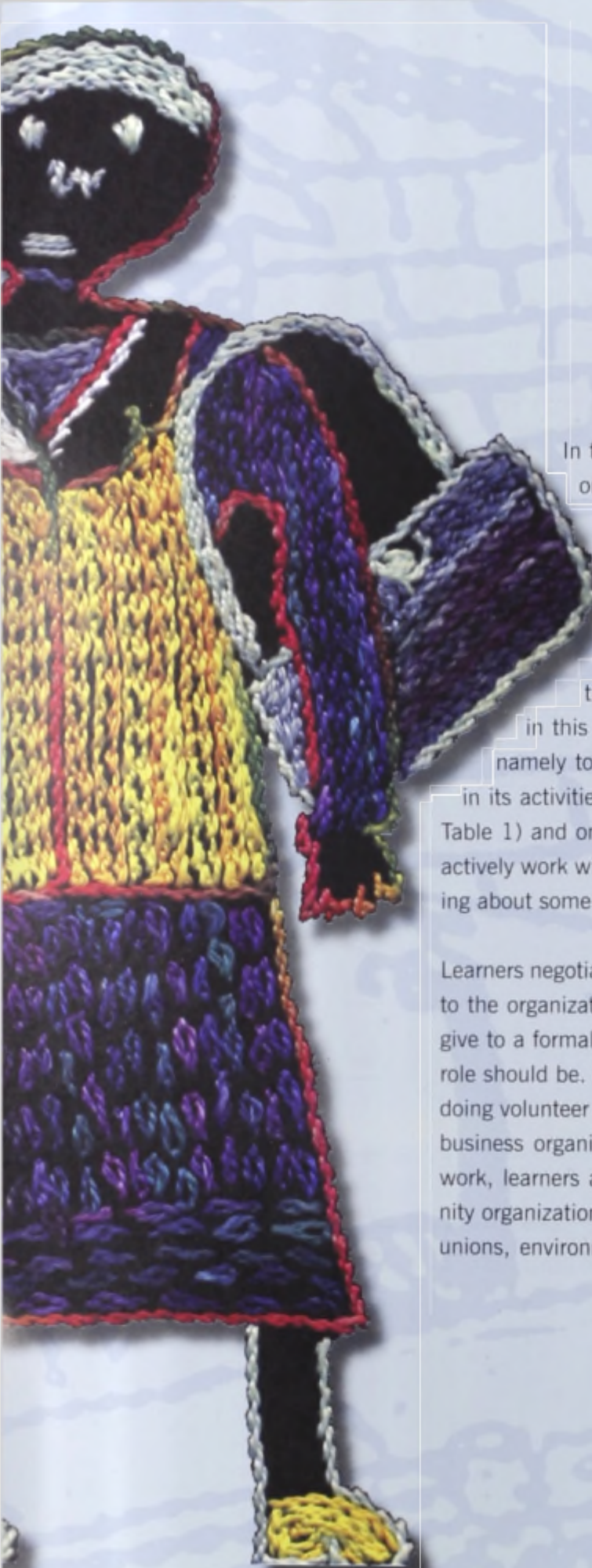
with their community, the community of learners, and with us – the facilitators.

Students typically respond with enthusiasm to the module once they have come to terms with the fact that we do, seriously, want them to use their creative faculties rather than just their capacity to absorb and reproduce textbook knowledge. However, some students struggle with aspects of the module, particularly the abstract academic nature of some of the readings. Some students, especially those from privileged backgrounds, also feel uneasy about what they perceive as the overly politicised and 'preachy' tenor of some of the course material.

## Destination 2: Community intervention strategies

The discipline and profession of psychology is not only concerned with interpreting individual and social processes but, for better or for worse, is also always interested in possibilities for active intervention. We therefore developed another undergraduate module, presented at third-year level, which focuses on community intervention strategies.





In this module students are invited to join a community organization or group, to participate in and observe the work of the organization or group, and to share their understandings – again while simultaneously also engaging with academic readings.

This module shares many of the features of the second-year module, but rather than engaging in an array of smaller activities (going ‘walkabout’, engaging with family members, and so on), in this case students are expected to engage in just one, larger activity, namely to join a community organization of their choice and to participate in its activities. There are minimal constraints on the type of organization (see Table 1) and on the role students play within the organization – so long as they actively work with others, over a period of time, in an organization aimed at bringing about some form of social change.

Learners negotiate their involvement in a manner suitable to them and appropriate to the organization or group. We provide learners with a letter of introduction to give to a formal organization as part of agreeing with the organization what their role should be. Learners may also stay with an organization that they are already doing volunteer or paid work for. They may also join government departments and business organizations. Apart from organizations that do counselling or welfare work, learners are reminded that there are in fact many other kinds of community organizations where they can make a useful contribution, for instance, labour unions, environmental organisations, worker cooperatives, community economic



**Table 1. Some of the organizations and groups joined by learners during 2005 and 2006**

- Deo Gloria (attending to the welfare of street children by providing food and clothes)
- Women Agricultural Society (youth work and orphanages)
- Reiki (Ancient Japanese practice that centres around creative energy)
- SALT programme (provides food parcels to a government clinic for distribution to HIV infected women)
- Methodist Church (distributes food parcels to people with HIV/AIDS)
- Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA – fundraising in rural area)
- Phambili Centre (abused women)
- Inter Trauma Nexus (assistance to trauma victims)
- The Samaritans (Befrienders International in Rome – Italy suicide prevention)
- 'Together we will overcome this' (support group for women who come from abusive environments)
- Malibongwe (focus on social and economic development of black women in rural and urban areas)
- Headway Natal (Stroke and Brain Injury Support Group)
- Darling Focus (Community Development Centre)
- Mmata counselling and support group (a group formed by people living with HIV/AIDS)
- The Rietvlei Home Owner's Association (strives to create a safer community to work and live in - was established after the rape of a 14-year old girl)
- Mayfair Community Programme (promoting reading, writing and storytelling to educate the community on the subject of HIV/AIDS)
- Treatment Action Campaign (TAC – promote HIV/AIDS awareness)
- Belvedere Hindu Youth Society (clean and tidy temples, and do voluntary work at nursing homes and hospitals)

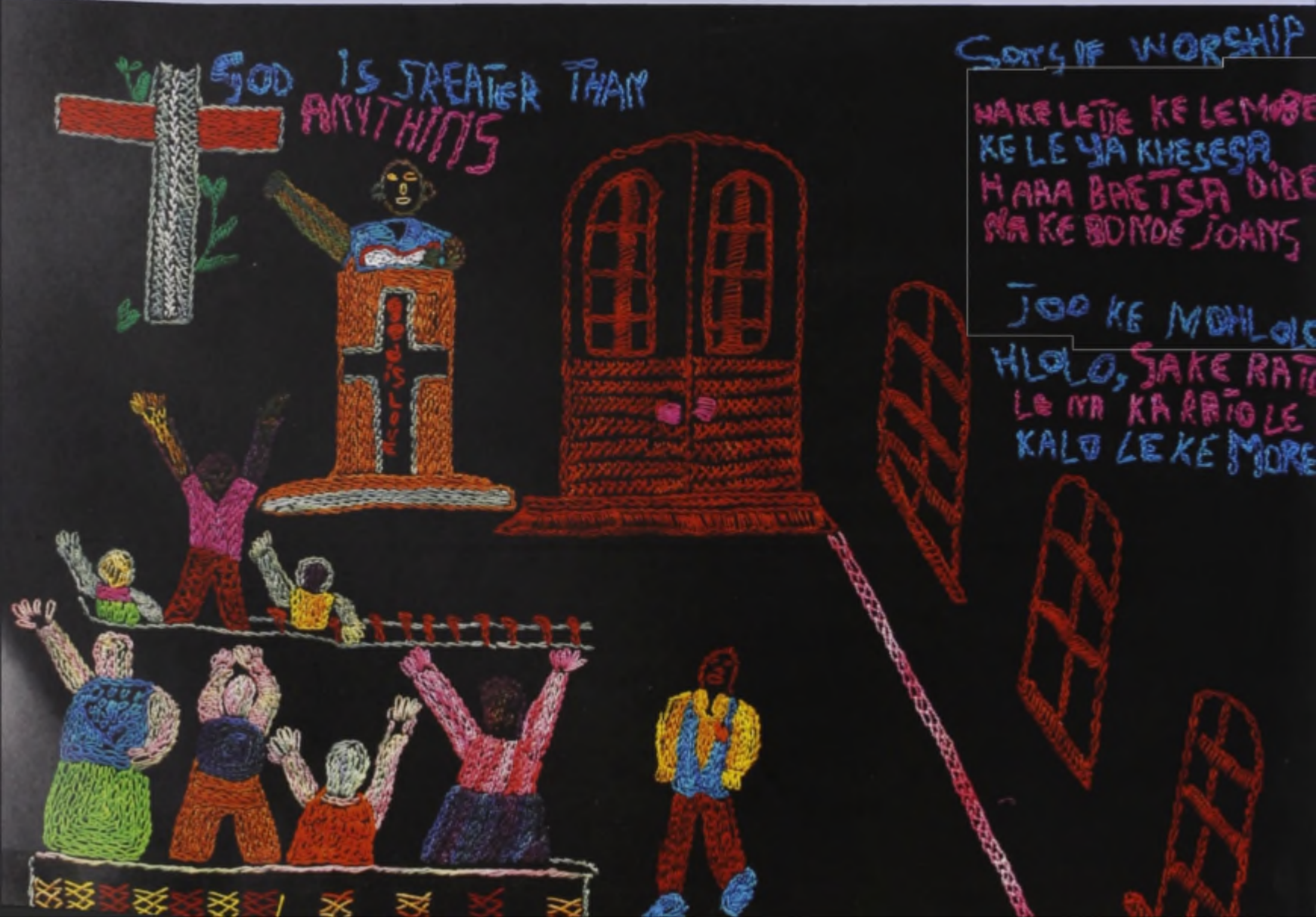


development organisations, advocacy organisations for people with disabilities, public interest research groups, feminist organizations, anti-racism organizations, support groups, and so on.

Students are required to write short narrative accounts describing and reflecting on the process of joining the organization, and each account is circulated – via the UNISA assignments system – to three other students. These students comment on the accounts (we encourage them to provide feedback in the form of a supportive peer conversation rather than as an evaluation), and the comments are then

returned – again via the UNISA assignments system – to the students who wrote the accounts. Thus each student has an opportunity to share ideas with other students – usually students who are geographically distant from them, and who may be working in very different types of organizations, but who struggle with similar issues.

As in the previous module, students are encouraged to combine their practical experience with academic reading, and to find ways of synthesizing these two sources of understanding. In this case, the synthesis takes an unusual form: Students are required to





create, and iteratively develop, a three-panel poster reflecting, in an integrated way, what they learn from participation in an organization and from their reading. This poster is also what they are finally examined on.

The three panels of the poster cover the following issues related to intervention: Panel 1 - *what needs to be changed* (how to go about identifying 'needs', 'problems', and possibilities for growth); panel 2 - *making change happen* (what types of intervention strategies and techniques can be used), and panel 3 - *noticing signs of success* (tracking the outcomes of interventions). Some of the readings focus on change at a purely local level, and on interventions intended merely to ameliorate distress, while others focus on processes operating at the national and global levels and on more fundamental, transformative change. There are also readings that problematize psychology's readiness to identify 'needs' and 'problems', and its willingness to offer solutions. Examples of the topics covered in the readings are liberatory psychology in South Africa, activity theory, participatory action research, interventions with 'street children', HIV/AIDS interventions, and interventions aimed at opposing various forms of violence.

As completing the second year module is a prerequisite for entry into the third year module, students doing the third year module have already had an opportunity to become used to the unusual (and sometimes quirky!) style of community psychology teaching at UNISA. There is therefore typically less initial uncertainty, and more willingness to accept that they have to actively engage with a range of knowledge sources to produce their own understandings. However, as

in the second year, students do complain about the academically advanced nature of the readings, and sometimes struggle to properly integrate these with their practical experience.

Most students enjoy constructing the three-panel posters, and appreciate the opportunity to use a format other than the usual grey academic prose (see Figure 2 for some examples). Most also seem to effectively use the poster as a device for structuring their thinking throughout the module, and for iteratively recording and refining their understanding of community psychology intervention strategies.

Interestingly, however, it is not the posters but a relatively minor aspect of the course – the brief initial accounts of joining community organizations – that seems to have most captured students' imaginations. Students clearly relish the opportunity of collaborative exploration and learning with other students,

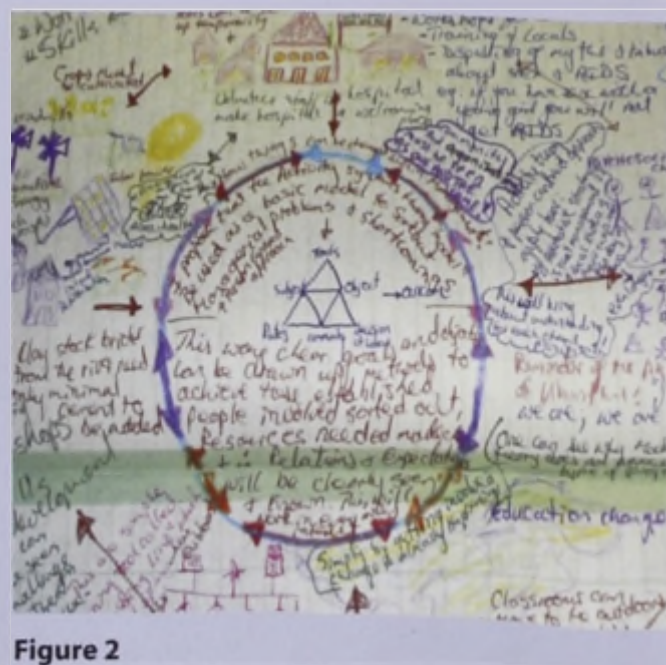


Figure 2



who struggle with similar issues across a wide range of different communities. Most students take considerable care in providing comprehensive and constructive comments in responding to their fellow students' accounts and take other students' advice very seriously in plotting their way through the module.

## **Destination 3:** **Working with community psychology practitioners and students**

Our final 'destination' is the community psychology honours course, which follows after the two undergraduate modules. This course was developed before the undergraduate modules and in its present form has a far more conventional academic character, with the usual essay-style assignments and examination requirements.

However, we are now (together with our colleague Matshepo Nefale) in the process of re-thinking the course to bring it more in line with the ethos of the undergraduate modules. As a substantial majority of UNISA postgraduate students now have internet access, our intention is to use the internet to build on the interactive elements of the undergraduate modules.

Our vision for the honours course is not only to radically enhance the possibilities for interaction between lecturers and students, and among students, but to break away from the 'walled garden' approach typical of academic courses. Traditional 'walled garden'

courses contain cohorts of students within narrowly defined limits, preventing them from interacting with people not formally participating in the course, or with students who have completed the course in previous years. It also defines learning products created by students as purely for educational purposes and without any practical utility or lasting value.

What we have in mind, as a counter to this, is to embed the course within a larger community of practice, consisting of, among others, community psychologists and activists, past and present students, and lecturers. Novice students will learn by at first engaging in 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002), and then gradually progressing to more central roles in the community. Rather than only two possible roles in the learning relationship (lecturer or student), participants will be able to occupy a diversity of different roles, to switch between roles, and to contribute to the community's work in a variety of different ways.

Students will also not create isolated learning products such as essays that are discarded once the course has been completed, but will be expected to create material that persists after they are no longer part of the course and that extends and refines work done by previous students. For example, we plan on having students contribute to and maintain a collection of resource listings covering geographical communities throughout South Africa, to collect, organize and interpret audiovisual material from around the country, and to comment extensively on the contributions of other participants in the network.



In time, we hope to build this into a widely used nexus providing information, contacts, and support for community practitioners and students from around South Africa.

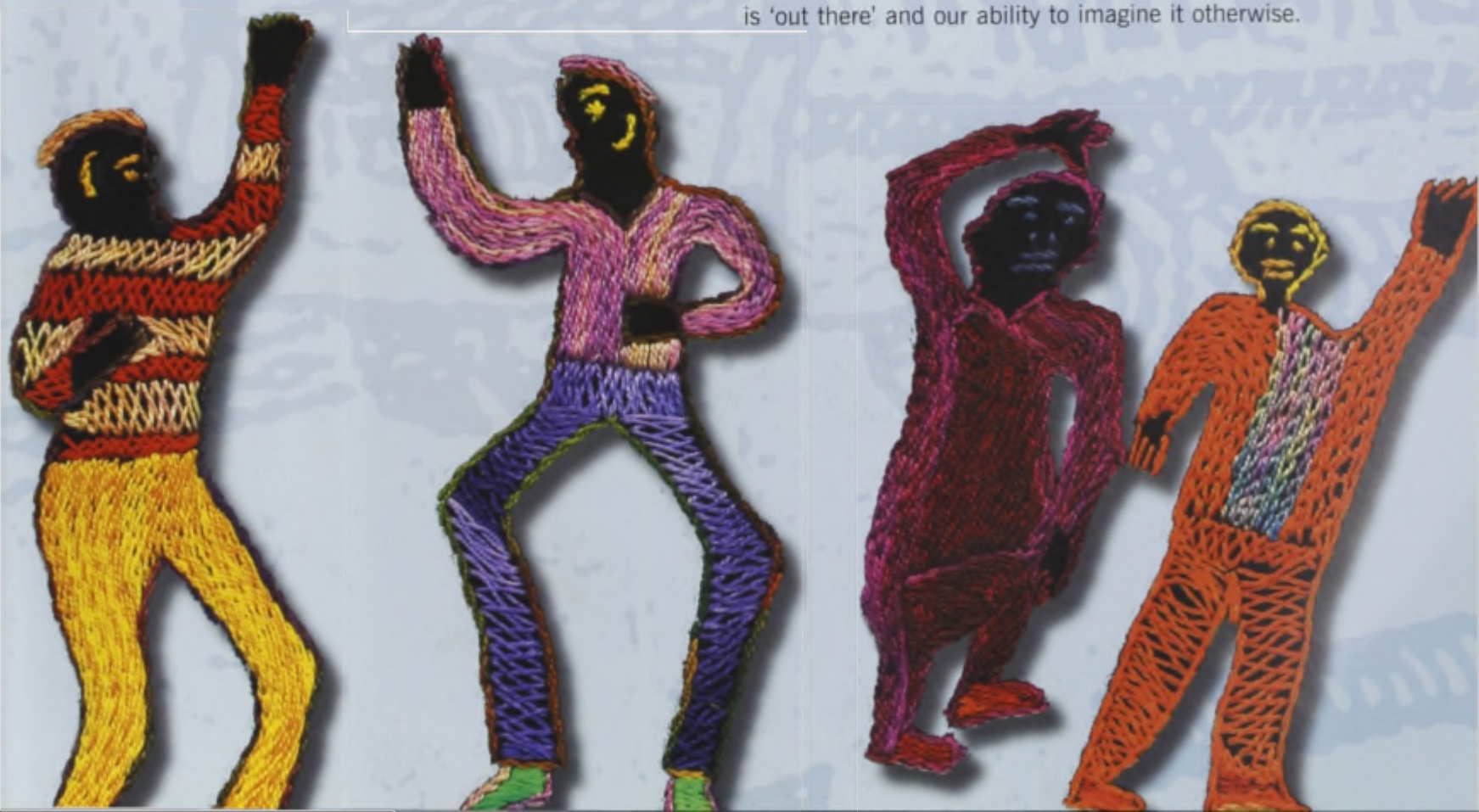
## Conclusion: 'Go back to begin'

Our journey ends here and now we ask: Where to from here? And how do we get there?

One important lesson we think we have learnt from our experience in community practice, research, and teaching – and from our reading of community psychology texts – is the importance of approaching communities (and that includes our students) with an open mind, but not empty-handed. In other words, we need, first, to keep reminding ourselves,

that most of what is of value in human interactions is not about content but about process, and requires an ongoing openness to what may follow next. At the same time, we should also remember that we cannot, and do not, enter processes empty-handed. Part of what we bring to community processes, and to our interactions with students, is in the form of unnecessary baggage from the past, which might as well be jettisoned, but part of what we bring is in the form of valuable 'intellectual capital', accumulated over long periods, which we have an obligation to share with others. The challenge lies in continually re-discovering the optimal balance between letting events unfold as they may, and attempting to steer them in particular directions.

Another lesson we think we have learnt, or are learning, is that community is not a fixed thing that is waiting to be discovered and analyzed, but an unfolding series of possibilities – a combination of what really is 'out there' and our ability to imagine it otherwise.





The same holds for community psychology, and for the process of teaching and learning in community psychology. We therefore need always to try and foster a learning climate which emphasizes self-knowledge through interaction, introspection, and risk taking, within which our students and us, can discover communities as they are, imagine them differently, and work together to narrow the gap between how things are and how they might be.

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# Extracts from conference

[P]ost 1994, in the national performance space there has been the carefully woven promotion and projection of unity and reconciliation (read: managing of public opinion and steering of popular aspirations away from direct confrontation both through the media and political interest groups). The myth of a rainbow nation united and collectively hard at work for a better life has taken centre-stage. Those who through their actions do not conform to the foundational rainbow-and-reconciliation myth (thus rejecting the reification of reality, the glorification of the myth and possibly the deification of its creators and praise singers) and who refuse to speak as if in a chorus with others, who are waxing lyrical about how far we have come, have been ostracised and, in some cases, demonised. They have not conformed to the rather passive myth of a South African miracle nor have they succumbed to the pleasing and seductive project(ion) of a 'rainbow' nation in which all South Africa's people in a seemingly undifferentiated mass work together for a better life. Yet their refusal to be written off and edited out of political and social (and thus literary) existence has meant that the performance space remains a rich and vibrant living space where new counter narratives emerge and are in the process of being made and unmade. {In the process} both the political domain and the related literary realm are changed as new voices and texts emerge contesting and enacting new power... Stories through their very existence

can break down borders, question and constantly re-define what constitutes the national space, and work towards a greater overall freedom of a society. In this way, literature is indeed empowering and literary works, through their very presence, their reasons for being, are also acts of (political) consciousness.

This opens the way for the powerless, for ordinary people to make their presence felt in stories and for the ordinariness of people's lives to become the subject of literature, so that new and little truths (not white lies, nor blackouts) begin to have popular appeal, to speak truth to power and, most importantly, to themselves.

From  
**RE-(W)RIGHTING THE NATION:  
WILL THE REAL WINNIE MANDELA AND  
ROBERT MCBRIDE PLEASE STAND UP?**

Lisa Combrinck  
(Department of Foreign Affairs, RSA)

and

Rosemary Gray  
(University of Pretoria)





# From other voice papers

My contention in this paper is that the Bible (in its present state, which I refer to as 'The Received Text') is profoundly informed with discrimination based on gender, that is manifestly unconstitutional in terms of section 16 (1) (c) of the Bill of Rights which expressly prohibits 'advocacy of hatred based on [inter alia] gender and that constitutes incitement to cause harm', the shorthand for which is 'Hate Speech', and that such speech is in violation of section 9 which proscribes unfair discrimination (discussed below).

The ethos of unfair discrimination (and it is important to note that discrimination based on gender is presumptively unfair, the onus being on the perpetrator to discharge the burden of proof) that the Bible promotes is in breach of the grundnorm that constitutes a society based on 'human dignity, equality and freedom.' Particularly in South Africa, where colonial discourse has engendered a sycophantic reverence for patriarchal hegemony, women and gays are written out of the ideology as text. The Bill of Rights is the Revolutionary Voice, articulating the mute grievances of the Oppressed, the Disenfranchised, the quintessential 'Other'.

From  
**UNFAIR DISCRIMINATION VERSUS BIBLICAL  
INJUNCTIONS**

Laurence Berman  
Department of English Studies  
University of South Africa

In Museveni's Uganda (1986-present) space for political action has been markedly expanded relative to past regimes. The exception has been the ban on political party activities. The articulation and more importantly aggregation of interests has been restricted and limited to the boundaries of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) in what has been dubbed a "no-party democracy" system. The NRM has argued that parties breed religion and ethno-sectarian division, a political cancer which has afflicted most of Uganda's post colonial politics. Opposition groups have propounded the claim that "no-party" politics is simply a political gimmick constructed by the ruling elite to entrench themselves and more particularly the Movement system in power. Against this context, this paper examines whether the suspension of political parties has been beneficial to democratization and especially the efficacy of Uganda's civil society. More specifically it focuses on the growth and dynamic of the women's movement in Uganda in the era of "no-party" democracy. The paper's main argument is that contrary to conventional wisdom, no-party democracy in Uganda has been a vital and necessary transitional condition for the development of the women's movement.

From  
**THE "NO-PARTY" SYSTEM AND THE WOMEN'S MOVE-  
MENT IN UGANDA: PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS**

Joshua B. Rubongoya\* and  
Esther Kibuka-Sebitosi\*\*

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Perform



# n a n c e : music & multimedia



# the Journey





"For a people emerging from the painful clutch of apartheid, memorial acts are necessary rituals in order to contextualize the pain and to make sense of the progress towards current states of healing. Memorializing past events and imagining future utopias empowers those who were formally oppressed to retell their stories to future generations and it is a warning to guard against the grim spectre of 'history repeating itself'. Music, dance and orature are some of the texts in African societies in which are inscribed stories of pain, resistance, triumph and healing." - **Thembela Vokwana**

# freedom narratives

The Journey to Freedom Narratives was a creative collaboration between the UNISA department of Art History, Visual Arts and Musicology, visual artists, the Melodia UNISA Chorale and the Boitumelo and Intuthuko sewing groups. Apart from the choir the musical performance also featured 'Gcina Mhlophe and 'Presss' of 999 Music. The Melodia UNISA Chorale was established in March 2000 as a choral organization to cater for both students and staff of UNISA with a keen interest in being actively involved in choral singing. Its founding conductor was Prof. S Shole of the African languages department. Since its inception, it has participated actively in university events such as the launch of the National Reading Campaign, launch of UNISA's AIDS Centre, the investiture of the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor, University Open day, awarding of the Honorary doctorate to Mary Robinson of the UN, graduation ceremonies, opening of the Musicological Congress of South Africa conference and numerous other events. It has performed to hearty applause during the much celebrated and publicized launch of UNISA's new logo and corporate identity as moving towards the African University in the service to humanity.

# in song

Based on extracts of writing by **Thembela Vokwana**,  
**Puleng Sekgala** and **Gwen Miller**





In the larger community, the choir has participated in SATICA, this being a festival of tertiary institutions in South Africa, Youth Day celebrations at the State Theatre, and has been selected among numerous choirs to be one of the representative choirs for the National Heritage Day celebrations in Johannesburg in 2002. In September 2001, the choir had the honour to be invited to participate in the South Africa Week celebrations in Singapore. In 2003 the Melodia UNISA Chorale was invited to take part in yet another week long festival of arts and culture organized by the Namibian ministry of education in Windhoek. An ensemble representing the choir competed up to the semi-finals in the Vodacom-Unisa voice competition held in April 2005. Since 2001, the choir has been conducted by Mr Thembela Vokwana, a lecturer in the university's department of Art History, Visual Arts and Musicology.

**In 2004 the choir was approached to work on the collaborative project with the University of Mississippi. Sadly the Mississippi leg never took place.**

The call for celebrating the twin milestones of ten years of democracy in South Africa and forty years since the passing of the Civil Rights Act in the United States of America took shape... popular liberation songs from our past together with songs of healing and reconciliation become the medium in narrat-

ing the tale of our momentous journey to freedom. American songs such as Negro spirituals were also included in the programme in order to reflect our parallel histories of oppression, resistance and reconciliation among black people both in Africa and the African diaspora.

Thembela Vokwana and Puleng Segalo identified and arranged the songs. They were a vital link in the conceptualization and interaction between the music and visuals. Whilst the early outline of the link between music and image was set in the draft by Vokwana and Miller, the input by Wendy Ross, Celia De Villiers and Erica Luttich, the artist facilitators of the embroidering groups, provided valuable guidance.

The 2004 Journey to Freedom narratives performance took the audience on a fascinating voyage from the struggle of the apartheid years to the age of democracy, from repression to liberation. The songs in the performance reflect the pain and resilience during the struggle years and spiritual freedom in the American South, songs that come from the struggle for equal rights and songs that reflect reconciliation, freedom and empowerment in everyday South African life. The musical performances were accompanied by projections of digital animations as part of a multimedia project.





The Civil Rights movement in America was strengthened and carried forward by song. Here in South Africa – eMzansi – we could not have come this far without song.

The tone of the resistance songs was such that they lifted the spirit of the people. In the film *Amandla* (2004), Hugh Masekela recalls the sense of unity and strength the music gave to the people. Similarly the American video *We shall Overcome*, that documents the history of this song and its international contextualisation, creates an understanding of how much power the unity of voice has when this hymn was sung during the oppression in the American South.

The cultural context of the music of the past struggle songs became the jolt of memory for people to pen their personal experiences. These stories were restructured into drawings and embroideries. The visual experience of the embroiderers became the filament for the animations, bridging personal experience with the general trajectory of the music's rendition of the historical moment of oppression to reconciliation.

The wall hangings and the animation utilized bright colours and retained the Folk Art style of the drawings as the women sketched their stories. The aesthetic is seemingly light hearted and the multitude of primary colours that layer the artwork, might suggest

simplicity – yet another layer of meaning is imbedded in the reality of the imagery. Lines and forms tell the story of anguish. This should however be seen in direct relation to the music, which was the starting point for the visual art.

There is a paradox in the experience, when we want to refer back to a time of heaviness and dark oppression and when we listen to the upbeat tunes of these songs today. However, if one considers the words in the first paragraph of *Bawo Thixo Somandla* it begs God in prayer:

Bawo Thixo Somandla  
Buyinton'ubugwenxa bethu  
Kazi senzen'ebusweni benkosi  
Bawo Thixo Somandla.

This translates to:

My Lord, God Almighty  
What is our transgression?  
What sin have we committed before Thee?  
Oh Lord, God, Almighty.

This prayer was accompanied by body movement, as in the performances by the UNISA Melodia Chorale, which were catchy and upbeat – yet the content of the song told of torment. The arts make it possible to pose questions and retell stories that might be too hurtful in day-to-day conversation. The embroideries and animations seemed as light hearted as the first



impression of the songs. It is exactly this vibrancy that facilitates the retelling of the stories of the struggle, making it possible to once again confront the atrocities and to celebrate reconciliation.

In one of her appearances of narration during the performance night Gcina Mhlophe told the audience:

'Our musical selves remember those times. Our souls remember the ancient rhythms and we find kindred spirits all over the world. Through music we feel the connection. Through stories we are drawn together by a force so gentle, subtle and yet so persistent. We feel our hearts beating to the rhythm of a chant so ancient and yet so familiar – like we heard it just this morning. The chant for freedom. Our music has been a common thread that bound us together in times of pain and struggle. Music lifted up our spirits when times were dark and the road was steep. And now in times of joy our song takes our spirit even higher...'















# THE MUSIC

The choir music was provided by the **UNISA Melodia Chorale**, conducted by **Thembela Vokwana** and **Puleng Segalo**, and consisted of:

**Soprano:** Sophy Leriba, Lethabo Mbungi, Zelda Mokhutle, Lerato Malatse, Stephina Masango, Bongiwe Mdluli, Tsholofelo Matlhasedi, Elizabeth Napo, Dumazile Ndlovu, Zamangwane Ngozi, Whitey Ntsoane, Nomzamo Qotho and Hope Shibambo.

**Alto:** Margaret Buys, Sylvia Choko, Nthabiseng Maboe, Franscinah Motsepe, Virginia Mophuting, Nyameka Ndaba, Millicent Mpholo, Sonto Nkomo, Puleng Segalo, Sindi Tsotetsi, Adelaide Skhosana and Sibongile Zwane.

**Tenor:** Elvis Aphane, Mighty Gwabeni, Serengwane Lethuba, Wanda Mamba, Meshack Mosotho, Megga Mbethe, Tebogo Moiloa, Collins Mohlala, Junior Makhubedu, Phatudi Malope, Thabo Mailula, Solomon Khoza, Tshepo Semenya, Alex Mahlobogoane and Thembela Vokwana.

**Bass:** Kgaugelo Bhoya, Benjamin Disoloane, Christopher Maimela, Solomon Nkwe, Mlungisi Thusi, Shole Shole, James Sithole, Lebogang Thakadu, Thepudi Marokane, Themba Mashiya-Tshabalala, Abram Ramokgaba, Tshifhiwa Netshiukwi, Titus Sebesho, Itumeleng Namo, Gontse Mabusela and Sam Masiya.





# 'Gcina Mhlope PROFILE





Nokugcina Mhlope has been writing and performing on stage and screen for the better part of thirty years. She began her career as a writer while working in Yeoville, Johannesburg, as a young domestic worker from Alexandra. She has subsequently written many children's books as well as adult audience poetry, short stories and plays. Her writings, for which she often composes accompanying music such as in the animated *Fudukazi's Magic*, have been published all over the world and have been translated, besides various South African languages, into German, French, Italian, Swahili and Japanese. Her work is used extensively in schools and universities.

Besides having a string of publications, 'Gcina has worked as Writer-in-Residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, US. She has received awards from among others, The BBC (for Radio Drama), the Edinburgh Festival (The Fringe First Award), New York's OBBIE and Chicago's Josef Jefferson Award. She holds Honorary Doctorates from the London Open University and the University of KwaZulu Natal.

As the storyteller chosen for *the Journey to Freedom narratives*, 'Gcina showcased the following stories for the project.



# PROFILE

## Preston Sihlangu

### "Presss"

This up and coming performer, who featured in the musical performance, hails from Bloemfontein. He started singing jazz and blues at an early age, watched mainly by hard core jazz followers.

He curtain-raised for big jazz bands and artists like the Jazz Crusaders, Bloemfontein Symphony Orchestra, Tanya Maria and Salif Keita.

He came to national attention in South Africa on the popular TV talent show Coca Cola Pop Stars.

He was 'spotted' and given a write-up by the late entertainment editor of The Sowetan newspaper, Elliot Makhanya.









# Research on song:

The songs were researched and interpreted by **Reboile Motswasele** and then 'workshopped' by the digital artists. This is an example:

## **My own song interpretation/analysis: Bawo Thixo Somandla**

To me this song is a crying plea to God. I strongly feel that it was a mother's cry — although the song was composed by a male. It is a mother who has lived through the deepest suffering a person can be subjected to. She has scars that do not heal. As soon as she tries to heal from a sad experience she is thrown with another tormenting one. My approach is that of handling this song as if it is a poem, and by doing that I'll be able to surface the emotions embedded within the words.

**Bawo Thixo Somandla (Father, God, Omnipotent. Bawo also acts as a respectful greeting word, e.g. Bawo Nkosi Dlamini; it does the same job as Bayete!)**

All the above three words refer to God (one could say they are synonyms), my thinking is that the composer is entrenching the fact that God is God (the creator) nobody is nothing above him. Now why would Mr Matshila do this?

- a) Because he wants to make it clear acknowledgement that he respectfully recognizes God, and that is truly omnipresent.
- b) Because after this acknowledgement, he can now introduce his argument for his discontentment with God, which follows & is introduced on the 3rd line of the 1st stanza.

**Buyintoni'ubungwenxa bethu (what is it that we have done before thee, God)**

This phrase is a question. The way it is constructed it gives a feeling that the person asking the question is really confused, disillusioned — he is failing to understand how he has come to offend God, and the following line emphasizes this state of confusion.

**Kazi senzeni' ebusweni benkosi? (but, so! What horrible, sickening ills have we done, to you Nkosi)**

The word "kanzi" builds/illustrates the mood. If one talks to you and happens to ask a question beginning it with the word "kazi"; all it says that person cannot find any wrong with themselves.

"Senzeni' ebusweni benkosi?" would directly translate into: what terrible wrong have we done before you Lord/God? On the other hand

"Kanzi,senzeni'ebusweni benkosi?" would just translate into: But, God, what terrible deeds did we commit before you? It is like saying to God, are You sure we supposed to be this harshly punished? Check your books again, I think you are not being fair, we did nothing wrong.

## **Bawo Thixo Somandla**

He is now closing the interrogative argument with God, by again recognizing God as the superior power. As almost saying, God forget that I've just been cross with You because of your unfair punishment.

**Soprano: kazi, senzeni na? (But what have done, hey? na! Is an exclamation word to drive the message home)**

Now the poet can't run away from this heated feelings towards God. Something interesting happens here:

- 1) he chose soprano voice to sing this line



# BAWO THIXO SOMANDLA

“To me this song is a crying plea to God”

II) this voice is highly pitched — to me its' far above what would be general constitute a normal soprano pitch

My thinking is that this was intended to be so. Soprano voice almost exclusively characteristics to women. Men can sing in an alto voice but it is very rare to find the them soprano pitched. So is it too much pain to entertain those thoughts, all she wants is an answer and an immediate end to this pain and suffering (unfortunately for her it doesn't get to there). To touch on the second point, I almost only hear such highly pitched voices at funerals, and most of the time it's the mother, sister siblings, female relatives, close female friends of the deceased who would speak and cry in such high pitched voices. It's a pitch whereby, one loses oneself into this emotions raging within one, and also one loses control of their larynx muscles to which in turn gives this trembling, high, inaudible voice. I can just picture mothers to individuals like Steve Biko, Hector Peterson, Onkgopotse Tiro, Martin Luther King Jnr, and others, asking the same question in the same voice tone feeling worthless with the corpse of their sons before them. The same stanza is repeated thrice, maybe she is addressing the individually kanzi senzeni

na? Is also a very impatient question, this brought upon by the word na.

Alto & tenor **Emhlabeni: ( in this world)**

**Sibuthelweli'bunzima: ( we are heavily burden – landed)**

The two lines say God in this world we have no home, no peace, no happiness, no hope; all we do is bear suffering . You look south, west, north and east and everything is painted “suffer”; it's too heavy.

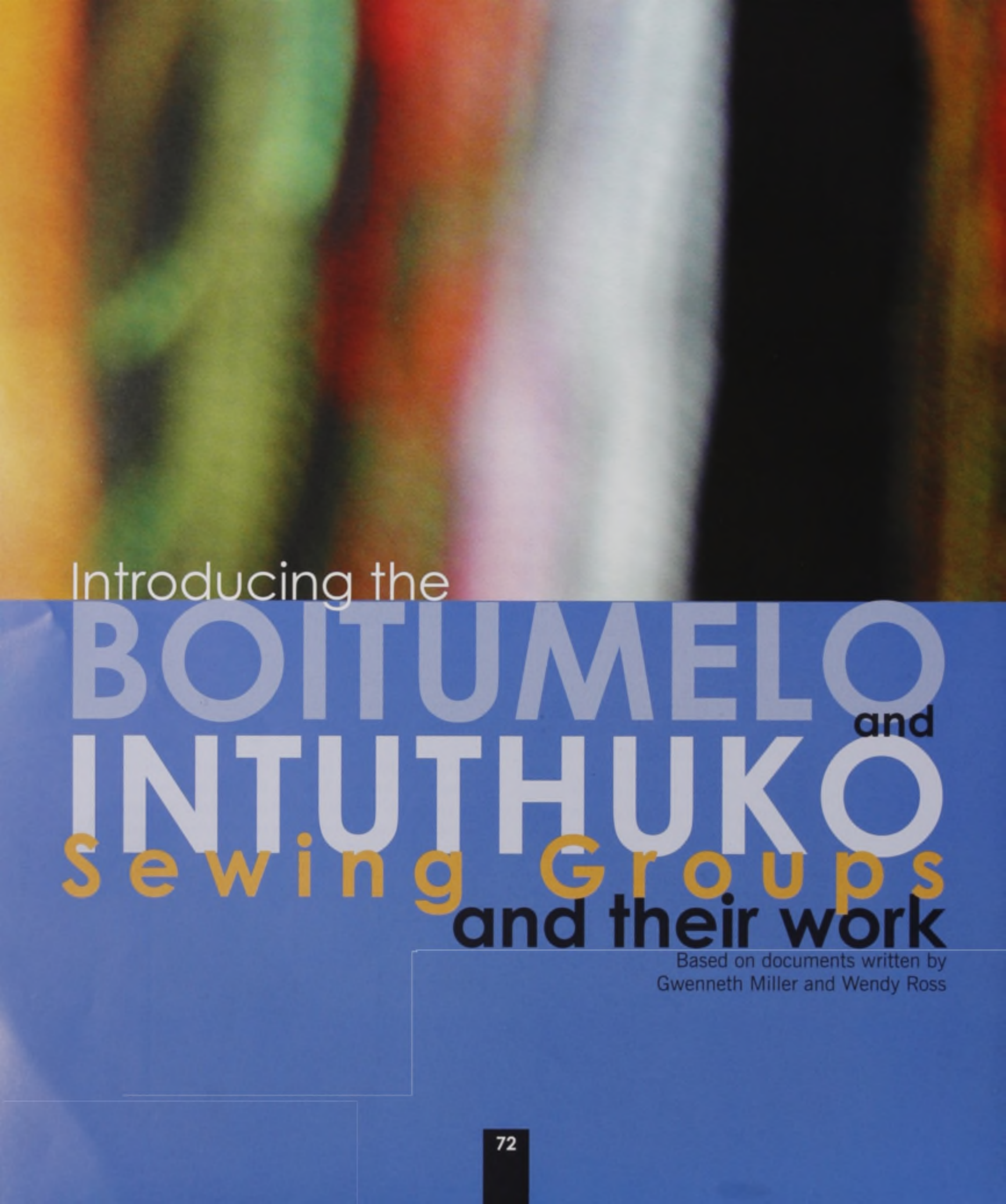
**Kanzi senzeni, nkosi yam!**

She also goes back to acknowledges her Bawo Thixo Somandla. But she uses the word Nkosi!

**Sigqilazwa nje! (this is a very deep word which I am finding very hard to find its English equivalent(s). One could say it means a de-humanized treatment towards someone. I could say people who had experienced slavery and the Nazi Holocaust would cry to God that “siya gqilazwa”)**

She is still going to alert God that this is punishment is too harsh.





Introducing the

**BOITUMELO**  
and  
**INTUTHUKO**  
**Sewing Groups**  
and their work

Based on documents written by  
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In the multimedia project that forms part of *The Journey to Freedom*, the unique embroideries of the people of the Boitumelo (Hillbrow) and Intuthuko (Etwatwa) sewing groups express their personal histories. We are generally reminded of our heroes in the history of our country, but it is not often that we hear or see the experiences of ordinary people.

The members of these groups wrote down their experiences of the past and present struggles and hopes. The telling and remembering of stories were at times very traumatic for the people involved. Extracts of the stories were translated into drawn images and embroideries. All these participants are unemployed. The women (and two men) involved in this phase of the project have had no formal art training, but the exquisite dedication of the handcraft has made these

works a visual pleasure. The groups were guided by artist-facilitators, whose expertise added greatly to the craftsmanship.

If one questions the rationale for community involvement in the project then one will need to question the overall benefits or aims of the project as a whole which is stated to be 'the celebration of reconciliation and freedom and the creating of the everyday'. Without the participation of the community the project is merely a celebratory event that gives cognizance to the processes and results of the struggle for equality and freedom. The explicit value of the embroidery project is its inclusiveness, the directness and spontaneity of images that evolved out of the working process and the authenticity of information and images that came from the source of the struggle – the people themselves.