"LISTEN TO OUR SONG, LISTEN TO OUR DEMAND":

South African struggle songs, poems and plays:
An anthropological perspective

by

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I declare that

"LISTEN TO OUR SONG, LISTEN TO OUR DEMAND":

South African struggle songs, poems and plays: An anthropological perspective

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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(G H Maree)

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DEDICATION

A poem by Constantine Cavafy based on the return of Odysseus to Ithaca

ITHACA

When you set out on the voyage to Ithaca, pray that your journey may be long,

full of adventures, full of knowledge.

Of the Laestrygones and the Cyclopes and of furious Poseidon, do not be afraid,

for such on your journey you shall never meet if your thoughts remain lofty,

if a select emotion imbue your spirit and your body.

The Laestrygones and the Cyclopes and furious Poseidon you will never meet

unless you drag them with you in your soul,

unless your soul raises them up before you.

Pray that your journey may be long,

that many may those summer mornings be when with what pleasure,

what untold delight you enter harbours you've not seen before;

that you stop at Phoenician market places to procure the goodly merchandise,

mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony, and voluptuous perfumes of every kind,

as lavish an amount of voluptuous perfumes as you can;

that you venture on to many Egyptian cities to learn

and yet again to learn from the sages.

But you must always keep Ithaca in mind.

The arrival there is your predestination. Yet do not by any means hasten your voyage.

Let it best endure for many years, until grown old at length

you anchor at your island rich with all you have acquired on the way.

You never hoped that Ithaca would give you riches.

Ithaca has given you the lovely voyage.

Without her you would not have ventured on the way.

She has nothing more to give you now.

Poor though you may find her, Ithaca has not deceived you.

Now that you have become so wise, so full of experience,

you will have understood the meaning of an Ithaca.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

Proceeding from the premise that the meaning of performances flows from contextual, textual, and nonverbal elements, this dissertation explores layers of meaning arising from performances of selected South African struggle songs, poems and plays. In particular, it focuses on performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group which functioned as an adaptive mechanism in the changing sociopolitical landscape of the 1980s and early 1990s, and on contemporary performances. The analysis of the songs, poems and play underscores the importance of nonverbal elements for the interpretation of performances, and proposes that performances functioned as debate and as a discursive presence in the public sphere. In particular, the performances glorified a masculine conception of the struggle and of South African society which highlighted the fragile gender politics in South Africa, and functioned as a vibrant mechanism for the expression of sanctioned criticism especially for the marginalised and for those at the fringes of power.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

interpretive anthropology, performance studies, Mayibuye Cultural Group, Tembisa
Cultural Group, common interest association, performance association, adaptive
mechanism, South Africa, labour movement, struggle songs, song as discursive presence,
Umshini wami, struggle poems, workshop play, gender equality, women's rights

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
AZACTU	Azanian Congress of Trade Unions
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
BC	Black Consciousness
BOSS	Bureau of State Security
BPC	Black People's Convention
CAWU	Chemical and Allied Workers' Union
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
COSAW	Congress of South African Writers
CUSA	Council of Unions of South Africa
CWLP	Culture and Working Life Project
DP	Democratic Party
DWCL	Durban Workers' Cultural Local
FAWU	Food and Allied Workers Union
FCWU	Food and Canning Workers' Union
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
FRELIMO	*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*
GWU	Garment Workers Union
ICWU	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
JATC	Junction Avenue Theatre Company
MAWU	Metal and Allied Workers' Union
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
MK	*Umkhonto weSizwe*
MPLA	*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*
NACTU	National Congress of Trade Unions
NP	National Party
NUM	National Union of Mine workers
NUMSA	National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa

NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
POTWA	Post and Telecommunication Workers Association
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACTU	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
SAIRR	South African Institute for Race Relations
SANC	South African Native Convention
SANNC	South African Native National Congress
SAP	South African Police
SARHWU	South African Railways and Harbour Workers Union
SASO	South African Students' Organisation
SAWCU	South African Workers' Cultural Unit
SAYCO	South African Youth Congress
SPROCAS	Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society
TAWU	Transport and Allied Workers' Union
TGWU	Transport and General Workers' Union
UCM	University Christian Movement
UDF	United Democratic Front
UMMAWSA	United Metal, Mining and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa
UNIPEC	United People's Culture

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CHAPTER 1

"WHEN *I* USE A WORD … IT MEANS JUST WHAT I CHOOSE IT TO MEAN":[1] NEGOTIATING TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DISCOURSE

1.1   EXPLORING THE PROBLEM

In a recent seminal article on the power of song in South Africa, Gunner (2009:29) makes the following remark:

> However important song and the powerful tools of rhetoric long nurtured within South African cultures may once have been, their presence seemed to many in the new dispensation diminished, even gone forever. The impact and cunning reincarnations of such forms may also have been underestimated by the powerful print media and by the print-bound technocrats of the new era. The era of the trade union poets of the 1980s, … of freedom songs chanted as coffins and crowds snaked their way through the apartheid streets of towns and cities, and the passionate declamations of the praise poems of the Zulu kings may all have looked — to the powerful — too distant to be of any importance at the present time; mere memories, always under control, to be visited when convenient. Yet the truth lay elsewhere.

Song as a discursive presence, like the proverbial phoenix, has risen from the smould-ering fire of South African politics, and no song has accentuated its resurgence in post-apartheid South Africa more than the sound of the liberation struggle song, *Umshini wami*, which South African President Jacob Zuma[2] reintroduced into public consciousness at the trial of Schabir Shaik[3] in 2005. The song[4] catapulted Jacob Zuma into public debate (Gunner 2009:38), and gained prominence as the signature song of Jacob Zuma due to its subsequent performances in varying contexts, such as his court trials and associated succession struggle with Thabo Mbeki for the office of President

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[1] The title of this chapter is based on Humpty Dumpty's response to Alice regarding the meaning of words in *Through the looking glass* by Lewis Carroll. The full response reads as follows: "When *I* use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more or less."

[2] At the time of the trial, Jacob Zuma was still the Deputy President of South Africa.

[3] Schabir Shaik, a former African National Congress (ANC) activist and close associate of Jacob Zuma, was indicted in November 2003 on charges of corruption and fraud stemming from the 1999 multibillion rand arms deal between government and the French arms company Thomson-CSF (its South African operations were later renamed to Thint Holdings) which, along with a local company, African Defence Systems (ADS), had won a contract to supply technology to the South African Navy.

[4] The lyrics of the song translated from the original Zulu read as follows: My machine [gun], please bring me my machine [gun], you are pulling me back, please bring me my machine [gun]. See Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of the song and its sociocultural meaning.

of the ANC, and amidst a public outcry against polygyny, at his recent wedding to his fifth wife. The song was also appropriated by others, as the 2008 xenophobic attacks in South Africa demonstrated, and has been taken up into the repertoire of choirs, such as that of the Holy Cross Church in Orlando West, Soweto (Gunner 2009:48).

The electronic and print media played a significant role in making the song a "potent presence" and augmented its reach and power. It was referenced in a South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) television series and recordings of its performance by Jacob Zuma in varying contexts were repeatedly screened in news broadcasts. Announcers on the Zulu-language radio station Umkhozi FM made subtle references to phrases in the song, and the song was even converted into a mobile phone ringtone (Gunner 2009:29-36). The song also had a presence on the internet. A recording of the song, for example, could be heard in an online game called Lame Duck Shootout in which players were invited to shoot down a duck flying above the Union Buildings, the seat of government in Pretoria, with a caricature cartoon character representing Jacob Zuma chuckling whenever a shot hit the mark (McLeod 2008:23).

The impact of the performance of *Umshini wami* was evident from the conflicting and multiplicity of responses it received. Mosiuoa Lekota,[5] for example, epitomised those who performed such songs as "brainless" and argued that the lyrics of songs had to convey the key messages of the ANC of reconciliation, peace and development. The Congress of South African Unions (COSATU), in contrast, defended its performance, and criticised Lekota's position on the song. In particular, COSATU was concerned about the manner in which he raised the issue in the mass media and that his statement would deepen divisions within the ANC and the democratic movement as a whole (COSATU 2007:1). The meaning of its lyrics and the significance of its performance were debated in blogs and on social network sites, on radio talk shows, in taxi's, during discussions at universities, on factory floors, and in bars and shebeens — in short, in a multiplicity of spaces where South Africans interacted (Gunner 2009:30).

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[5] Mosiuoa Lekota, a Thabo Mbeki loyalist, was the ANC National Chairman and the Minister of Defence at the time. However, on 23 September 2008 he resigned from the ANC and on 16 December 2008 was elected to the position of President of the breakaway party from the ANC, the Congress of the People (COPE).

The resurgence of song as discursive site in South African politics gives rise to a number of questions. Gunner (2009:35), for example, raises the following pivotal question in her discussion of the power of the song:

> … why should a plain song with few words and even a kind of melodic monotony play such a marked role in the South African public sphere at the present time?

Building on Gunner's (2009) line of questioning, and in attempt to broaden an understanding of the sociocultural meaning of not only songs, but also of plays and poetry in South African politics, I would like to raise the question why songs, plays and poetry did play such a marked role in the liberation struggle in South Africa, and what the contemporary performance of such genres signifies regarding present-day South African society. Although extensive research has been done on black South African music, little has been done on how performance genres and music in particular were used by political movements during the liberation struggle. In Gilbert's (2007:423) phrasing, "[g]iven the indispensable presence of freedom songs at mass gatherings, celebrations, funerals, protests and myriad public events in South Africa, this is a significant gap". Consequently, in this dissertation an attempt is made to uncover multiple messages emanating from the performance of struggle songs, poetry and workshop plays in the public sphere, and to illustrate how an analysis of verbal and nonverbal elements of these genres enhances an understanding of their significance as discursive sites in many spheres of South African society.

1.1.1 Performance as discursive presence during the liberation struggle

The decade leading to the change of South African society to a democratic dispensation in 1994 saw the emergence of a marked militancy among ordinary black South Africans in their struggle against apartheid which was accompanied and accentuated by a proliferation of songs, poetry and other performative genres. On 21 July 1985, the apartheid state responded to the rising tide of political turmoil by declaring a state of emergency in 36 magisterial districts in the former PWV (Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Vereeniging) area, the Eastern Cape and Western Cape. The state of emergency was lifted early in 1986, but was reimposed nationally on 12 June 1986 and remained in force until June 1990. Despite this state of affairs and amidst the banning of organisations, publications and artistic creations, amidst detentions of activists and political leaders and restrictions on political gatherings,

ordinary South African nevertheless sang, recited poetry, acted in plays and wrote about their exploitation, struggles and their demands for a democratically elected government in South Africa.

Hundreds of creative works such as struggle songs, plays and poetry were produced in those years, which led to the establishment of a great number of performance groups (Meintjies & Hlatshwayo 1989:3-4). Performances mushroomed in the context of closed gatherings of various labour, political, youth and community-based organisations which had been banned under the state of emergency and were thus inaccessible to the mass media. Performances also flourished in the context of open gatherings such as mass demonstrations, trade union federation rallies, strikes and consumer boycotts, and even on trains and busses which transported workers to and from their workplaces. Media coverage of these politicised performances presented images of unified masses of adult men and women as well as youths (representative of all South African indigenous societies) spontaneously engaged in powerful singing, chanting and toyi-toying, in performances so militant that they often provoked the security forces into taking action. Songs in particular appear to have been a vital form of expressing political resistance and mobilising people (Gunner 1986:33; Rycroft 1991:9), and were "*the* mode of expression for the comrades, constituting their liberation discourse" (Groenewald & Makopo 1991:88).

National political organisations such as the United Democratic Front (UDF), the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and later COSATU took note of this creative outburst and established special departments and structures (so-called cultural locals) to support the creative drive (Meintjies & Hlatshwayo 1989:3). Because of the repressive nature of the apartheid system, the labour movement assumed features characteristic of a social movement; formed strong links with other social movements such as youth and student organisations, and played a key role in articulating sociopolitical and labour grievances in a performance context (Buchler 1995:31-32). A resolution by the conference of Culture for Another South Africa (CASA) held in Amsterdam in 1987 articulated this strategy to organise and support the creative outburst as follows:

> Recognizing that culture[6] is an integral part of the national democratic struggle, the national democratic movement therefore asserts that the

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[6] Within the ANC alliance, the concept of culture was fairly consistently used to approximate Raymond Williams's (1985:90) conceptualisation of it as "the works and practices

role of cultural workers is inseparable from the overall struggle against apartheid[7] as well as the moulding of the future non-racial, non-sexist, unitary and democratic South Africa (Horn 1996:117).

1.1.2 Performance echoes from the past

A review of classic ethnographies on the indigenous societies in South Africa attests to the importance of songs, poetry and dances in the daily lives of traditional societies.[8] Scholars such as Casalis (1861), Brown (1926), Junod (1927a; 1927b), Schapera (1946; 1965), Kuper (1947), Bryant (1949), Bruwer (1957), Krige (1965), Mönnig (1967), Blacking (1967) and Hunter (1979) have noted that songs, poetry and dances were an integral part of rituals and ceremonies and were performed in various contexts. Facts of life, the history of a society, the roles of men and women in society, principles of family living, adult obligations, and the laws and functioning of political institutions were taught to members of indigenous societies through songs and poems. They were performed at different stages in the life cycle of individuals and groups and, among others, were associated with political process, the organisation of healing, work, war, education and play (Gunner 1995:186; Gunner & Gwala 1991:8, 22; Herzfeld 2001:279; Kebede 1982:38-40, 105; Ntshinga 1993:27-32).

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of intellectual and especially artistic activity" (Gilbert 2007:421). The concept of culture was consequently used to refer to performance genres such as music, poetry, theatre, dance, as well as to literature, graphic arts, beadwork and various other crafts.

[7] The use in the ANC alliance of concepts such as cultural workers and culture as a weapon of struggle, "derives from Soviet ideas about art and the rhetoric of social realism" (Gilbert 2007:421). However, in 1989 Albie Sachs proposed that such appropriations be banned because they were too narrow in their expression of "fists and spears and guns" and potentially harmful for the cause of the ANC alliance. Performance "needed to express not only the formulae of struggle, but also the richness and diversity of the newly emergent South African nation" (Sachs 1998 quoted in Gilbert 2007:422).

[8] In this dissertation, the terms "indigenous" and "traditional" are not used in opposition to the term "western" in support of an analytical binarisation of sociocultural phenomena into indigenous (or traditional) and western (or modern). Neither does the use of these terms presuppose a view that past phenomena flow unchangingly into the present, nor is it argued that indigenous phenomena can be easily identified and isolated from western phenomena. As Hannerz (cited in Barber & Waterman 1995:240) has noted, members of societies selectively appropriate aspects from the culture of other societies so that they can articulate their own historically and socioculturally specific experiences.

More specifically, the term "traditional" is used first to qualify sociocultural phenomena, such as ideas, interpretations, meanings, beliefs, values and behaviour which the research participants in this study have identified and regarded as traditional. Second, it qualifies similar phenomena recorded in ethnographies on indigenous societies before large-scale westernisation, urbanisation and industrialisation of these societies took place. It is acknowledged, however, that such use is not without difficulties since, in the absence of documentation on precolonial performances, such records are based on the observations of white explorers, traders and missionaries (Larlham 1981:16), and were transcribed and translated by intermediaries who, in the words of Brown (1998:10), held "a position of political power over the poet or informant".

In a political context songs, poetry and dances were performed to commemorate historical events, for instance at national festivals and ceremonies; at the installation of a new ruler, the marriage feasts of a ruler and the birth of a successor; to praise and enhance the prestige and status of rulers, famous warriors, prominent members and political institutions of society, and when preparing for and engaging in war (Blacking 1967:21-26; Casalis 1861:147; Hunter 1979:372; Junod 1927a:373, 403, 460-461; Junod 1927b:193-194, 201, 288-289; Kaschula 1991:1, 18; Kirby 1946:285-287; Krige 1965:259, 339-340; Kuper 1947:80, 203-212, 214-219, 221; Pollard 1980:64, 97, 103; Schapera 1965:1, 6).

In an economic context songs were performed at the organisation of work parties; after harvesting; while working; while preparing for hunting expeditions and when the hunt was over; and while moving a homestead or establishing a new homestead (Blacking 1967:22; Junod 1927b:23, 60, 144, 208-209; Kirby 1946:285-287; Krige 1965:207, 338; Kuper 1947:38, 147, 154; McAllister 1988:83, 87, 89).

1.1.2.1 Context for metacommentary

These performances not only provided entertainment, but were a discourse about society and the relationships between individuals and groups. They gave people an opportunity to construct and project images and interpretations of themselves, their world and others to their spectators (Drewal 1991:1-2; Furniss & Gunner 1995:1; Gilbert 2005:11; Gunner 2009:36; McAllister 1988:83; Palmer & Jankowiak 1996:226, 240), and in the words of Coplan (1991:187), provided a "context for metacommentary". As such these songs, poetry, dances and other creative forms served the following purposes:

- *Identification and affirmation of groups based on geopolitical considerations such as regiments, wards and tribes* (Blacking 1967:22; Kuper 1947:122, 207, 209; Lestrade 1946:295). Referring to Venda society, Blacking (1967:22-23) argues that music audibly and visually demarcated social and political groupings.

- *Accentuation of unity and solidarity among members of such groups and uniting them against outside forces* (Blacking 1967:22; Krige 1965:336; Kuper 1947:207; Mönnig 1967:236; Pollard 1980:100). The annual *Incwala* ritual among

Swazi society,[9] which among other matters of significance strengthens the kingship and gives renewed strength to the people for the coming year, is intimately associated with songs and dances which may only be performed during the *Incwala*. The dancing is seen to reinforce the king and the earth, while some of the songs are seen to magically protect the king from harmful influences. The *Incwala* affirms the king as well as Swazi society, and creates solidarity among the people which unites them against outside forces (Kuper 1947:80, 197-198, 203-225).

- *Expression of sanctioned criticism against the ruler or institutions of society and against dominating and harmful practices in society* (Blacking 1967:22; Groenewald & Makopo 1991:76-77; Junod 1927a:425; Kaschula 1991:1, 2; Kebede 1982:39; Pollard 1980:5, 101; Rycroft 1991:9; Schapera 1965:10). Among traditional Xhosa societies, for example, most beer drinking songs and songs performed at social dance gatherings (*umtshotsho* and social *intlombe* songs) had the potential to reprimand those who deviate from sociocultural prescriptions (Ntshinga 1993:34), whereas among Venda society, even a ruler had to subject him-/herself to criticism expressed in music (Blacking 1967:22). Praise poets in particular were given great licence and could insult a ruler without provoking any anger (Junod 1927a:425).

- *Approbation of members of society for socially approved actions and for the sanctioning thereof* (Hunter 1979:372; Kaschula 1991:1; Pollard 1980:3, 64). Such praises served as a reminder of acceptable and correct behaviour among the members of a society (Pollard 1980:103).

- *Mediation during discussions and disputes*. Deliberations in the tribal assemblies of some societies were preceded by performances which centred on matters to be discussed (Casalis 1861:233; Pollard 1980:71; Schapera 1965:6),

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[9] The term Swazi society is used here to denote people who speak Siswati and who collectively are known as the amaSwazi. Similarly, the terms Ndebele society, Xhosa society, Zulu society, Northern Sotho/Pedi society, Sotho society, Tswana society, Venda society and Tsonga society are used to denote people who speak isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho sa Leboa/Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Tshivenda and Xitsonga respectively, and who collectively are known as the amaNdebele, amaXhosa, amaZulu, Bapedi, Basotho, Batswana, Vhavenda and Vatsonga. Phenomena associated with these societies, such as ideas, beliefs, interpretations, meanings, values and behaviour, which are rooted in their culture, including reference to their language, are qualified in this dissertation by the English adjectives Swazi, Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, Northern Sotho/Pedi, Sotho, Tswana, Venda and Tsonga respectively.

while political disputes among Venda-speakers could be settled peacefully by the use of performances (Blacking 1967:23). Traditional praise poets also had an important mediating role and mediated between the individual, group, organisation or institution they praised and the broader society to which they belonged (Kaschula 1991:12, 17).

1.1.2.2   *Context as a determinant for performance*

The performance of songs, poetry and dances, however, was dependent on context. Many of the songs, poetry and dances were only performed at particular times and places when a social situation or process suggested performance (Blacking 1967:31, 191; Junod 1927a:160; Junod 1927b:441). Thus work songs, dances and poetry were performed in work contexts, whereas political songs, dances and poetry were performed in political contexts. As was the case with the *Incwala* (Kuper 1947:207), the *Ingoma* (ruler's song) among Zulu speakers was considered to be sacred. It was only sung at the time of the First-fruits ceremony, and was prohibited at other times (Krige 1965:339). Similarly, war songs and dances were performed when appropriate, for instance at the installation of a new ruler; when societies prepared for war, on the march to battle, as well as after battles had been fought. Reportedly, their performances were spectacular and powerful. They were characterised by a martial rhythm and unified movements, and were performed with foot stamping and the rhythmical brandishing of spears which dramatically enhanced the fighting spirit of the warriors (Bruwer 1957:179; Casalis 1861:147; Junod 1927a:462-464; Junod 1927b:194; Krige 1965:272, 342; Kuper 1947:195, 217-218).

1.1.2.3   *Performance groups and the differential rights of males and females as performers*

Because the performance of songs, dances and poetry was confined to appropriate contexts, specific performance groups were involved in particular performances. These were mostly groups that were founded either on kinship considerations such as clans, totemic groups, households or specific members of households (for example co-wives or work parties); or geopolitical considerations such as initiates, regiments, armies, tribal assemblies and entire societies (Blacking 1967; Brown 1926; Bryant 1949; Casalis 1861; Hunter 1979; Junod 1927a; Junod 1927b; Kirby 1946; Krige 1965; Kuper 1947; Mönnig 1967; Pollard 1980; Schapera 1965). However, individuals such as praise poets also featured prominently. As the mouthpiece of the people, a praise

poet communicated his views to the ruler of a society, and in so doing he exerted subtle pressure on rulers (Pollard 1980:20).

The participation of men and women in these performances was related to the male/female dichotomy that divided the sociocultural sphere and the differential rights of men and women in the exercise of public power (James 1994:104). Women in such societies were subjected to a complex web of sociocultural ideas, beliefs, values and practices rooted in the male authority of patrilineal societies which affected their right to exercise public power and therefore to perform political songs. As a result certain categories of song, such as stick-fighting-songs, regimental songs and battle songs were sung exclusively by males (Dargie 1988:31; Kirby 1946:285; Kuper 1947:214). Similarly, children were forbidden to perform adult music such as political songs (Blacking 1967:191).

1.1.3 Objectives

When one compares the songs, poetry and plays that proliferated during the struggle against apartheid with traditional songs, poetry and dances, several radical differences are revealed regarding the contexts in which songs, poetry and other creative works were produced and performed. There are also radical differences in the nature, structural elements and contents of the performances, as well as in the organisation of performers involved in the performances, particularly gender and age restrictions on the right to exercise public power and therefore to perform political songs. These differences raise numerous questions, notably

- whether the struggle songs, poems and plays were extensions or continuations of traditional songs, praise poetry and oral genres that endure to the present, or must be considered as new forms of artistic expression;

- how, in the event of them being extensions of traditional genres, modifications to the nature, structure, content and performance of these genres were forged in the specific sociopolitical context of the time;

- how modifications to the nature, structure, content and performance of these genres altered the meaning of the artistic expression;

- what was the nature of the social groupings in which performers organised themselves for the performance of the struggle songs, poems and plays;

- what these modifications signified about contemporary South African society since, as Woods (1975:xiii) has argued, changes in shared culture lead to changes in the structure or function of a social system, and changes in a social system lead to culture change.

In attempting to address these questions, the work of Drewal (1991) on the prioritisation of themes for performance research was invoked. Drewal (1991:35) emphasises, amongst other priorities, historical studies and intertextual studies of the relationship between performance and other cultural texts and between performances themselves. She pleas for a reorientation to the study of performance and specifically that three simultaneous paradigmatic shifts should take place, namely:

- from structure to process, i.e. instead of an essentially spatialised, distanced, objectivist view of performance as "things" to a temporal, participatory, interactive research practice;

- from the normative to the particular and historically situated, i.e. the description and interpretation of specific performances in time and place, and

- from the collective to the agency of identifiable individuals in the continuous flow of social interactions (Drewal 1991:2-3, 22-23).

In acknowledging the potential value of these perspectives and in formulating objectives for this study, the research questions were therefore rephrased in terms of Drewal's plea. As such, the objectives for this study are the following:

1. To retrieve liberation struggle songs, poems and workshop plays which were suppressed during the apartheid era and were associated with the ANC or its affiliated organisations, to enable the evaluation of long-term transformations in South Africa. The retrieval of these works is important in the light of Gagiano's (2002:163) statement that the discussion of fictions of transformation is an urgent need in South African society. In recovering the genres and artistic

expressions, an attempt is made to determine whether they were extensions of traditional genres, or whether they constituted innovative performance expressions. In this process, due acknowledgement is given to the role and involvement of individuals and to the description and analysis of specific performances in time and place.

2. To determine whether and how changes in the sociocultural conditions and contexts in which liberation struggle artistic expressions were produced and performed, altered the nature, structure and performance of identified performances. Attention is given to how these changes influenced the social groupings into which performers organised themselves for the performance of songs, poetry and plays, and how gender and age restrictions on the right to exercise public power and therefore to perform political songs, were affected. With regard to the gender issue, Peterson (1995:578) has noted that although scholars have made important contributions regarding the ways in which performance captures historical and social experiences, and have emphasised the diverse sociocultural backgrounds of performers as well as their diverse aesthetic and ideological orientations, little work has been done on questions of gender, and consequently this matter constitutes a particular focus of this study.

3. To study the process of performance. In the field of performance studies the processual nature of performance has been emphasised (Drewal 1991:1). Schechner (1985:16-21), for example, criticises approaches to the study of performance which neglect the whole performance sequence, and he identifies seven phases of performances which need to be investigated: training, workshopping, rehearsing, warming up, performing, cooling down and aftermath.

4. To demonstrate how identified genres function together in performances. Performance in Africa cannot arbitrarily be compartmentalised into categories such as song, poetry and dance. Categories rarely exist in isolation, but more commonly function together in performance. Very few studies examine how various genres function together in a single performance; most studies focus on one particular genre to the exclusion of others (Drewal 1991:11, 16).

5. To uncover in particular the meaning and significance of identified liberation struggle songs, poetry and workshop plays, and whether the contemporary performance of struggle songs has resulted in changes to their meanings and significance. The analysis aims to uncover what "stories" performers were telling themselves about themselves through their performances and what these stories signify regarding contemporary South African society. Attention is also given to the questions of how songs, poems and plays were and currently are used to achieve the ends of the performers, and in particular, why song is foregrounded as a discursive site in sociopolitical contexts in preference to other verbal art forms, such as poetry or plays. To put it succinctly, what options does song as a genre offer participants and audiences alike that other art forms seemingly cannot?

In order to realise the objectives of this study, it was necessary to find a performance group that, first, had its origins in the ANC or its affiliated organisations such as COSATU; second, emerged from the experience of everyday life under conditions of domination, and third, focused on issues that pertained to the democratisation of structures of everyday life in their performances, in other words, that produced social commentary in their performances. When the fieldwork commenced in 1990, I decided to search for such a group among the ranks of COSATU. I assumed that it would be easier to gain access to performance groups within the ranks of the labour movement, which were not banned under the state of emergency, than to those in organisations under the ANC umbrella which were banned in South Africa. Further, COSATU claimed that performance activity in the labour movement was strong and therefore I also assumed that locating and contacting a performance group would be relatively easy. For example, from 1985 to 1992 approximately 1 500 COSATU members in KwaZulu-Natal allegedly were involved in reviving oral traditions of performance, the making of plays, writing and telling stories, composing and singing (Sitas 1997:100). In order to have reasonable, speedy and frequent access to members of the research group, I searched for such a performance group in Gauteng Province where I resided. This was necessary because reports on liberation struggle performances revealed that performance groups often emerged in response to specific issues such as labour disputes, voiced their demands, and then disappeared as soon as the disputes were resolved, apparently because groups did not have sponsorship and support and could not cope with transport, marketing and administrative problems (Maistry 1991:33).

The Mayibuye Cultural Group[10] that performed in Tembisa in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality and greater Johannesburg area met the requirements of the research. First, it was a formal performance association that emerged from the ranks of COSATU and as such was associated with the ANC alliance. Second, the association was a prominent and established choral group which had been singing and performing plays for years, and the lyrics of their songs as well as the text of their play, *Women stand up for your rights*, did indeed contain social commentary. Third, the Mayibuye Cultural group had not previously been the focus of ethnographic research.

1.2   THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

1.2.1   In search of meaning

During the 1960s, there was a shift in anthropological thought from an interest in behaviour and social structure to symbols and meaning (Marcus & Fischer 1986:26). This shift emerged mainly in response to Nietzsche's notion that sociocultural worlds, like works of art, can be interpreted in countless and vastly different ways, and that they do not have a single meaning, but numerous meanings. Nietzsche argued that the inhabitants of a world interpret it in order to make it understandable and liveable. They create the world, themselves, and their perspectives through their interpretations, as manifested in the various ways of life of societies (Rapport & Overing 2000:206-207), and, according to Heidegger, continue to make interpretations because the imposition of meaning on life is the main objective and primary condition of human existence (in Applebaum 1987:486).

This refocusing of anthropological interest from social structure to the interpretation of meaning gave rise to interpretive anthropology, an approach which comprises a diverse set of reflections on the concept of culture and the practice of ethnography. It developed out of the confluence of ideas from various theoretical traditions, including   the   sociology   of   Talcott   Parsons,   classic   Weberian   sociology,

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[10] The Mayibuye Cultural Group should be distinguished from the London-based ANC group which was known as the Mayibuye Cultural Ensemble. According to Gilbert (2007:422), the Mayibuye Cultural Ensemble was established in 1975 and was active for approximately five years. It achieved considerable success in raising international awareness regarding the anti-apartheid cause, and at the same time raised consciousness within the ANC about the ways in which performance could be used to advance national liberation.

phenomenology, structuralism, structural and transformational linguistics, semiotics, the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and hermeneutics. In particular, interpretive anthropology generated sophisticated discourses regarding the primary aim of ethnography, namely to represent the "native point of view", as Malinowski dubs it, and to explain how different cultural constructions of reality affect social action. It also investigated the communicative processes that anthropologists use to elicit knowledge from members of a society regarding its systems of cultural meaning in order to represent such systems in ethnographic texts (Marcus & Fischer 1986:25).

Interpretive anthropology as an approach focuses less on finding causal explanations for human behaviour and more on the meanings that are associated with the actions and behaviour of members of a society (Applebaum 1987:482; Magnarella 1993:136, 137). Clifford Geertz, arguably the most persuasive and influential proponent of this school of thought, and drawing on Max Weber, proceeds from the premise that "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun…", that the totality of these webs constitute culture, and that the analysis of culture is "therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Geertz 1973:5). In Geertz's phrasing then, the objective of interpretive anthropology is to uncover the conceptual structures beneath the surface of observable behaviour in terms of which behaviour is produced, perceived and interpreted, and the role that these structures play in determining human behaviour (Rapport & Overing 2000:352). Interpretive anthropology is therefore mentalist in its orientation and does not focus directly on behaviour and social action. It does not negate the material world, but proceeds from the idea that the material and social worlds of a society can best be understood by comprehending the way in which members of a society explain and understand their mode of life (Applebaum 1987:482-483).

1.2.2 Reflections on the concept of culture

In terms of Geertz's spider analogy, culture comprises the totality of the webs of significance encoded in symbols that societies use to give meaning to things they observe and experience. Individuals within society then use symbolic systems such as religion, art, music, ideology, economics and sport to make sense of themselves and their world, and to represent themselves to themselves and to others (Rapport & Overing 2000:350). Meaning here entails semantic as well as existential meaning.

Religion, therefore, does not only refer to how the natural and social world are organised in an intelligible way, but also provides answers about the nature of the human condition and human destiny. In short, it makes intellectual, emotional and moral sense of the world (Argyrou 2002:54-55). Individuals within society use the symbols which represent values, codes, and rules "as a language through which to read and interpret, to express and share meaning". They interpret the external world in terms of their inner worlds, interests and sense of self and other, and therefore individual consciousness lies beneath the symbols (Rapport & Overing 2000:210).

However, argues Geertz, culture is not something which is locked inside the heads of members of a society, but is embodied in public symbols through which members of a society communicate aspects such as their values to one another, to future generations and to outsiders (Ortner 1984:129; Rapport & Overing 2000:351). Although key symbols serve as reminders of how people should view reality, symbols are inherently ambiguous, and consequently their meanings must always be interpreted before they can be employed. Meaning is continually being redefined in interactions between various social groups, status groups and individuals (Rapport & Overing 2000:115). Signifiers may become unfixed and seized by others who may refashion them and put them to usage previously unknown. Various groupings, such as ethnic groups and religious groups in a society, may contribute different meanings to a given event, giving rise to several contested perspectives in the culture of a society at any point in time, since groupings compete in the public arena to ensure that their perspectives are predominant (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:17-18; Sabloff 2000:2-3; Rapport & Overing 2000:351).

1.2.3 Interpretive anthropology as a humanistic science

In the light of the above, Geertz argues that anthropology cannot strive to be a science in the sense that natural sciences are, but must be based on concrete reality and derive meanings from this reality rather than predictions based on empirical data (Applebaum 1987:483). If people create their worlds by making meaningful interpretations of them, our anthropological constructions of other people's constructions of what they are doing constitute a form of knowledge that is similar to that of the literary critic (Marcus & Fischer 1986:26). Geertz consequently aims for representations that reflect the individuality and complexity of human behaviour normally associated with the humanistic disciplines such as literature and art, and

employs "text analogy" as a method for interpreting culture (Applebaum 1987:484-486). In terms of the metaphor of culture as texts, an observer can read social activities for their meanings, as is the case conventionally with written and spoken materials (Marcus & Fischer 1986:26; Rapport & Overing 2000:207). Interpretive anthropologists consequently emphasise a strategy that seeks interpretations and meaning in human actions by means of analogies based on theatre, poetics, literature, play, painting, drama, myths and symbols (Applebaum 1987:482-483; Geertz 1987:521).

In an attempt to construct the sociocultural meaning of the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, the principles and premises of interpretive anthropology were adopted as theoretical framework. This approach shares many of the central concerns of performance studies, and to an extent has shaped research on performance (Drewal 1991:5). It emphasises the uncovering of meaning that members of a society give to their experiences and actions, and construes this meaning by employing text analogy and analogies rooted in theatre, poetics and literature.

1.2.4   Premises of interpretive anthropology

Although Magnarella (1993:138) maintains that there are no guiding models or paradigms for interpretive anthropology, the following general premises, drawn from the writings of the most influential interpretive anthropologists, have been adopted as premises for this study:

1.2.4.1   Meaning is determined by the context

Interpretive anthropologists such as Geertz argue that context is a crucial component in understanding what signals represent (Applebaum 1987:482). Context is, however, a problematic concept. Bauman and Briggs (1990:68) have observed that although seemingly a simple task, the description of the context of a performance can be an infinite regress, and they identify two problems with definitions of the concept of context: inclusiveness and false objectivity.

Bauman and Briggs (1990:68) argue that definitions such as those of Dundes (who suggests that the performance context is the specific social situation in which an

item of folklore is performed) and of Bauman (who distinguishes various elements such as the context of meaning, institutional context, social base, context of communicative system, individual context and context of situation in his formulation) are overly inclusive, since there is "no way to know when an adequate range of contextual factors has been encompassed". False objectivity arises from the positivistic nature of most definitions of context that equate "…'the context' with an 'objective' description of everything that surrounds a set of utterances" (Bauman & Briggs 1990:68). However, it is obviously impossible to incorporate all aspects of the context of a social interaction, and consequently the researcher becomes the judge of what elements merit inclusion.

In an attempt to transcend the limitations of the concept of context, some writers have proposed a shift from context to contextualisation that involves an ongoing, active process of negotiation in which participants interpret the structure and significance of their own discourse as it emerges in social interactions (Bauman & Briggs 1990:69). This interpretive concern with contextualisation has profound implications for fieldwork, and has led to the contextualisation of both the observer and the observed (Borofsky 1994:24-25; Rapport & Overing 2000:92). During the 1980s interpretive anthropologists intensely questioned the ethnographic process itself (Marcus & Fischer 1986:26, 32). They argued that anthropology's practice of studying other societies by way of engagement is at odds with its claim to produce objective, historical scholarship, since observation is never done from a neutral perspective (Hastrup 1995:4). Drawing on Heidegger and Gadamer, interpretive anthropologists believe that the observer cannot be separated from the observed; the observer is inescapably a part of what he/she observes and of the events under construction. The observer's search for knowledge is also filtered through the prism of his/her culture, context and history (Applebaum 1987:486). Both the researcher and the researched are engaged in cultural interpretation. The researcher interprets research participants' interpretations of behaviour or texts, and constructs their constructions of what they are doing (Applebaum 1987:482-483; Borofsky 1994:25; Kempny & Burszta 1994:126; Rapport & Overing 2000:351). Therefore, to produce valid anthropological interpretations, the participants in the research process, i.e. the observer (researcher) and the observed (researched) should establish shared meanings (Kempny & Burszta 1994:126).

1.2.4.2   *Meaning arises from discourse*

Geertz has been inclined to postulate the interpreter as being at a certain distance from the object of interpretation, as a reader of a text might be, rather than in terms of the metaphor of dialogue which more accurately portrays anthropological interpretation in fieldwork (Marcus & Fischer 1986:29). In support of the notion that meanings arise in dialogue, Linger (1994:295) argues against the notion that meanings inhere in symbols, and that symbols are "concrete embodiments of ideas, attitudes, judgements, longings, or beliefs…". He believes that by arguing thus, interpretive anthropologists are obscuring important social processes, transmuting life into text, effacing the agency of performers and detemporalising the flow of human interactions. His view that meanings arise in communicative events, that symbols rather are tokens of communication and that culture is continuously refashioned and closely linked to public symbolic action is accepted as a premise for this study. He rightly asserts that just as words are not thoughts, symbols are not culture. Meanings are rather evoked or accessed by symbols. Since symbols do not have meanings and symbolic systems are not autonomous, symbolic interpretations should be considered with caution (Linger 1994:285-286, 292, 296, 307).

1.2.4.3   *Meaning is multilayered and open-ended*

Interpretive anthropology, as phrased by Geertz, opposes the notion that there is one correct interpretation of the world: meaning is postulated as being open-ended and consisting of many layers (Borofsky 1994:25). Interpretation is postulated as a complex process because the structures of meaning which underlie any one sociocultural situation are multiple, partial and tangled together (Rapport & Overing 2000:351). The description of the sociocultural meaning of systems of symbols by the anthropologist, therefore, is an imaginative act and a fiction which is incomplete and refutable (Rapport & Overing 2000:351-352). Since I, as researcher, am part of the dialogue in which meaning arises, the meanings which are ascribed to the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group in this study are a result of my intervention and dialogue with its members and consequently must be seen as incomplete and refutable. It is acknowledged, as Rapport & Overing (2000:351-352) have argued, that meanings can be refuted by future or even past events, and can be superseded by more deeply grounded or more complexly conceptualised interpretations.

1.2.4.4 Meaning flows from individual consciousness but is actualised in a public communal way

The attachment of meaning to behaviour achieves form and actualisation only in a public and communal way since the symbolic logic and conceptual structuring of a society are socially established, sustained and legitimised in the context of concrete social events and occasions and are publicly enacted (Rapport & Overing 2000:208). However, Geertz has emphasised that culture and social organisation do not exist separately from individuals, but rather in and through their interpretations of social events and activities around them. He therefore emphasises the subjective and objective nature of the social order: flowing from individual values and motivations, yet actualised through public symbols and communication (Applebaum 1987:485). My approach to the study of meaning is informed by this premise, and I consequently focused on the public performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, although due attention was given to the individual values, attitudes and behaviour of members of the performance association.

1.2.4.5   Meanings form a collectively shared, coherent and singular system

The meanings with which people invest their worlds form, in Geertz's view, a collectively shared, coherent and singular system (Rapport & Overing 2000:210). Meaning must be shared for it to be meaning at all (Hastrup 1995:183). Members of a society must have some expectation of what other members in their society believe, how they will react to others and how others will react to them. They use such meanings and interpretations to select the appropriate behaviour for specific contexts which will enable them to interact and communicate with others (Applebaum 1987:482). Individual minds within the same society accordingly are understandable to one another since they think in terms of the same shared beliefs and values and use the same interpretive procedures to make sense of reality (Rapport & Overing 2000:208). However, members of a society do not have equal access to the totality of its cultural knowledge, nor are they equally involved in investing the world with meaning: a few powerful individuals empower symbols and spin the webs that catch the majority of people (Magnarella 1993:140). This state of affairs also applies to the Mayibuye Cultural Group: not all its members were continuously and actively involved in the creative output of the association. Consequently, my study reflects the experiences, values, attitudes and ideas of those who were actively involved in the creative output and running of the association.

However, since all collective efforts of the association were marked by reaching consensus on the nature and content of performances as well as on the actions of the association, it is accepted that these experiences, values, attitudes and ideas are representative of the members of the performance association as a whole.

1.2.4.6   *Meaning shapes the ways in which members of a society experience the world*

In terms of the interpretive approach where culture is seen as systems or structures of symbolic meaning, culture is understood to orient, direct and organise action in systems by providing each with its own logic (Rapport & Overing 2000:95). Geertz, for example, consistently focuses on how symbols shape the ways in which people see, feel, and think about the world (Ortner 1984:129). Over recent decades, however, this powerful law-and-order notion of culture has been seriously questioned and criticised as restrictive determinism, and as constituting a set of control mechanisms, i.e. plans, rules, procedures and instructions for the governing of behaviour. In particular, anthropologists have increasingly called into account the notion of cultural (collective) representations as a template for social action which gives rise to "portrayals of cultural dopes who act unconsciously in accordance to underlying structures of shared symbolic meaning" (Rapport & Overing 2000:96). Although I do not subscribe to the notion of culture as a template for social action, my premise for this study is that culture shapes the ways in which members of a society experience the world. Performance as a structure of symbolic meaning is therefore seen in this study as being reflective of the sociocultural context in which it emerges, as well as reflexive: "…that it constitutes the social settings in which it occurs rather than simply being cradled within them" (D. James 1993:12).

1.2.4.7   *Meaning arises from a holistic analysis*

Interpretive anthropology, similar to many other anthropological paradigmatic manifestations, is founded and guided by the ideal that one has to achieve a holistic analysis of a phenomenon (Rapport & Overing 2000:294). Performance therefore cannot be isolated from the political, economic and other contexts in which it develops, and by which it is sustained and transformed (Drewal 1991:28). Consequently, due attention is given to the integration of culture within the performances of the association.

1.2.4.8   Meaning is uncovered through thick description

Geertz introduced the concept of "thick description" into anthropology to describe the qualitative process of uncovering the multiple layers and hierarchy of structures of meaning underlying behaviour. Anthropologists do "thick" writing through ethnography (Rapport & Overing 2000:349-350). Thick description, which informed my methodological approach, calls for a particular strategy, one that is microscopic and particular, continuing the tradition of anthropologists such as Boas, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown who undertook in-depth studies of a single cultural context to derive insights about the functioning of a society (Applebaum 1987:484). Interpretive anthropology, therefore, focuses on the study of a single case or a particular social group which can yield insights and meanings, and investigates the particular features that mark a case or group (Geertz 1987:520). Geertz argues that thick description is suited to theoretic generalisation since meaning is inherently something public. In thick description, "large conclusions are characteristically drawn from small, densely textured facts, and broad abstractions grounded on narrow particulars" (Rapport & Overing 2000:350).

1.2.4.9   Meaning is grounded in insider accounts of a society

If we are to understand the culture of a society, we must place ourselves in the position from which the culture was constructed. Interpretive anthropology, similar to Boasian anthropology, provides insider accounts (the "native point of view") of other societies (Applebaum 1987:484), and focuses on what institutions, actions, images, utterances, events, customs and so forth, mean to those who share or participate in them (Geertz 1987:520; Marcus & Fischer 1986:26).

However, Geertz asserts that in cross-cultural communication and in writing about the sociocultural context of one society for members of another, insider interpretations should be juxtaposed with outsider interpretations that the ethnographer shares with his/her readership and which are based on observations using his/her own theoretical orientation or model (Applebaum 1987:484; Marcus & Fischer 1986:31). The first juxtaposition and negotiation of concepts occur during the process of fieldwork, and the second during the construction of the ethnographic account. Juxtaposition of concepts and categories embedded in their sociocultural contexts, and their integration within it, are therefore important components of

interpretive anthropology (Marcus & Fischer 1986:31), and the interaction between the insider and outsider approaches gives us a representative reflection of a particular cultural context.

1.2.5   Performance as an interpretation of our sociocultural world

Across academic disciplines performance is a contested concept, and its definition varies in scope and significance from one discipline to another and from one theorist to another (Drewal 1991:1). In the field of anthropology, for example, some theorists restrict the meaning of the concept to "public, highly conventionalized, authentic, spectacular, theatrical, or ritualized events, while others would apply … [it] … to the analysis of cultural behavior at any level, including mundane everyday events" (Palmer & Jankowiak 1996:225). The theories of Dell Hymes and Victor Turner in particular, respectively exemplify these two central tendencies in anthropology. Hymes advances the view of performance as a type of social action in which poetic forms are presented to an audience, whereas Turner argues that performance or social and cultural drama are the basic fabric of social life, and that performance includes mundane everyday events such as speech behaviour and the presentation of self, as well as the more imposing state drama or social drama (Palmer & Jankowiak 1996:231, 237).

Despite these conflicting views, performance theorists generally agree that performance is not only an essential dimension of culture, but that it provides a discourse on society and the relationships between individuals and groups in society. In terms of this view, people employ symbols in performance to construct images and interpretations of themselves, others and their world, and project these to themselves and their audiences (Coplan 1991:187; Drewal 1991:1-2; Furniss & Gunner 1995:1; McAllister 1988:83; Palmer & Jankowiak 1996:226, 231, 234, 240, 252). In the absence of established public forums, performance has the capacity to become the primary means for public discussion of important societal issues and a space where people can gain visibility and stage their identities (Dolan 1996:11). In Africa, for example, it is a primary means through which people interpret and produce knowledge about their current sociocultural conditions, define and redefine themselves and their social world, and either support, oppose, or subvert social orders (Drewal 1991:1-2).

However, performance theorists do not agree on how one should "read" these constructed images and interpretations, and the question of what performance-centred research should take as its subject matter to uncover the meaning of performances has given rise to intense debate. Some theorists argue that one should focus on text (i.e. symbolic expressions such as narratives and music), while others advance embodied experience (the enactment of imagery) as focus. Text-centred approaches privilege "writing, language, and vision as the sources of meaning", whereas approaches that focus on embodied experience are "consistent with the idea that body and mind are mutually constitutive [as sources of meaning - GHM] and that much of conceptualization is 'embodied' in the sense that it is structured by physical experiences" (Palmer & Jankowiak 1996:253).

With regard to text-centred approaches, in nonliterate societies such approaches have used the lyrics of orally transmitted songs (in the absence of written sources) as sources of information in the study of these societies. Since it is argued that lyrics are retained only "if they express popular attitudes and opinions" (D. James 1993:9), they are thought to "provide reliable insights" into the behaviour, thinking, values and attitudes of such societies. Such approaches, however, may easily fall short in two respects.

First, texts are inseparable from their performance context. The separation of text (lyrics) from the performance context as constituting the sole source of historical data can easily underplay the embeddedness of text within the performance context, "and the capacity of performance itself to alter, influence, or even constitute the objective or 'true' social world of the performers" (D. James 1993:11). Further, with regard to the connection between text and context, some writers have been criticised of "limiting their idea of context too much to the microdynamics of performance situations and to the immediate conditions surrounding such situations, and thus of ignoring the broader socio-historical conditions within which performances are embedded" (D. James 1993:11-12). Second, text-centred approaches do not give due recognition to nontextual aspects, such as nonverbal features, of performances.

In an attempt to address these concerns and to include nontextual and nonverbal elements of performance in my study, I have adopted aspects of Alan Dundes's (1980) approach to uncover the meaning of the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural

Group. Dundes proposes a three-tiered approach to the analysis of folklore (and therefore of performance), namely the study of the textual, textural and contextual elements of the performance. However, the appropriation of Dundes' three-tiered approach is not without pitfalls. A separation of the contextual, textural and textual elements of performance for analytical purposes and for the presentation of research findings may easily create a perception that they are separate and distinct constructs. My use of Dundes' approach does not aim to support such a perception — following scholars such as Young (1985) and Muana (1998), my approach gives due recognition to the interrelatedness of the textual, textural and contextual (Muana 1998:43).

1.2.5.1   *Textual elements*

Textual elements in Dundes's (1980:23) phrasing represent the features that concern the text of an item of folklore, such as a version of a poem or singing of a song. Although this formulation limits the scope of performance, particularly in view of those theorists who apply the concept to the analysis of cultural phenomena at any level, I have decided on a similar formulation for the purposes of my investigation. Following D. James (1993:12), if the researcher is to be the judge of what to include in the context of a performance, I choose to focus on the public "theatrical" performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group. By doing so, I am not supporting a narrower definition of performance as public, collective and sharply demarcated performance events; on the contrary, I support a broader definition of performance, such as that of Palmer and Jankowiak (1996:226) which advances that "performances run the gamut of complexity from mass rituals, such as the Great Sacrifices and Prophet's Birthdays of Morocco … and the spectacular floor shows of Las Vegas, to small, self-deprecating jokes and mundane comments on the weather". My delimitation of the concept is rather owing to the capacity of public "spectacles" or "theatrical" performance events to comment on societal experience, a focus which is central to my investigation. This choice has been led by my own observations and reflections on the meaning of the texts, as well as those of the research participants who maintained that their public performances reflected the lives of "workers" in South Africa — that the performances were intended to alter the perceptions of their audiences, and to promote sociopolitical transformation in South Africa. Nonetheless, my investigation of textual elements will give due recognition to aspects of performance which do not fall within this narrower definition, but which influenced

the performances of the association, such as the influence of my performance as researcher on its performances.

1.2.5.2 Textural elements

Dundes (1980:22, 23) argues that in the case of verbal forms of folklore, the textural elements relate to language (linguistic) features, such as rhyme, alliteration, stress, pitch, onomatopoeia and tone, and that nonverbal genres, such as dance and music, have their own textural counterparts of linguistic features. Although it is acknowledged that all these elements can influence the shape, direction and meaning of performances (Herzfeld 2001:281), a detailed study of the textural elements of the verbal aspects of the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group has not been done. For example, I have neither analysed the system of structured movement nor the action signs which were employed in their performances. I also have not described the tonal system of their songs nor have I done a sonic analysis, since aspects such as these are the foci of the specialised fields of linguistics, human movement studies and ethnomusicology respectively. Where I have included textural elements in my analysis, my choice was informed by what the research participants themselves identified as important, as well as by reflections on what seemed to impact considerably on the textual meaning and interpretation of the performances of the association.

1.2.5.3 Contextual elements

Contextual elements, according to Dundes (1980:24), relate to the specific social situation in which an item of folklore is employed or to "exactly how, when, where, to whom ... by whom..." and why an item of folklore such as a song, poem or play is employed on a specific occasion. In delineating the context of the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, I once again based my judgement of what merited inclusion or exclusion on extensive discussions with the performers and reflections on the meaning of the texts. Accordingly, I have focused on aspects of the situational contexts in which the songs, poems and play of the association were produced and performed, as well as the sociocultural contexts of the performers themselves rather than, for example, the broader role of common interest performance associations in sociopolitical transformation in South Africa. Following D. James's (1993:12) approach to kiba performances, the contexts of the public performances,

nevertheless, will be shown to extend well beyond the microdynamics of the performance situation itself. The public performances and genres of the association, the performers themselves, the performance association, and the meaning that the members attached to their public performances and association are therefore central to my investigation. Performance here cannot be understood except in relation to the sociocultural backgrounds of the performers; to their experiences as workers, students and township residents under the system of apartheid; to their sociopolitical networks and alliances, and to the ways in which they constructed their identities as men and women in the rapidly changing landscape of South Africa.

1.3   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

To realise the objectives of my study, I undertook an extensive literature study as well as ethnographic fieldwork. In my research design, I opted for a combination of mainly complementary qualitative data collection techniques, namely "participant" observation, observation, group interviews, individual interviews, content analysis, and audiovisual recordings, but also used quantitative techniques, namely questionnaires and prioritising grids, to document and interpret the textual, textural and contextual elements of the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group.

1.3.1 Literature study

The literature consulted for the study can be divided into several categories, which are briefly discussed in the following sections.

1.3.1.1   Anthropological theory and methods

Literature on anthropological theory and methods was used to plan the research, select the appropriate theoretical approach and methodology, and select strategies for the writing up of research findings. The work by Bernard (1994) and Leedy (1989) constituted primary sources. Bolles (1991) proved useful for the design of prioritising grids for the preference lists, and Fiske (1990) for the content analysis of songs, poetry and plays. Writings which informed my theoretical approach included Drewal (1991), Dundes (1980), Geertz (1973; 1987), D. James (1993), Marcus & Fischer (1986) and Palmer & Jankowiak (1996), while the insightful commentaries of Rapport

& Overing (2000) and Applebaum (1987) deepened my understanding of Geertz (1973) and interpretive anthropology.

1.3.1.2   *Performance and performance genres*

Classic ethnographies including Casalis (1861), Brown (1926), Junod (1927a and 1927b), Kuper (1947), Bryant (1949), Krige (1965), Mönnig (1967) and Hunter (1979) were consulted to situate the performers and performance of songs, poetry and dances in the South African historical context. More specifically, they were consulted for details on the nature, characteristics, functions and contexts of songs, poetry and dances, but except for mostly general descriptions of and references to songs, dances, festivals and related performance genres, details were lacking and they were not sufficiently specific in their description of the contexts in which performances occurred or of the verbal and nonverbal elements of performance.

Literature dealing specifically with performance as a phenomenon, particularly Blacking (1967); Coplan (1980; 1985); Davis & Fuchs (1996); Gilbert (2007); Gunner (1994; 2007; 2008); James (1994); Kirby (1946); Schapera (1965) and Sienaert *et al*. (1991), were also consulted and provided valuable insights on the nature, characteristics and functions of performance. They also influenced my approach to the study of performance genres in general. In addition to these, it was necessary to consult sources on performance among the Cape Nguni specifically, since most members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group were Xhosa-speaking, and evidence suggested that this layer of identity influenced their performances. Dargie (1988) and Ntshinga (1993) were consequently consulted and provided valuable information that served to contextualise the study. No anthropological sources on South African workshop plays or drama that could be drawn on to "unpack" the workshop plays were found, thus writings from other disciplines were consulted, notably those of Fleischman (1990) and Sitas (1986; 1992b), as well as those of Von Kotze (1984;1988). The works of Sitas, in particular, were extremely useful and helped to develop my understanding of the poetry and workshop plays of the Mayibuye Cultural Group. Cognisance was taken of researchers such as Van Niekerk (1999) who suggests that song was used to intimidate the masses during the liberation struggle, but since the association insisted that their songs, poems and plays were not used to intimidate other workers or residents of townships and I could not uncover fieldwork data which proved otherwise, such literature was not used in the development of my argument.

1.3.1.3   South African sociopolitical history

Since the Mayibuye Cultural Group was part of a network of groups and associations that were loosely organised around the mobilisation of the broader society against the former minority government, literature on the broader ANC alliance, with which the Mayibuye Cultural Group was associated, was consulted to contextualise the association's performances. Lodge (1983/84; 1991), as well as Seekings (1992), were particularly useful to map the sociopolitical developments during the latter phases of the liberation struggle, while Tarrow (1991; 1994) provided valuable insights into an understanding of the nature and characteristics of social movements and collective action. An attempt was also made to contextualise the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group against the background of their predominant performance space, Tembisa, but because very little had been published on the history of this township, the Tembisa Town Council (1988) and various newspaper articles in local and national newspapers were consulted to provide data on the history, demographics, socio-economic and sociopolitical developments in the township.

1.3.1.4   Common interest associations

Literature dealing with common interest associations was consulted to describe and interpret the nature, structure and functions of the Mayibuye Cultural Group as a performance association. For this analysis, Kerri (1976) proved to be particularly useful.

1.3.2   Selection of the Mayibuye Cultural Group as research group

Access to COSATU and consequently to a suitable research group within its structures during the turmoil and uncertainty of the late 1980s and early 1990s was primarily dependent on one's political ideology and association. As an Afrikaans-speaking male who did not have the appropriate political connections or a history of involvement in the liberation struggle, I lacked the profile to be accepted as a researcher in COSATU structures. Despite the initiatives at the time towards the democratisation of South Africa, such as the unbanning of organisations, the release of Nelson Mandela, the lifting of the state of emergency and the establishment of forums to negotiate the future of South Africa, organisations associated with the liberation struggle feared

that government agents would infiltrate them and consequently were reluctant to accept outsiders into their ranks.

From September 1989 to February 1990 I made numerous attempts to contact COSATU "cultural workers" and so-called worker performance groups, but all my attempts were resisted and in vain. In March 1990 I finally managed to establish contact through the intercession of a family member of a colleague, who introduced me to members of the former ANC cultural desk. They, in turn, introduced me to cultural workers within COSATU. This acceptance, however, did not immediately put me in contact with an appropriate research group and locating one proved to be difficult. It appeared that various performance groups emerged around specific struggles such as a strike, mobilised the workers, and disappeared as soon as the strike was resolved or the group had achieved its aims. Research on such groups therefore was often impossible because a performance group could be disbanded and disappear within weeks or even days of its establishment. It was only possible to locate and approach performance groups once they had developed into formal performance entities.

Initially I was introduced to the Living Wage Group, a performance group that was a formal performance entity, but this contact proved to be unsuccessful. The Living Wage Group did not want to participate in my research since they felt that they had been "over-researched". Fortunately, by that time I had made contact with members of COSATU's Women's Forum who put me in contact with the Mayibuye Cultural Group, then known as the United People's Culture (UNIPEC) Group, which performed mainly in Tembisa. I met the association for the first time in September 1990 and although my lack of commitment to the liberation struggle in the past was raised, they agreed to participate in my research.

1.3.3   Fieldwork

Fieldwork was undertaken intermittently from September 1990 to November 1993, as well as during August 2004. In part therefore, it was conducted under the state of emergency which initially was imposed by the then government on 21 July 1985 and which finally was lifted in June 1990 (see 1.1.1). The main body of fieldwork was completed by November 1993, which at the time seemed to be a logical cut-off point with the April 1994 elections that heralded a new phase in transitional politics in

South Africa looming, and the disbandment of the association just before the institution of the Government of National Unity.

However, due to personal circumstances and work pressures during 1994 and 1995, I was not in a position to continue the study. When I resumed research in earnest in 1996, the use of songs, poems and plays as a means to express opposition to the state and to effect sociopolitical change had receded, and in the new dispensation no longer seemed relevant. The research trail, in a manner of speaking, had gone cold. However, as Gunner (2009:29) has remarked, "the truth lay elsewhere" and the use of performance to express dissatisfaction with prevailing sociopolitical conditions resurged, and in particular began to gain momentum from 2005 onwards. Consequently, follow-up interviews were conducted with some members of the association during August 2004 to establish whether they were still involved in performance and protest politics and from June 2007 to December 2010, newspaper reports and television broadcasts were scrutinised for information on *Umshini wami* as a discursive presence in the South African public sphere.

With regard to the Mayibuye Cultural Group, fieldwork was mostly done over weekends and on weekday evenings while attending their meetings, workshops, rehearsals, and in a few cases, actual performances. It was very difficult to make appointments with members of the association outside of these relatively fixed times because of their respective household, school, work and committee responsibilities and duties. When meetings or rehearsals were cancelled at short notice, I was often not informed because members did not have access to a home telephone or other modes of communication. On such occasions, I fruitlessly waited at the meeting place, a situation that was stressful due to a prevailing climate of political and racial polarisation in the country at the time, and since there had been several incidents of race-related murders in and around Tembisa at the time.

1.3.3.1   *Participant observation*

Making contact

My initial informal meetings with the association were met by reservation and suspicion, but they did serve as a platform for establishing rapport, so that I could familiarise myself with the research setting and context, explain my intentions and

objectives, and deal with members' perceptions and expectations regarding the research. In particular, their expectations that I would be able to assist them financially and that I might be a talent scout for a recording company were addressed. At this point, I also discussed my intention to produce a video recording of their performances and obtained their consent to use audiovisual equipment.

From the start it was my intention to establish an "objective" or, in Watson's phrasing (1987:35), a "dispassionate camera-like observer" stance towards the members of the association and the theme of the research. I did not want to create the perception that I was an activist in the making or to generate expectations that I would not be able to fulfil once the research was completed. Therefore, I felt uncomfortable when members of the association addressed me as "comrade". Since I did not have a struggle history, I felt that the appellation was unwarranted and if anything, emphasised my position as "the other". This appellation, however, was a logical consequence of the way in which I had been introduced to the association. Since I did not wish to offend them or risk my hard-won access and cooperation, I did not tell them how I felt, but instead emphasised my role as a researcher, the purpose of my research, and what I intended to do with the research findings.

"Participating observer"

Various practical considerations made it impossible to conduct participant observation in the sense of the "longterm, intense interaction with members of a community during which the researcher plunges into their activities as completely as possible, for example, by attending rituals, 'hanging out', or washing clothes at the river with other women" (Barfield 2001:348). I was not a member of the ANC or any of its affiliated organisations. I did not live for an extended period of time among my research participants, nor was I subjected to the particular sociopolitical conditions enforced on them. I also did not perform with the association nor did I assist with workshopping performances. My physical appearance also seemed to identify me as part of "the other", their adversary, rather than as part of them, a participant. This became apparent during rehearsals of their workshop play when members would give me furtive glances or laughed surreptitiously whenever a white Afrikaner manager was being portrayed. When confronted with their reaction to me, they acknowledged that physically I conformed to the stereotypic image of an overweight, middle-aged, white oppressor in a position of economic power, but then they quickly added that

their reaction was indicative of their concern that I might be offended by such portrayals of Afrikaners.

I did participant observation, however, in the sense that I, in Drewal's (1991:34) terms, became involved in a dialogical relationship with the research participants to the point where we became active participants in the performance discourse. Following Rudie (1994:28-29), the research context included the experiential baggage of the research participants as well as mine, since I was inescapably a part of what I observed and of the events under construction. We acted as catalysts to each other's processes of making sense. My interest in and analysis of what may have seemed trivial to them, triggered them to reflect on and to reinterpret these, which in turn were once again subjected to my analysis. In such a way the efforts of the research participants to make sense of their own experience became part of my efforts to transform their practice into anthropological knowledge.

More specifically, in Bernard's (1994:138) terms, I was a "participating observer": I "participated" in meetings and rehearsals, acted as catalyst to their processes of making sense of their experiences, and through my continuous interest in their workshop play, rekindled their interest to rework and perform the play. I increased the probability of members showing up for appointments and rehearsals by setting up specific time slots for the production of the video recording of their performances. Ultimately, amidst escalating township violence, I reluctantly became an accomplice to their reconnaissance trips to Tembisa hostels by providing transport for these monitoring actions. Ironically, through this circumstance of complicity I felt that I "belonged" and deserved to do research among them. My conflict lessened and I felt that I had established a relationship of trust with the association. This was confirmed when they shared their experiences, thoughts and feelings openly with me; by their frank comments and subsequent disclosure that at the start of the research they had suspected me of being a government agent; their invitation to me to join them at the 1992 conference of the Witwatersrand Regional Council of Shop Stewards where various union issues and initiatives were discussed; their insistence after rehearsals that a member accompany me to the edge of Tembisa (some distance from where they lived) to ensure my safety, requiring the person to walk home from there; and their support when my car broke down in Tembisa one evening in 1992. The general secretary of the association and his cousin accompanied me to the nearest telephone, which was at the police station, so that I could contact a tow-away

service. They waited with me for hours while they, as known activists, were being harassed by the police.

1.3.3.2 *Interviews*

Before any interview commenced, research participants were asked whether they objected to the use of a tape recorder to record the interviews. Since no one did, interviews were recorded in full.

Informal interviews

Informal interviews were conducted with individual members and the association as a whole. These interviews served to provide background information on the association, their activities as well as their performances, and directed the formulation of questions for the semistructured and structured interviews. The informal interviews were not recorded because of the arbitrary nature of the discussions, but field notes were taken either during the interviews or as soon as possible afterwards.

Structured interviews (questionnaires)

Two questionnaires were designed to collect basic biographical data of the members of the UNIPEC Group and the Mayibuye Cultural Group. The first questionnaire was given to complete to members of the UNIPEC Group, and the second questionnaire to the members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group. The second questionnaire also incorporated improvements on the first one, particularly with regard to the preference lists (see Appendix E).

To determine members' attitudes to and opinions of selected themes, several lists comprising as many as 21 items were compiled and given to members to complete (Questionnaire 1 in Appendix E:1, items 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28). In these, members had to prioritise items in order of preference. However, they reacted negatively to the lists and indicated that they were too comprehensive and unwieldy, and that it was difficult to meaningfully compare items. As a result, most members did not complete them. To address these concerns, prioritising grids (Bolles 1991) were adopted and proved to be useful to determine members' attitudes to and opinions of

selected themes (Questionnaire 2 in Appendix E:2, items 16, 17, 18 and 19). The themes in the prioritising grids were selected from themes that emerged during group interviews and which generated debate and disagreement between the members. For purposes of convenience the selected items (themes) were placed alphabetically in Section A of the grid because a particular order was unimportant. After the lists were completed, the number of times an item was circled was counted. Ranking (prioritising) the importance of items was based on the numbers — the item that was circled the most was placed first, and the item that was circled the least was placed last. When items were circled an equal number of times, ranking them was determined by the preference of members when these specific items were compared with each other (see Bolles 1991:216).

Semistructured interviews

I conducted semistructured group interviews with the members of the association, and individual interviews with most them. Some members were reluctant to participate in individual interviews and consequently were not interviewed. In most cases the interviews lasted for 90 minutes. The group interviews which were conducted during meetings, workshops, rehearsals and before performances, in particular, served as the primary communication forum during the fieldwork. The members of the association only met as a group during these gatherings which therefore provided useful opportunities for the research. In addition, the association felt that group interviews were the most appropriate forum for discussions, since matters that related to the association as a whole had to be discussed among members of the association so that they could reach consensus on such issues. Individual members could answer in their capacity as individuals and express individual viewpoints, but could not respond on behalf of the association.

From September 1990 to mid-1992, the association met and rehearsed in the Tembisa branch office of the Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU) in the Tembi Centre. Thereafter they either met in the house of the general secretary of the association in Ethafeni Section or in a classroom of the Masisebenze Secondary School. Group interviews consequently were conducted at these venues. Individual interviews were also conducted at the above venues or after school hours at the schools of student members. Working adult members were met at places close to their workplaces and which were convenient to them.

In the case of the individual interviews, the chairperson or general secretary of the association acted as interpreter. Although all members of the association spoke and understood English, not all of them were fluent in it. Consequently, to eliminate possible uncertainties as regards the meaning of questions in the interview guide, the questions were asked in English, and then translated into the home language of the interviewee. The interviewees answered in their home languages and these answers were then translated into English. Since the chairperson and general secretary were fluent in English, their interviews were conducted in English only.

Likewise, during the group interviews questions were asked in English. However, the general secretary or the chairperson of the association often translated the questions to the association into Zulu, the lingua franca of Gauteng, since all members were reasonably fluent in it and it served as predominant medium of communication during their meetings. Answers would then be discussed and once the association reached consensus, the answer would be translated into English.

Interviews with cultural activists at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the National Cultural Coordinator of COSATU in Durban, as well as with members of the Mpopomeni Performance Group in Howick, KwaZulu-Natal were conducted during April 1991 to collect general background and comparative data on performance in KwaZulu-Natal. These interviews assisted with the identification of patterns which informed subsequent interviews with members of the association.

1.3.3.3   *Audio and video recordings*

One of the initial aims of this study was to make videotape recordings of the performances of songs, plays and poems of the association. This was deemed necessary because the poems and workshop play of the association did not have formal texts (see 3.2.2.1 and 4.2.2.2), and with the recordings I intended to "freeze" the performances as well as their variations into visual texts. Further, the recordings were intended to facilitate meaningful analyses and comparison of the performances. The recordings were also meant to compensate the association for their willingness to participate in the research that had placed an additional burden on their already busy lives. It was in fact also a strategy to sell myself to the association.

Various factors determined my initial approach to making a video recording. First, members of the association as well as COSATU officials had specific expectations regarding the video. Providing the video complied with professional standards, they hoped that it would be suitable for commercial distribution and generate money for the association, since at that time, there was an overseas market for videos on anti-apartheid performance groups in South Africa. The association also saw such a video as a way of promoting themselves. Second, although I did not have the required experience or equipment and support to produce a high quality ethnographic video, in an effort to win the approval of the association, I agreed. At that time I did not realise that this attitude would not serve the demands of documenting an acceptable research text.

The documentation of performances to produce acceptable research texts presents particular methodological demands on a researcher. It requires him/her to fulfil simultaneously the role of researcher, cameraman, lighting assistant and producer, a task which I could not manage. The production of a commercially viable video has a further disadvantage in that the researcher has to dramatise and direct the performance since he/she must select interesting and contrasting camera angles, take close-up shots of the performers and emphasise specific actions or emotions. This can radically alter the performance.

Mainly because of my lack of experience and planning, I was unprepared for the challenges which faced me in the field and my attempts to produce acceptable video recordings were unsuccessful. I did not have funding to hire professionals or the appropriate equipment, and in my attempts I made use of equipment that did not meet the demands of recording in unpredictable and adverse conditions. There were logistical challenges involved in transporting and carrying the camera equipment and lights to the venues and to move these when a venue changed. The setting up of the camera and lights in these poorly lit venues also proved to be difficult. The venues were too small — the office in the Tembi Centre as well as the lounge of the general secretary were approximately 10 m^2 and on average accommodated 18 people on rehearsal evenings. It was therefore impossible to set up the lights and the video camera (on its tripod) to take a long shot of the performance and events, more so since a performing space also had to be created in the rooms. The lack of electrical power points or sufficient power points also provided challenges. Further, during

many scheduled rehearsals in the Tembi Centre, FAWU members themselves occupied their office, forcing the association to meet in the corridors of the centre.

It also became evident that medium and close-up shots of the play and performers could not capture the textural and contextual elements of the performances adequately. Close-up shots of a performer, for example, excluded most of his/her body and nonverbal behaviour, the other performers, the decor, the performing area, the audience and general sociocultural context. Sudden movements by a performer caused others to step out of the view of the camera, or in close-up situations, performers moved out of the focus of the camera. It also happened that when performers outside the view of the camera spoke their words these were not contextualised. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the association did not have a formal text for their workshop play, but only a basic story-line around which they improvised dialogue and actions (see 4.2.2.2 and 4.3.2.1). As a result, successive performances differed and I could not plan camera shots in advance. In addition, the performers reacted to the camera in the sense that they changed their behaviour when they knew that they were being videotaped and this prevented the natural flow of a rehearsal.

The recording of actual performances was also problematic. Because the association performed at closed gatherings of political and related organisations, decision makers were constrained to give me permission to attend the gatherings. After several failures to frame the performances meaningfully, I abandoned the video initiative temporarily and decided to acquire some technical skills before attempting it again. Consequently, I followed a television orientation course at the University of the Witwatersrand to evaluate my video initiative and to learn more of the technicalities involved.

The solution to videotaping, however, did not bring me any closer to the realisation of my initial plan. I realised that to document a performance for anthropological research purposes, I would need at least two cameras with appropriate lighting: a static camera to record long shots of the whole performance within the performing area and as much as possible of the audience, and a second camera to record the performance from a different angle as well as for close-up shots of the performers. A second camera was also necessary to record instances where performers blocked others behind them or where performers did not face the static camera. It also

became evident that such a set-up would require two cameramen and possibly other assistants. At the time, however, access to organisations affiliated to the ANC alliance was problematic and outsiders were distrusted. Finally I decided that the restraints set by the research made it impossible to produce a video recording of a performance and the project was abandoned.

The only video recording which survives is one of the 1993 AGM of the association in a classroom of the Masisebenze Secondary School. On this occasion, only a few songs were performed at the end of the meeting. The presence of the camera and lights, however, gave rise to a reactivity problem. In comparison with actual performances, the recorded performances are subdued, lack spontaneity and energy, and the performers are self-conscious. A decision was consequently taken that these would not be included as part of the research data. However, a recording of the songs of the association was made and given to them.

1.3.4   Thematic analyses of texts

Thematic analyses of the songs and poems of the association aimed to uncover their meanings. Regarding the songs, the selected themes corresponded with the traditional functions of songs (see 1.1.2.1). Since successive renditions of the poems which were performed as part of Songs 5 and 6 (see Appendix B:5 and 6) could differ, "standardised" performances of the poems were taken as basis for the analyses. The analyses of songs and poems were done only insofar as they related to the aims of the study, and did not include detailed text analyses or literary analyses. Each song or poem was sifted for the selected themes, and the number of times they occurred, was recorded. The frequency of a particular theme was then taken as an indication of its relative importance (Fiske 1990:136), and as indicative of the attitudes of members of the association.

1.3.5   Verification of the research findings

Various attempts were made to verify the research findings. With regard to validity, falsification of aspects of the research data was done: data collected were deliberately reformulated in the negative and then submitted for verification to members of the association. In the instances where they disputed such findings and

argued for the reverse, data were seen as verified. Data obtained from individual interviews were also correlated with that of other individual interviews and with data obtained during group interviews. Contradictions were noted and subsequently raised in the group discussions and interviews to clarify them. The research findings were also compared and correlated with findings in documentary sources on performance in general and other worker performance groups in particular, as well as with data obtained from interviews with the National Cultural Coordinator of COSATU and other cultural activists in KwaZulu-Natal. Triangulation was done to verify the research findings: the data on the opinions, values and attitudes of the association for example, were verified through quantitative (questionnaires and prioritising grids), as well as qualitative techniques (thematic analyses of performances, participant observation, group interviews, individual interviews and observation). Much of the data gathered through the thematic analyses of the performances, for example, were confirmed during group and individual interviews as well as through observation. Reliability of data was increased through the use of the questionnaires and the semistructured interviews.

1.4   THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF BLACK POLITICAL EXPRESSION

To contextualise the circumstances and conditions that ultimately gave rise to the Mayibuye Cultural Group as a performance association, broad sociopolitical developments in South Africa, from colonisation to large-scale black resistance in the 1980s, are set out in the subsequent sections. However, this discussion does not deal specifically with the intensifying township political protest and radicalisation of township-based organisation that had a major impact on South African politics during the 1980s and early 1990s, since these developments are included in Chapter 2, where the specific setting against which the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group were analysed, are discussed. Similarly, factors which gave rise to the resurgence of the power of song in post-apartheid South Africa are discussed in Chapter 5 where the sociocultural meaning of the contextual, textual and textural elements of the song *Umshini wami* is explored.

1.4.1   Introductory comments

Blacks constitute the majority of South Africa's heterogeneous population and are divided into the following main groups on the basis of language: Nguni speakers

(including Southern Ndebele, Swazi, Xhosa and Zulu speakers), Sotho speakers (including Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho and Western Sotho or Tswana speakers), Tsonga speakers and Venda speakers. In precolonial times, each of these groups comprised many separate chiefdoms, each of which had its own distinct political governmental structure and authority that are still in operation today in the rural areas of South Africa. The chiefs (senior traditional leaders) of these chiefdoms were chiefs-in-councils and not autocratic rulers. Each chief was assisted in the exercising of authority by various councils on the central and local level. If a ruler persistently exceeded his or her powers, he or she could be reprimanded and disciplined and even be released of his or her duties if he or she disregarded the disciplinary actions of the councils (Myburgh 1986:74; Sansom 1974:248-249; Schapera 1937:174-175, 181-185; Van Niekerk 1999:53; Wilson & Thompson 1982:250).

Some measures constituted a warning to a ruler that his subjects were dissatisfied, as in the case of praise poets publicly criticising a ruler, or songs, poems and dances expressing dissatisfaction with a ruler (see 1.1.2.1). There were, however, also radical measures which could result in the overthrowing of a ruler if he persistently acted unlawfully and exercised his powers unjustly. If a ruler persistently opposed his councils, his subjects could refuse to do public service, move in large numbers to the area of another ruler, start a civil war, assassinate the ruler, or institute a *coup d'état* (Myburgh 1986:73-74).

1.4.2 The colonial era

The arrival of Europeans in South Africa initiated a process which radically changed the sociopolitical landscape. Sociocultural change generally arises from modification in the natural environment and/or the sociocultural environment of a society, which may occur simultaneously in both or follow one another (Woods 1975:11). Such modifications may be due to initiatives from within a society, as in the case of innovations and inventions by members of a society, or to external influences to which the members of a society are exposed, for example when socioculturally diverse societies come into contact with one another (Pauw 1981:30; Woods 1975:xi), as was the case in South Africa. The contact between white colonisers and indigenous societies paved the way to a process of extensive and far-reaching sociocultural change, or acculturation, due to the ensuing direct and continuous contact between

members of these socioculturally diverse societies, and ultimately led to the domination of blacks by white colonisers.

From anthropological literature it would appear that acculturation typically has a characteristic three-phase course, namely contact, conflict and adaptation.

- Contact and the changes which follow in its wake, especially when these changes are the result of a dominant society impacting on a subordinate society, cause disruption and stress for the members of the subordinate society (Woods 1975:36-37).

- Conflict is not necessarily an inevitable aspect of the process, but a possibility, especially if one society dominates over the other. In practice, the sociocultural transformation which takes place is usually reactive and conflictual, because the societies in contact do not influence each other in equal measure — one society usually dominates over the other and contributes more to the process of change (Berry 1980:10-11).

- Adaptation attempts to stabilise the conflict and in Spindler's (1984:33) phrasing is a strategy that people use to cope with economic, social and political disadvantages resulting from a subordinate position.

Berry (1980:12-13) distinguishes three modes of adaptation: adjustment, reaction and withdrawal:

- In adjustment the playing fields are levelled. Changes are introduced that reduce the conflict by making the different sociocultural features between the societies more similar, such as where a society relinquishes its sociocultural identity and is assimilated into another society.

- In reaction changes are introduced that attempt to reduce the conflict by retaliation against the source of the conflict, such as political organisation against the subjugating society.

- In withdrawal changes essentially remove one element from the contact, such as the creation of nativistic movements in which people attempt to retain and restore aspects of their sociocultural system that are under threat.

The first contact between white colonisers and blacks was established through survivors from shipwrecks, refugees from the erstwhile Cape Colony, missionaries, and participants in trading and hunting expeditions into the interior of South Africa. The contact was characterised by racial prejudices, feelings of superiority and inferiority and a conflict in value systems. Various reasons, including differences in deep-seated cultural values, an effort to avoid conflict between indigenous societies and the white colonisers as well as to control markets and trading, led successive governments of the erstwhile Cape Colony to limit interaction between indigenous societies and white colonisers. However, due to increasing farming (*Vryburgers*) and trading activities, labour needs, missionary activities and political initiatives to regulate land and trade, interaction between blacks and white colonisers increased (Wilson & Thompson 1982:233-242, 270-271).

Measures which were introduced by these governments included the following:

- the control of the boundaries of the colony;

- regulation of trade and the competition for hunting and grazing lands;

- the British annexation of the area presently known as KwaZulu-Natal in 1843; the areas which under the apartheid state became known as the Ciskei and the Transkei respectively in 1866 and between 1879 and 1894, and finally all traditional black areas by 1902, and

- the deliberate destruction of the powers and authority of the traditional rulers and their councils because they were perceived as a military threat. As a result, European administrators and courts gradually assumed many of their functions (Thompson 2001:80; Wilson & Thompson 1982:237-239, 243, 264, 271). However, the power and authority of traditional rulers to a large extent were restored by two legislative measures, namely the Native Administrative Act 38 of 1927 and the Bantu Authorities Act 68 of 1951.

The introduction and acceptance of Christianity also brought radical changes. Converts were exposed to western formal education and embraced western values which threatened many traditional institutions and values, such as polygyny and values associated with the *lobolo* institution. Some Christians no longer recognised tribal governmental systems, and mission schools were directly involved in creating the new elite (Walshe 1987:7-8; Wilson & Thompson 1982:266).

As could be expected, the sociocultural changes resulting from contact between blacks and whites and the subsequent domination of the former by the latter, caused disruption and stress in the lives of blacks. Consequently, in an effort to restore meaning and content to their lives, they met the domination with conflict and resistance, as exemplified by the following:

- the various frontier wars from 1779 to 1881 in which the Xhosa fought to retain their territory and independence from the control of the Dutch East India Company, and after 1806, from the British government of the erstwhile Cape colony

- various wars and skirmishes from 1836 to 1898 in the former areas of Natal, the Orange Free State and Transvaal in which various indigenous chiefdoms clashed with the Afrikaners (Boers) as well as the British colonial forces in an attempt to prevent white settlement and control

- the ethnocidal Xhosa cattle-killing in 1857 (a nativistic movement), which was a response to military defeat, loss of land, Christianity and western formal education. This movement culminated in an estimated 25 000 to 70 000 Xhosa starving to death and 30 000 leaving their traditional territory in search of food and work.

- the rebellion led by Chief Bambatha in 1906 against poll tax in the former area of Natal

- the establishment of the ANC, a cultural adjustment movement, in 1912, which took as its purpose the creating of a more satisfying and meaningful sociocultural environment for blacks in South Africa (Thompson 2001:73-77, 80,

8-92, 128-130; Wilson & Thompson 1982:240, 252, 256-260; Van Niekerk 1999:25, 53-54).

1.4.3   The rise of the ANC

In the second half of the nineteenth century, all adult males in the British colonies were entitled to qualified franchise. In accordance with the *Cape of Good Hope Constitution Ordinance* of 1852, males of any race who occupied a site and structure with a value of at least £25 or earned £50 a year, or £25 if board and lodging were provided, could vote (Davenport 1980:78; Thompson 2001:64). Although black political involvement in the colonies was slow to develop, mission-educated blacks participated increasingly in political life after the frontier wars of 1877 and 1878, and by 1891 black males comprised more than twenty percent of the voter population in 22 constituencies in the Cape. This situation necessitated predominantly white political parties to reposition themselves with regard to the black vote in their formulation and advocacy of political policies (Davenport 1980:83; Stack 1989:4). However, with the promulgation of the *Franchise and Ballot Act*, No.9 of 1892, which raised the property qualification from £25 to £75 and stipulated that voters should be able to sign their names in the presence of a registration official, the growth of the black electorate was checked and it consequently fell back to approximately fifteen percent of the total voter population (Davenport 1980:83; Van Niekerk 1999:54).

In the erstwhile Natal, blacks qualified for franchise in terms of *Ordinance 3 of 1849* providing they were in possession of fixed property with a value of at least £50 or paid £10 a year in rent. However, these requirements were also adjusted with growing white concern about possible widespread registration of black voters. With the promulgation of the *Natives Electoral Franchise Act*, No.11 of 1865, blacks no longer were considered for inclusion on the electoral roll unless they had resided in the erstwhile Natal for at least twelve years; could produce proof that they were exempted from native law for at least seven years, and were approved by three whites whose word was endorsed by a magistrate (Davenport 1980:90). In the erstwhile Boer republics of the Orange Free State and Transvaal, blacks did not qualify for franchise at all. In terms of their constitutions, which respectively were adopted in 1854 and 1860, franchise was restricted to white males only, and they did not grant blacks equality in matters of the church or state (Thompson 2001:102).

This state of affairs led to dissatisfaction among blacks. The period preceding and concurrent with the Anglo-Boer War, which lasted from 1899 to 1902, witnessed fruitless attempts by associations, notably *Imbumba Yama Afrika* and the South African Native Congress, to unite black resistance and to establish an umbrella organisation which would cover the interests of all blacks. Instead these attempts seemed to have had the opposite effect of widening the rifts between factions. However, it anticipated the South African Native Convention (SANC) which was to meet in March 1909 to discuss the draft South Africa Act, and the establishment of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) in 1912 (Davenport 1980:84-85).

With the end of the Anglo-Boer War in 1902, in which the British gained victory over the Boers, blacks in the former republics of Orange Free State and Transvaal entertained hopes that under British rule they would be entitled to qualified franchise, but these hopes were crushed (Van Niekerk 1999:54). Article 8 of the *Treaty of Vereeniging* of 1902 blocked black access to political power and made the enfranchisement of blacks in the colonies dependent on white approval. The frustration accompanying the realisation that the northern policy of the Boer republics was to be continued, found expression in various protests and petitions by blacks. In the decade preceding unification in 1910, black movements repeatedly attempted to pressurise the governments of the various colonies into changing discriminatory legislation and the political rights of blacks. The most notable of these was the attempt by the SANC to amend the draft South Africa Act, which was to become the constitution of the Union of South Africa. In May 1908, a proposal was accepted by the governments of the various colonies to seek a political solution for unification by calling a National Convention. The National Convention drafted a union constitution which stipulated that the franchise system in operation in each colony would continue after unification, but that blacks could not be elected to parliament (Davenport 1980:152, 163-164; 167). Blacks therefore could register as voters in the erstwhile Cape Province and Natal, providing they complied with franchise qualifications, but were excluded from election as members of parliament.

The SANC intended to consolidate all black political organisations into one body with the purpose of amending the draft Act. The South Africa Act of 1909, however, was passed by the British House of Commons in August 1909 and came into effect in South Africa in 1910. The subsequent lack of direct black political representation in the Union necessitated a strong national organisation. As a result, the SANNC, which in

1923 was renamed the ANC, was established in Bloemfontein on 8 January 1912 as an assembly of prominent middle-class blacks who were of the opinion that black interests would best be served by blacks (Barrett 1989:2; Lodge *et al* 1991:383; Walshe 1987:24; Stack 1989:5-6).

Several reasons have been advanced for the formation of this political organisation. Amongst others, it is seen as a response to the South Africa Act of 1909, an attempt to create a single consolidating organisation to unify regional and ethnic divisions in South Africa which would further black political aspirations, and as an expression of the fears of the so-called African petite bourgeoisie of being pushed back into the ranks of the urban and rural poor (Barrett 1989:2).

The early period of the SANNC (ANC) is marked by peaceful, nonviolent strategies, for example petitions and delegations to the union government and foreign governments, and as such it was similar to other nationalist organisations of that time (Barrett 1989:2). A notable example was their campaign against the Natives Land Act 27 of 1913, which promoted territorial segregation of whites and blacks. In this campaign acts of passive resistance were accompanied by resistance songs and poetry (Van Niekerk 1999:59-60), such as the popular song, *Umteto we Land Act*, which protested against the injustices of the Land Act (Coplan 1980:168). However, although only 9,1 million hectares were allocated to blacks, it was the first time in the history of South Africa that land was officially and exclusively allocated (on the basis of the work of various Location Commissions) to blacks where no whites could obtain land.

By the mid 1930s, the ANC was in trouble. Its national membership had dwindled because of ineffective organisation. In contrast, the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU), which was established in 1920 at a labour conference initiated by the SANNC, had managed to mobilise thousands of workers during the 1920s and this feat both challenged and impressed members of the ANC (Barrett 1989:2). With the rise of trade unionism, the influence of socialism and communism consequently became more apparent in the strategies and campaigns of the SANNC and later the ANC (Van Niekerk 1999:60-61).

Although there was a decline in ANC activities during the 1930s, the ANC was reactivated in 1936 around two issues: the *Representation of Natives Act*, No.12 of

1936, which threatened the black franchise in the Cape Province, and the establishment of a Native Representative Council which only had advisory powers. With regard to the first, blacks in the Cape Province were removed from the common electoral roll to a separate roll. From then on they could elect three whites to represent them in parliament, two to represent them in the Cape Provincial Council and four to represent them in the Senate (Davenport 1980:220-222, 333; Stack 1989:11). The promulgation of the Native Trust and Land Act 18 of 1936, which made provision for additional land (approximately 6,2 million ha) for blacks in the so-called Released Areas, could not stem the rising tide of frustrations. Resistance to the restriction of black franchise once again found expression in song. The song *Ivoti* urged people in the Cape Province to resist the revocation of their voting rights while the song *Vukani Mawethu* reprimanded people for allowing others to exploit them (Coplan 1980: 269-270). The Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act 46 of 1959, however, ultimately repealed this system of black representation in Parliament by whites and provided for ethnically-based constitutional development in the so-called homelands. With regard to the second issue, although ANC members served on the Native Representative Council for most of its existence (from 1937 to 1950), the council was doomed to failure because it only had advisory and no decision-making powers. The council reached a deadlock with government in 1946, which ultimately led to its scrapping in 1951 (Davenport 1980:333). The council consequently suffered the same frustrations and fate as the Native Advisory Boards which were instituted in 1923 and their later extensions, the Urban Bantu Councils, which were established 1961.

In an effort to establish a more assertive national organisation, elements within the ANC pushed for a more radical approach which led to the establishment of the ANC Youth League in April 1944. The leading personalities behind the ANC Youth League were, amongst others, Nelson Mandela (who in 1994 became president of South Africa), Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo. The Youth League emphasised the need for blacks to develop and progress, while at the same time it advocated mass action and civil disobedience. The Youth League broke with past practice in the organisation by linking forces with other groups and established multiracial alliances with white, Indian and coloured organisations. This culminated in the signing of the symbolic Joint Declaration of Co-operation in 1947 which promised a combined struggle by blacks and Indians against all forms of discrimination. The Youth League also paved the way for the formation of the Programme of Action which was adopted at the

ANC's Annual Conference in 1949. With the adoption of this militant statement of principles, there was a shift to a leadership that was committed to a more militant programme of action and which culminated in an escalation of organised black political action and confrontation between blacks and government. On 23 March 1954 the ANC, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the South African Congress of Democrats and South African Coloured People's Organisation established the National Action Council for the Congress of the People which in 1955 produced the Freedom Charter at Kliptown near Johannesburg (Barrett 1989:2-3; Lodge 1985:25, 27, 38, 69-70).

However, in March 1959 an Africanist faction within the ANC, led by Robert Sobukwe and Potlake Leballo, led to a split in the organisation and consequently to the establishment of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). Leballo was opposed to the ANC's participation in Advisory Board elections and its alliances with Indians, whites and communists, and felt that the ANC had repudiated the principles of the Programme of Action (Davenport 1980:285; Lodge 1985:81). Sensing competition from the newly formed Africanist organisation, the ANC conference in December 1959 resolved to lead a national campaign against the pass laws on 31 March 1960. The PAC, however, pre-empted this initiative by announcing that on 21 March 1960 it would lead a similar national campaign. On 21 March 1960 Robert Sobukwe and many of his followers across the country who defied the pass laws were arrested. Although police reaction to the nonviolent demonstration in most places was itself nonviolent, in Sharpeville in the former Transvaal 69 blacks were killed and 180 injured when police opened fire on a crowd which, it appears, was getting out of hand. Shock rippled across the country and the shooting was immediately condemned by the international community (Davenport 1980:286).

Government classified this direct action as an extraconstitutional means of exerting pressure for political change (Kotze s.a.:295). Consequently, on 8 April 1960, the ANC and PAC were banned in terms of the Suppression of Communism Act 44 of 1950. House arrest and detention without trial were introduced as measures to silence political opposition and censorship powers were extended (Brown 1998:169). In March 1961, amidst a period of severe repression, the ANC demanded a National Convention of all racial groups. Its purpose was to draw up a new constitution for South Africa in which all people would enjoy equality. When this did not happen and South Africa became a Republic on 31 May 1961, the ANC executive met secretly in

June 1961 to consider Nelson Mandela's proposal of sabotaging state installations. They decided not to abandon their official policy of nonviolence in favour of violence, but rather to create a separate organisation with military aims, namely *Umkhonto weSizwe* (MK). On 16 December 1961 explosions shook the country and a leaflet heralding the formation of MK was distributed. It stated that there were but two choices, to submit or to fight, i.e. to gain control of South Africa through violent actions and military means (Barrett 1989:3).

In July 1963 seventeen ANC members, including virtually the whole of MK's high command, were arrested in Rivonia (Barrett 1989:3; Stack 1989:20). The subsequent trials beheaded the organisation and any chance of MK re-emerging was crushed by trials which sent 2 000 ANC and PAC members, including Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, to prison on Robben Island (Barrett 1989:3). Oliver Tambo and a few other prominent ANC leaders managed to flee the country and went abroad where they established the external mission of the ANC under Tambo's leadership, while others withdrew from politics altogether (Barrett 1989:3; Stack 1989:17). Thus the 1960s were marked by a decline in overt organised black political action which resulted from the banning of the ANC and PAC as well as the inability of the ANC and PAC to achieve their short-term objectives (Kotze s.a.:288). These years were dominated by the government's programme of launching black participation in homeland politics. The Bureau of State Security (BOSS) was also established in 1968, and consolidated and extended the security police system.

Rising frustration with the apartheid policy, however, led to the emergence of Black Consciousness (BC) as a political ideology, which expressed group pride in black values as well as the need for blacks to stand together and to effect their own liberation. Towards the end of 1968, members of the University Christian Movement (UCM), which was established in 1967, attended a UCM conference in America that focused on Black Theology and BC. The feedback on this conference encouraged Steve Biko and black students in 1969 to break away from the multiracial National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), and led to the establishment of the black South African Students' Organisation (SASO). In 1972 the national urban-based Black People's Convention (BPC) was established. SASO and the BPC were at the time perhaps the most important BC-orientated organisations in South Africa. They were opposed to all aspects of South African government policy and promoted BC as a unifying force in South Africa. SASO in particular played a pivotal role in the

spreading of knowledge of BC to all corners of South Africa through university and secondary school student organisations (Brown 1998:168, 169; Kotze s.a.:289; Lodge 1985:323).

In a related development in 1968, the interdenominational Christian Institute (CI) under the leadership of a former Dutch Reformed minister and former prominent member of the *Broederbond*, Dr Beyers Naudé, published its *Message to the People* in which it condemned separate development (apartheid) as at variance with the Bible and called for a political alternative. Consequently the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society (SPROCAS) was established in 1969 under the auspices of the Christian Institute and the South African Council of Churches (SACC). Its objective was to identity fundamental changes that needed to be effected in the political, judicial, economical, social, educational and religious spheres of South African society. In its final report SPROCAS concluded that the only alternative that remained to effect nonviolent change in South Africa, was to apply the principles of community development. In 1972 SPROCAS II was established under the auspices of NUSAS, CI, SACC and the South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR) to implement the recommendations of SPROCAS I, and it launched programmes which aimed at stimulating both BC and white guilt (Randall 1973a; Randall 1973b).

The proliferation of voluntary common interest associations in the urban areas of South Africa also impacted on urban black politics at the time (Kotze s.a.:292). As adaptive mechanisms in situations of large-scale sociocultural change, in which commonality of interest emerges as basis for the organisation of new social groupings and reorganisation of existing social groups to meet the demands of new domains of experience (Kerri 1976:23-24, 31), the associations in the urban areas of South Africa were indicative of the sociocultural diversity and included, amongst others, professional, special interest, youth and student, cultural and resident organisations (Kotze s.a.:292). As is often the case (Kerri 1976:34), some of these associations were established to specifically introduce or oppose sociocultural change or to provide alternative ways of dealing with it (Kerri 1976:34). Many of these organisations had links and overlapping membership with black political groupings or were established by political groupings. SASO and the BPC, for example, stimulated the establishment of BC-oriented associations and encouraged their members to participate in existing associations so that they could spread the BC philosophy and influence the policies of the associations concerned (Kotze s.a.:292-293).

The BC movement broadened its scope and influence during the 1970s. At one point there were more than 600 active BC organisations which established a broad-based infrastructure for future black resistance in South Africa. However, although it spread to almost all sectors of black society, its impact on black workers was limited and its most visible effect was during the Soweto uprising which started on 16 June 1976 and spilled over to townships throughout the country. The protest actions, which lasted for more than a year, were sparked by the protest of black students against Afrikaans as a compulsory medium of instruction in schools. On 19 October 1977 leading BC organisations, including SASO, the Black Communities Programmes and the BPC, were declared illegal (Brown 1998:170).

The Soweto riots of 1976 also provided the ANC with new impetus and strengthened the organisation internally and externally, especially since the exiled leadership was plagued from 1964 to 1976 by internal rifts caused by ideological and personal differences within the movement (Barrett 1989:3). The ANC regained considerable influence in the township towards the late 1970s, especially after the banning of leading BC organisations, which had left a vacuum. It stepped up its military campaign and started to direct its efforts at the so-called officials of apartheid. However, the campaigns undertaken by organisations within South Africa, such as those of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), an organisation of students at schools, technical colleges and teacher-training colleges, were more successful. Formed in 1979 initially around the ideology of BC, the organisation adopted the Freedom Charter in 1981 and played a leading role in the organisation of school boycotts during the 1980s. The early 1980s also saw the emergence of civic, community, women's and youth organisations which formed links with student organisations and often collaborated with them in campaigns (Brown 1998:242).

1.4.4 From nonviolence to a people's war

Between its establishment in 1912 and its banning in 1960 the ANC drafted four constitutions, all of which rejected racial discrimination and were committed to the promotion of black interests by the encouragement of unity and cooperation among black people in South Africa. The first two constitutions envisaged the role of the ANC to be a channel of communication between government and blacks with regard to black grievances and aspirations, and the rights, duties and obligations of blacks

towards the state, whereas a growing militancy characterises the latter two, calling for complete liberation from all forms of discrimination and oppression (Stack 1989:13-14).

In the period before the adoption of the Programme of Action in 1949, black political organisations pursued respectability and acceptance. Therefore they mainly used constitutional channels and petitions and deputations to promote their points of view. Subscribing to the belief in the superiority of nonviolence as a means of effecting political change, urban blacks likewise employed nonviolence as a political strategy: nonviolent direct intervention to exert pressure to change decisions and structures, and passive resistance to thwart government decisions. Passive resistance as a strategy was adopted by the ANC in conjunction with the SAIC and the Franchise Action Council of the Cape in 1952. This strategy was used together with nonviolent direct intervention during the Defiance Campaign to protest against, among others, the pass laws, stock limitation and various acts which ruled the daily lives of blacks (Kotze s.a.:293-295).

Stack (1989:15) argues that the ANC's understanding of its struggle as a civil rights campaign changed during the 1940s and 1950s, and particularly after its banning in 1960, to that of a war of national liberation. Towards the late 1950s, peaceful demonstrations increasingly ended in violence. The ANC Youth League also exerted pressure for armed violence since it became increasingly impatient with the ANC's strategy of passive resistance. These factors, together with the breakaway of the PAC, which impacted on and threatened the support base of the ANC, probably influenced the decision to adopt a strategy of armed violence (Stack 1989:15-18).

In June 1961, immediately after South Africa had become a republic, the leadership of both the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) decided to adopt a strategy of violence while still subscribing to the principle of nonviolence as embodied in the Freedom Charter. According to Stack (1989:19), the SACP claimed responsibility for the ANC's decision to embark upon such a strategy. In terms of this decision, the ANC officially would retain its nonviolent stance, but would permit its members to participate in the then newly formed MK, which fell under a "National High Command" of members drawn from the ANC's National Executive and the SACP (Lodge 1983/1984:159). In 1962, after the October Lobatsi Conference in Botswana,

the ANC released a statement which linked the ANC with MK and declared it as the military wing of the ANC's liberation struggle (Stack 1989:15-18).

However, the ANC failed to launch a successful military campaign during the 1960s. MK did not manage to get beyond the planning stage of a protracted guerrilla war and in late 1963, most members of the National High Command were arrested and the underground organisations of the ANC, SACP and MK were destroyed (Lodge 1983/1984:160). The 1969 Morogoro Conference in Tanzania reorganised the ANC in an attempt to heighten its military efficiency as well as to intensify the activities of MK (Stack 1989:21), and resolved that "non-Africans" could join the ANC although the national executive would remain exclusively "African". This resolution set the ANC apart from the BC movement that was emerging at the black universities at the time and that appeared to be the dominant ideology among blacks within South Africa (Lodge 1983/1984:162). The conference also adopted a strategy to downgrade urban guerrilla warfare in favour of rural-based guerrilla warfare and political mobilisation (Stack 1989:21), but despite these initiatives, ANC activity in South Africa was virtually nonexistent until the Soweto uprising in 1976. Instead of a rural-based war, however, a rising tide of armed insurgency developed mainly in the townships and urban areas in the wake of the 1976 Soweto uprising and characterised the early 1980s. It is estimated that between January 1977 and December 1982 at least 160 instances of violent activity in these areas were engineered by the ANC (Lodge 1983/1984:153, 157, 160). These acts were met with increasing South African Defence Force (SADF) actions, such as cross-border raids on ANC training camps and assassinations of ANC activists in neighbouring states (Stack 1989:21).

In the sphere of diplomacy, there were two important developments within the ANC. First, it consolidated links with the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo) and the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) which supported the ANC to launch an insurgency into South Africa after 1975 when they became the ruling parties of Mozambique and Angola respectively. Second, the ANC consolidated its relationship with the then Soviet Union which continued to finance the organisation and to provide its members with military equipment. In 1977 the Internal Reconstruction and Development Department was established in Lusaka and groups were formed in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland to supervise the creation of an internal political network. The ANC embarked on a campaign to influence potentially sympathetic organisations within South Africa and, among others, in 1979

had contact with Inkatha. However, the talks were unproductive and the hostility between the ANC and Inkatha deepened (Lodge 1983/1984:161, 171-174).

By 1981, the success of the ANC's "armed propaganda" was evident in the rising popularity of the ANC among urban black South Africans, the fact that it was regarded as the sole legitimate representative of the South African people in several of South Africa's neighbouring states and was gaining ground in Europe and America. In a reorganisation and centralisation of the ANC's external bureaucracy the Revolutionary Council, which was staffed jointly by the ANC and the SACP, was abolished and in its place three committees were established, namely a Military Committee, a Political Committee and a coordinating Joint Committee. These committees were all tightly subject to the authority of the ANC's National Executive and emphasised the dominant position of the ANC in the ANC-SACP-South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) alliance (Lodge 1983/1984:176).

The year 1983 saw the beginning of vast internal political mobilisation, predominantly in response to the exclusion of blacks from the terms of government's 1983 constitution establishing a tricameral parliament. The UDF, an umbrella organisation, was established in August 1983 to coordinate opposition to these reforms which extended political participation to Indians and coloureds, but not to blacks. It was a social movement that mobilised support across societal divisions to create strategic alliances and it drew support from diverse ideological, ethnic, religious and economic groupings and associations. Although it drew on the philosophy of the ANC, there were, according to Good (2003:170), significant differences in the outlook, practice and power of the UDF and the ANC. By March 1984 the UDF included more than 600 organisations, united only by their opposition to the apartheid state (Brown 1998:242-245; Buchler 1995:35, Callinicos 1991:4, Seekings 1992:20), and developed the ANC's support structure through various student, youth, women's and civic organisations which were affiliated to the UDF (Kromberg 1991:185). At its peak, the UDF represented around two million people (Good 2003:169).

The tension between the ANC and Inkatha also had an influence on the formation of alliances between various organisations. Since both the ANC and Inkatha attempted to play a central role in regional and national politics, they had to compete for the allegiance of the African workers and attempted to rally workers into their

respective structures. Initially, many trade unions attempted to stay out of the conflict between the ANC and Inkatha, and did not affiliate to the UDF because they attempted to attract workers from both sides. When FOSATU inevitably was drawn into the conflict, it affiliated to the UDF because of its nonracial ideology. With the merger of FOSATU and other trade unions to become COSATU in December 1985, the Freedom Charter was adopted and COSATU aligned itself to the ANC (Kromberg 1991:185). Mangosuthu Buthelezi and Inkatha furthered the polarisation between it and the ANC by their strong criticism of the formation of COSATU (Seekings 1992:27).

COSATU's alignment with the ANC, however, presented a challenge to the respective groups in the nonracial ANC alliance to unite a diversity of people under a single "cultural" and political umbrella. The trade unions and youth organisations, which had become the organisational backbone of the ANC alliance due to their increasing involvement in township politics, used so-called culture to spread their ideology and influence, creating opportunities and platforms for performers (Callinicos 1991:2, Kromberg 1991:180, 185-186).

At the same time, the ANC's military structures were reorganised under the leadership of Joe Modise (Stack 1989:23). Two themes influenced the ANC's planning and strategies with respect to South Africa during the 1980s, namely a people's war and a negotiated settlement. The notion of a people's war became central to the ANC's military planning from 1983 onwards and was used to plan the further unfolding of the armed struggle. Towards the end of 1982, ANC strategists believed that an enormous potential for the advance of the revolutionary movement, particularly in the cities, had been created by the growth in mass organisations and in particular the trade unions and civic associations. The ANC's strategy was that the decisive military and political battles would be waged within the cities and especially within an organised and, ultimately, armed "working class" (Lodge 1989:42-43). Not surprisingly, therefore, during 1984 protests were transformed into extended bloody confrontations in the Gauteng area and parts of the Eastern Cape (Seekings 1992:22).

In the middle of the escalating countrywide violence between 1984 and 1986 which re-established the ANC as the predominant force in black South African politics (Lodge 1987:2), the ANC modified its viewpoint on soft targets at its June 1985 Kabwe Conference by insinuating that the difference between "soft" and "hard" targets was becoming increasingly less clear. The ANC also adopted a policy of a

people's war which envisaged arming the masses and bringing the insurrectionary youth in the townships under the leadership of MK. The ANC decided that no negotiations would be considered unless these related to the technicalities of the transfer of power and were conducted in an open climate and with public approval (Stack 1989:23-25).

On the diplomatic front, the ANC was also making considerable gains. By 1984, the ANC presence in Great Britain, America and Australia was beginning to reap dividends and it established official contact with government officials in these countries. The ANC also began a new phase of contact with South African groups and from 1985 onwards it received various deputations consisting of business leaders, political groupings, church groupings, trade union groupings, including a deputation from COSATU, as well as student organisations. An ANC delegation under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki also met with the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (Idasa) and 52 mainly Afrikaans-speaking intellectuals in Dakar from 9 to 12 July 1987 to discuss the future as South Africa. The contact with South African groups advanced the objectives of the ANC. It helped to confirm the dominance of the ANC in black South African politics and opened up "the possibility of eroding the South African government's support base within the white community" (Lodge 1987:17-19).

The government responded to the political turmoil by declaring a state of emergency in 36 magisterial districts in the former PWV area, the Eastern Cape and Western Cape on 21 July 1985. This state of emergency lasted eight months and was lifted early in 1986, but reimposed nationally on 12 June 1986. The emergency regulations, among others, placed severe restrictions on the media and political gatherings. Political leaders were detained and various organisations, including the UDF, were effectively banned. The vacuum left by these measures created the space for COSATU to become more involved in political issues, especially after it formally adopted the Freedom Charter as policy in July 1987. At this time, an informal alliance developed between restricted UDF organisations and COSATU which in 1989 became known as the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) and since the movement was not formally constituted, it was difficult to restrict (Brown 1998:244). On 11 February 1990, Nelson Mandela was released from prison and on 7 June 1990 the state of emergency was lifted in all provinces except KwaZulu-Natal where it was enforced until 18 October 1990. These measures paved the way for the major South African political organisations and parties to negotiate the future organisational and

constitutional structures of South Africa through the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), which met for the first time in December 1991 (Buchler 1995:27) (see 2.4.8.4).

Thus the political conflict and worker organisation which marked the 1970s and 1980s created a climate in which the labour movement centred itself as a voice for the oppressed masses, and provided the preconditions for the emergence of performance groups and performance in the labour movement as but one manifestation of resistance to the apartheid state.

1.5   PRESENTATION

1.5.1   Spelling conventions

It would appear that there are conflicting conventions regarding the spelling of compound words in English. For example, some sources propose that words such as *co(-)supervisor* or *socio(-)economic* should be hyphenated while others propose that such words should be written as one word. To standardise the spelling in this dissertation I have adopted the recent trend not to hyphenate words where it does not enhance the readability of words. Accordingly, where a vowel in a compound word is immediately followed by a consonant, I have written such words as one word, as in the case of *cosupervisor* above. However, where a vowel in a compound word is immediately followed by another vowel and readability might be compromised, I have hyphenated such words, for example in the case of *socio-economic*. In verbatim quotations the convention used by the original writer has been retained.

1.5.2   Cross-references

Cross-references in the dissertation indicate the chapter, section and subsections where the information referred to can be found, e.g. 4.3.2.2 refers to the section headed with that number in Chapter 4.

1.5.3   Order of presentation of data

Chapter 2 introduces the physical and sociocultural setting of the research group and contains demographical, sociocultural and sociopolitical data. The development of the performance association is investigated and its constitution is introduced. The

respective sociocultural backgrounds of the members are explored and differences between men and women, as well as adults and students in the association, are unpacked. Proceeding from this analysis, the role of gender in the nature, structure and functioning of the association is discussed. The organisational links of the association, particularly those with the ANC and COSATU, are examined and the strategies of these organisations during the late 1980s up to 1991 are discussed as possible factors influencing themes in the performance of the association. Township issues in Tembisa are also emphasised as possibly influencing the themes in the performance of the association. Finally, traditional influences on the nature, structure, functioning and performance of the association are also discussed.

Chapter 3 deals with the songs and poems which the association performed. The nature and development of the songs and poems, as well as continuity and change within the song and poem genres are investigated to establish whether they are continuations of traditional songs and poems or new forms of artistic expression. Since the performance dimension is central to the classification of performance genres and attempts to uncover their meaning, the performance sequence is introduced as a representational framework for the analysis of the genres. An attempt is also made to relate the changes in the sociocultural conditions and contexts in which the performance genres were produced and performed to changes in the nature, structure and performance of the genres, particularly the gender and age restrictions on the right to exercise public power and therefore to perform such genres. The texts of the songs and poems are related to traditional indigenous themes and to "negotiation" and "armed conflict" as strategies of the ANC, and due attention is given to how textual, contextual and nonverbal elements of the performances influenced their sociocultural meaning and significance. Finally, an attempt is also made to demonstrate how songs and poems of the Mayibuye Cultural Group functioned together in performance.

Chapter 4 introduces the play of the association. The emergence, development, nature and characteristics of the play are unpacked, and attention is given to how the themes in the play related to the aim of the association to conscientise and mobilise ordinary South Africans with the messages in their performances. In particular, an attempt is made to relate the changes in the sociocultural conditions and contexts in which the workshop play was produced and performed to changes in the nature, structure, content and performance of the play. The rights of women are

examined against the backdrop of the position of women in the trade union federation in order to determine how these rights related to the broader national debate on the rights of women in South Africa. Finally, an attempt is made to establish the sociocultural significance of the play and whether it achieved its intended result.

In Chapter 5 the significance of the contemporary performance of struggle songs such as *Umshini wami* is established and what such performances signify regarding present-day South African society. The context of the origin of *Umshini wami* as a struggle song and of its resurgence in post-apartheid South Africa is explored and its analysis is projected against a larger context of political turmoil stemming from a power struggle for the leadership of the ANC and consequently of the country. The continuities between the song in its current incarnation and struggle songs in general are investigated, and the analysis demonstrates how a study of the somatic and other nonverbal elements of its performance enhances an understanding of the song as a discursive presence within the public sphere.

Chapter 6 presents the findings and conclusions reached in the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

"ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE …":[11]
REPRESENTING THE PERFORMERS AND SOCIOCULTURAL LANDSCAPE

2.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter it was argued that the political conflict and worker organisations of the 1970s and 1980s paved the way for the labour movement to centre itself as a voice for the oppressed masses, and created an environment in which performance and performance groups emerged in the labour movement as but one manifestation of resistance to the apartheid state. Such performance groups became part of a network of social movement organisations that arose, in Escobar's phrasing (1992:407), out of the experience of everyday life under conditions of domination. Buchler (1995:17-20) argues that both the emergence of such organisations and the interaction between participants of these organisations are influenced by an ideology of shared meanings; that the organisations typically are loosely federated on national levels; act as collectives in confronting elites, authorities or other groups; focus on grassroots politics and raise issues that pertain to the democratisation of structures of everyday life.

In this chapter the emergence, nature and functioning of the Mayibuye Cultural Group are investigated against this framework. Since the association was associated with the special departments and structures that were established in COSATU to support the expression of political resistance to the apartheid system by means of performance, the analysis of the group as a performance association is projected against these developments in the labour movement and the broader sociopolitical landscape in South Africa at the time. More specifically, the analysis is framed against the development of performance structures in COSATU; national and local township struggles in Tembisa, where the association was based; and aspects of the broader sociopolitical negotiation process which culminated in the establishment of a democratic government in 1994. Social organisation, however, does not exist separately from the individuals who constitute it, and consequently the respective sociocultural backgrounds of the members of the association were explored. These

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[11] The title of this chapter is based on the well-known verse line from Act 2, Scene 7 in the play *As you like it* by William Shakespeare. The full verse line reads as follows: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players."

data are presented as part of the context against which the establishment, nature, structure and functioning of the association are assessed.

2.2   PERFORMANCE AS MOBILISING STRATEGY IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The emergence of performance and performance structures (so-called cultural locals) in the ranks of COSATU to a large extent was the consequence of the Food and Canning Workers' Union's (FCWU) appeal in 1979 to the public to support striking workers who had been fired from the pasta manufacturers Fatti's and Moni's (see 4.3.1.1 for a more comprehensive discussion on the emergence of performance in the labour movement). In response to this appeal, some members of the Junction Avenue Theatre Company (JATC) developed a play, *Security*, which focused on unemployment and raised funds for the workers' boycott campaign. This play established a basis for cooperation between trade unions and activists from JATC, and they collaborated in several subsequent strikes and union struggles, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, where their collaboration gave rise to the development of a so-called worker theatre movement and the resolution that "culture" should be an important part of union affairs (Von Kotze 1988:20-21, 42).

Arising from these initiatives, the Durban Workers' Cultural Local (DWCL) was founded in 1984. This committee actively strove to propagate the use of performance in the labour movement (Kromberg 1991:187) and stimulated the national debate on the role and function of performance in the trade unions (Meintjies & Hlatshwayo 1989:3), which, in an attempt to build a united, democratic and nonracial society, was conceptualised as representing the views of the majority of the workers and serving the interests of the labour movement (Oliphant 1989:41). In terms of this view, "culture" had to consolidate, expand and mobilise the labour movement's constituency and promote education and unity among workers. Many performances, however, conflated shop floor issues with broader sociopolitical issues, resulting in the convergence of labour, township and youth struggles.

Not all groupings in the labour movement supported the priority that was given to "culture" (Gready 1994:168, 170), but despite these tensions, support was given to the establishment of cultural locals in various regions. By 1989, fifteen cultural locals had been established in the Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Western Cape regions (COSATU Cultural Department 1989:58) and according to COSATU claims, by

1993 the number had grown to 38 locals involving 300 active performance groups (Sitas 1997:104). These committees were coordinating bodies that aimed to facilitate performance at the local level involving as many people as possible, and to upgrade performance and performance skills in their respective areas.

A national cultural coordinator was also appointed to coordinate performance events in COSATU at regional and national levels. The functions of this coordinator included assisting performance groups in creating structures that would advance the struggle for liberation and the establishment of a united, democratic and nonracial society, as well as acquiring the necessary skills to achieve the aforementioned aim (Oliphant 1989:39-43).

2.3   THE MAYIBUYE CULTURAL GROUP AS AN ADAPTIVE MECHANISM IN RAPID SOCIOCULTURAL CHANGE

2.3.1   The emergence of the Mayibuye Cultural Group as a performance association

The banning of key anti-apartheid organisations and the placing of severe restrictions on political gatherings during the 1970s and 1980s in an effort to prevent people from meeting and organising, resulted in people using the long trainrides between townships and workplaces to organise and talk politics. Certain carriages on the train, called *emzabalazweni* (meaning "in the struggle") became meeting places for those who wanted to further the struggle against the apartheid system and mobilise the broader society (Shubane 1988:43, 45). In doing so, they extended the tradition of using trainrides for all kinds of sociocultural activities, such as trading and church gatherings, to the singing of resistance songs interspersed with speeches, poetry and dancing (*The New Nation* 1989b:13; Van Schalkwyk & Moifatswane 1993:4).

In 1986 a group of workers commuting on trains between Tembisa and Elandsfontein began to perform popular resistance songs and poems to fellow passengers. The positive response they received from commuters motivated them to find a wider audience and to form a performance association that publicly would express anger and despair at what was happening in South Africa. They issued an open invitation to train commuters to join the proposed performance association, and as a result 22 people, mostly women from different factories, workplaces and trade unions, responded to their call. At the foundation of the association they decided to call it the UNIPEC Group. The name is an acronym for United People's Culture and was

chosen to reflect the expressed unity among members consisting of workers, unemployed people and students, and as such was reflective of the broader developments in the labour movement and anti-apartheid political organisations at the time where labour, youth and community-based organisations were uniting and working together in their resistance to apartheid.

Figure 2.1   The UNIPEC Group (Tembisa Cultural Group) performing at COSATU's 1987 Cultural Day in Johannesburg (Photo: Weinberg 1989:105)

Initially the UNIPEC Group performed in private homes in Tembisa. *Worker's lament*, a poem composed by a member of the association (the cousin of the general secretary of the Mayibuye Cultural Group), was recited at performances and gained popularity. This inspired the association to dramatise the poem and it developed into a play. The popularity of the play eventually led to invitations for its performance at other venues in the Witwatersrand area of Gauteng, including at the Johannesburg UDF Congress in 1987. The association also performed the play on the train from Elandsfontein to Tembisa.

In 1988 the popularity and success of their performances prompted the Women's Forum of COSATU to ask them to develop a play on the threefold exploitation of women as blacks, females and workers (see 4.2.2.3). The ensuing play, *Women stand up for your rights,* forged a bond between them and COSATU, to which they became affiliated. During 1990, the association shifted its emphasis from plays to singing, as members felt that singing required a lesser time commitment and that audiences responded better to their songs. However, the group still continued with the

performance of the play *Women stand up for your rights*. At the time, the association also experienced internal problems resulting in several members resigning. The general secretary of the Mayibuye Cultural Group claimed that various factors contributed to members resigning from the association. The most important among these were: accusations by male and female members of sexual harassment within the association, complaints that discipline in the association was too harsh, and overcommitment of some of the members causing them to miss workshops and rehearsals. The association also lacked sponsorship and it never had the financial security of some of the other performance groups in townships which managed to secure recording contracts. As a result, some members could not manage the required financial sacrifices such as transport costs and were forced to resign. This demoralised members because they felt that they were not succeeding. Despite these challenges, however, the UNIPEC Group had fifteen active members during 1991.

Towards the end of 1991, the association broke its formal bonds with COSATU and joined the South African Workers' Cultural Unit (SAWCU), a nonpartisan performance organisation based on the former COSATU cultural structures, which was launched at the time. In keeping with the political climate of a united front, SAWCU opened up its membership to any "working class person", even those who were unemployed or were part of independent trade unions. SAWCU prioritised the promotion of performance in the workplace and indicated that it would negotiate with the state, local government and management to secure space for these performances. In the words of Mongane Wally Serote, a veteran of the liberation struggle and one of South Africa's eminent poets, the ANC associated themselves with SAWCU and viewed it as an important weapon against apartheid (*The New Nation* 1991:8).

At the beginning of 1992 the UNIPEC Group lost momentum and was disbanded. Eight of its former members, however, decided to start a new performance association. To this end, the general secretary of the Mayibuye Cultural Group and his cousin recruited people, especially those with good singing voices, and met with former UNIPEC Group members to discuss the formation of the new association. A new name for the association was also discussed and as a result the Mayibuye Cultural Group was founded in April 1992. Although the association was based in Tembisa, it performed across the Witwatersrand. With the institution of the Government of National Unity in April 1994, the Mayibuye Cultural Group was disbanded.

2.3.2   The nature and functioning of the Mayibuye Cultural Group

2.3.2.1   The name of the association

At the relaunch of the association in 1992, the members decided to adopt a new image and name. The respective members suggested various names for the association, including Masithandane (a Xhosa word meaning "let us love one another") Cultural Group, Mayibuye (a Xhosa word meaning "let it return") Cultural Group, Mayihlome (a Zulu word meaning "let it arm itself") UNIPEC, Mayithole (a Zulu word meaning "let it get something") Cultural Group and Peacemakers Cultural Group. Although the suggested names Masithandane Cultural Group and Peacemakers Cultural Group attempted to reflect the aim of the association to be nonpartisan and to unite workers irrespective of their ideology (see 2.3.2.2), members only supported two suggestions: Mayibuye Cultural Group and Mayihlome UNIPEC. Some members petitioned for Mayihlome UNIPEC because they felt that the new name of the association should reflect their origin from the UNIPEC Group. However, the majority of members voted for Mayibuye Cultural Group and it was subsequently adopted as the new name of the association.

Mayibuye is the singular imperative of the verb *ukubuya,* meaning "to return". The specific derivation used presupposes the use of a class 9 noun after the verb. Although such a noun was not part of the name Mayibuye Cultural Group, the class 9 derivation *Mayibuye* was probably used in imitation of the popular slogan, *Mayibuye iAfrika* (meaning "may Africa return"), which was used by the PAC at the time. It is noteworthy that the name was proposed by a member of the association who had previously been a member of the PAC. Members, however, dismissed my suggestion that their choice implied support for the PAC and argued that the ANC had used the slogan in earlier times. Members interpreted the word *mayibuye* in their own way. They felt that it reflected their African heritage and inspired a sense of pride. It voiced their wish to regain everything which they had lost: the members who had left the association without sound reasons, resources and opportunities in the townships and country which forcibly had been taken away from them. This included their right to vote and govern the country.

The association was also known under other names to audiences outside Tembisa. In some instances, audiences referred to the association as the Tembisa Cultural Group

because they associated it with its place of origin. In other instances, audiences named it for the organisation for whose benefit it was performing because of an assumed association between it and the particular organisation.

2.3.2.2   *Common interest as organisational basis for the association*

The association was formally organised: it had an executive committee, a constitution (see Appendix A), set procedures, rules of conduct and a distinct identity. In terms of its constitution, any person with an interest in performance could join the association. Members committed themselves to maintaining a nonsexist, nonpartisan and democratic association, and to developing entertaining and educational performances. The performances were produced through the voluntary, and mostly unpaid, participation of members. Consequently, the Mayibuye Cultural Group may be regarded as a common interest association in terms of the definition thereof as any private group which is more or less formally organised, and where members join voluntarily and pursue a common interest, usually by means of part-time unpaid activities (Haviland 2002:297; Kerri 1972:44).

Initial interviews with the members did not produce a clear conception of the primary interest around which the association rallied. Members claimed that they had joined in the first place to pursue an interest in performance and in the second place to contribute to the liberation struggle against the then white minority government. Third, they claimed that they had distanced themselves from political organisations and direct politics and wanted to perform to audiences irrespective of their ideologies. To put it succinctly, members argued that they were not actually involved in politics, but in performance that was used by other organisations for their own purposes, and that affiliation to a particular organisation would have prejudiced the messages in their performances.

Such statements, however, contradicted the circumstances that gave rise to the establishment of their precursor, the UNIPEC Group, their former formal connections with COSATU and its affiliates, and the fact that their songs, poems and play had a political content, were performed exclusively in politicised contexts and reflected direct support for the ANC and its affiliates (see 3.3.4.2 and 4.2.1). Members also mostly spoke of and described their performances in terms of the liberation struggle. To resolve this apparent contradiction regarding the primary interest of the

association and to facilitate the establishment of shared meanings between myself (the researcher) and them (those being researched), members were asked to rank motivational factors for participation in the association as an indication of their primary reason for being involved in it. The factors were building a career, creating art, contributing to the struggle, enjoying oneself, becoming famous, playing a game, relaxing, socialising with friends/people and working (see Appendix E:2.19). These factors, except "playing a game", were drawn from interviews with members dealing with the aims of the association and meanings which they ascribed to the concept of performance. The factor "playing a game" was added to the list because the concept of play approximates terms that a number of African societies, including South African societies, use to describe a diverse range of performances (Stone 1988:8).

The following ranking regarding their primary reason for being involved with the association was obtained:

1. contributing to the struggle
2. creating art
3. enjoying themselves
4. working
5. socialising with friends and people
6. building a career
7. relaxing
8. playing a game
9. becoming famous

This ranking suggests that they associated their activities in the association, which were informed by a shared ANC ideology, primarily with the liberation struggle. It consequently supports the hypothesis that their primary aim was to oppose the oppressive nature of the apartheid system, and to mobilise ordinary black South Africans towards national liberation through their performances.

To verify this finding, members were asked to rank career paths which were associated with money, status and an involvement with the struggle to determine their importance as motivational factors for members participating in the association. In discussing the functions of common interest associations, scholars

(Kerri 1976:32; Little 1970:114-5) have noted that associations can promote the prestige, social recognition and economic mobility of their members, and this may have been the reason for some members joining. The lack of money in the association certainly was the reason for some members resigning. The selected career paths were lawyer, professional sportsman, taxi-owner, policeman, priest, teacher, Mayibuye Cultural Group member, ANC official, trade union official, and student/worker (see Appendix E:2.16). The career paths were ranked in the following order:

1. Mayibuye Cultural Group member
2. worker
3. lawyer
4. ANC official
5. professional sportsman
6. trade union official
7. taxi owner
8. teacher
9. priest
10. policeman

The respective choices of the adults and the students did not differ meaningfully. Members ranked a career in the Mayibuye Cultural Group (a control item) first despite the fact that the Mayibuye Cultural Group did not offer career opportunities in the conventional sense of the word, explaining that it reflected their commitment to and the importance they placed on their participation in the Mayibuye Cultural Group. The high ranking of worker, members explained, was due to the fact that it related to any person, for example a lawyer, labourer, doctor, taxi-owner or mineworker who was exploited, participated in the struggle for national freedom and who, in the words of the general secretary, "had no control over the means of production". The rationale for the high ranking of lawyer was that lawyers were seen as champions of the people and because several ANC leaders had a legal background. Some students ranked trade union official relatively high although the association at that time had no direct connections with trade unions, explaining that COSATU and the ANC had similar principles, and therefore a trade union official was a desirable career. The low ranking (last in the preference order) of policeman, according to members, was attributable to the fact that policemen were seen as a part of the

apartheid forces. The ranking, therefore, once again emphasised the importance of an involvement with the struggle, corroborating the finding that their primary aim was to oppose the oppressive nature of the apartheid system, and to mobilise ordinary black South Africans towards national liberation by means of their performances. In the light of the above, the statement that they were not directly involved with politics but with performance per se, should rather be seen as an expression of the association's strategy at the time (and that of former cultural structures in COSATU) to strengthen its ties with anti-apartheid organisations which did not fall under the umbrella of the ANC alliance, and to broaden the base of a united front by opening up its membership, in the words of members, to "any working class person".

The Mayibuye Cultural Group, therefore, functioned as a political pressure group that aimed to conscientise and mobilise ordinary South Africans towards demanding legislative reform that would promote the interests of its members and the ANC alliance. In the absence of constitutional means to express opposition to the apartheid system (see 1.4.3), the association used performance as a vehicle to express their anger and despair at the sociopolitical conditions in South Africa. In the words of members, they stimulated the "culture of debate" with their performances, and similar to what has been reported on the nature and role of common interest associations elsewhere (Kerri 1976:34), the association was an adaptive mechanism in the changing sociopolitical landscape of South Africa of the 1980s and early 1990s. It opposed the coercive reforms in South Africa which were engineered by the then minority government, and suggested alternatives to these reforms to their members and audiences alike (see Chapter 3 and 4 in this regard).

2.3.2.3   *The performance focus of the Mayibuye Cultural Group*

Since the Mayibuye Cultural Group, and its precursor, the UNIPEC Group, had at various times in their respective histories focused on different performance genres, it was necessary to establish the primary performance focus of the associations. This was particularly pertinent in the light of the apparent contradiction between the content of their rehearsals and public performances on the one hand and interviews with members regarding their performances on the other hand: judged on the performance content of their rehearsals and public performances, the association

mostly performed songs, while an analysis of informal and unstructured interviews with members suggested that they strongly focused on their play.

In an attempt to resolve the contradiction, members were asked to rank types of performers, reflective of the various performance genres in which they were involved, to indicate the type of performer they primarily saw themselves to be (see Appendix E:2.17a). The six types were poet, musician, dancer, actor, playwright and singer. The association ranked the types as follows: playwright, actor, singer, musician, poet and dancer, a ranking order which accounted for their apparent focus on their play. There was, however, a meaningful difference between the choice of adults and students (see 2.3.2.4 for the age distribution within the group) with respect to the item singer, which was ranked first by the students, but fifth (second last) by the adults.

When challenged with the observation that by choice the association mostly performed songs and not the play, the adults could not justify their low ranking of the item singer or the infrequency in the performances of their play, which at that stage was hardly ever performed. In subsequent interviews it became clear that my intervention as a researcher influenced the ranking of the items of playwright and actor. Initially, I presented my research to the members as focusing specifically on the plays of the association, a presentation which gave rise to the deference effect: in an attempt to provide me with the information which in their opinion I was pursuing, the adults overemphasised the play and their involvement in it.

In reality, the association was first and foremost a choir which performed on average once a month. As such, it corresponded with most grassroots performance groups in the country which at the time were choirs (Maistry 1991:13). The association aimed to sing in various languages to reach and unify the whole spectrum of society in the townships, and by so doing, echoed attempts by performers of the DWCL, who similarly attempted to unify audiences across racial and cultural boundaries (Von Kotze 1988:65-6).

2.3.2.4   *Demographic profile of the members of the association*

Maistry (1991:30), writing on performance groups in the country at the time, claims that most grassroots resistance performers were young black men between the ages

of fourteen and 25. Almost 95% of the performers were under 35 years of age. They were mostly unemployed, factory workers or students and lived in townships, villages and informal settlements. Most performing groups had between eight and twelve members, although a larger membership was found in the case of choirs (up to 50 members) and youth groups engaged in performance activities. This profile corresponded to a large extent with the profile of the so-called comrades as delineated by Sitas (1992a:633, 635). He argues that they were the soldiers of the liberation movement and a social movement whose sociocultural dynamics and volatile identity were shaped through mobilisation and conflict. They attempted to generate a new kind of mobilisation and expressed their opposition to the apartheid state in militant songs, actions and behaviour.

The Mayibuye Cultural Group displayed most of the characteristics noted above and addressed each other, and all people who in their opinion were involved in the struggle, as comrade. During 1993, the association had sixteen members, eleven males and five females, all of whom lived in Tembisa. The association was thus comparable in size and composition with other such groups. The majority (twelve) of the members were between sixteen and 24 years old. Eight members (five males and three females) identified themselves as students, while the remaining members (six males and two females) identified themselves as adults. Further, the average age of the members was 22,6, with the youngest aged sixteen and the oldest aged 35, which also corresponded with the age distribution in similar groups. The average age of male members was 23,3 years and of female members 21 years. Young people therefore dominated the membership. However, their number was proportionally very high in relation to the 1991 census figures for Tembisa, where only 18,4% of the population was between fifteen and 24 years (South Africa, Central Statistical Service 1991:68).[12] The composition of the association was very fluid. Although a core of members consisting mainly of males controlled authority and creativity in the association, there was a relatively high turnover of other members that impacted on its gender and age distribution. In 1991, for example, the ages of members ranged from eight to 47 years. All the members identified with a specific language group, including eleven Xhosa speakers, two Tswana speakers, and one each Zulu, Ndebele and Northern Sotho speaker. Only five of the eight adults were economically active

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[12] Since the bulk of the fieldwork as regards the association was conducted from September 1990 to the end of 1993, the 1991 census statistics are used to provide comparative data on the population of Tembisa at the time of the research.

(see 2.4.5.1). The association, therefore, had a novel composition of male and female adults, as well as male and female student members that superseded traditional gender and age restrictions on the right of people to exercise public power and therefore to perform political songs (see 3.2.2.2) in politicised contexts.

2.3.2.5   *The executive committee*

The Mayibuye Cultural Group had an executive committee which ran the daily affairs of the association. The functionaries were elected by the members of the association and held office for a period of only one year. The members felt that such an arrangement afforded various members the opportunity to lead the association and would stimulate growth and initiative. There were seven portfolios available which ensured that almost half of the members were involved in the running of the association. Common interest associations in Africa often have a multitude of offices available so that even the most insignificant member has the opportunity to feel that he or she matters (Little 1970:88). The Mayibuye Cultural Group had a chairperson, vice-chairperson, general secretary, vice-secretary and a treasurer. In addition, a conductor and an assistant-conductor were appointed, although they were not part of the executive committee. For a description of the various responsibilities of the functionaries, see Appendix A, Clauses 4 and 5.

The executive committee of the Mayibuye Cultural Group was more comprehensive than that of its precursor. The UNIPEC Group had an education officer, an organiser, a treasurer and a spokesperson. The education officer (who subsequently was elected as the general secretary of the Mayibuye Cultural Group) had the task of liaising with other performance groups and structures and informing the association of performance events. The organiser (the cousin of the general secretary of the Mayibuye Cultural Group) had to organise the logistics of performances. The spokesperson (who subsequently was elected as chairperson of the Mayibuye Cultural Group) was their main contact with the outside world. He spoke to the people who wanted to join or communicate with the association, and announced songs, plays or poems during performances.

The role of gender in the executive committee

Since the Mayibuye Cultural Group agitated for women's rights and their play *Women stand up for your rights* revealed various discriminatory issues that are still relevant in contemporary South Africa (see 4.3.4), a profile of the gender composition of the executive committee is presented for an analysis of the extent to which women's rights were acknowledged within it and reflected in the nature and functioning of the association. The males controlled the executive committee of the association. The chairperson, vice-chairperson and assistant-conductor were male students. The general secretary and conductor were adult males. Only two females were involved in the executive committee, as treasurer and as vice-secretary. The first chairperson of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, however, was a female student, but she resigned from the association after a short period of time. The females seemed to have been more involved with family responsibilities which gave them less leisure time and opportunities to be involved in the running of the association. Nevertheless, the Mayibuye Cultural Group was more gender-conscious than the UNIPEC Group whose executive committee consisted exclusively of males.

Females in choirs, particularly those in peri-urban and rural areas, seldom occupied leadership positions (Maistry 1991:30), but since the association agitated for women's rights one would have expected greater involvement of the females in leadership positions. This would have been in line with the main aim of COSATU's Women's Forum, namely to prepare women for leadership positions in the federation and its affiliates (Shefer 1991:5). In this respect the association reflected the situation in the unions and therefore in COSATU, where women occupied few leadership positions despite having been at the forefront of militant shop floor struggles in certain sectors (Cullinan 1988:9).

The role of the general secretary

In most cases, the general secretary spoke on behalf of the association and was identified by the members as being the person who contributed most to its functioning and successes. More specifically, he was described as inspiring, energetic, enthusiastic, and as the main contributor to the development of the songs, poems and play that the association performed. His influence on the decisions of the association also seemed to have been greater than that of the other members.

On occasion he single-handedly managed to reverse motions that the association had accepted. He also seemed to have assumed the role of disciplinarian, for example, by his accusations of a lack of commitment by members who had missed several rehearsals and meetings, and his threats of corporal punishment. Such threats did not seem to have been unusual among performance groups. The well-known and respected playwright, Gibson Kente, allegedly used corporal punishment as a measure to control the casts of his plays and was of the opinion that it produced the necessary results.

This apparent status of the general secretary in the association corresponded with the status of indigenous traditional leaders in such matters (Olivier *et al*. 1989:137, 139; Vorster 2001:120), and appeared to have been sanctioned by the members. Such transference of status also corresponded with what occurred in voluntary associations in Africa in general, where, according to Little (1970:87), associations often served needs of kin groups and lineages in traditional societies.

2.3.2.6   Meetings

The association had executive meetings, monthly meetings, special meetings which were called when necessary, and an annual general meeting which normally was held on 16 December to coincide with the yearly commemoration date of the founding of *Umkhonto weSizwe* (lit.: spear of the nation) (see Appendix A, Clauses 6, 7 and 8). The chairperson chaired the executive and general meetings. Usually the meetings were conducted in isiZulu because all members understood it. However, members could address a meeting in their mother tongue. In such cases, the chairperson, who spoke more languages than anyone else in the association, translated and summarised matters into isiZulu so that everyone could understand. The chairperson would open a meeting with a brief discussion of the agenda. Members would then be given an opportunity to discuss matters and to put motions and countermotions on the table. After discussions, they would vote on the different motions and come to a conclusion. Consensus of members was important and discussions often centred on reaching consensus, but the executive committee had a veto on any decision, which on occasion they exercised.

2.3.2.7　**Rehearsal commitments**

The Mayibuye Cultural Group rehearsed three hours per week on average (see 2.4.7.1). Its precursor, the UNIPEC Group, rehearsed on Monday and Thursday evenings as well as Sunday afternoons. Because several members often could not attend all such rehearsals because of their political and other commitments the UNIPEC Group dropped Monday rehearsals. The Mayibuye Cultural Group, in terms of its constitution, should have rehearsed on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays (see Appendix A, Clause 9), but because of members' various other commitments, they normally met and rehearsed from 18:30 to 20:00 on Tuesday evenings and from 14:00 to 18:00 on Sunday afternoons.

2.3.2.8　**Funding**

Maistry (1991:32) claims that the sources of income of grassroots performance groups in South Africa at the time consisted of subscriptions and/or contributions by members; monies generated by performances, and, in the case of a few groups, business and multinational sponsorships. Some political organisations and trade unions also provided support by making their facilities available to performance groups. The Mayibuye Cultural Group neither had a sponsor nor a subscription system, but survived on contributions by members and monies generated by performances. The UNIPEC Group initially had a subscription system: members paid a monthly subscription of R2 to cover costs, but when students started joining, the system was dropped because the students could not afford the subscriptions. When the Mayibuye Cultural Group needed money, contributions were collected from members (see Appendix A, Clause 12). Employed members were required to contribute more than unemployed members: they usually contributed R10 while students and unemployed members contributed R5. If, for some reason, a member could not manage a contribution, it was accepted without reservation by the association. The association was also supported by some organisations and individuals; for example, FAWU supported the UNIPEC Group by providing its Tembisa branch offices for meetings and rehearsals of the association, while the principal of the Masisebenze Secondary School allowed the Mayibuye Cultural Group to rehearse and meet at the school.

In the opinion of members, the lack of sponsorship (and therefore money) was one of the most enervating challenges that the association had to face. As was mentioned earlier, it certainly contributed to the high turnover of members in the association. Some members resigned because they could not afford the financial sacrifices that were required of them. In contrast, members wanted to be in a position where they were paid for their efforts and participation. During performances they asked audiences for contributions, justifying the request by explaining that they were not affiliated to any organisation and that they did not have a sponsor. Only occasionally did they receive money or were their transport fees paid.

Although it was one of their express aims to raise money for the association (see Appendix A, Clause 3), the Mayibuye Cultural Group and its precursor only launched two notable initiatives to raise money. In 1989, the UNIPEC Group successfully organised a festival which raised some funds. After the foundation of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, the association, spurred on by the success of UNIPEC's initiative, decided to organise a fundraising event in Tembisa and scheduled a concert for 21 November 1992. They intended to include a fashion show and beauty contest in their programme and to approach other performance groups to support their effort. They also approached the civic structure of Zone 6 in Tembisa to help them organise the event, but Zone 6 had an executive committee election and in the change-over of committees, the association did not receive any help. The association requested the residents of Zone 6 to assist them with the costs involved, but because they could not secure the support of the civic structure for their venture nor generate enough interest through pamphlets advertising the concert (the few that were available were pasted to the walls of houses and shops in the area), they were forced to cancel the concert. The association also had a long-term goal to record their songs, which they had hoped would have raised funds. They were of the opinion that they only would have been able to do so once they had recruited musicians who could accompany the choir and had acquired funds to purchase the necessary equipment to produce a decent demonstration tape. Unfortunately, this never materialised.

2.3.2.9   *Discipline*

The Mayibuye Cultural Group, similar to common interest associations in Africa generally (Little 1970:95-6), had a disciplinary code which was adopted at their 1993 Annual General Meeting. The code was drawn up by the general secretary. Upon

joining, members were required to sign the code. The code was intended to prevent victimisation in the event of a disciplinary hearing. When a disciplinary problem was experienced in the association, all members were notified and requested to be present at a hearing. At such a hearing the problem was discussed and a decision to suspend a member was reached on the consensus of the members. Failure to attend meetings, rehearsals, workshops and performances was considered to be just cause for a disciplinary hearing (see Appendix A, Clause 7 to 11).

2.3.2.10　Venues for meetings and rehearsals

The UNIPEC Group met, workshopped and rehearsed in the Tembisa branch office of FAWU (an affiliate of COSATU) in the Tembi Centre, which was situated next to a station of the former South African Police (SAP) in Tembisa. Because members were labelled as activists by virtue of their association with the ANC alliance, they exposed themselves to possible SAP harassment when they attended meetings, workshops and rehearsals. The FAWU office was very small (approximately twelve square metres in size) and was sparsely furnished. The walls were covered almost completely with pro-ANC alliance posters.

Meetings, workshops and rehearsals which took place in this venue therefore occurred within the context of the networks and ideology of the ANC alliance. On several occasions the association was forced to meet in the corridors of the Tembi Centre because FAWU officials used their office during times which were scheduled for meetings and rehearsals of the association. Often such meetings and rehearsals were disrupted by traffic in the corridors. People passing by greeted members and discussed pressing issues with those who were also fellow members of other organisations. When SAWCU was formed and formal links with COSATU were severed, FAWU likewise formally severed its links with the association, with the result that the association was no longer allowed to use this venue.

The Mayibuye Cultural Group used other venues for rehearsals and meetings. Occasionally they met at the house of the general secretary in the Ethafeni section. On these occasions, they used the lounge, which was very small (approximately nine square metres in size) and crowded with furniture. This venue was unsuitable and only served as a last resort. At other times, they rehearsed in room 54 of the COSAS block of the Masisebenze Secondary School. The room was approximately 45 square

*Figure 2.2.   FAWU's office walls were covered almost
completely with posters of the ANC alliance*

metres in size and except for chairs, school desks and an empty cupboard, bare. The names and acronyms Joe Modise, SACP, ANC and MK were painted on the outside walls of the COSAS block, which again invoked the ideology of the ANC alliance as part of the context.

Maistry (1991:33) claims that at the time grassroots performance groups across the country rehearsed in schools, churches and the outdoors, a fate which the Mayibuye Cultural Group shared. The members were not happy with their venues and on various occasions approached the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) to provide them with a rehearsal venue, but this request met with no success. At our first meeting the members also asked me to assist the association in securing a proper rehearsing venue for the association, but all efforts to do so proved to be fruitless.

2.3.2.11 Dress

The association did not have a distinct costume or dress which they wore during performances because they did not have the necessary funds to acquire costumes. They indicated that they would have liked to wear costumes, since they believed that it would have enhanced solidarity within the association, underscoring Little's (1970:88) view that common interest associations often have emblems and a uniform style of dress to enhance solidarity within the association.

2.3.2.12 The association as a vehicle for the aspirations of individual members

Since members of common interest associations by participating in and successfully organising an association may develop qualities and skills that can be helpful in their careers and provide ambitious members with the opportunity of widening their personal contacts (Kerri 1976:32; Little 1970:114-115), an investigation was done to determine whether this was true of members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group. The members certainly received wide exposure in a variety of politicised contexts, and by performing in and organising the association, acquired qualities, skills and experience that could have been conducive to widening their personal contacts and increasing their prestige and social recognition. The general secretary of the association appeared to have been in search of some sort of recognition, since he was trying to secure a publisher and/or video producer for his play (see Appendix D:2), but except for one poem, *I am politically bankrupt* (see Appendix C:4.), never managed to publish any of his work.

Consequently, to assess whether they thought, albeit unconsciously, that performing in the association identified them as activists in the ANC alliance and increased their visibility, members were asked to complete two related prioritising grids. The first required them to rank identities which, in their opinion, best described themselves (see Appendix E:2.17b) and was designed to provide a basis for interpretation and comparison, while the second required them to rank identities which audiences, in their opinion, ascribed to them (see Appendix E:2.18). The two grids had identical identities that were drawn from interviews with members, except for the identity of "Mayibuye Cultural Group member", which was included in the first grid, and "celebrity" (famous person), which substituted Mayibuye Cultural Group in the second grid. The exclusion of celebrity from the first grid was prompted by members'

distinct uneasiness with and dismissal of the question whether they were an eminent performance association. However, since the identity was indicative of social recognition and the second grid did not directly convey members' own perceptions, but rather perceptions which, in their opinion, were reflective of their audiences, it was included to assess its latent significance for members. The identities that were included in both grids were ANC member, black, COSATU member, cultural worker, PAC member, performer, student, worker, and member of an ethnic group.

The association ranked the identities which described themselves best as follows: performer, worker, Mayibuye Cultural Group member, cultural worker, ANC member, student, COSATU member, black, member of an ethnic group and last, PAC member. There were, however, significant differences between the choices of the adults and students. The adults ranked the identities as follows: Mayibuye Cultural Group member, performer, cultural worker, worker, ANC member tied with COSATU member, black, student, member of an ethnic group and PAC member. The students, in contrast, ranked them as follows: student tied with worker, performer, cultural worker, member of an ethnic group, ANC member, Mayibuye Cultural Group member, black, COSATU member and PAC member.

Adults	Students
1. Mayibuye Cultural Group member	1. student/worker
2. performer	2. performer
3. cultural worker	3. cultural worker
4. worker	4. member of an ethnic group
5. ANC/COSATU member	5. ANC member
6. black	6. Mayibuye Cultural Group member
7. student	7. black
8. member of an ethnic group	8. COSATU member
9. PAC member	9. PAC member

Table 2.1 Differences in identity ranking between students and adults in Mayibuye Cultural Group

As could have been expected in terms of their strategy at the time to distance themselves from political organisations and direct politics, the ranking of both the

adults and students indicated a reluctance by members to describe themselves in terms of political membership and a preference for identities which were associated with performance, such as performer, cultural worker and Mayibuye Cultural Group member. Three results were particularly interesting: first, the difference in the ranking of "Mayibuye Cultural Group member" by students and adults. The students ranked it seventh while the adults ranked it first, indicating that the identity "Mayibuye Cultural Group member" was more important to the adults than the students. Second, was the high ranking of "worker" (tied with student in first place) by students, which indicated the students' appropriation of a class ideology and consciousness associated with the ANC alliance at the time. Third, was the difference in the ranking of "member of an ethnic group" by adults and students which is discussed below (see 2.4.8.1).

With regard to the second grid, there were no meaningful differences between the choices of adults and students. The identities were ranked as follows: ANC member, performer, worker, cultural worker, COSATU member, student, black, member of an ethnic group, celebrity and PAC member. The ranking, in contrast to the first grid, privileged their ANC identity (which was ranked fifth in the first grid, but first in the second grid) and placed greater emphasis on their association with COSATU (which was ranked seventh in the first grid, but fifth in the second grid). Since the association did not exclusively perform at ANC gatherings, but also at various trade union, COSATU, UDF and MDM gatherings (see 2.3.3), which therefore excludes the logical assumption that they were ANC performers, the ranking suggested that members were of the opinion that their participation in the association identified them as ANC activists and increased their visibility as ANC activists.

To assess whether their visibility as activists in the ANC alliance in fact enhanced their social recognition in the Tembisa community, the leadership roles of members were investigated. The analysis revealed that a significant number were or previously had been in leadership positions in organisations: three students (the chairperson, vice-chairperson and a male student member of the association) at the time had important portfolios in the Students' Representative Councils of their respective schools (see 2.4.6.1), while the general secretary and his cousin, at various times during the existence of the association, had occupied local ANC and ANC Youth League leadership positions in Tembisa, as well as local and regional leadership positions in COSATU and TGWU (see 2.4.5.2 and 2.4.8.3). In almost all cases, they

were elected to these leadership positions after joining and performing with the association. According to Gready (1994:170), this eventuality was true of grassroots performance groups generally. Performers in such groups often ascended to leadership positions because of the stature they had gained in gatherings of the ANC alliance and labour movement.

It would appear then that participation in the association enhanced members' prestige and social recognition, and that this enhanced status even helped to advance their careers after the association was disbanded. As a student at the Witwatersrand Technikon from 1994 to 1997, the chairperson became involved in student politics and was elected to the position of deputy general secretary of SASO's branch at the technikon. In 2001 he was also nominated for membership of the Council of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, but did not accept the nomination. The general secretary, after the association was disbanded, was appointed as a shop steward for TGWU, while his cousin was elected to a leadership position at sectional level of the ANC civic structures in Tembisa. Members affirmed that participation in the Mayibuye Cultural Group had given them confidence and courage and had helped them to develop leadership qualities, debating skills, and the ability to deal with difficult situations.

The performance skills and experience which they acquired as members of the cast of *Women stand up for your rights*, in the words of the former chairperson, also proved to be valuable. In 1997, he received a best actor award for his role as Fafi in the technikon's production of *Sophiatown*. This achievement, he claimed, was in part owing to the experience gained and skills honed as a member of the association.

2.3.3   Networks

As was mentioned earlier, the UNIPEC Group was formally affiliated with COSATU. Besides this bond, its individual members were involved with a variety of organisations affiliated with the ANC alliance, which collectively strengthened their relationship with it. Not surprisingly then, the association performed at various trade union, COSATU, UDF, MDM and ANC gatherings. The Mayibuye Cultural Group, although not formally associated with COSATU or any political organisation, similarly was associated with a variety of organisations affiliated with the ANC alliance through the membership of its individual members (see 2.4.5.2, 2.4.6.1 and 2.4.8.3),

and performed at small and large trade union and political gatherings. Examples of such performances were their performances at local annual general meetings and rallies of the ANC, COSATU, SACP, NUMSA, TGWU, the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) and the Post and Telecommunication Workers' Association (POTWA), organisations which were, according to Baskin (1991:184, 197, 199, 330, 354), affiliated with the ANC alliance.

The bond which existed between the Mayibuye Cultural Group and the ANC was also acknowledged by the Tembisa ANC branch approaching the association to become an ANC performance association to popularise the struggle in Tembisa. Although the majority of the association supported the proposition, they did not come to a final decision since NUMSA made a similar offer at the time and members were divided on the issue. Some members felt that their connection with NUMSA would have been more profitable and that the ANC would not have been in a position to assist them financially.

The association was also approached by the Johannesburg Dance Foundation to serve as a link between the foundation and performance groups in Tembisa, but this did not materialise. The association occasionally worked together with other performance groups. In 1992, for example, they performed with gospel choirs, and also invited the Masekane Choir from an informal settlement in Tembisa to perform with them.

2.4   THE SOCIOCULTURAL BACKGROUND OF MEMBERS OF THE MAYIBUYE CULTURAL GROUP

2.4.1   Introduction

In this section, the sociocultural contexts of members are investigated to determine their significance in the establishment, nature and functioning of the association, as well as the extent to which they created cohesion between members: to put it succinctly, the investigation aims to uncover how members became entangled in the webs of significance that were spun around the association. Members did not share the same sociocultural background nor did they live in the same circumstances. They were from diverse ethnic origins and associations, and as a group transcended specific cultural boundaries. As workers and members of the broader, complex South African society, however, they had much in common and were exposed to similar and

collective experiences. The 1960s ushered in a dramatic expansion of South Africa's manufacturing sector. For example, the number of black workers in this sector rose from 479 200 in 1960 to 1 133 500 in 1982 (Marx 1989:383-5). In the early 1990s the expansion gave way to a process of deindustrialisation in the post-apartheid state (Sharp 2006:18). Sitas (1986:87) argues that transition to "the gigantic modern factory", amplified by the effects of apartheid, exposed workers to a collective experience, and resulted in workers from different industries having similar experiences and problems, and to "talk the same language".

Van Heerden (1992:74) argues that individuals in complex societies on the one hand are connected to each other across societal boundaries by global cultural systems, such as Christianity and capitalism, or in Sitas's (1986:87) phrasing, the gigantic modern factory. On the other hand, they are exposed to local cultural systems, such as those relating to a neighbourhood or a local church. Further, every individual is exposed to a variety of cultural systems, each comprising different participants, relationships, ways of interacting and communicating, resulting in each individual differing from residents of his or her township or city and even from members of his or her kinship group (Van Heerden 1997:78). Therefore an analysis of the multiple sociocultural contexts in which an individual participates requires an approach that would account for shared as well as distinctive characteristics, and does not proceed from a supposedly bounded group to the individual, but from the individual to the group. In our contemporary world where there is large-scale mobility of people and spreading of technology, especially those which enable extensive and intensive communication, the application of an approach which emphasises the boundedness of culture has become problematic, especially in areas of research which do not fall in the ambit of separate, bounded societies, but cut across the boundaries of specific communities and that need to be viewed against a broader societal context (Van Heerden 1992:69-70).

To study individuals holistically and contextually, Van Heerden (1997:78) proposes that one should analyse individuals' involvement in various fields of activity. In terms of her definition an activity field is "a sociocultural field of interaction between certain persons (participants) in connection with a specific type of activity or activities in which a particular set or network of relationships occurs … and in which activities are guided by ideas …". Since the respective sociocultural contexts of members consisted of several smaller and diverse contexts that were connected to

the broader, complex South African society and local Tembisa community, Van Heerden's approach has been adopted and the sociocultural contexts of members are presented accordingly. From interviews conducted with and observation of the activities of members, it became clear that the following fields of activity presented themselves as important for members: those arising from residential locality, kinship, religion, occupation, formal education, leisure and politics.

2.4.2 Activities and interactions arising from residential locality

The Mayibuye Cultural Group was based in Tembisa. The name Tembisa means "promise of a new life"(*The New Nation* 1989c:4), and the township is situated in the area of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality in Gauteng, along the main railway line linking Centurion and Germiston (see Maps 1 and 2 in Appendix F). Although all members lived in Tembisa, especially in Ethafeni Section (see Map 3 in Appendix F), only four were born in the township. Eight of the members, including two females, were born in the former Transkei and Ciskei in the Eastern Cape. Two members were born in neighbouring townships, namely Thokoza and Soweto, while the remaining two members came from Cape Town and Dannhauser respectively. Six members relocated to Tembisa towards the end of the 1980s and were therefore, at the time of the fieldwork, newly arrived residents: four (two adult males, one male student and one female student) came from the former Transkei, one adult female from Ciskei and one male student from Dennilton. Membership of the association was drawn exclusively from Tembisa (and mainly from residents in the Ethafeni Section), as can also be inferred from the alternative name, the Tembisa Cultural Group, which some people used to refer to the association. However, the organisational principle of the association was not based on territory, nor did it intend promoting neighbourhood issues exclusively. Membership was open to anyone, irrespective of where he or she lived. The fact that membership was drawn exclusively from Tembisa in fact pointed to practical considerations. Transport at the time often presented overwhelming challenges and would have been debilitating for a prospective member who lived outside of Tembisa. Their shared domicile as residents of Tembisa exposed them to collective and similar socio-economic and sociopolitical experiences.

2.4.2.1   *Historical profile of Tembisa*

The township was proclaimed a regional township in the late 1950s to serve as labour pool for the then new industrial and residential growth area between Johannesburg and Pretoria, as well as to house families that were removed from Alexandra, Edenvale and Midrand (Kumalo & Mokwebo 1989:16; *Leadership: A way of life* 1987:61).

The term "regional township" refers to a township which was proclaimed as a result of a joint decision by various local authorities to serve their common geographical area, instead of each local authority laying out one or more smaller townships. The former Department of Native Affairs started this initiative for a common residential area, and approached seven local authorities which all agreed to cooperate. The common geographical area extended over the areas of Bedfordview, Edenvale, Germiston, Kempton Park, Lyttelton/Verwoerdburg (now Centurion) and Modderfontein, as well as areas which were under the jurisdiction of the Peri-Urban Areas Health Board (Van Zyl 1990:1-2).

Tembisa was established in terms of the Native Urban Areas Act 21 of 1923 (as amended in 1930, 1937 and 1945). The Blacks (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act 25 of 1945 had to be amended to provide for the laying out of a regional township by agreement between various local authorities. The memorandum of agreement between the local authorities was finalised in 1957, Tembisa was proclaimed, and the first 200 families moved into the area that same year (Van Zyl 1990:2).

The administration of Tembisa was taken over by the East Rand Administration Board in April 1973 (Tembisa Town Council, Department of Community Development 1988:2). It was granted municipal status in 1982. In 1983 seventeen councillors were elected in a 16,9% poll to administer the township (Kumalo & Mokwebo 1989:16). The Tembisa Town Council became autonomous in 1986. In 1988, the town council comprised six councillors and an administrator (Tembisa Town Council, Department of Community Development 1988:2-4). Finally, the councils of Edenvale, Kempton Park, Modderfontein and Tembisa dissolved at the end of 1994 to be amalgamated in January 1995 as the Edenvale/Modderfontein Metropolitan substructure and the Kempton Park/Tembisa Metropolitan Substructure of the North East Rand Metropolitan Council (Koch 1995:19). At the time, the western part of Tembisa fell

under the jurisdiction of the Edenvale/Modderfontein Metropolitan Local Council and the rest of Tembisa under the Kempton Park/Tembisa Metropolitan Local Council. In 1996 the North East Rand Metropolitan Council was renamed the Khayalami Metropolitan Council.

In 2001 the Khayalami Metropolitan Council was incorporated into a larger structure, the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, which comprised all the towns and townships of the former East Rand. This metropolitan municipality was established in terms of Section 12(1) of the *Local Government Municipal Structure Act,* No.117 of 1998 (under Notice 6768 of 2000 published in Provincial Gazette Extraordinary of 1 October 2000, as amended by Notice 8700 of 2000 published in Provincial Gazette Extraordinary of 4 December 2000, and Notice 5215 of 2001 published in Provincial Gazette Extraordinary of 29 August 2001). Tembisa is currently part of the Northern Service Delivery Region of the metropolitan municipality (see Maps 1 and 2 in Appendix F).

2.4.2.2   *Demographical profile of Tembisa*

According to official sources Tembisa had a population of 209 023 in 1991 (South Africa, Central Statistical Service 1991:68). However, according to officials at the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality the estimated population of Tembisa in June 1996 was 435 000. Officials speculated that the disparity in the population figures was the result of either inaccurate and insufficient census data collected during the problematic sociopolitical situation of the time, or rapid population growth during the early 1990s, or both.

The area of Tembisa in 1991 measured 2 281 ha, and it was subdivided into 57 sections (see Map 3 in Appendix F). In 1996 there were 27 000 single housing units, 5 000 backyard shacks and four hostels with a total of 16 000 beds in the township, and its public facilities in 1995 included one hospital, one hotel, 35 industries, 210 small retail developments, two banks and one building society (*Official South African Municipal Yearbook* 1995:235). There was a huge housing backlog in the township. In 1989, for example, some residents claimed that they had been on the housing waiting list for twenty years (Kumalo & Mokwebo 1989:16). According to the Tembisa Town Council, Department of Community Development (1988:2-3), families initially were housed in two-roomed or four-roomed houses, but due to housing shortages,

the houses were overcrowded. In a 1988 survey of the area it was found that numerous two-roomed houses were occupied by families comprising more than ten people, and that four-roomed houses often accommodated extended families. Many residents erected shacks in their backyards and rented these to other families. Such occupancy was legalised through lodgers' permits which were issued by the council.

Informal settling in Tembisa started to assume serious proportions towards the end of 1989 (Van Zyl 1990:4), and conditions and services in Tembisa were appalling (*The New Nation* 1989c:4). The existence and expansion of informal settlements as well as the erection of secondary structures in backyards indicated that the housing shortage was intensifying. The backlog in housing was aggravated by political instability, lack of investment confidence, economic recession, the influx of people to the metropolitan areas, and unemployment (*African Business & Chamber of Commerce Review* 1991:13).

At the time of the fieldwork for this study the greater part of the township was divided into different ethnic zones. According to officials at the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, this ethnic zoning was not instituted with the establishment of the township but was introduced subsequently. The zoning was reflected in the physical addresses of the members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group. All Xhosa-speaking members, with the exception of one female student, lived in Ethafeni Section. The two Tswana-speaking members as well as the Ndebele-speaking member lived in Sedibeng Section, while the rest of the members lived in Moedi Section, Endulweni Section and Tsenelong Section (see Map 3 in Appendix F). In terms of the civic structures, the Zulu-speaking member lived in Zone 1, the eleven Xhosa-speaking members lived in Zone 6 and the other four members lived in Zone 7.

2.4.3   Activities and interactions arising from kinship

A group based on commonality of interest implies that it is not primarily based on kinship considerations (Kerri 1976:24). Consequently, to substantiate their claim that the association was based on commonality of interest and not on any other organisational principle, the kinship relationships and networks in the association were investigated to determine their potential role, if any at all, in the establishment and nature of the association.

2.*4.3.1* *Consanguineous and affinal relationships in the association*

There were two sets of consanguineous (blood) relatives in the association. These sets were related to the general secretary and the conductor of the association respectively. Two consanguineal relatives of the general secretary, namely his brother and a male parallel cousin, and two of the conductor, namely his sister and a male cross-cousin, were members of the association. There were no affinal relationships (relationships established by marriage) in the association at the time of the fieldwork: previously the general secretary's wife had been a member, but resigned from the association before the fieldwork commenced.

2.4.3.2 *Kinship networks*

Three male members in the association were married, and two female members were single parents. With regard to the married members, one had concluded a civil marriage while the other two, namely the general secretary and his cousin, had concluded both a traditional and a civil marriage. All three, however, had delivered *lobolo* to their respective wives' agnatic groups. They therefore observed this traditional requirement with regard to the conclusion of marriage.

All members of the association, except for one male, lived with members of their agnatic groups: two lived with their parents, four with their parents and other members of their extended families, and nine with either siblings or cousins. With regard to the two sets of consanguineal relatives in the association, the conductor, his sister and cousin lived together, while the general secretary provided accommodation for his brother, who was a student at the time. The male member who did not live with his agnatic group, shared a room with another male member of the association (a friend of his), who was living with his agnatic group. These two members knew each other from childhood and, before coming to Tembisa, lived in the same village in the former Transkei. All the members of the association indicated that they had relatives in rural areas and that they had frequent contact with them.

2.4.3.3 *Clan affiliation*

On the question whether they were members of a clan (a descent group whose members claim to be descended from a common fictive ancestor), twelve members

of the association (ten Xhosa speakers and one each Zulu-speaking and Northern Sotho-speaking member) responded positively. Two members (one Xhosa-speaking male adult and one Southern Ndebele-speaking male student), who linguistically were associated with societies that were characterised by clan organisation, did not indicate any clan membership.

The Xhosa-speaking members who indicated that they were members of a clan, identified with the following clans:

- two adult males and one male student with the *Cirha* clan
- one adult male with the *Majola* clan
- one adult female with the *Matshangisa* clan
- one female student with the *Mbathane* clan
- one adult male and one female student with the *Nyathi* clan
- one female student with the *Rhadebe* clan
- one adult male with the *Tshawe* clan

The general secretary, his brother and cousin were under the authority of their mothers' clan (*Cirha*). Their mothers, who were sisters, got divorced when they were still boys, and returned to their father's (the boys' maternal grandfather's) agnatic group after they had left their respective husbands.

The Zulu-speaking adult female indicated that she was a member of the *Mpembe* clan. The Northern Sotho-speaking male student, who was born in Dennilton in the former homeland of KwaNdebele, indicated that he was a member of the *Selai* (also called the *Mahlagaume)* clan, although linguistically he was associated with the Northern Sotho society that traditionally did not have clan organisation. Although uncommon, such identification of clan membership among Northern Sotho speakers has been noted. De Beer (1986:122) has recorded remnants of a clan organisation among the Northern Ndebele, who largely have been assimilated into the Northern Sotho, while Jonas (1989:44-46) has recorded several unfamiliar clan names in Ndebele society that were derived from Northern Sotho surnames. He relates the occurrence of such clan names to the influx of people from various sociocultural backgrounds into the former homeland during the decades leading to the change to a democratic government in 1994. Ndebele society considers the surnames of all people living in the area to be clan names, and expects people to observe rules of

exogamy associated with clans, even if they were associated with societies that traditionally did not have clan organisation. Since the Northern Sotho-speaking member's family came from the former homeland of KwaNdebele, the above serves to explain why the member recognised a clan, despite being associated linguistically with a society that was not characterised by clan organisation, but by a lineage organisation.

From the above discussion it is clear that the association was not constituted by kinship, and that it did not play an important role in the establishment or functioning of the association. Clan membership in the association was diverse and did not form a basis for organising the association. The consanguineal relations in the association, however, played a role in the recruitment of members and created cohesion between related members.

2.4.4   Activities and interactions arising from religion

An investigation of activities arising from religion revealed that members observed beliefs and behaviour associated with indigenous traditional religions as well as Christianity.

2.4.4.1   Ancestor religion

Belief in and behaviour associated with ancestor religion were common in the association. Fourteen members indicated that they observed ancestor rituals: eleven of these said that they participated occasionally in such rituals and three members (two male students and one adult male), that they regularly participated in rituals. Only the two adult females said that they did not believe in ancestor spirits nor did they participate in rituals honouring such spirits. Both professed a belief in the tenets of Christianity, were members of Christian churches, and emphasised that they attended weekly gatherings of their respective churches.

A few of the members, mostly adults, said that as children they did not practise ancestor religion, and that such beliefs were appropriated at a later stage in their lives. For example, the general secretary only started practising ancestor religion as an adult. These members said that their western education and Christian beliefs had served as a deterrent to them observing ancestor religion. Such reappropriation of

indigenous religious practices reflected the association's express wish to reclaim their African heritage (see 2.3.2.1). Several members in the association also mentioned that they consulted traditional healers, for example when western medicine failed to heal them; a finding that was corroborated by the goat skin talismans and amulets which some wore at different stages during the fieldwork period.

2.4.4.2   Christian beliefs

Fourteen members indicated that they were Christians. Six members, all Xhosa-speaking, were Methodists, two members were Roman Catholics and one member was an Anglican. Five members indicated membership of African Initiated Churches: two members belonged to the Zion Christian Church, and one member each to the Home of Zion Apostolic Church, the Zionist *Ekanyezini* and the Born Again Church. Five members claimed that they attended church gatherings on a weekly basis. The other nine Christians in the association indicated that they only attended church occasionally.

The configuration of church membership in the association was not reflective of the configuration of church membership in the broader Tembisa community. According to the 1991 census, 4,6% of the Tembisa population belonged to the Methodist Church, 8,1% belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, 2,3% to the Anglican Church and 45,7% to African Initiated Churches (South Africa, Central Statistical Service 1991:225). The percentage of Methodists in the association was therefore significantly higher than the percentage of Methodists in the broader Tembisa population. However, the association was not in any way linked to the Methodist Church in Tembisa, nor did such membership play a role in the establishment, nature and functioning of the association. It did, however, create a web of shared beliefs and interests among such members.

2.4.5   Activities and interactions arising from occupations

On the surface, the activities and interactions arising from occupations appeared to be particularly significant for the association: the precursor of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, the UNIPEC Group, was affiliated with COSATU performance structures, and the association often performed in the context of labour gatherings. The

occupational fields and labour networks of members of the association were therefore investigated to establish their significance as explanation for this apparent connection between UNIPEC and the labour movement, and to determine how they manifested in the establishment, nature and functioning of the association, and how they created cohesion between members.

2.4.5.1   Occupational fields

An investigation of the occupational fields of members in the association revealed that five of the eight adult members (62,5%) were economically active. The level of employment in the association was therefore similar to that of the broader Tembisa population, of whom 60,4% were employed (South Africa, Central Statistical Service 1991:388, 460). One male and one female had permanent employment as labourers, and three males had casual employment at Pickfords Removals. It would appear that the economically active members in the association did not manage to retain their work and often were moving from job to job, possibly because of their activities as performers: most workers in KwaZulu-Natal who were involved in performance groups appear to have been targeted in their workplaces and consequently lost their jobs (Sitas 1997:105).

The occupational fields of members on their own did not account for the establishment of the association nor the collaboration between UNIPEC Group and the labour movement. It was not an offshoot of organisation at a particular place of employment and, except for the three members who worked at Pickfords Removals and were friends, did not amplify the cohesion between members of the association. The establishment of the association and its subsequent affiliation to COSATU structures, as was mentioned earlier (see 2.3.1), was rather the result of broader developments in the labour movement and anti-apartheid political organisations at the time where labour, youth and community-based organisations were uniting and working together in their resistance to apartheid.

2.4.5.2   Trade union networks of members

The employed members belonged to two different unions: three males were members of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) and the female a member of the Chemical and Allied Workers' Union (CAWU). The association

therefore did not draw its membership from a specific trade union. At various times during the existence of the association the general secretary and his cousin occupied local and regional leadership positions in COSATU and TGWU. The cousin of the general secretary was a shop steward for TGWU, and at one stage chairperson of the COSATU local in Tembisa. In 1989 he was elected to the position of vice-chairperson of the regional culture committee of COSATU. However, during the last phase of the fieldwork period he was retrenched and faced the threat of losing his union membership since a worker could only be a member of TGWU for a period of six months after retrenchment in terms of the organisation's constitution. The general secretary shared his fate, since he too was retrenched in 1993 while still a member of the executive committee of the erstwhile Transvaal branch of TGWU.

The networks of the general secretary and his cousin, as well as the strategy of the labour movement and anti-apartheid political organisations to collaborate in the struggle against the apartheid state, shaped the nature and functioning of the association and even more so of the UNIPEC Group. In their capacity as members of management committees, the general secretary and his cousin negotiated performance opportunities and spaces for the association at organisations within the ANC alliance, and with other role players in these committees, orchestrated collaborative performance events between the association and other performance groups. In the committees they also gained insights on the use and efficacy of culture as a strategy to oppose the apartheid state which they, in turn, shared with the other members of the association.

2.4.6   Activities and interactions arising from formal education

Activities and interactions arising from formal education also appeared to be potentially significant for the establishment, nature and functioning of the association. First, eight of the sixteen members in the association were students, and therefore members' educational activities were investigated to establish whether the activities contributed to them becoming entangled in the webs of activities of the association. Second, the performances of the association were characterised by orality and not by the production of formal written texts for their songs and plays (see 3.2.2.1 and 4.2.2.2). Consequently, the literacy levels in the association were researched to establish whether a lack of functional literacy contributed to the oral nature of their performances. Third, the association aimed to perform in various

languages to reach and unify the entire social spectrum in the townships. The language proficiency of members in the main languages spoken in South Africa was consequently investigated to establish whether they were sufficiently proficient to realise this aim.

2.4.6.1   Educational networks

The eight students (five males and three females) attended four schools in Tembisa. Four of them, one of whom was the brother of the general secretary and the link in the recruitment of members at the school, attended the Masisebenze Secondary School; two students attended the Boitumelong (also known as Thabo Mbeki) Secondary School; and one student each attended the Ikusasa Comprehensive School and the Bokamaso Secondary School. With the exception of those who attended the Masisebenze Secondary School, their attendance of these particular schools did not per se contribute to cohesion between members. Three student members held leadership positions in their schools: the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the association were, respectively, the deputy president and chairperson of the Students' Representative Council of Boitumelong School, and a third student a member of the Students' Representative Council of the Ikusasa Comprehensive School. As student leaders, these members were important links in the association's networks with youth groupings in Tembisa.

2.4.6.2   Literacy

The literacy level of members in the association was on average much higher than that of the population of Tembisa. Fourteen members (87,5%) were either high school students or had a high school education, while only two members had no schooling. In comparison, only 43% of the Tembisa population had a high school or higher qualification. The highest qualification of any member in the association was Grade 12, and ten members (62,5%), including four of the females, had passed Grade 10 or were in possession of a Grade 10 or higher qualification. In comparison, only 23,6% of the Tembisa population were in possession of a Grade 10 or higher qualification (South Africa, Central Statistical Services 1991:303). Given their youthful age and level of education, the association was thus representative of the situation in the broader South African society at the time when black youth with school education were at the forefront of struggle-related political activities.

The oral mode of the association's performances was thus not the result of functional illiteracy, and appeared to have been a deliberate choice which resonated with the sociocultural backgrounds of most of the association's target audiences (traditionally indigenous societies did not have a written language) and their literacy level which, as Fleischman (1990:92) argues, was closer to the oral pole of the orality-literacy continuum than the literate pole. Members also claimed that formal written texts were unnecessary because they knew all the songs and the storyline of the play, implying thus that a text was not seen as a guide for performance, but rather as a memory aid for those who did not know the lyrics of a song or the storyline of their play (see 3.2.2.1 and 4.2.2.2).

2.4.6.3   *Language proficiency*

With regard to language proficiency and the ability to speak, read and write the main South African languages, the following profile emerged: all sixteen members of the association spoke English and Zulu. Eleven members spoke Xhosa, five Sotho, four Afrikaans, three Tswana, two Northern Sotho, two Ndebele and one Tsonga. All sixteen members could read English. Twelve members could read Zulu, eleven members Xhosa, five Sotho, four Afrikaans, four Tswana, three Northern Sotho, two Ndebele and one Tsonga. All sixteen members could write English. Eleven members could write Xhosa, ten members Zulu, four Afrikaans, three Sotho, two Tswana, two Northern Sotho and two Ndebele. Members therefore, had the required language proficiency to perform in various South African languages but did not do so (see 2.4.8.1).

2.4.7   Activities and interactions arising from leisure

An investigation of members' leisure activities and interactions uncovered friendship networks in the association and fields of interaction which affected performances, recruitment of, and cohesion between members.

2.4.7.1   *Leisure activities*

With regard to leisure activities, members of the association presented their choices as follows (the number between brackets indicates the number of members):

- watching television (12 members)
- attending political meetings/ rehearsals of the Mayibuye Cultural Group (11)
- visiting friends (11)
- reading books (9)
- reading newspapers (8)
- listening to the radio (8)
- going to live musical entertainment (4)
- playing games (4)
- watching videos/movies (3)
- participating in sport (2)
- frequenting shebeens (1)

The average time per week spent on leisure activities, was as follows:

- watching television: 260 min
- participating in political meetings: 192 min
- rehearsing in the Mayibuye Cultural Group: 169 min
- visiting friends: 173 min
- reading books: 180 min
- reading newspapers: 135 min
- listening to the radio: 386 min
- listening to live musical entertainment: 320 min
- participating in games: 160 min
- watching videos/movies: 105 min
- participating in sport: 180 min
- visiting shebeens: 180 min

The leisure activities of members in some instances overlapped, for example, during rehearsals, in instances where some of them visited each other and/or watched television or videos together, played together or attended the same political meetings. Their shared activities and experiences amplified the cohesion between the members, and impacted on the recruitment of new members into the association (see 2.4.7.2 below). The leisure activities of the general secretary, in particular, impacted on the performances of the association. He was in contact with various performers and performance groups and went to their performances. Consequently,

he was exposed to various so-called worker plays, including those of the Katlehong Cultural Group and Victor Shingwenyana, a performer from Tsakane, Springs, who was affiliated to SAWCU. He was particularly impressed with Victor's one-man play, and consequently invited him to attend a rehearsal of the Mayibuye Cultural Group so that he could give them guidance. Flowing from this collaboration, the general secretary adopted Victor's approach to the structuring of plays.

2.4.7.2   *Friendship networks*

To establish whether friendship networks were a factor that impacted on the recruitment of new members, members were asked to indicate their friends in the Mayibuye Cultural Group and whether they had known them before joining the association. Twelve members responded that this indeed had been the case. Only four members responded that they had not known those whom they identified as friends before joining and that they had subsequently befriended them. Surprisingly, there were very few correlations between the responses of the members. In most cases, the person identified as the closest friend of a particular member did not reciprocally indicate such member as a close friend. Since upon joining most members had friends in the association, it can be inferred that friendship networks were important for the recruitment of members. Friendships also amplified the cohesion between members in the association.

2.4.8   **Activities and interactions arising from politics**

The Mayibuye Cultural Group and its precursor, the UNIPEC Group, functioned as political pressure groups in service of the ANC alliance, and for this reason the political affiliations and networks of members were investigated to establish their role in the establishment, nature and functioning of the association. Further, since the ANC alliance opposed tribalism and ethnicity as divisive forces in the broader South African society and framed its principles in a class ideology, the ethnic consciousness and class consciousness of members were investigated as indicators of the extent to which they subscribed to the ideology of the ANC alliance. Last, to outline the context in which the Mayibuye Cultural Group functioned from its establishment in 1986 to its disbandment in the beginning of 1994, collective sociopolitical experiences in Tembisa are discussed to provide a setting against which the performances of the association should be analysed. Such an analysis is

necessary; first, because the association was part of the network of associations which were involved in collective action against the government; second, the association's aim was to contribute to the struggle for a democratic South Africa by mobilising people through messages in its performances (see 2.3.2.2); and third, the association performed during trade union and political gatherings (see 2.3.3). As Groenewald and Makopo (1991:84-85) point out, such performances formed part of the larger politicised performance events which were, according to Sitas (1992b:93), organised and proscribed by agendas and embedded in power relations.

2.4.8.1   Ethnic consciousness

Members did not overtly display a strong ethnic consciousness and were reluctant to acknowledge or identify with specific ethnic groups. The low ranking of ethnic group membership in the prioritising grids relating to how members saw themselves (the first grid) and how they thought their audiences saw them (the second grid)(see 2.3.2.12), confirmed this supposition. As regards the first grid, the item "member of an ethnic group" was ranked ninth (second last) by the association as a whole. The students, however, ranked this item fifth. In the case of the second grid, the item was ranked eighth (third last) by the association as a whole.

The emphasis on conformity and unity across traditional ethnic identities as countermeasure to the threat of apartheid and division, muted diversity and the significance of ethnicity in the association, and discouraged members from focusing on signs of their distinctiveness. Their reluctance to acknowledge such signs was also demonstrated by their public rejection of "tribalism" and "ethnicity", and their criticism of items in the prioritising grids, namely black (ranked eighth), member of an ethnic group (ranked ninth) and PAC (ranked last) (which in their view represented a racist organisation that made no contribution to the struggle), as so-called "racialistic" options. However, all members identified with specific language groups (see 2.3.2.4) that seemed to point to a latent or suppressed ethnic consciousness among them. The number of Xhosa speakers in the association was significant with respect to the distribution of language groups in Tembisa, because only 5,4% of the population in Tembisa identified Xhosa as their home language at the time (South Africa, Central Statistical Service 1991:143). Xhosa, in particular, seems to have been an important factor in uniting members. Although the association aimed to perform in various languages to reach the entire spectrum of society in the

townships, they seemed to convert into a Xhosa-speaking group on stage, since most of their songs and poems as well as the dialogue in their play were in Xhosa (see 3.2.2.2 and 4.3.3.4). In spite of this the association did not promote Xhosa interests or issues, but emphasised unity across ethnic boundaries and cannot therefore be regarded as an ethnic association.

To confirm the existence of a latent ethnic consciousness among members, their observance of traditional initiation rituals, which serve as an additional indicator of ethnic consciousness, was researched. Eight members (50%), all Xhosa-speaking, indicated that they had been initiated. The general secretary completed his initiation at a late stage in his life. After the divorce of his parents during his teens, he was reincorporated into his mother's agnatic group. Consequently, his father's agnatic group did not participate in his initiation rituals. Subsequent to his initiation, he developed health problems, including infertility, headaches, sleepwalking and nightmares. Various traditional healers advised him that his ancestors did not recognise his initiation and that his problems were caused by his incomplete initiation. He therefore went back to his father's agnatic group in the former Transkei and asked them to assist him. After the completion of the rituals, he was cured. Of the three Xhosa-speaking members who were uninitiated, two were students. Several of the students in the association maintained that they did not reject initiation and that they might be initiated at a later stage. These findings therefore suggest that there existed a latent ethnic consciousness among most members.

When they were challenged on this issue, the members admitted to being proud of their "tribal roots", but feared that tribalism would prevent them from building one nation. They felt that they should stand together and therefore did not openly identify with these roots. They pointed out that one of their aims was to unite people and to break down tribalism and ethnicity, and that the former name of the association, UNIPEC Group, reflected this aim. Song 5 (see Appendix B:5) and the central message of their first play, *Worker's lament*, echoed this sentiment and blamed ethnicity and tribalism for causing conflict and confusion in South African society. It would appear then that they underplayed their ethnic identities in a context which demanded unity against the threat of apartheid and division.

However, thirteen members subsequently responded in the positive to the question whether they belonged to a specific ethnic group, tribe, nation or *isizwe* (a Xhosa word meaning "tribe" or "nation"). The term *isizwe* was specifically selected because they used the term in some of their songs, while the term tribe was selected in view of statements made by members that they belonged to different tribes. Of the eleven Xhosa-speaking members, six identified with the Gcaleka tribe, one with the Mfengu tribe, one with the Hlubi tribe and three with Xhosa society. With regard to the rest of the association, only one Tswana-speaking member and the Northern Sotho-speaking member identified respectively with the Tswana- and Northern Sotho-speaking societies. As members of particular ethnic groups, they were exposed to ideas, beliefs, interpretations, values and behaviour which are characteristic of the respective ethnic groups, and shared sociocultural identities which created a measure of cohesion between respective members of such ethnic groups.

2.4.8.2　Class consciousness

Members clearly demonstrated a class consciousness and often identified themselves with reference to the working class or as workers, which they defined as "persons who have no control over the means of production". This Marxist view pointed to the ideology of shared meanings and understandings which they had in common with the networks of social movement associations which supported the ANC alliance (see 2.1) and echoed the view of Sitas (1986:87) that workers talked "the same language"(see 2.4.1).

2.4.8.3　Political networks

All members in the association supported the ANC, and therefore strengthened the web which connected them, but only twelve were registered members of either the ANC, the ANC Youth League or the ANC Women's League. With the exception of one adult all the female members were involved in either the ANC Youth League or the ANC Women's League. Seven members, including three adult males, were members of the ANC Youth League. Two were members of the SACP, four student members were members of COSAS, the chairperson of the association was a member of the Congress of South African Writers (COSAW), and the general secretary was a member of SAWCU.

Interestingly, according to members of the association it would appear that one of the adult male members was a member of the PAC or at least that he sympathised with them, but he did not admit to it during interviews, possibly because of the strong anti-PAC sentiment within the association. There were nevertheless indications of an undercurrent of black consciousness in the association, as can be inferred from the name of the association (see 2.3.2.1), the fact that they were trying to reclaim their African heritage, and were calling for Africa to return (see Appendix B:18), as well as the call for "Boers" to be killed (see Appendix B:15), which echoed popular PAC rhetoric at that time. Since the association denied such support for the PAC and black consciousness, this contradiction could not be resolved.

Most of the members were politically active. This was particularly true of the students. Four male students participated in formal political activities on a weekly basis and two female students participated in such activities more than once a month. The adults, by comparison, had monthly or occasional political commitments. The general secretary and his cousin were elected to local ANC leadership positions in Tembisa. During the fieldwork period, the general secretary was elected to the position of vice-chairperson of the ANC Ethafeni Area Committee, while his cousin was a member of the executive of the ANC Youth League in Tembisa.

Their participation in political gatherings and their individual political networks and activities created webs of interaction and significance which shaped the nature and functioning of the association. First, the ideology and strategies of the ANC alliance informed their performances (see Chapters 3 and 4) and altered the nature of the association, as evidenced by the severance of their formal links with COSATU in 1991 and subsequent joining of SAWCU in accordance with the strategy of the ANC alliance to broaden the base of a united front against apartheid by opening up ranks to any "working class person". Second, in collaboration with other role players in committees, they debated the use of culture and performance in the ANC alliance. Third, in their capacity as leaders in the ANC at local level, as well as in organisations affiliated to the ANC, the chairperson, vice-chairperson, general secretary and his cousin negotiated performance opportunities and spaces for the association. Fourth, as leaders they were involved in coordinating joint performance events in Tembisa in which the association participated.

2.4.8.4   Collective sociopolitical experiences as residents of Tembisa

Seekings (1992:1) argues that the intensifying political protest in the townships and the radicalisation of township-based organisation during the 1980s and early 1990s, had a major impact on South African politics. The review of collective sociopolitical experiences in Tembisa, therefore, focuses on township struggles. Broader national developments have been included, however, because the Mayibuye Cultural Group performed in the greater Johannesburg area and was aligned with principles of national organisations such as the ANC and COSATU. The review, therefore, touches on aspects of the broader political negotiation process between the apartheid state and national organisations.

Seekings (1992:16) distinguishes four broad periods in the development of township struggles between 1980 and 1991, which differ in terms of scale, intensity, form of protest and confrontation. The first period from 1980 to mid-1984 was characterised by township protests that were generally limited and local, and involved diverse grievances. The second period from late 1984 to mid-1986 was marked by widespread and violent conflict in the townships. The third period from mid-1986 to late 1988 was marked by the imposition of a nationwide state of emergency on 12 June 1986, which to a large extent constrained the level and form of township struggles. The fourth, stretching from early 1989 to the period beyond the political liberalisation of February 1990 was characterised by a resurgence of township protests.

Seekings' approach has been adopted here for the presentation of the sociopolitical developments. The review is structured into four periods stretching from 1980 to 1993. The year 1980 was selected as starting point for the review because, on the one hand, as Lodge *et al*. (1991:24) argue, it marked the period when the ANC's political philosophy began to strengthen against the philosophy of black consciousness. On the other hand, the industrial unrest and Soweto student uprisings of 1973 and 1976 respectively, had opened up limited legislative reform (through the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions of Enquiry) which came into their own in mid-1979 and early 1980 (Baskin 1991:26). However, many of the issues and struggles which are presented here had their origin in earlier decades, but spilled over into the 1980s and made it the climax of a century of black protest (Buchler 1995:33). The year 1993 was a logical cut-off point because the calling of the April 1994 elections, which

heralded a new phase in transitional politics in South Africa, sounded the death knell for the association which disbanded at the beginning of 1994.

The period from 1980 to mid-1984

During the period from 1980 to 1984, the main grievances underlying protests related to rent and busfare increases, the school crisis, influx control, the housing shortage, evictions, shack demolition, inadequate township infrastructure, and corrupt township councillors (Seekings 1992:16). Schools increasingly became sites of struggle and political education (Lawuyi 1998:85). The grievances resulted in bus boycotts, campaigns against rent increases and short class boycotts (Seekings 1992:16).

Several factors shaped the changing township politics. First, the year 1981 saw the South African economy sliding into a deepening recession which brought severe hardship for many township residents. Second, the system of local government financing aggravated township conditions. In terms of this policy, township administration and development largely were to be financed out of revenues raised within the townships. This led to repeated rent increases and eviction of rent defaulters. It constrained development in the townships, the housing shortage grew and infrastructure remained poor. These circumstances gave rise to a proliferation of backyard shacks and informal settling. Third, the political system denied township residents access to decision-making bodies through which they could negotiate with central government. Elected town councillors were unable to redress residents' grievances because they had very limited powers, leaving protest, demonstrations and support for extra-state civic and political organisations as the only avenues through which residents could express their grievances. The rent protests were also aimed at the councillors and their role in township politics. They were seen as being responsible for a range of unpopular state policies and as enriching themselves at the expense of the other residents (Seekings 1992:17-19).

During the period from 1980 to mid-1984, a range of organisations was established or revived that also contributed to the undermining of effective township administration (Buchler 1995:32, 34). Many of these organisations aligned themselves with the Freedom Charter and included, among others, COSAS, youth congresses, certain civic organisations and trade unions (Seekings 1992:20). The informal links between these organisations were strengthened in 1983 by the formation of the UDF which was

rooted in the history of the ANC and earlier periods of struggle (Buchler 1995:34-35). However, the impact of national political organisations in the townships until 1984 was indirect due to their organisational shortcomings and tactical weaknesses (Seekings 1992:20-21). Buchler (1995:33), for example, maintains that although the ANC enjoyed considerable support by 1980, it had little organisational presence inside South Africa. The main impact of the political organisations at the time related to recruitment, interaction of local activists and an increase in the linking of diverse local struggles both with each other and with national politics. Nevertheless, these indirect influences contributed to the escalation of the struggle (Seekings 1992:21).

The period from late 1984 to mid-1986

The period from late 1984 to mid-1986 saw township resistance intensifying. The institution of the tricameral parliament on 3 September 1984 sparked a wave of protest which started in the former Vaal Triangle and spread across the country (Buchler 1995:35). Rent, consumer and school boycotts as well as direct action against the security forces and symbols of authority proliferated (Kumalo & Mokwebo 1989:16; Seekings 1992:22-23).

State repression fuelled political violence, caused an escalation of protest and prompted a new form of protest, namely stay-aways. The stay-away of 5-6 November 1984, the first in a series of major stay-aways, was a result of the intensifying school crisis and mass action against the operations of security forces in townships (Seekings 1992:23). It marked the beginning of a new phase of opposition to apartheid, i.e. the beginning of united action among labour organisations, youth and student and community organisations (Labour Monitoring Group 1987:259). The imposition of a partial state of emergency in Gauteng, the Eastern Cape and Western Cape in the course of 1985 did not stem the violence.

Protests increasingly focused on regional or national rather than local issues, providing the base for the organisation of so-called organs of people's power, namely street committees and people's courts. This organisational development was accompanied by increasingly violent protest in response to the breakdown of state authority and the proliferation of forms of protest such as consumer boycotts (Seekings 1992:24-25). Acts of intimidation by supporters of the ANC alliance were exercised on both dissenting township residents and the adversaries of the alliance

such as the oppressors and the then white government to achieve desired objectives (Van Niekerk 1999:27-28, 204). The youth became prominent as the vanguard of violent or militant struggle, but their violent and direct action was widely regarded with caution and even opposed within the townships (Seekings 1992:25-26). Militant cadres as well as intellectuals who could provide philosophical leadership were recruited from the ranks of the youth (Lawuyi 1998:85).

Although the protests of this period brought residents in many townships to an understanding of and support for each other's grievances, in some townships they led to conflict between the residents. The youth tried to preserve the unity of these townships, on their terms, and attacked alleged collaborators, while vigilante groups, which often were supported by the police, harassed and attacked local radical activists (Seekings 1992:26).

The first indications of the growing conflict between Inkatha and non-Inkatha groups also began to emerge during this period (Seekings 1992:26), and this fuelled the spiral of violence in South Africa. In Tembisa, for example, housing shortages led to conflict between ANC supporters and Inkatha supporters. In 1986, the "comrades" allocated four-roomed hostel houses to homeless residents, forcing the original hostel inhabitants to share their accommodation with these people. As a result of these occurrences tension in Tembisa rose (Kumalo & Mokwebo 1989:16).

The impact of national political organisations on local politics in 1985 and 1986 was greater than in previous years, partly because they responded positively to the rise in township unrest. Local protests brought township residents into contact with each other and in direct confrontation with the state. Activists were therefore attracted to the ANC and UDF's national opposition to the state. The youth on the other hand, were attracted by the militancy of the ANC, its calls for insurrection, people's war and power (Seekings 1992:27-28).

This said, the role of local protests in this period should not be underestimated. The rent boycotts offered immediate material gains and opportunities to challenge the state whereas local level negotiations represented real attempts at solving problems as well as a mechanism for marginalising official township councils even further. But the imposition of the nationwide state of emergency on 12 June 1986 started a

period of unprecedented repression and marked the end of this period of township struggles (Seekings 1992:23, 28-29).

The period from mid-1986 to late 1988

During the period of mid-1986 to late 1988, struggle activity was largely paralysed due to the state of emergency and more than 20 000 people were detained in 1986 alone. Low-intensity warfare raged in the townships and students identified as "comrades" were excluded from schools in many townships. Repression changed the form of protests rather than suppressing them. Trade unions became increasingly involved in political struggles and various major protest stay-aways took place. The state also adopted a strategy of orderly urbanisation, involving differential development of urban settlements with continued restrictions on uncontrolled informal settlement (Seekings 1992:29).

School attendance remained low and the school boycotts continued, including at the Masisebenze High school, Boitumelong High School and Ikusasa Secondary School in Tembisa, which student members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group attended (*Sowetan* 1988:2). The interference of the SADF and SAP in township initiatives to resolve a three-week boycott at Tembisa high schools in August 1988, was given as reason for students prolonging the boycotts (*Weekly Mail* 1988:2).

The housing problem protests and rent boycotts, including those in Tembisa, continued and were reinforced by attempts to suppress them (*Sowetan* 1989:6; *The New Nation* 1989a:3; Seekings 1992:29). The housing conflict between residents and hostel dwellers in Tembisa continued and hostel dwellers evicted residents with force from hostel complexes (Malunga 1989a:1; Malunga 1989b:7).

This conflict also affected members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group. Several members moved into Ethafeni Hostel in Tembisa, an old hostel section, with the backing of ANC structures, after the migrant hostel residents were forced out. Township residents occupied the houses when it became clear that the council could not provide housing to the families on the waiting list (*The New Nation* 1989d:3). The township residents elected a residents' committee to represent them in negotiations with the town council which eventually acceded to allocate and sell the units to

them. The forced removals of the migrant hostel residents, however, led to conflicts between the latter and the families who occupied the units.

The state of emergency affected the monthly death toll resulting from political violence, and the death toll decreased, except in KwaZulu-Natal where it rose rapidly. It remained relatively low in most areas until September 1987, when it started to rise dramatically. The cause of the majority of deaths during 1986 to 1988 appears to have been very different from earlier periods; it would appear that the deaths were the result of internecine violence within townships and rural areas and did not arise out of protest against the authorities (Seekings 1992:30).

The ANC still pursued a negotiated settlement. In October 1987, the ANC's national executive reaffirmed that the ANC and the masses were ready and willing to enter into negotiations aimed at the transformation of South Africa into a united and nonracial democracy (Lodge 1989:47-8).

The period from 1989 to 1993

There was a revival of township organisation and protest in early 1989. This revival began with defiance campaigns against apartheid and the 1989 tricameral elections, and was given momentum by the release of political activists and the unbanning of political organisations. Due to the state's growing tolerance, it allowed action which it hoped might resolve the continuing rent boycotts and crisis in the schools under the Department of Education and Training. The MDM emerged as an umbrella organisation for broadly charterist organisations. Various new civic and youth organisations were formed and existing organisations were given direction and momentum. Meetings, demonstrations and marches were organised and squatter struggles proliferated (Seekings 1992:31-32).

Although a combination of various factors gave impetus to the upsurge of township protest in 1989 to 1990, township issues such as housing, rents, busfares and services continued to play a major role. The urban policy reforms of the state, aimed at selective upgrading of the townships and creating divisions between township residents, together with broader economic change, gave rise to increasing differentiation and political fragmentation within the townships. The later 1980s saw a sharp increase in backyard shack rents while landlords were boycotting their rent

and services charges to the councils. This situation led to increased tension in the townships. The subsequent land invasions by the backyard shack residents, who occupied land around the townships, were therefore not only a response to the housing shortage, but also to the tensions that arose in the townships and township political organisations (Seekings 1992:32-33).

However, the conflict that erupted in townships on the former Witwatersrand and in the Vaal Triangle in 1990 was not fuelled by the tension between informal settlers and township housing residents, but rather by the tension between Inkatha-supporting hostel dwellers and non-Inkatha residents. These conflicts were therefore largely an extension of the chronic war in KwaZulu-Natal (Seekings 1992:33). In the second half of 1990, the focus of this violence shifted to townships of the former East Rand such as Tembisa (Seekings 1991:12), involving several of the student members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group in action against pro-Inkatha hostel dwellers. Two developments, which relate to these conflicts, can be traced to mid-1990. First, the re-establishment of Inkatha as the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and second, the declaration of Inkatha as an enemy by a number of pro-ANC organisations, such as SAYCO. Clashes between pro-Inkatha hostel residents and other hostel residents were triggered by an Inkatha rally held on 22 July 1990 in the former Vaal Triangle. The violence between them eventually broadened, drawing other township residents into the conflict. Whereas hostels were marginal to black political organisation and protest during the early and mid-1980s, they shifted to the centre of township politics in 1991 (Seekings 1991:11-2).

The release of political activists, the unbanning of political organisations and the state's commitment to remove apartheid created space for the major South African political organisations and parties from 1990 to negotiate the future organisational and constitutional structures of South Africa through CODESA, which met for the first time in December 1991 (Buchler 1995:27). These developments occurred against the background of the ANC's continued official commitment to the armed struggle until they agreed to suspend it in August 1990. Conflict between ANC and Inkatha supporters, especially in KwaZulu-Natal, tension in rural towns between black protestors and right-wing groupings, the continuation of the schooling crisis, and mounting white fears about the militancy and criminality of the youth and the ANC's lack of control over them continued. The ANC declared 1991 to be the Year of

(peaceful) Mass Action. In late January 1991, they started with marches to demand a constituent assembly (Seekings 1995:28-30).

According to Buchler (1995:27-28) the principles of transition underlying the expectations of the National Party (NP) and the ANC regarding CODESA were completely opposite. The NP wanted to retain as much power for as long as possible while the ANC wanted to seize as much power from it as soon as possible. This led to a deadlock in 1992 resulting in the ANC embarking on a programme of rolling mass action amidst high levels of violence in the townships and the worsening of the black schooling crisis (Seekings 1995:32).

The massacre of Boipatong shack dwellers on 17 June 1992 forced the NP back to negotiations since international goodwill changed against the NP. Both parties signed the Record of Understanding in September 1992 which committed both of them to resuming negotiations. They did so early in 1993 and resolved the deadlock in November 1993 with the acceptance of the interim constitution, which effectively dismantled the pillars of apartheid (Buchler 1995:28).

2.5   SUMMARY

From its inception in 1986 to the end of 1991, the UNIPEC Group (the precursor of the Mayibuye Cultural Group) was linked to a network of performance structures within the ranks of COSATU which were established to facilitate the articulation of sociopolitical and labour grievances in a performance context, despite the fact that the association was not exclusively comprised of employed or unionised members, but also of unemployed and student members. This alliance of workers, unemployed adults and students was a deliberate choice, and was reflected in the name of the association, UNIPEC, which is an acronym for United People's Culture. The strategy to unite against the threat of apartheid and division arose from broader developments in the labour movement and anti-apartheid political organisations at the time, in which trade unions called for the convergence of worker and township issues and the establishment of alliances between groups, organisations and movements (including those of women, the youth and students) that were involved in township and civic struggles. The stay-away in the former Transvaal in November 1984, which was called in support of student demands, laid the basis for developing the alliance between students, other youths and worker parents. The Mayibuye

Cultural Group, which was established in the beginning of 1992, similarly was an alliance of workers, unemployed adults and students. It was affiliated to SAWCU, a nonpartisan performance organisation based on the former COSATU cultural structures, which, in keeping with the political climate of a united front, had opened up its membership to any "working class person", including the unemployed and workers from the independent trade unions. The Mayibuye Cultural Group was a common interest association which was based in Tembisa. The association was first and foremost a choir and was founded primarily to oppose the oppressive nature of the apartheid system. Meetings, workshops and rehearsals of the association occurred within the context of the networks and ideology of the ANC alliance. As such, it was part of a network of social movement associations that shared the same ideology, focused on grassroots politics and was involved in collective action against the apartheid government. In the absence of constitutional means to express opposition to the coercive reforms in South Africa, the association appropriated performance as vehicle to express anger and despair at the situation in the country and to suggest alternatives to the reforms. As a political pressure group that aimed to conscientise and mobilise ordinary South Africans in demanding legislative reform which promoted its interests and that of the ANC alliance, the association stimulated the "culture of debate", and was an adaptive mechanism in the changing sociopolitical landscape of South Africa in the 1980s and early 1990s.

The association reflected most of the features of worker performance groups in the country who at the time expressed their resistance to the apartheid state in song. It had sixteen members, and young people dominated the membership. Given their youthful age and level of education, the association was thus representative of the situation in the broader South African society at the time when black youth with school education were at the forefront of struggle-related political activities. However, the composition of the association was fluid. Although there was a core of members consisting mainly of males, the association had a relatively high turnover of members which impacted on the gender and age distribution in the association. Members attributed the high turnover of members to the association's lack of a sponsor or sustainable source of income, which they felt created many enervating challenges for the association.

There were no meaningful differences between the male and female members with regard to age, place of origin, language group, level of education and church

membership, but the females in the association did not play a significant role in the management and creative output of the association. In spite of the fact that the association agitated for women's rights and their play revealed various discriminatory issues that are still relevant today, authority and creativity vested mainly in male members, while female members seemed to comply with traditional gender roles. The general secretary in particular played a significant role and spoke on behalf of the association. His status in the association corresponded with the status of indigenous traditional leaders in such matters. One would have expected greater involvement of the females in the association's leadership positions which would have been in line with the aim of COSATU's Women's Forum to prepare women for leadership positions in the federation and its affiliates. The role of women in the association, however, reflected the situation in the unions and therefore in COSATU at the time, where women occupied few leadership positions despite having been at the forefront of militant shop floor struggles in certain sectors. The participation of members in the association enhanced their prestige and social recognition, and even helped to advance some members' careers after the association was disbanded.

Projected against the Tembisa population as a whole, the literacy level of members of and percentage of Xhosa speakers in the association were significantly higher, and in both cases gave rise to contradictions in the nature and functioning of the association. Despite the high literacy level of members, their performances had an oral nature, which appears to have been a deliberate choice which resonated with the sociocultural backgrounds and literacy level of most of their target audiences, who were closer to the oral pole of the orality-literacy continuum. With regard to the percentage of Xhosa speakers in the association, the association seemed to convert into a Xhosa-speaking group on stage. In spite of the association's express wish to perform in all languages and to unite all people across traditional ethnic boundaries, an analysis of their performances revealed that they mostly performed in Xhosa. The emphasis on conformity and unity across traditional ethnic identities as a countermeasure to the threat of apartheid and division, muted ethnic diversity and its significance in the association and discouraged members from focusing on signs of their distinctiveness. They feared that ethnicity and tribalism would impact negatively on nation-building, which, in their opinion, were the root causes of the conflict and confusion in South Africa. All members nevertheless identified with specific language groups, and in the case of the majority, with specific ethnic groups.

The members of the association had divergent fields of activity, and in several cases these included activities and interactions that arose from traditional sociocultural beliefs and practices, such as ancestor religion and initiation rituals. The only characteristics shared by all members in the association were that they lived in Tembisa, had a common interest in performance, participated in political activities and supported the ANC. None of the individual fields of activity accounted adequately for the establishment, nature and functioning of the association, nor the involvement of and cohesion between the respective members. The various fields of activity and networks of the members combined accounted for the involvement of and cohesion between the members in the association, and created webs of interaction and significance that drew members into the association and shaped its nature and functioning.

First, the ideology and strategies of the ANC alliance informed their performances and altered the nature of the association, as evidenced by them severing their formal links with COSATU in 1991 and subsequently joining SAWCU. This was in accordance with the strategy to discontinue these structures within COSATU and to broaden the base of a united front against apartheid by opening up ranks to even the unemployed and workers from independent trade unions.

Second, in collaboration with other role players in committees, they debated the use of culture and performance in the ANC alliance, and through exposure to other performers and performance groups, were influenced in their approach to their own performances.

Third, in their capacity as leaders in the ANC at local level, as well as in organisations affiliated to the ANC, the chairperson, vice-chairperson, general secretary and his cousin negotiated performance opportunities and spaces for the association.

Fourth, as leaders they were involved in coordinating joint performance events in Tembisa in which the association participated.

Although membership was drawn exclusively from Tembisa, the association did not have a territorial basis, nor did it promote neighbourhood issues. However, their shared domicile as residents of Tembisa exposed them to collective and similar socio-

economic and sociopolitical experiences. Consequently, the association performed amidst the intensifying township political protest and radicalisation of township-based organisation in Tembisa, the ANC's continued official commitment to the armed struggle until they agreed to suspend it in August 1990, ongoing conflict between ANC and Inkatha supporters, tension in rural towns between black protestors and right-wing groupings, the continuation of the schooling crisis and the negotiation of future organisational and constitutional structures by the major South African political organisations.

In Chapters 3 and 4 the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group are analysed against these sociopolitical developments to determine their sociocultural significance. First, the analysis aims to determine how the performances related to the themes, i.e. a negotiated settlement and a people's war, that influenced the ANC's planning and strategies with respect to South Africa and second, how they related to the challenge of the network of social movement associations to spread the ANC's ideology and to unite a diversity of people in their opposition to apartheid under a single "cultural" and political umbrella.

CHAPTER 3

HARMONISING IMAGES OR IMAGINING HARMONY?

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2 it was argued that the Mayibuye Cultural Group, as a political pressure group, was part of a network of social movement associations that were involved in collective action against the apartheid state. Further, the view was advanced that in the absence of constitutional means to express opposition to the apartheid system, the association appropriated performance, particularly songs and poems, to vent their outrage at the then prevailing sociopolitical conditions. Through these performances, the association aimed to conscientise and mobilise ordinary workers towards demanding legislative reform that would promote the interests of the liberation movement. As such, their use of performance corresponded with the use of performance in social movements universally, and, as was generally the case in authoritarian systems (Tarrow 1994:10, 115, 119), constituted an important form of symbolic communication. In particular, the performances of the association were reminiscent of those performances in traditional societies that had the capacity to express opposition to institutions, groups, individuals and harmful practices in society, and which served to identify, affirm and unify social groups; and therefore the notion that the songs and poems of the association served to provide such layers of metacommentary (see 1.1.2.1 in this regard) is explored in this chapter.

Groenewald and Makopo (1991:78) argue that performances cannot be understood unless they are projected against the sociocultural context in which they are performed. Accordingly, the analysis of the meaning of the songs and poems is projected against the changing sociopolitical landscape of South Africa during the 1980s and early 1990s. In particular, the analysis is framed against the ideology of the ANC alliance, and the themes of "a negotiated settlement" and "a people's war" that influenced the ANC's planning and strategies with respect to South Africa at the time. Attention is given to the nature, development, characteristics and performance of the songs and poems, as well as the association's response to the challenge posed to the network of social movement associations to popularise the ANC's ideology, and to unite a diversity of people under a single sociopolitical umbrella. Further, an attempt is made to relate changes in the sociocultural contexts in which songs and poems were produced and performed to modifications in the nature, structure and

content of the songs and poems. Finally, the analysis demonstrates how songs and poems of the association functioned together in performance.

3.2 THE SONGS AND POEMS OF THE MAYIBUYE CULTURAL GROUP AS PERFORMANCE GENRES

3.2.1 The nature of the songs

In Chapter 1 (see 1.1.2) it was argued that songs and poems play an indispensable role in the daily lives of indigenous societies and are composed for a variety of purposes and performed in a variety of contexts. Such performances do not only provide social entertainment but provides also a discourse on society and relationships between individuals and groups (see 1.1.2.1). With regard to the performances of the association, poems were primarily performed as part of larger song cycles and consequently were constituent parts of the songs. However, for analytical purposes and for the presentation of the data, the songs and poems of the association are presented separately here, but due attention is given to how the genres functioned together in performance.

3.2.1.1 The classification of the songs

There are various indigenous approaches to the classification of songs. The inhabitants of the Lumko district in the Eastern Cape, for example, classify songs on the basis of their sociocultural uses, or with reference to the performers of the songs. Accordingly, songs that accompany work are classified as work songs, while songs that are performed by diviners are classified as diviner songs (Dargie 1988:31). Male migrant performance groups from the Limpopo Province, in contrast, classify their performances in terms of the specific techniques used to produce the sound of their performances. *Kiba* performances, for example, derive their name from the musical instruments which are used in these performances (D. James 1994:84).

The association's approach to the classification of their songs was similar. Members used three terms to denote their songs, namely *isingqi, ingoma* and *iculo*. They almost exclusively used the term *isingqi* (a Xhosa word meaning "rhythm"), which they translated as "sound" to describe all but Song 18 (see Appendix B) of their songs. Members defined a sound as a cyclical choral song which is performed with a dance step (see 3.3.4.3) and as such it corresponded with those songs which Coplan's

informants called "songs sung with the feet" (Groenewald & Makopo 1992:134). Ntshinga (1996) defines sounds in a similar way, but draws attention to additional characteristics of sounds that were also characteristic of those of the association, namely that they are performed with energetic action and are based on school songs (see 3.2.2.2).

As such, the classification of the songs of the association as *isingqi* is reflective of a classification which is done in terms of a specific technique used to produce the sound of songs, and foregrounded rhythm which, according to members, was one of the most important and distinctive elements of their songs. They defined rhythm as "the beat of a song" and argued that rhythm influenced the choice of lyrics for their songs in the sense that the lyrics had to fit the rhythmic pattern of songs, and that adherence to the rhythm of songs was key to their successful performance. Further, they argued that the accompanying rhythmic movements helped them to maintain the rhythm of songs, but also that the movements added a musical (audible) dimension to their songs (see 3.3.4.3). However, the classification of the songs of the association as *isingqi* obscured essential elements of the songs and their performance, particularly their sociocultural use, the atypical composition of the performance association (see 2.3.2.4) as well as the novel contexts in which they were performed, and consequently was deemed to be unsuitable to describe the characteristics of the songs of the association.

The second term, *ingoma* (a Xhosa word meaning "song"), was used occasionally by some members to denote the songs of the association. The term *ingoma* is generally used to denote traditional songs. Ntshinga (1996) claims that the semantic field of the word *ingoma* includes various categories of song, but generally relates to songs that derive their meaning from their specific sociocultural contexts and therefore cannot be extracted from these. Although it was true that the songs of the association could not be extracted from their sociocultural contexts, the classification was too general to meaningfully typify the songs of the association, and in any event was not uniformly used by members of the association.

The third term, *iculo* (a Xhosa word meaning "hymn" but also "song"), was used by members with reference to Song 18 only (see Appendix B:18) and as such could not be used to classify the association's oeuvre. Neither the song nor its lyrics were composed by the association. It was a popular song which was performed by many

choral groups at the time. Dargie (1988:33) argues that *iculo* derived from western songs and claims that it refers to both church (mission) hymns and school songs. Members of the association concurred that the song had a western origin and specifically that it was based on a western hymn. Interestingly, it was the only song performed by the association that was not accompanied by rhythmic movements.

In an attempt to construct a more integrated approach to the classification of songs, Ntshinga (1993:67-68, 1994a:1-2, 14) has proposed a classification that is based on the interaction of all the essential textual, textural and contextual elements of songs, since these elements determine the meaning of the songs. In view of the fact that my approach to the analysis of the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group foregrounds textual, textural and contextual elements (see 1.2.5), Ntshinga's approach has been adopted here. In terms of such an approach, all the songs of the association were political songs, and in particular struggle or anti-apartheid songs. The songs were performed in politicised contexts. The members identified with the political philosophy of the ANC (see 2.4.8.3) and were critical of the ideology of the former minority government that was in power at that time (see 3.3.4.4). Further, the composition of the association reflected broader developments in the labour movement and anti-apartheid political organisations at the time where labour, youth and community-based organisations were uniting and working together in their resistance to apartheid. The songs also had the gravitas of war songs, and the texts contained explicit references to organisations and individuals which at the time had aligned themselves with the Freedom Charter and the ANC alliance, or in the case of the association's political adversaries, the apartheid state (see 3.3.4.4).

On the question whether their sounds were political songs, the members agreed, and when asked what kind of "sounds" they performed, they responded with "revolutionary sounds". The term struggle song, however, has been adopted here to refer to the musical performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group. This decision was informed by two considerations: first, the fact that the association's oeuvre also included *iculo* which could not be classified as sounds, and second, the fact that the textual elements of some songs, although political and related to the liberation struggle, could not be classified as revolutionary (see 3.3.4.4).

3.2.1.2   *Political songs as a relatively new urban form*

An analysis of the historical forces that shaped urban performance genres is difficult

> … even when their components are well defined and the connections between them clear. The problem lies in attempting to isolate any form or process from its total context, to speak of one relationship without simultaneously implying another, and above all to establish lines of causation (Coplan 1985:230).

Consequently, the development of the political song in South Africa has not been teased out here except to acknowledge the importance of factors, such as colonialism, westernisation, Christianity and urbanisation which, according to Coplan (1985:50), had shaped the development of new kinds of societies and in turn had influenced performance genres profoundly. Ceremonies and practices which once had flourished in precolonial societies, changed, and songs which had accompanied these, shifted to new contexts, leading in the case of the Xhosa society to changes in for example wedding songs and work songs (Ntshinga 1993:39-42, 89; 1994b:6).

Groenewald and Makopo (1991:76-78, 81) argue that although there is continuity between indigenous choral songs that date back to precolonial times and that of modern politics, new experiences in the urban context probably gave rise to the development of the modern political song. Gunner (2009:37) traces its genesis back to the use of *Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika* by the ANC in the second decade of the twentieth century, but Coplan (1980:168, 269-270) provides examples of political songs such as *Umteto we Land Act*, *Ivoti* and *Vukani mawethu* which also were performed at that time, and therefore I would argue that the genesis of the modern political song remains obscure. *Umteto we Land Act* protested against the injustices of the Natives Land Act 27 of 1913, while *Ivoti* urged people to resist the revocation of their voting rights in the Cape, and *Vukani mawethu* reprimanded people for allowing others to exploit them.

Rycroft (1991:9) argues that modern political songs in South Africa were sung more specifically after apartheid legislation was introduced, and that they in all probability flourished after the banning of the ANC and SACP in 1960. This view seems to be supported by Tracey's research: in 1958, for example, he made the observation that modern African nationalism had not as yet utilised its own folk music as a political propaganda force (Groenewald & Makopo 1991:78). Be that as it may, explicit references to political parties, political figures, the struggle and the

apartheid state in the lyrics of political songs clearly show their emergent nature of modern political songs and characterise them as a relatively new urban form (Groenewald & Makopo 1991:82; 1992:136).

3.2.2   The characteristics of the songs

The potential and style of the modern political song derived from the indigenous choral song (Groenewald & Makopo 1991:76-81). Groenewald and Makopo (1992:132-133, 136) argue that the most obvious connection between indigenous choral songs and political songs is that both categories of song exist in and thrive on performance, and consequently are characterised by orality. The orality in all probability was perpetuated in political songs because it afforded performers the opportunity to engage their audiences directly and to build solidarities and mutual support systems. Further, most of the indigenous communal song performances in South Africa are characterised by a call-and-response pattern and therefore the extension of this style to the political song was logical (Groenewald & Makopo 1991:79-81). Repetition in its various forms is also a distinguishing characteristic of traditional oral genres and consequently of political songs as an oral form. With regard to textual elements, the most striking parallel between political song texts and the texts of indigenous oral forms can be found in the spirit of overt criticism (Groenewald & Makopo 1992:132-3, 136).

3.2.2.1   *Continuity between the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group and indigenous choral songs*

Orality

The songs of the association existed in and thrived on performance, and consequently were characterised by orality. The oral nature of their songs, as indicated earlier (see 2.4.6.2*)*, was a deliberate choice. Members also argued that formal written lyrics were unnecessary, because they knew the lyrics of all the songs, implying thus that formal written lyrics were seen as memory aids for those who did not know the lyrics of a song. In any event, since the members of the association did not compose the songs or have the ability to write music, lyrics without the sheet music would have had little use outside the association.

Style

The association had an antiphonal style of singing, or what Kebede (1982:7) identifies as a call-and-response pattern, which corresponded with the singing style of worker choirs in KwaZulu-Natal (Sitas 1992b:101). Similarly to traditional choral songs, the songs of the association were sung *a cappella* and the call of the lead singer and the response of the choir did not begin simultaneously, but overlapped, resulting in polyphony. The voice part of the lead singer displayed greater traditional influence than the response part of the choir did (C. James 1993). Two of the songs of the association (see Appendix B:5 and 6) included poems. These poems were recited during the performance of the songs: in each case the association completed a cycle or various cycles of the song and then rendered the poem while humming the song. Once the poem was completed, the association once again began to sing cycles of the song. This practice, however, was not an innovation, since the principle of choral singing combined with a solo performance is common to indigenous oral traditions (Groenewald & Makopo 1991:81).

Rhythm

Most of the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group were homorhythmic and therefore the rhythm was not particularly traditional. However, in some songs counterrhythms were used (C. James 1993) which are characteristic of indigenous songs. In these songs the call voice part and the response voice part had different rhythms which interacted with each other throughout the performances of the songs. The rhythmic movements which accompanied the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group were also derived from indigenous performance traditions (see 3.2.2.2) and according to Groenewald and Makopo (1992:133), are an important characteristic of political songs.

Repetition

The songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, similarly to traditional choral songs, were characterised by repetition. First, most of their songs consisted of a few melodic lines which were repeated continuously. Second, the various calls and responses were repeated during the performance of songs, and third, the song cycles were repeated. Traditionally, songs are cyclical and do not have fixed endings. Among

Xhosa society, for example, the cycle is the basis of the song structure and each song is made up of a continuous repetition of cycles (Dargie 1988:87) which reflects an indigenous experience of time as an endless rhythm of cycles (Mbiti 1989:17, 21, 24). The songs of the association were similar and there were various cycles within their songs. Although the association had a convention to repeat a whole song only three times when they were performing, they often deviated from this convention and similarly to what is reported about the people of the Lumko district (Dargie 1988:91), the length of the song was determined by the interest and energy of the performers. Sometimes they repeated song cycles only twice and at other times repeated cycles four times. However, some members felt uncomfortable when they deviated from this convention and argued that when a song was repeated too many times, it lost its impact.

Themes in the songs

The themes in the songs of the association primarily displayed contemporary influences and apart from the poem in Song 6 (see Appendix B:6), did not have clear continuity with traditional indigenous themes. However, the spirit of overt criticism which permeated the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group resonated with traditional indigenous themes (see 3.2.2).

The poem in Song 6 echoed traditional themes in the sense that it focused on heroic conflict, a struggle between two opposing forces and on commemoration, themes in worker poetry which Gunner (1986:36-37) identifies as being consistent with *izibongo* deep structures. The conflict in the poem was between the soldier of the people or so-called preacher of peace (the hero who was commemorated) and the apartheid forces.

In some cases the texts of the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group were somewhat obscure, for example in Song 13 (see Appendix B:13) the association simple repeated the following verse line "Come down you mountains so that we see Mandela". Groenewald and Makopo (1991:78) maintain that the political song is often just as obscure as the traditional oral forms are. This obscurity is in part due to the fact that songs are composed by a group that knows the details of phenomena or events, so that these phenomena or events need only be sung in terms of reference and not in terms of detail. With regard to the Mayibuye Cultural Group, the ideology and

demands of the ANC alliance provided the framework against which the obscure texts had to be interpreted (see 3.3.4.2).

3.2.2.2 Emergent aspects in the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group

It was the perception of the members of the association that their songs were influenced by western music. According to C. James (1993), the songs of the association certainly displayed missionary influences. The arrival of Christian missionaries in South Africa had a profound impact on traditional indigenous music. From the early nineteenth century, the missionaries forcefully condemned indigenous culture as incompatible with Christianity. They taught western culture to the indigenous societies and generation upon generation of converts were led to despise and reject indigenous musical traditions. As a result, in the case of the Cape Nguni Christians, nothing was adopted from their indigenous performance genres into hymnody except for the use of the Xhosa language in the lyrics (Rycroft 1991:5; Coplan 1980:79, 85).

However, towards the late nineteenth century several influential indigenous mission leaders began to speak out against westernisation, the benefits of which were becoming increasingly suspect. In their quest to redefine themselves and to develop a new way of life amidst severe restrictions on their mobility in the political, social and economic spheres, performance was appropriated as one of the ways in which one could prove that such a way of life could develop, and this provided syncretic indigenous choral music with a vital stimulus (Coplan 1980:88-89; 1985:30).

As a result, some indigenous Christian composers started to revitalise indigenous music by reintroducing elements such as traditional melodies, part musical structures and performance conventions into the hymns and secular choral music which they composed. Cape Nguni musicians in the urban areas gave further momentum to the revitalisation of indigenous music and stimulated the development of indigenous hymnody and secular choral music in the mission schools and dance halls. The western formal educational system also impacted on the development of indigenous performance genres in the sense that school concerts promoted the stylistic development and diffusion of syncretic indigenous performance genres (Coplan 1985:25, 30, 33, 36-37, 155, 166, 179). The songs of the association displayed such

syncretic influences and missionary influences were particularly evident in the musical structures and rhythm of the songs.

Language

Three of the songs of the association were sung in English (see Appendix B:2, 5 and 19) and one song was sung in a mixture of English and Xhosa (see Appendix B:6). The rest of the songs were sung in Xhosa. Members of the association indicated that the use of English widened their influence and made their songs accessible to more people. It would appear that English was used in struggle songs generally and clearly characterised the songs as a relatively new urban form.

Style

With regard to the style of the songs of the association, western influence was evident in the voice ornamentation of the soprano leader (caller) as well as in the organisation of the choir into soprano, alto, tenor and baritone sections (see 3.3.4.3). The songs were mainly sung in four-part harmony but some were sung in three-part harmony.

Musical structures

As was mentioned earlier (see 3.2.2.1), the association did not compose songs. The melodies of their songs were not particularly indigenous and were based on the western seven note scale. Most of their songs were sung in G Major. The harmonies in the songs also displayed western influences and were simple (C. James 1993). The members of the association claimed that some of their songs were based on the musical structures of school songs, and identified songs 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10 and 16 (see Appendix B:1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10 and 16) as examples of such songs. Songs 6 and 18 were identified as examples of songs that were based on religious songs or hymns (see Appendix B:6 and 18). In this sense their songs corresponded with songs of worker choirs in KwaZulu-Natal which, according to Sitas (1992b:101), had formal roots in school and church choir traditions. As regards the origin of the remaining songs, the members were unsure, and suggested that the musical structures of these songs were taken from contemporary songs which other choirs performed. An attempt was consequently made to trace the original songs on which the songs of the association

were based. The attempt yielded very little, since in only in one case was the search successful, namely in the case of song 1 (see Appendix B:1) which was based on *Wi wi sizongena*, a traditional Zulu wedding song of the 1940s and 1950s.

Rhythm

As was mentioned above (see 3.2.2.1), the songs of the association were predominantly homorhythmic and as such reflected western influence. The rhythmic movements or dance steps (see 3.3.4.3) which accompanied performances of the songs and accentuated the rhythm of songs in all probability were founded in the mission schools. In the schools traditional performance conventions were shaped, amongst others, by influences from western school action songs and singing games, restrictions placed by the missionaries on the performances of "heathen" and "immoral" dances, as well as African-American style movements which were incorporated in the rhythmic movements (Coplan 1980:166-168).

The association toyi-toyied in one song (see 3.3.4.3). There are divergent explanations for the origin of toyi-toyi, but it would appear that most researchers agree that the dance–step originated in MK training camps, and most probably in Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Angola (Spaarwater 1993:8; Suttner 2009a:81; Twala & Koetaan 2006:166-167). The toyi-toyi generally accompanies the performance of political songs and is defined as a quasi-military dance-step which is characterised by high-stepping movements, and can either be performed on the spot or while moving slowly forwards (Silva 1996:730). The movements and energy of toyi-toyi have the capacity to bring people together and to ignite the courage of the performers, and consequently were frequently used in preference to political speeches to promote the struggle for liberation in South Africa (Twala & Koetaan 2006:167-169).

Themes in the songs

The dominant themes in the songs of the association reflected modern-day influences, and dealt with the liberation struggle, the plight of exiles, the democratisation of South African society and the replacing of the apartheid system. The songs referred explicitly to individuals and organisations which at the time had aligned themselves with the Freedom Charter and the ANC alliance or alternatively with the apartheid state (see 3.3.4.4). As such, the themes in the songs

corresponded to a large extent with the songs of the comrades (see 2.3.2.4) and other performance groups which were associated with the liberation movement. Political songs that celebrated political leaders, created solidarities and demonstrated defiance, for example, were commonly found among such groups (Davis 1992:23; Groenewald & Makopo 1992:136; Gunner 1986:33; Sitas 1992b: 96-97). Most songs of the association were militaristic and had an affirmative tone, for example, the lyrics of song 15 read "Are you afraid of them? We are not. Strength will be with us. Take a bazooka, take a grenade and kill the Boers". However, some of the songs of the association had a disempowering and despairing tone. The lyrics of song 6, for example, read "The nation is being destroyed by the Boers, Lord save us".

The role of age and gender

The novel composition of the association that comprised male and female adults, as well as teenage male and female student members superseded traditional gender and age restrictions on the right of people to exercise public power and therefore to perform political songs in politicised contexts. The men, women and teenage students in the association performed in political and trade union meetings which were not traditional gatherings, and sang about war and political issues. This disregard for the gender and age restrictions was even more marked when the association still performed as the UNIPEC Group, because the association then had an eight-year-old male member.

Traditionally, political responsibilities fell predominantly in the domain of male responsibilities. The fact that women as well as students sang about war, political prisoners and political rights was indicative of a shift that had taken place in the exercise of political powers in indigenous societies generally, and the role women and the youth played in the struggle for national liberation (see 2.3.2.4).

3.2.3   The nature of the poems

3.2.3.1   *The classification of the poems*

The poetry of the association provided a discourse on society and relationships between individuals and groups (see 1.1.2.1). Members indicated that their poems,

namely *Interim Government*, *Koze kube nini na?*, *The days I shall never forget* and *I am Politically Bankrupt* (see Appendix C:1, 2, 3 and 4) were composed to express anger and despair at the sociopolitical conditions in the country at the time, and to unify and mobilise ordinary South African towards national liberation (see 2.3.1). The members classified their poems as worker poetry and since the nature and characteristics of their poems correspond with the characteristics of worker poetry generally (see 3.2.4), the term worker poetry has been adopted to refer to the poetry of the association.

3.2.3.2   The emergence of worker poetry

Various scholars maintain that worker praise poetry is a transformation of *izibongo* (a Nguni word meaning praise poems) (Kromberg 1991:182) which are common to all Bantu-speaking societies in South Africa and which are composed by men and women as well as the old and the young (Lestrade 1946:297). The changing sociocultural landscape in South Africa during the previous two centuries gave rise to a transformation of praise poetry and modifications to its nature and structure. For example, the devastating effects of the *Mfecane* in the first half of the 19th century influenced the form and length of praise poetry, and the influx of Boers into the former areas of the Orange Free State, Transvaal and Natal during the Great Trek gave rise to a use of praise poetry to fuel opposition to the Boers (Horn 1996:116). Further, by the end of the 19th century poems were used to criticise tribal leaders who collaborated with the colonial governments (Sole 1987b:108).

During the early 20th century, the transformation of praise poetry was given further momentum by the poems of the black female poet, Nontsizi Mgqwetho, who in early 1920s protested against white systems of control (Opland 1995:169). During the 1930s, praise poetry was used in the context of the labour movement to praise the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICWU) and to challenge established power (Brown 1998:5; Sole 1987b:108). Praise poetry was even used for propaganda purposes during the disagreement between tribal leaders over the question of the independence of the former area of Transkei in the early 1960s (Sole 1987b:108), and on the mines, praise poets assumed the role of peacemakers in conditions where workers from diverse sociocultural backgrounds had to live together (Coplan 1987:14).

H.I.E. Dhlomo, who was one of South Africa's pre-eminent literary figures during the first half of the 20th century, stimulated further poetic development. He broke away from western traditions which were introduced and elevated by the mission schools. He imagined himself to be an *imbongi* (a Xhosa word meaning "praise poet") of the black people, but he wrote and published in English and consequently was isolated from his audience who was closer to the orality pole of the orality-literacy continuum than to the literacy pole. However, the space which he created for further development was taken by M. Kunene who also assumed the role of an *imbongi*. His poetry made an Africanist statement rather than an anti-white statement and led the way to the ideological and spiritual preoccupations of the black consciousness movement. M.P. Pascal also influenced the transformation of praise poetry by assuming the role of an urban *imbongi* of scripted letters. Although he wrote in English, his poetry displayed traditional influences and he played a formative role in the poetry of the black consciousness movement (Sitas 1994:140-49).

During the 1980s, oral political poetry emerged in labour organisations in KwaZulu-Natal as an important part of the political discourse and as a voice of ordinary workers (Brown 1998:5; Gunner & Gwala 1991:11; Sitas 1994:150; Horn 1996:118). Spontaneous praising at small union meetings introduced the use of oral performance forms in the labour movement. The traditional praise poet as political orator and social critic was absorbed into the context and structures of the liberation movement, and oral poetry became a vehicle of protest in the ANC alliance. In the context of the labour movement, poetry was used to articulate the interests of the workers (Kaschula 1991:1-2) and to agitate for political change, and it created unifying symbols which went beyond ethnic boundaries (Gunner & Gwala 1991:13). Audiences responded well to the relatively novel use of praise poetry in such contexts and were excited about the possibilities which the genre offered. This application of praise poetry was initiated by the workers themselves and led to a wave of worker poetry. The positive responses from audiences encouraged the early exponents to continue and others to follow their example (Kromberg 1991:180, 188-9).

Initially, the trade unions were sceptical about the value of the poetry, but started to incorporate it into meetings and worker gatherings and the use of poetry was subsequently furthered by the drives of the cultural locals (Sitas 1994:150). The praise poems which Alfred Qabula composed for FOSATU and which he performed for

the first time at Curries Fountain in Durban in 1984 (Gunner 1995:186), in particular enthused other worker-poets and gave rise to a wave of poetry which was included in the AGM's of unions (Gunner 1986:36). Ordinary black workers, drawing on indigenous oral traditions and using structures, imagery and language common to traditional praise poetry (Kromberg 1991:182) began orating poetry in worker gatherings. In some cases the poems were written down first and then performed, while others were improvised spontaneously (Sitas 1994:151). Both performers and audiences used the poetic conventions of the praise poetry in the composition and understanding of worker poetry (Kromberg 1991:182). Some of the poets were versed in the formal praises of official Zulu praise poetry and employed some of these praises in the context of the trade union and their contemporary struggles, and in the process recreated the history of labour organisation in KwaZulu-Natal (Sitas 1994:152-153).

Trade union officials played an important role in the encouragement of the use of praise poetry, and had they not done so, praise poetry would not have taken root as fast as it did in worker gatherings (Kromberg 1991:189). It was logical for trade union officials to authorise praise poetry within the worker context because the poetry praised the union in a way that was reflective of workers' experiences, inspired and energised the audience and built a sense of community among the audience (Kromberg 1991:189). The worker poets reflected the close ties between COSATU, the UDF and the ANC in their poetry and the content of their poems progressively shifted from worker issues to national issues (Kromberg 1991:190).

3.2.4   The characteristics of the poems

Since worker poetry developed from traditional praise poetry and displays many characteristics of praise poetry, the nature of praise poetry is presented here, after which continuities between the worker poetry of the association and praise poetry is discussed. Praise poems are characterised by a succession of loose stanzas of an irregular number of lines which contain an irregular number of words (Lestrade 1946:295), and do not have fixed boundaries in the sense of western literary genres. Pronounced rhythm and power of performance are characteristic of praise poetry (Kromberg 1991:197), and stylistic techniques such as parallelism[13] and repetition are

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[13] Parallelism refers to the practice in which an idea in a verse line is repeated or developed in the following verse line by the use of the same or similar words or word roots or by the use of different words. Parallelism allows for repetition which assists the audience in

commonly used. The poems are performed with dramatic gestures and lively movements (Casalis 1861:329; Hunter 1979:371). Praise poems are flexible and adaptable and emphasise action, movement, travelling, breaking of bonds and making of new paths. Praise poetry has been and still is "open to appropriation by those who had or wished to have access to political power and influence" and has been used by those in power to sanction their claim to rule (Gunner & Gwala 1991:1, 7, 19).

In a sense the term praise poetry is misleading since it primarily concerns identifying and embodying a personality or characteristics through naming, thus ultimately giving significance to a person or object, and may be recited by specialists as well as non-specialists (Gunner & Gwala 1991:2, 8). Historical themes often emerge in praise poetry (Gunner & Gwala 1991:8; Kaschula 1991:18). Praise poems often centre on combat and conflict. They express the justness of war and conquest which are fought necessarily by men (Gunner 1995:186; Gunner & Gwala 1991:22). Praise poems have a heroic ethic, and try to mobilise people around a particular figure and to create loyalties to that particular figure. In addition, it promotes self-identification with a set of loyalties with which the person in question associates him- or herself (Gunner & Gwala 1991:18).

3.2.4.1   *Continuity between traditional praise poems and the worker poetry of the Mayibuye Cultural Group*

The poems *Koze kube nini na*? and *The days I shall never forget* have a heroic ethic and provide historical commentary. As such they correspond with traditional praise poetry and worker poetry in general. *Interim Government* and *Koze kube nini na*? which were performed during the songs *We demand* and *Saphela isizwe* respectively (see Appendix B:5 and 6), as well as *The days I shall never forget,* made use of traditional poetic conventions and centred on combat and conflict, which were also characteristic of praise poems and worker poetry in general. In the praises of trade union poets the heroic ethos was used to raise the consciousness of workers with regard to the role of unions (Gunner 1986:35) and the focus on conflict between two opposing forces demonstrated the continuity of worker poetry with traditional praise poems (Gunner 1986:36).

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understanding the poetry (Kaschula 1991:4, 10, 17).

The poems *Interim Government* and *Koze kube nini na*? also made use of stylistic techniques such as parallelism and repetition. In *Interim Government*, for example, the following example of parallelism is found:

> How long must our people suffer these oppressive laws
> How long must we tolerate the chains of bondage

and in *Koze kube nini na*?, the following example of parallelism is found:

> He died in the liberation of the oppressed masses
> He died for the liberation of the Workers
> He died for the liberation of the Students

The poems of the association also do not rhyme, a characteristic which, according to Opland 1995:168), is consistent with Xhosa tradition.

3.2.4.2   Emergent aspects in the poems of the Mayibuye Cultural Group

Style

The poem *Koze kube nini na*? which was performed during the song *Saphela isizwe* (see Appendix B:6) was written in both English and Xhosa which clearly demonstrates its emergent nature. The poems of the association did not employ the principle of naming or constructing a series of praise-names nor did they make use of extensive imagery as traditionally was the case.

Themes

The poems of the association invoked images of the struggle against apartheid which underscored its emergent nature, and as such the themes in the poems of the association corresponded with themes which were found in worker poetry in KwaZulu-Natal at the time. According to Sitas (1994:158-159), worker poetry included themes such as an emphasis on hope, a promise of redemption, violence and death. At their best the poems were self-reflective and critical of popular organisations and culture. All the poems of the association had a defiant tone and addressed death and violence. In addition, the poems *Interim Government* and *The days I shall never forget* emphasised hope, while the poem *I am Politically Bankrupt* was self-reflective and critical of popular organisations and culture at the time.

Similar to worker poetry in general (see Kromberg 1991:195), military imagery was commonly found in the poems of the association. The weapons of the liberation movement, namely the AK47 assault rifle and the bazooka, were referenced in several of the poems of the association and demonstrated its emergent nature. The poems of the association, similar to worker poetry in KwaZulu-Natal, celebrated the growth of unionism, and praised the strength of the workers and of COSATU (Sitas 1992b:102).

Gestures which accompanied performances of the poems of the association corresponded with those which accompanied worker poetry in general, but were also reminiscent of the dramatic gestures and lively movements of traditional praise poetry. Modern oral poetry is largely a performance, and arm gestures, clapping, head nodding as well as fashionable political salutes, such as A*mandla! Awethu!*, are important textural elements. Further, similar to worker praise poets generally (see Kaschula 1991:16-18), the association members as historic commentators fulfilled an important educational role since they raised the consciousness of the workers and people in general about the role of COSATU and the ANC in everyday South Africa. In addition, some of the poems of the association, similar to worker poetry generally (see Sitas 1994:154), were rich in religious Christian metaphors (see 3.3.4.4 and Appendix B:4 and 6).

3.3   THE SOCIOCULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SONGS

3.3.1   Overview

As was argued above (see 1.2.5), the interaction of the essential textual, textural and contextual elements determines the meaning of songs, and consequently the analysis of songs should not only depend on the verbal aspects of songs, but also on nonverbal elements, the context of performance and the various detailed performance devices which performers have at their disposal (Ntshinga 1994a:2-5). For example, the performance process can and does alter the formal characteristics of songs. Dance steps which accompany songs may become a dominant aspect during performance and influence the sociocultural meaning of the songs.

Consequently, particular attention has been paid to the performance dimension of the songs of the association because the songs exist in and thrive on performance.

Aspects of Dundes' (1980) approach to the study of the actual performance have been adopted as a framework for the presentation of the findings but due recognition has also been given to Schechner's (1985) concern for process in the presentation of the findings as far as they were relevant to the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group.

3.3.2. Training

The members of the association did not have any formal singing or choir training. Except for some student members, none of the members had performed in school or church choirs prior to joining the association. The members nevertheless felt that they were talented and had an understanding of music, and described themselves as musicians in addition to being singers (see 2.3.2.3).

Although no physical, breathing or vocal exercises were done to prepare members during workshops or rehearsals, some training was done and ideas were shared. For example, the general secretary taught the different sections of the choir their voice parts and often corrected the pitch and interpretation of songs during workshops.

Figure 3.1   The general secretary corrects the pitch of the tenors during a rehearsal of their songs

In particular, the pitch was corrected when a song was started on too high or low a pitch. This was probably done out of practical considerations since such circumstances pushed the vocal range of the choir to its limits. The general secretary of the choir maintained that the tenors and sopranos "screamed" when a song was started on too high a pitch. The balance of the sound of the choir was also corrected by moving singers from stronger sections in the choir to the undermanned sections. The association appointed two conductors (see Appendix A: Clause 4) to assist with the performance of songs. In practice, however, they mainly controlled the tempo of the songs by tapping their feet or snapping their fingers and were not concerned with the interpretation of the songs. Once the members of the association memorised songs, they no longer relied on the conductors.

3.3.3   The production and development of the songs

Although conceptual boundaries have been drawn between workshops and rehearsals in this section, it is not always easy to compartmentalise them and much of what is presented as relevant to workshops, also applies to rehearsals. However, in those instances where information relates specifically to one phase, it has been presented as such.

3.3.3.1   *Factors contributing to song texts*

In view of the fact that the specific circumstances leading to the development of song texts are sometimes essential for an understanding of the songs, especially when the songs are obscure (Groenewald & Makopo 1991:78), the circumstances which gave rise to the composing of the lyrics of the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group have been researched. However, members of the association could only in the case of seven of their songs (see Appendix B:1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13 and 18) identify the specific circumstances which prompted the composing of lyrics. Some of these lyrics were composed in response to demands made by the ANC alliance or individuals within the alliance (see Appendix B:1, 3, 5 and 13) whereas others (see Appendix B: 4, 6 and 18) drew on struggles and heroes of the past, corroborating the view of Callinicos (1991:1, 3) that history is a resource of mobilisation in South Africa.

Songs arising from demands within the ANC alliance

<u>Slovo</u> (see Appendix B:1): In March 1990, soon after Nelson Mandela's release from prison on 11 February 1990, an ANC delegation met with the then minority government to discuss indemnities for returning exiles which paved the way for their return. *Slovo* was written to welcome these exiles who returned to South Africa. Significantly, some of the members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group who previously had lived in the homelands (see 2.4.2) considered themselves to be exiles, because under the apartheid system they were denied South African citizenship and were not at liberty to return to South Africa, but were forced to become citizens of the former homelands. Such members felt that the apartheid policies and measures had deprived them of opportunities and rights in the urban areas, and maintained that the lyrics of the song also reflected their struggle to secure housing in Ethafeni hostel in Tembisa.

<u>Mvezeni simbone</u> (see Appendix B:3): The song was directed at Magnus Malan and Adriaan Vlok and was written around 1990 to echo the then demand of the ANC alliance that they, as Ministers of Defence and Law and Order respectively, should resign because they were unable to maintain effective law and order in South Africa. Magnus Malan was the Minister of Defence from 1980 to July 1991; thereafter he was appointed as the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry. On 28 February 1993, his political career ended. Adriaan Vlok was appointed as the Deputy Minister of Defence in September 1984, the Deputy Minister of Law and Order in January 1985 and from December 1986 to September 1991, he served as Minister of Law and Order. In September 1991 he was appointed as the Minister of Correctional Services and was given the additional responsibilities of the Minister of the Budget in the Administration, House of Assembly. His political career ended on 10 May 1994.

<u>We demand</u> (see Appendix B:5): In *The Harare Declaration*,[14] dated 21 August 1989, the ANC called for the establishment of an interim government to supervise the transitional process in South Africa. *We demand* was written to echo this demand by the ANC alliance and also drew on historical events to mobilise audiences. The poem *Interim Government* which was performed during the song focuses on crises within the National Party (NP), namely the Muldergate (Infogate) and Inkathagate scandals,

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[14] Declaration of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) ad hoc Committee on Southern Africa; Harare, Zimbabwe, (The Harare Declaration), Sections 14-24, 21 August 1989.

which surfaced in November 1978 and 1991 respectively. According to members, these scandals were referenced in the poem to expose the then minority government's incompetence and inability to rule the country effectively.

In the Muldergate scandal, the misappropriation of funds in the erstwhile Department of Information was uncovered, particularly the Department's secret financing of the daily newspaper *The Citizen* (Van Jaarsveld 1982:581-582), while the Inkathagate scandal pointed to collaboration between the South African Security Forces and Inkatha Self Protection Units. The theme of the alleged collaboration between the Security Forces and Inkatha Units surfaced in struggle songs and plays of other worker performers as well (Davis 1992:23; Memela 1991:14).

Dilika we ntaba (Appendix B:13): The song was written in response to the demand for the release of Nelson Mandela and political prisoners generally that was voiced by various organisations which were affiliated to the UDF (and later the MDM), such as the Release Mandela Committee. In terms of the Harare Declaration, the release of political prisoners was seen as a precondition for negotiation with the then government about the democratisation of South Africa.

Songs drawing on historical struggles and heroes

Owu yini Hani (Appendix B:4): This song was written in response to the massacre of ANC supporters on 7 September 1992 in the former independent homeland of Ciskei, as well as to the continuous killing of ANC supporters in the former independent homeland of Bophuthatswana.

Saphela isizwe (Appendix B:6): The song includes the poem *Kose kube nini na?* which was written as a dedication to an organiser of the Transport and Allied Workers Union (TAWU) who was shot by Inkatha warlords in Pietermaritzburg. It would appear that songs and poems which were written in response to specific tragedies such as the incident above, were quite common at the time (Davis 1992:23). Although the song is dedicated to a specific person, members of the association claimed that the song was written for all the "blacks that were killed in the violence" and was an appeal to Christians to stop the violence.

Makana (Appendix B:18): The members of the association did not write the lyrics of this song. They were under the impression that the song was about "Makana, a

Nguni-speaking prophet who lived in either the eighteenth or nineteenth century". In reality, the song in all probability was about Makanda Nxele, a Xhosa diviner and so-called "Bantu prophet", who lived around the beginning of the nineteenth century and who was influenced by the preaching of Dr Van der Kemp of the London Missionary Society. In his preachings, Makanda called on the ancestors to rise up from the dead to fight against the settlers and in 1819 he led an attack on Grahamstown (Dargie 1988:5). He was imprisoned on Robben Island and drowned when trying to escape from the island prison.

3.3.3.2 Workshopping phase

The Mayibuye Cultural Group did not compose songs, but wrote lyrics which were set to melodies of school, church and popular songs. The general secretary, his brother and cousin wrote most of the lyrics. All three were Xhosa speaking, a factor which may have been a reason why most of the songs of the association were sung in Xhosa. The general secretary composed the lyrics of eight of the songs (see Appendix B:1, 4, 6, 7, 14, 15, 16 and 17) and two of his poems were included in songs (see Appendix B:5 and 6). His brother composed the lyrics of three songs (see Appendix B:3, 5 and 11) and collaborated with the general secretary on one song (see Appendix B:4), while his cousin composed the lyrics of two songs (see Appendix B:2 and 10). Members of the association also contributed to the lyrics during the workshopping of songs and a song was only accepted if all members reached consensus on the lyrics of the song. The fact that members had to reach consensus about the lyrics of songs is indicative of a group orientation among the association. Thus the lyrics were a product of a strong individual input and a communal creative process. Further, since they based their songs on school and other popular songs, the musical structures and rhythms of which influenced the lyrics, the creative process probably is, as Elbourne has observed, spread over many generations and individuals (cited in Van Schalkwyk & Moifatswane 1993:9).

As a general rule, the individual concerned (the general secretary, his brother or cousin) started the creative process by selecting suitable popular songs which other choirs performed. The next step was to write lyrics which rhythmically matched the musical structure of the song. In the case of *Saphela isizwe* (see Appendix B:6), the general secretary wrote the poem first and then he adjusted the lyrics of the song to fit the general tenor of the poem. If specific circumstances prompted the writing of a

song, such circumstances were reflected in the lyrics. The lyrics were the result of a process of trial and error in which the writer repeatedly sang the melody while attempting to fit lyrics onto the musical structure of the song. Once he was satisfied, he took the song to the association.

The next phase was the communal creative phase. Before members of the association started a workshop, they discussed (the) new song(s) and warmed up their voices by singing one of their songs. A new song was then sung to the members and workshopped without the use of sheet music. During this phase, the members sometimes changed the lyrics and occasionally even the rhythm, but never the melodic structure of the song. Finally, when they were satisfied with the end result, the members selected a suitable rhythmic movement to be performed with the new song.

3.3.3.3   *Rehearsals*

Before a performance the association scheduled several rehearsals. During the last of these, the performance programme was finalised. The group orientation of the association was also evident in the finalisation of the programme since the association as a whole decided on the programme. They normally selected ten songs and decided on the order in which they would be sung. The lyrics of the songs and the specific audience for which they were going to perform, influenced the selection of songs. *Slovo* (see Appendix B:1) was popular and often opened their performance programme.

3.3.3.4   *Warming up*

Before a performance started, the association warmed up by rehearsing the first song they were going to perform. During this song they checked the pitch, tempo and balance of the voices and once they were satisfied, they went to the performance space and entered the stage singing. When they were performing plays that included songs, they warmed up their voices during a song that was normally sung by the audience before the play commenced.

3.3.4 Actual performance

3.3.4.1 Introduction

The contextual, textural and textual elements of the songs are discussed in this section because, as Groenewald and Makopo (1991:78-79) argue, they find expression mainly in performance itself and as such can only be fully appreciated in performance. The performance which has been selected for the analysis and presentation of research findings took place on 14 September 1992 at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Women's Forum of TGWU. The AGM was held on the 2nd floor of the Queen Court Building, on the corner of Plein and Bree Streets in Johannesburg. Due to unrest in the townships and transport problems at the time, many forum members could not make it to the meeting and only eleven women and one arrived for the meeting. For that reason, the forum did not continue with its planned agenda but waited for possible latecomers, and in the meanwhile they discussed some general matters.

The members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group arrived at the venue at 10:00 and socialised while they waited to hear whether they were going to perform. As the day dragged on without any indication of what was going to happen, I decided to use the opportunity to conduct interviews. At approximately 15:00 the members of the Forum decided to close the meeting and decided to give the association an opportunity to perform. The association was told that they could only perform five songs and two poems. They consequently decided to perform the following songs: *Sinik' umkhonto lo* (see Appendix B:11), *Slovo* (see Appendix B:1), *We'll never compromise* (see Appendix B:2), *Gomomo noJay Naidoo* ; and *Saphela isizwe* (see Appendix B:6). The cousin of the general secretary was selected to render his poem *The days I shall never forget*.

It should be noted that many of the elements presented here were also part of performances in the workshops and rehearsals. However, successive performances and rehearsals of the association were not identical because the interaction between elements of performance in some instances differed slightly from context to context. Different performance contexts foregrounded different aspects in performance and consequently, in addition to a discussion of the contextual, textural and textual

elements of the actual performance, general findings on the performances of the association are also presented.

Poetry did not feature prominently in the performances of the association. Only two poems, *Interim Government* (Appendix C:1) and *Koze kube nini na*? (Appendix C:2), were performed regularly. They were performed as part of the songs *We demand* (Appendix B:5) and *Saphela isizwe* (Appendix B:6) respectively. The poem *The days I shall never forget* (Appendix C:3) was recited as a poem in its own right, while the poem *I am Politically Bankrupt* (Appendix C:4) was never recited during performances but was published under the name of the general secretary and the Mayibuye Cultural Group[15]. Consequently, only four of the ten poems which are included in Appendix C, were part of the collective repertoire of the association. The analysis, therefore, relates to these four poems only.

3.3.4.2   Contextual elements

Songs

The texts of the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group were general and slogan-like (see 3.3.4.4) and were performed in a variety of contexts in the greater Johannesburg area, particularly in Tembisa. In particular, they were performed at trade union and political meetings of organisations that were associated with the ANC alliance and in performance spaces, for example trade union offices, that often were directly connected to these organisations. The songs therefore formed part of larger politicised events and were performed at political venues which framed the songs around the ideology of the ANC alliance.

Sitas (1992b:96) argues that such meetings can be divided into three different modes, and that each mode demands different forms of performative participation. First, the meetings are spaces where emotive threads are woven together and where identities and comradeships are created and affirmed. Meetings create a sense of belonging and ritually demonstrate defiance and resistance. In this mode the task of performers is to weave solidarities together. The fact that songs serve to create

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[15] The poem was published in *The Shopsteward*, Volume 3(3), April/May 1993.

solidarities and strike defiant chords has also been stressed by Henderson (Davis 1992:23) and Ntshinga (1993:87).

Second, meetings have a cognitive mode in which "people are asked to settle down, think, discuss, explain, justify, but, more often than not, ratify, and endorse" (Sitas 1992b:96). The leaders control the messages and influence the way in which they are transmitted. They also preplan the agendas and priorities, ask the people to hear arguments and resolve issues, and identify performers who endorse these issues through their performances.

Last, meetings have a festive mode where performers are organised to liven up the proceedings (Sitas 1992b:96). The above approach to the analysis of performative participation in these meetings has been adopted in this section to contextualise the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group.

As mentioned earlier (see 3.3.3.3), the association had a specific programme for each performance. Although these programmes were generally followed, last minute changes to programmes were sometimes necessary to accommodate changes by the host organisation to the agenda of the meeting or circumstances which impacted on the time allocated for performance. The association usually had two performance sessions during meetings. During their first appearance they sang the first five songs on their programme and completed the programme when they were called back. In some cases, however, their programme was prolonged by requests from the audience to repeat songs. During performances, the songs of the association were introduced by the chairman, the general secretary or his cousin and a member of the choir, but never by a female member.

They normally performed the first part of their programme after the opening address of the event, during a phase of the proceedings where the establishment and affirmation of identities and comradeships as well as the demonstration of defiance were particularly evident in the chanting of slogans such as *Amandla!* (a Zulu word meaning "power"), *Awethu!* (a Zulu word meaning "ours") and *Long live the ANC*. Fourteen of their songs clearly affirmed identities in the ANC alliance or celebrated individuals connected to the ANC alliance and created a sense of belonging and comradeship (see 3.3.4.4). For example *Angatheth' COSATU* (see Appendix B:16) proclaimed

> When COSATU speaks
> You must know that the world hears him
> They hear him, hear him
> The whole world hears him

Eight songs demonstrated resistance and defiance (see Appendix B:2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17 and 18). For example, the song *We'll never compromise* (see Appendix B:2) declaimed

> We'll never, never, never, never
> Abandon the struggle
> We'll better die in our struggle
> We'll never compromise

Other examples included "Let your spirit of non-surrender remain with us" (see Appendix B:6); "We will fight, we will fight until we get our country back" (see Appendix B:9); "Join the MK and kill the SADF with AK's" (see Appendix B:10); "Tambo give us the spear, Tambo give us a Makharov" (see Appendix B:11); and "Are you afraid of them (the Boers)? We are not. Take a grenade and kill the Boers" (see Appendix B:15). Therefore, since 17 of their songs contained affirmative and/or defiant elements, it was logical that the association was asked to perform during a phase in the proceedings where the demonstration of defiance and affirmation of identities dominated. When the songs were performed in this context, they served to unite the performers with the audiences and to mobilise the audiences by means of the defiant tenor of the songs.

The association, however, preferred to perform during the discussion phase of meetings or during breaks in discussions when the cognitive mode is dominant. Fourteen of their songs were framed around the strategies, i.e. a negotiated settlement and a people's war which influenced the ANC's planning during the 1980s and early 1990s (see Appendix B:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17 as well as 3.3.4.4) and were therefore suitable to be performed during this phase, since the cognitive elements in their songs had the potential to endorse issues and to unite the audiences around these issues.

Sometimes the association performed their programme at the end of an event although members of the association preferred not to do so. They felt that audiences were tired then and that their songs would not have impact. They indicated nevertheless that they certainly livened up the proceedings when they performed at

this stage because their songs were entertaining. The rapport that they established with audiences and the enjoyment that they as well as their audiences derived from their performances, underscored the entertaining (festive) nature of the songs which resonated with the festive mode of meetings. From the above discussion it is clear that the affirmative, cognitive and festive elements in their songs resonated with the various modes into which meetings can be divided.

Audience responses

The audiences were an important part of their performances and in most cases comprised of local political and trade union leaders as well as members and supporters of various organisations. Sitas (1992b:97) argues that if the form of communication employed by performers is competent, the audience will respond and interact with the performance. In the case of the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, the audience ululated, shouted slogans relevant to the struggle against apartheid, clapped hands, encouraged the performers, sang along with the choir and joined in with the dance step which the choir performed or performed an alternative dance movement. Under such circumstances, some appreciative members of the audience even crossed "the boundary" into the performing space of the choir. This served to break down the boundary between the performers and the audience and promoted unity among them.

The members of the association enjoyed the fact that the audience joined in and were encouraged by it. The Mayibuye Cultural Group sometimes received feedback on their performance from friends, neighbours, colleagues or members of the audience. This feedback was incorporated into their performances if the feedback was seen by members as an improvement on the original.

The songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group also seemed to have reached a wider audience which had not been exposed to their live performances. A tape recording of their songs was played to three domestic workers in Benoni in Eastern Gauteng. These domestic workers claimed that they did not only know the melodies of some songs, but also their lyrics. The domestic workers claimed that the songs *We demand* (see Appendix B:5) and *Saphela isizwe* (see Appendix B:6) were frequently performed on trains between Benoni and Daveyton in Eastern Gauteng at the time. Since the association insisted that they wrote the lyrics of these two songs, it would appear

that some of their songs had filtered into the general repertoire of struggle songs in the Gauteng area. In contrast, the domestic workers indicated that they knew the melodies of *Slovo* (see Appendix B:1), *Gomomo noJay Naidoo* (see Appendix B:7), *Ligcwele iimpimpi* (see Appendix B:9) and *Niyaboyika na?* (see Appendix B:15) but not the lyrics. This finding seemed to support the association's claim that they used popular melodies onto which they grafted their own lyrics.

3.3.4.3   Textural elements

The analysis of nonverbal elements mainly relates to those elements and aspects of performance which members of the association considered to be important as well as those that upon reflection seemed to impact considerably on the textual meaning and interpretation of the songs and poems of the association.

Performing space

Actual performances took place in defined spaces. In some venues, the Mayibuye Cultural Group performed on a *iqonga* (a Xhosa word for "stage"), which is a platform or a space that was specifically designed to serve as a stage. More frequently the association performed in offices or classrooms that did not have defined performing spaces. In such cases the "stage" was defined by the people attending and constituted an open area in the room. A specific use of the performing space was important to the choir. If in performance the rows spread out and as a result the members moved too close to the audience, the conductor or general secretary indicated to the choir to move back or closer together. However, this was also done during workshops and rehearsals and therefore it would appear that the performing space was controlled for practical considerations, to assist the choir in its performance rather than to maintain a boundary between the choir and the audience.

With regard to the actual performance of the association at the Queen Court Building, members waited in a small room adjacent to the room in which the forum met and in which they finally performed. The performance space was thus contextualised by the politicised meeting of the Women's forum. The room in which the performance took place was approximately three by five metres in size and was

empty, except for roughly 20 chairs which had been placed in the room as seating for the audience.

Dress

The Mayibuye Cultural Group members did not wear a distinctive costume or dress (see 2.3.2.11). During workshops and rehearsals they wore casual, comfortable clothing. When they performed the males wore white shirts and black or dark trousers, and the females white shirts and black skirts. Khaki shirts were also acceptable. Those who did not have white shirts performed in T-shirts. Previously, as members of the UNIPEC Group, they wore T-shirts of TGWU, but as members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group they did not wear T-shirts associated with any political or worker organisations because of their declared nonpartisan stance. As such their dress was not different from the dress of their audience which assisted in obscuring the boundary between the choir and the audience, and in the process emphasised the unity of those present.

Vocal organisation

The choir was organised into various vocal sections, namely soprano, alto, tenor and baritone sections. There were six baritones, five tenors, two sopranos and three altos in the Mayibuye Cultural Group. Members did not distinguish conceptually between baritone and bass, and considered them to be synonymous concepts. They preferred the term baritone to bass although they acknowledged that some groups used the term bass to denote low-pitched male voices. *Isicathamiya* (male) choirs, for example, organised their choirs into bass, tenor, alto and soprano sections (Erlmann 1992:701). When too many members of a vocal section were absent during a performance, that section was strengthened with compatible voices from other sections of the choir. On occasion tenors or even baritones sang the part of the sopranos.

The choir had a specific spatial organisation. They entered the performing space in a specific order. The sopranos led, with the altos, tenors and baritones following. In the performance space they organised themselves into two rows. The sopranos and altos stood in the front row with the sopranos placed to the left of the choir, while the baritones and tenors were in the back row with the baritones placed to the left

of the choir. This line-up, however, depended on circumstances. When microphones were available, they divided the choir into separate voice sections around a microphone, and on occasion even formed themselves into a half-moon around a microphone. With regard to the actual performance of the association at the Queen Court building, when the choir entered the performing space, members were organised in three rows with the sopranos in front, the altos and tenors in the middle and the basses in the back row.

Figure 3.2   Due to the limited space in this venue, the group is spatially organised into three rows

Interpretative gestures

Coplan (1980:167) argues that interpretative gestures which accompany choir perfor-mances seemed to have emerged in the late nineteenth century in mission schools as a solution to the difficulty to keep students standing still while singing. According to members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, interpretative gestures were important aspects of their songs and corresponded with the messages in the songs. To demonstrate that something was disturbing or shaming them, they folded their arms across their chests so that the tips of their fingers touched their shoulders, as was the case in the song *Saphela isizwe* (see Appendix B:6). This gesture emphasised their concern at that time about the so-called black-on-black violence in South Africa

and the shame they as Christians felt. In their opinion, Christians should have been able to stop the violence.

Hand gestures featured in some songs. In the song *Slovo* (see Appendix B:1) they pointed their index fingers which signified that Joe Slovo, a military leader of MK at the time, had to "open the way". According to members, these gestures in particular indicated that Slovo had to open the way for the exiles to return to South Africa. Since the call was directed to a military leader, the request and gesture suggested military action by MK to open the way. During the performance of the song *Owu yini Hani* (see Appendix B:4) the baritones also pointed their index fingers which signified that Hani must "open the way". However, in the context of this song, members argued, "open the way" suggested forgiving and consequently the pointed fingers were a forgiving gesture. The forgiving tone of the song, according to members, was strengthened by other gestures which signified forgiving. For example, members stretched out their arms and opened their hands while they were singing:

> Forgive them Hani, they don't know what they are doing.

The words "open the way", as well as the accompanying gestures, were directed at an intermediary in each song, namely Joe Slovo and Chris Hani, who were requested to act on behalf of the group. As such, their role as intermediaries to some degree corresponded with the role of go-betweens or intermediaries in traditional indigenous societies. In a legal context, for example, such trusted individuals initiated negotiations, acted on behalf of the group, facilitated negotiations between the parties involved and tolerated rebuffs on behalf of the group (Olivier 1989:42).

Hand gestures were also used to indicate change. While the general secretary of the association recited his poem *Interim Government* during a performance of the song *We demand* (see Appendix B:5), he twirled his hands in sections of the poem that dealt with change, as in the case of

> The Winds of change are Swaying in South Africa
> The freedom bird is weavering [wavering-GHM] in our Country

Members of the association also used mimicking gestures in some of their songs. In the song *Niyaboyika na?* (see Appendix B:15) the members mimicked a throwing action when they sang

> Take a bazooka
> Take a grenade and kill the Boers

Such gestures heightened the militancy of the song which intimidated those who did not share their political vision and ideology, and the gestures, more than the textual elements of the song emphasised their resolve to fight for their rights and a democratic South Africa.

The song *Saphela isizwe* (see Appendix B:6) was preceded by a sketch. In the sketch two male members of the association acted out "a scene of two fighting rivals": an ANC member who was toyi-toying and an IFP member who was reciting a praise poem about himself. This sketch related to the poem *Koze kube nini na?* which was performed during the song and particularly to the assassins of the "Soldier of the people" who "died in the struggle of the oppressed masses". Although the assassins in the song were only identified as "apartheid forces", this sketch made it clear that they were IFP members. This conclusion is underscored by the fact that the poem in the song was dedicated to an organiser of the Transport and Allied Workers' Union (TAWU) who was killed by Inkatha warlords. Members of the association were convinced that the IFP was backed by the then government and held the IFP as well as the then government responsible for the so-called black-on-black violence. This view was also expressed in the literary plays of the general secretary of the association (see Appendix D).

In the sketch the IFP member was represented as being involved with a performance genre which is firmly rooted in tradition and his praise poem about himself suggested his self-centredness. This representation was in line with the view of members that the IFP aimed to maintain traditional culture and strengthen their own position at the cost of a united South Africa. In contrast, the ANC member was represented as being involved with a contemporary performance genre which was associated with the struggle, namely the toyi-toyi which, it would seem, was developed during drill sessions in *Umkhonto weSizwe* training camps (see 3.2.2.2). The sketch underscored the conclusion that the Mayibuye Cultural Group openly supported the ANC alliance despite their claim to be a nonpartisan performance association.

Call-and-response pattern

All the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group with the exception of the songs *Thina singama cadres* (see Appendix B:17), *Makana* (see Appendix B:18) and *Joe Modise* (see Appendix B:19) had two voice parts, the call of the leader and response of the

choir, which did not start simultaneously but overlapped in performance. The Mayibuye Cultural Group primarily used one of the sopranos as caller in their songs, but sometimes they used one of the tenors, for example in the songs *We demand*, *Sinik' umkhonto lo* and *Niyaboyika na?* (see Appendix B:5, 11 and 15) and even in a section of the choir in the song *Gomomo noJay Naidoo* (see Appendix B:7).

According to Mayers (1976:201), a call-and-response system emphasises the connectedness among communicating participants and creates unity among them, and according to Akbar (1976:178-179) is generally evident in the interaction between African performers and their audiences. This antiphonal style of singing emphasised the group-oriented approach of the Mayibuye Cultural Group and created unity among members. The connectedness between the members of the association and the audience were also emphasised and strengthened by the fact that the lyrics of their songs were fitted onto the musical structures of school, church and popular songs which were well known to the audience (see 3.3.3.2).

Dance steps

The dance steps which the members of the association performed while they were singing, are called "step" (*istep* is a loan word from English) and the members did not have indigenous terms to name the different steps. They could not define a step, but maintained that it is not "a dance" and that the sound of it adds a musical dimension to a song. In addition, a step comprises rhythmic arm, foot and whole-body movements. Such movements are limited in scope and are repeated continuously for the duration of a song. The members maintained that a dance has less structure and more expressive possibilities than a step and explained that they did not do dancing and therefore had placed the category dancer as a performance type last on the priority list which ranked the type of performers they were (see 2.3.2.3). The Mayibuye Cultural Group felt that the style of their music compelled them to do synchronised step-dancing although there was no rule that a step should be done with a song. They argued that a step is a uniting factor; that it functions to emphasise the rhythm and that it helped them to keep the rhythm of a song.

The association performed five basic steps. The steps were the general steps that most choirs perform and which are known to the broader society. They did not as a rule create their own steps but elaborated on commonly accepted steps in some

songs. Two factors determined the kind of step they selected for a song, namely the lyrics and the rhythm. The accompanying step to a large degree was determined by the rhythm of songs because the step must match the rhythm. Although different steps could be executed with a song, a specific step was selected. However, during performances the choir was sometimes forced to do a different step to the rehearsed step. At one particular performance the sopranos started a song with an unrehearsed step. Instead of persisting with the rehearsed step, the rest of the choir, who were lined up behind the sopranos, fell in with the new step. The small variation in steps seems to suggest that the steps in themselves are not normally one of the dominant elements.

*Figure 3.3   The association is performing a dance step to the song
Mandela, simthini uVlok*

They toyi-toyied in one song only, namely *Sinik' umkhonto lo* (Appendix B:11). However, the members of the association adapted the toyi-toyi in this song so that the female members could keep up with the pace of the step. According to Klaaste (1991:9) toyi-toying has a hypnotic effect and unifies the performers to the point where they become one in step, one in mind and one in spirit. This one-mindedness was evident in performances of *Sinik' umkhonto lo* by the association and facilitated the aim of the songs to unify workers.

In terms of an African worldview, rhythm is the natural flow of the cosmos and is the essence of the oneness which permeates this worldview. Rhythm regulates relationships between people and in songs it unites the performers and audience into a shared oneness, and affirms the unity among them (Akbar 1976:176, 187, 194). The dance steps which the association performed unified the performers and in some cases members of their audiences as well. The steps also contributed to the forceful performance of the songs and heightened their militancy.

The performance at Queen Court Building

The actual performance of the association at the Queen Court Building reflected many of these conventions. The first song which was performed, *Sinik' umkhonto lo* (see Appendix B:11), erupted with energy and was accompanied by toyi-toying and saluting which heightened the militancy of the lyrics of the song:

> Tambo give us the spear
> Tambo give us the Makharov

The audience participated actively and several women ululated during the performance of the song. Members of the audience shouted political slogans in response to the song and encouraged the performers. However, during the performance of the second song *Slovo* (see Appendix B:1) the members of the choir seemed to be serious and the reception of the song was more subdued. The cousin of the general secretary was next and when he rendered his poem, he used his arms and hands extensively. He placed his left hand often over his heart and he raised his right arm with a clenched fist which signified black power, but also pointed to the audience when he recounted the events of 16 June 1976 (see 1.4.3). At one point he also crossed his arms over his chest in a gesture of shame. The performance of the third and fourth songs *We'll never abandon the struggle* (see Appendix B:2) and *Gomomo noJay Naidoo* (see Appendix B:7) reignited the energy of the choir and audience alike, and the performances of the choir were powerful. The fourth song in particular was accompanied by a demanding dance step, which required members to lift their legs almost like one would do in a can-can dance. Several members of the audience sang with the choir, participated in the dance step and saluted. With the performance of the final song *Saphela isizwe* (see Appendix B:6) the whole audience, with the exception of me, stood up, sang the song and participated in the dancing step.

In my view, the performance of the association was forceful and intimidating and the threat of violence against whites made me uncomfortable. In particular the performance of nonverbal aspects of the songs was intimidating and the view of Groenewald and Makopo (1992:133) that the nonverbal elements of political songs more than any other aspects of political songs provoked the security forces at the time of their performance, took on a new meaning for me after I had attended this performance. The performance amplified my concerns that they would sense that I did not share their political ideology. It also rekindled fears that they would after all decide that I was in fact part of the enemy and their political adversary, which would have jeopardised my research.

Ensemble work

The members of the association were constantly concerned about the pitch (see 3.3.2 and 3.3.3.4) and tempo of their songs and took great care during performances to maintain correct pitch and tempo. According to the members, audiences got bored if songs were sung "too slow". When they maintained the correct tempo during songs, it certainly added to the energetic performance of their songs. The general secretary was often dissatisfied with their performance because the choir slowed down during songs and did not maintain the tempo. There were, however, sorrowful songs (see Appendix B:4 and 6) which were sung at a slow tempo to create the sorrowful atmosphere of the songs.

Harmonic balance was very important to members of the association and depended on the successful interaction of the overlapping calls and responses and different rhythms during performances. The importance of the interaction of different elements during performance has also been emphasised by Charles Adams (see Coplan 1980:167) who maintains that among the Basotho a good performance was dependent on the successful interaction between the "sound" and the "rhythm done with the feet". In terms of an African worldview, harmony reaffirms the rhythmic flow between self and others (Akbar 1976:176). It therefore emphasised the unity among members of the association as well as with members of the audience who joined in the singing and thus facilitated the aim of the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group. With respect to the performance of the poems during the songs *We demand* (see Appendix B:5) and *Saphela isizwe* (see Appendix B:6), members tried to

synchronise the humming of the melody with the rhythm of the poems. If they succeeded to complete the cycle of the song at the same time that the poem ended, they considered it a good performance.

Diction was also important and members of the association commented that people had to be able to hear what they were singing. They maintained that clear diction was an indication that there was harmonic balance. Clear diction emphasised the text, making the text an important feature of all their songs. According to members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, excellence in performance was not measured against the volume at which a song was performed. They maintained that some songs required a sensitive approach and not a forceful one. In contrast, Erlmann (1992:703) argues that much of the aesthetic appeal of *isicathamiya* choirs is measured in terms of volume. With regard to the Mayibuye Cultural Group it would appear that increased volume rather functioned to emphasise the text during performance and in some cases (see Appendix B:2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14 and 17) to heighten the militancy of the songs.

3.3.4.4   Textual elements

In the following section, the themes in the songs and poems of the Mayibuye Cultural Group are analysed. The analysis only relates to the identification of themes in the texts which had a bearing on the sociopolitical developments at the time and which contextualised events. In order to facilitate the analysis, summaries of the lyrics of the songs are given, but the texts of the poems are given in full. The summaries reflect how members of the association interpreted the lyrics of their songs. In cases where the lyrics were somewhat obscure (see Appendix B:3, 4, 12 and 13), the members were asked to explain their meaning. The lyrics are slogan-like and were written to evoke emotional responses, and not primarily to convey factual statements. As such the lyrics had a perlocutionary function (see Austin 1962) which implies that they aimed to incite people to action.

As was mentioned earlier (see 3.3.4.3), the texts of the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group were a dominant aspect of their performance. The continuous repetition of the lyrics during performances of their songs underscored the importance of the lyrics, and was also acknowledged by members of the association. In their view, the lyrics, together with the rhythm, were the most important aspects

of their songs (see 3.3.4.3). The texts are therefore an important aspect in establishing the sociocultural meaning of the songs.

Summaries of the texts of the songs (see Appendix B for the full texts of the songs)

Slovo: We will get into South Africa. Joe Slovo [MK leader at the time-GHM], open up the way [with MK-GHM] so that we, the exiles, can get rights.

We'll never compromise: We will never abandon the struggle and will sooner die than compromise.

Mvezeni simbone: Adriaan Vlok and Magnus Malan [NP cabinet ministers at the time-GHM] are guilty, let them be brought before the people.

Owu yini Hani: Chris Hani [MK leader at the time-GHM], forgive Oupa Gqozo and Lucas Mangope [former homeland leaders-GHM] [for the massacres in their states and for being puppets of the South African government-GHM] since they do not know what they are doing.

We demand: We demand an interim government, a constituent assembly and one-person-one-vote. The text of the poem *Interim Government* which was recited during the performance of reads as follows:

> The Winds of change are Swaying in South Africa
> The freedom bird is weavering [wavering-GHM] in our Country
> The last kicks of the N.P. are becoming powerless every passing minute.
> This tyrant monster refuses to die
> As the Sun is about to Set for the Junior Govern. [government-GHM]
> The law of a Jungle is collapsing
> Listen to our demand - Listen to our Song
>
> From the Infogate to Inkathagate scandal
> From the Inkathagate to 1985 death orders.
> From 1985 death orders to the Exit gate
> I say now is the time for the Govern [government] to quit.
> This is a blatant attempt to destroy the will of our people
> The ship is wrecking for the PTA regime (This verse line was deleted in the original but has been included here to demonstrate the development of the poem as well as for the sake of completeness.)
> We demand the installation of transitional Government.
> Listen to our demand - Listen to our Song.
>
> How long must our people suffer these oppressive laws,

> How long must we tolerate the Chains of Bondage
> Our Masses cannot postpone their Hunger for freedom.
> This is the situation we are not willing to accept.
> This is the demand we cannot compromise
> This is our last mile we intends [sic] to run.
> Listen to our demand - Listen to our Song.

Saphela isizwe: Lord, save the nation from the destruction of the Boers who are responsible for the violence. The text of the poem *Koze kube nini na* (For how long)? Which was recited during the performance of the song reads as follows:

> Here lies the Soldier of the People
> He died in the Struggle of the Oppressed Masses.
> He died for the liberation of Workers.
> He died for the liberation of Students.
> Here lies the hero - died for us all.
> Now he is no more - killed by Apartheid forces.
> Oh! *Koze kube nini na* (For how long)?
>
> Along the dusty streets of our township
> Along the factory
> Along the Apartheid Schools
> Along the hundred thousands of Unemployed
> You always find him there.
> Preaching the gospel of Peace
> Now he is no more - killed by Apartheid forces.
> Oh! *Koze kube nini na* (For how long)?
>
> Oh! My brother
> I shall never forget you
> I shall never forgive your assassinators [sic].
> Brothers and Sisters
> Let his spirit of non-surrunder [sic] remain with us.
> Now he is no more - killed by Apartheid forces.
> Oh! *Koze kube nini na* (For how long)?

Gomomo noJay Naidoo: John Gomomo and Jay Naidoo [COSATU leaders at the time-GHM], brave warriors, we thank you for what you have done for the workers. COSATU, we salute you.

'Khonto weSizwe: We have our own army [MK-GHM] which have come with us from Lusaka.

Ligcwele iimpimpi: Although there are many spies [collaborators/puppets/informers-GHM] among our people [the disadvantaged masses-GHM], we will fight until we have reclaimed South Africa.

Siyawaz' umbala: We know what the ANC flag represents. Join MK and kill the SADF with AK47's.

Sinik' umkhonto lo: Oliver Tambo [President of the ANC at the time-GHM], bring on the army [MK] and give us weapons.

Sayiwela iLimpopo: Oliver Tambo, we are on our way to join you [MK-GHM].

Dilika we ntaba: Come [fall-GHM] down you mountains so that Nelson Mandela [political prisoner at the time-GHM] can be released. (After the release of Nelson Mandela the song became a call for all political prisoners to be released.)

Mandela, simthini uVlok?: Nelson Mandela, what are we to do with Adriaan Vlok?[16] We want him to see the situation from our perspective.

Niyaboyika na?: We are not afraid of the Boers. Strength will be with us. Take a bazooka and a grenade and kill them.

Angatheth' COSATU: When COSATU speaks, the whole world hears.

Thina singama cadres: We, the cadres from Lusaka [MK-GHM], shoot with a tank. We shall win and govern.

Makana: Long ago there was a brave man called Makana [Makanda Nxele-GHM] who, when faced by his oppressors, sacrificed his soul to protect our forefathers' land. He prophesied that a generation would come that would fight to reclaim Africa for its sons. His prophecy has come true: the writing is on the wall.

Joe Modise: Joe Modise [MK leader at the time-GHM], the champion, the great fighter is coming home.

The text of the poem *The days I shall never forget* reads as follows:

> Let me remember the days of sorrow

---

[16] In a twist of fate and almost as if the wish expressed in this song came true, in August 2006 Adriaan Vlok publicly apologised to Frank Chikane for his role in the 1989 plot to assassinate Chikane who was the secretary-general of the South African Council of Churches at the time. Vlok then asked Chikane's permission to wash his (Chikane's) feet. Subsequently Vlok has also washed the feet of the ten widows and mothers of the Mamelodi 10, a group of anti-apartheid activists whose deaths were caused by a police informant (Wikipedia s.a.(c):1). Also see *Mvezeni simbone* (Appendix B:3) in this regard.

Let me remember the days of no retreat
The day the people vowed not to surrender
when all stopped with mourning and weeping
and all long flowing tears were wiped
Vithumete ishu ntze bechu biti izinyo izinyo
(A tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye)

For all peace channels were exhausted
and all amicable means were not to be found
Allow me to honour you December 16
for embracing me in the peoples' army
Umkhonto weSizwe
Formed in bloodstains of multitudes in Sharpeville
in order to meet the apartheid violence
Allow me to remind you once more
of the heroic sacrifice by the youth
who dared to take determined decisions
and raised high the banner of the founding fathers
and sowed to all corners of the country
their unwavering and militant spirit
despite heavily armed police actions
tragically they sank
Noma besidubula siyaya (Even if they shoot us we are going forward)

Allow me therefore to remember June the sixteenth
for the glorious blood that painted red
the streets of our township
the blood that paved the way to freedom
freedom or death was the only provision for the journey
Allow me therefore to quench my thirst from that blood
the blood of heroes like Hector Peterson and others
who paid their last price for my freedom
for their crucible blessed dedication to the struggle

The text of the poem *I am Politically Bankrupt* reads as follows:

Allow me to say that I am a Cow to be slaughtered.
Allow me to say that the A.N.C is selling the Masses.
Allow me to say that we will continue with the armed struggle.
The Struggle I've never been to good at
I am opportunistic enough to come out with such a claim.
As the A.N.C had decided to suspend it.
I always wait for the A.N.C to make a move.
Thereafter - I hope to improve on it.
Oh Yes forget me not - I am Politically Bankrupt.

It is pointless for me Sounding purist & holier-than-thou
I would not like to see the Collaborators on the Negotiations table.
Hence the reality is that they have a role to play.
I am calling Baba Madiba a Sell out.
But he sacrificed his life in jail more than the years of my life.
Don't you think he would have sold us and get his freedom.
Oh Yes forget me not - I am Politically Bankrupt.

CODESA is not the only Sole mechanism by which democracy can be attained.
I have embarked on a campaign to disband it.
I want to make a way for a new negotiating forum.
To have tricameral & home land [sic] leaders on the Neg [Negotiation] table is to commit suicide.
I say CODESA is little more than a talking shop
Oh Yes forget me not - I am Politically Bankrupt.

I appreciate that Organ [Organisations] have their Independent rights.
As I have also embarked on Police killing Campaign.
I say these people are apartheid apparatus
I had some people appalled because of my Campaign
They say it won't achieve my Aims
Some asked about the killings of these people.
I foresee a problem with my explanation
As it will expose my Bankruptcy
Oh yes forget me not - I am Politically Bankrupt.

From Village to Village
From Township to township.
Is the name of my game.
This is another attempt to smash CODESA.
This is another try to excite the Ghost.
I was expelled from the Patriotic front
Due to my foolishness
This expellision [expulsion] is about to expose my bankruptcy.
I say "NO" cannot be left out.
The enemy will get me nacked [naked].
Oh Yes forget me not - I am Politically Bankrupt.

Some people talk about Mass action
This is an attempt to denounce the spirit of our Masses.
They are merely doing so to enable CODESA to sit again.
Our Masses must ignore this meaningless call.
I-for-one will nor participate in such a useless exercise.
Oh Yes forget me not - I am Politically Bankrupt.

Solidarity with the ANC alliance

Fourteen of the songs of the association (see Appendix B:1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 19) demonstrated direct support for the ANC and its affiliates, and affirmed identities within the ANC alliance. Songs called upon leaders of the ANC and MK for help (see Appendix B:1 and 11), addressed leaders of the ANC alliance that had been in jail or in exile (see Appendix B:1, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 19), paid tribute to people and organisations that were associated with the ANC alliance (see Appendix B:6, 7, 8, 13, 16, 17 and 19) and even called on people to join the ANC alliance (see Appendix B:10). The association also aimed to strengthen the links between the various groupings within the ANC alliance, namely the workers, the

students, the oppressed masses and the unemployed by uniting the struggles which these groupings respectively faced (see Appendix B:6).

However, not one female leader within the ANC alliance was acknowledged or celebrated in any of the songs of the association. This lack of acknowledgement for the contribution women made to the liberation struggle as well as for female leaders such as Albertina Sisulu or Winnie Mandela, is also raised by other researchers (see Gunner 2007:13). Further, the support of the Mayibuye Cultural Group for the ANC alliance was directly contradictory to their aims as an association (see 2.3.2.2) in terms of which the association was to maintain a nonpartisan political stance. Their support, however, was consistent with the fact that all members of the association were either members or supporters of the ANC.

Several of the songs of the association reflected the aspirations, hopes and experiences of the exiles or outsiders (see Appendix B:1, 8, 9, 12, and 17). In *Ligcwele iimpimpi* (see Appendix b:9), for example, the association sang:

> There are many spies in our country
> We will fight, we will fight
> Until we get our country back

The theme of the exiles was raised in other struggle songs as well. Gunner (2009:39) maintains that some struggle songs distinguished between insiders and outsiders — the "struggling righteous just" and the "comfortable unjust" and that the songs had as vision the inversion of the state of affairs, namely that the outsider would become the insider.

Some of the songs articulated the demands of the ANC alliance and amplified aspects of their ideology. For example, the song *We demand* (see Appendix B:5) delared:

> We demand interim government
> We demand constituent assembly
> We want one-person-one-vote

Songs of the association also clearly opposed the adversaries of the ANC alliance which in itself underscored their support for the ANC alliance. Eight of their songs (see Appendix B:3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14 and 15) opposed or criticised the NP or people and organisations that were associated with them, namely the Boers, the SADF,

informers, puppets of the then government and spies. In the poem *Interim Government* which was performed during the song *We demand* (see Appendix B:5) the poet stated:

> The last kicks of the N.P. are becoming powerless every passing minute.
> This tyrant monster refuses to die
> As the Sun is about to Set for the Junior Govern. [government-GHM]
> The law of a Jungle is collapsing

Three of the songs of the association (see Appendix B:3, 5 and 14) referred directly to the NP or people who were associated with the NP, and three (see Appendix B:6, 10 and 15) indirectly to the NP in the sense that they were directed at people and organisations which were connected to the government. Adriaan Vlok, the then Minister of Law and Order, was criticised in two songs (see Appendix B:3 and 14) and Magnus Malan, the then Minister of Defence, was criticised in one of their songs (see Appendix B:3). The NP was described as the junior government, tyrant monster and Pretoria regime (see Appendix B:5).

The Boers are referred to in two songs (see Appendix B:6 and 15). On the question who the Boers (*amabhulu*) were, the members of the association maintained that the term referred to those who were against the transformation of South Africa at that time, i.e. the minority government and all people, black or white, who supported them. Thus every collaborator, black policeman or SADF member, for as long as they were the instruments of the then minority government, were considered to be part of the *amabhulu*. In the song *Niyaboyika na?* (see Appendix B:15), the term referred specifically to the SADF. However, members denied that the term referred to the Afrikaner population or whites per se, but such denial obviously could have been due to the deference effect. Groenewald and Makopo (1991:79) also maintain that the term *amabhulu* does not refer to whites generally, but more particularly to the negative elements in the Afrikaner and the larger white population. However, the fact that English was used by the association to articulate their demands and defiance (see Appendix B:2, 5, 6 and 19) while Afrikaans was only used as the language of the oppressor in their workshop play and the literary plays of the general secretary (see Appendix D), seems to support the view that the term Boers in the context of their performances referred to Afrikaners. The origin and general meaning of the term Boer (a term denoting Afrikaners or farmers) also supports this conclusion.

Although the SADF was only referred to in three songs (see Appendix B:6, 10 and 15), the SADF was seen by members as the main obstacle in their way to freedom. These sentiments were also evident in the literary plays of the general secretary (see Appendix D). Members said that the SADF created misunderstandings and divisions within broader society despite their claim that they served society. The security forces (along with Inkatha) were described as "assassins" and as "the apartheid forces", while liberation fighters were referred to as "the soldiers of the people", "heroes", "preachers of peace", "comrades", "greatest among greatest" and "brave warriors" (see Appendix B:6 and 7). Members of the association reported that they personally had been subjected to SADF brutality, although they could not pinpoint specific incidents. They nevertheless argued that SADF brutality had been demonstrated in its handling of the housing problem in Tembisa, a sentiment which seemed to have been shared by the broader Tembisa society (Molusi & Mokwebo 1989:10).

The collaborators or informants referred to in the songs included collaborators or informers in general, IFP members and former homeland leaders such as Oupa Gqozo of the Ciskei and Lucas Mangope of Bophuthatswana who were regarded as puppets of the NP government (see Appendix B:4, 5, 6, 9 and 15). Members of the association did not have positive feelings towards Inkatha and clashed with IFP members during the hostel violence in Tembisa as well as in their struggle to obtain residential rights in Ethafeni (see 2.4.8.4).

The strategy of a people's war

The songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, similar to South African struggle songs in general, were characterised by militarism. Struggle songs associated with the ANC alliance at the time were filled with threats of death and violence against the Boers, how powerful the liberation forces were and referred to the weapons of MK such as AK47's and bazookas (Davis 1992:23; Groenewald & Makopo 1991:84; Sitas 1992b:100; *The Sunday Star* 15 August 1993:27; *Sunday Times* 2 May 1993:5). Further, the songs, in Gunner's (2009:40) phrasing, were clothed in a masculine conception of militarism and nationalism.

Most of the songs of the association had a definite militant and militarised content and in this sense reflected the "people's war" strategy which the ANC pursued from

1983 to August 1990 when the armed struggle was suspended. Eight songs (see Appendix B:1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15 and 17) suggested the armed struggle or fighting as a suitable course of action to be taken against the government: open the way with the army (*Slovo*); "We'll better die in our struggle" (*We'll never compromise*); "We will fight, we will fight until we get our country back" (Song 9); "Join the MK and kill the SADF with AKs" (*Siyawaz' umbala*); "Tambo give us a Makharov" (*Sinik' umkhonto lo*); "We crossed the Limpopo, Tambo" (Song 12); "Take a grenade and kill the Boers" (*Niyaboyika na?*) and "We are the cadres, we shoot with a tank" (*Thina singama cadres*).

Nine of the songs of the association (see Appendix B:1, 4, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17 and 19) celebrated or referred to MK and its leaders or referenced the weapons of the liberation movement. MK was referenced in three songs (see Appendix B:8, 12 and 17). Joe Slovo (see Appendix B:1), Chris Hani (see Appendix B:4) and Joe Modise (see Appendix B:19) were referenced in one song each. The texts of the songs referred to weapons such as AK47's (see Appendix B:10), a Makharov (see Appendix B:11), a bazooka (see Appendix B:15), a grenade (see Appendix B:15) and a tank (see Appendix B:17). The AK47 assault rifle in particular was associated with the liberation movement and was a popular symbol of resistance and of passage to power (Gunner 2007:11; Lawuyi 1998:83).

The militant and militarised content of their songs was also heightened by referencing Makanda, a historical black military leader who led an attack on Grahamstown in 1819 (see Appendix B:18 and 3.3.3.1); the description of trade union officials in military terms as warriors and soldiers (see Appendix B:6 and 7); and by targeting and condemning the behaviour of the security forces at the time as well as their leaders, namely Adriaan Vlok (see Appendix B:3 and 14), Magnus Malan (see Appendix B:3), the SADF (see Appendix B: 6, 10 and 15) and the apartheid forces (see Appendix B:6).

Some of the songs evoked resonances of a PAC ideology (see Appendix B:10 and 15) in the sense that they called for the killing of the Boers, a call which echoed the PAC's slogan of *one settler, one bullet* at the time. This slogan caused controversy in the ranks of the ANC, particularly the continued public use of the slogan by Peter Mokaba, an ANC official, after the ANC suspended the armed struggle and started to pursue a negotiated settlement (Nyatsumba 1993:19). As such the continued use of

the two songs (see Appendix B:10 and 15) resonated with the suggestions of an undercurrent of black consciousness in the association (see 2.4.8.3).

In reaction to the statement that their songs are very militant, calling for the killing of the Boers despite the ANC's suspension of the armed struggle and pursuit in search of a negotiated settlement, members of the association denied that the lyrics meant that they wanted "to kill the whites". They said that they did not condone violence in any way and that the killing of policemen and whites was bringing out the worst in the "black societies". All they wanted to achieve was that South Africa should have majority rule and that the lyrics were used to threaten those who opposed the transformation of South Africa.

Tarrow (1994:116) argues in this regard that forms of collective action in movements are often radicalised because the forms of collective action that support (extreme) demands, even if they are novel, soon dissolve into routine action, lose impact, evoke predictable responses and "leave militants weary and onlookers bored". He also makes the point that the power of protest lies not in its level of violence, but primarily in its threat to burst through the boundaries of accepted behaviour (Tarrow 1991:7). However, this is not to say that the praxis of violence cannot issue forth from such a source. Tarrow's view echoes the statement by members of the association that the militancy of their songs intended to threaten their adversaries and therefore the militancy of their songs should be interpreted in terms of Tarrow's view. The calling for the killing of the Boers and thus for behaviour that threatened to burst through the boundaries of accepted behaviour made their songs powerful and therefore suitable to support demands and to create solidarities. Further, since the songs were performed against the context of continuous efforts to reach a negotiated settlement, they should not be seen as demanding the death of the Boers but rather as Colson (1995:67) suggests with regard to dispute settlements as dramatic "rhetorical displays in an attempt to mobilize support and undermine the opposition". Sitas (1992b:98) concurs and maintains that militancy in worker gatherings is a ritual process of identity formation and comradeship building.

The strategy of a negotiated settlement

Five of the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group (see Appendix B:3, 4, 5, 13 and 14) made demands in the spirit of negotiation and reconciliation and were therefore

framed in terms of this strategy of the ANC. The lyrics of the song *Mvezeni simbome* (see Appendix B:3) demanded that Adriaan Vlok and Magnus Malan should be brought to justice; while the song *Owu yini Hani* pleaded with Chris Hani that he should forgive the former homeland leaders because they did not know what they were doing, implying that they were mere puppets of the apartheid state (see Appendix B:4). In the song *We demand* the choir voiced the demands of the ANC alliance at the time for a transitional government, a constituent assembly and a system of one person, one vote (see Appendix B:5). The song *Dilika we ntaba* called for the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners (see Appendix B:13) and in the song *Mandela, simthini uVlok* the choir suggested that Adriaan Vlok should be turned into a communist (see Appendix B:14).

Religious themes

Groenewald and Makopo (1991:87-88) maintain that some political songs have a religious ring. Only two songs of the association had a religious ring (see Appendix B:4 and 6). In *Saphela isizwe* (see Appendix B:6) the choir called on God to intervene on their behalf. Members also indicated that the song was a plea to all Christians to take a stand against violence. The lyrics of the song *Owu yini Hani* "Forgive them Hani, they don't know what they are doing" (see Appendix B:4) were similar to the words of Christ on the cross:

> Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do
> (Luke 23:34)[17]

and as such related to Christianity.

3.3.5   Winding down

With regard to the actual performance of the association at the Queen Court building, members expressed contentment after the performance, and commented that it made them happy to know that people "enjoyed their performance". However, they were tired since the singing was demanding, and thus did not reflect on their performance, but left for home to relax and socialise. When I left the

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[17] Quotation taken from Bible Society of South Africa. 1962. *Holy Bible.* Based on King James Version 1611 and American Bible Society 1962. 2nd South African edition. Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa.

building on my way home, approximately a half a block down from Queen Court, the sidewalk in Bree Street was packed with people. The sound of drumming drifted through the air. As I got closer, I saw seven male performers, young boys as well as men, performing traditional dances. They were dressed in traditional skins and feathers and when I asked onlookers who they were, I was told that they were Swazi performers. This performance stood in stark contrast to the performance I had just witnessed and consequently underscored its impact for me.

3.4   SUMMARY

Songs and poems played an indispensable role in indigenous societies. They were performed in various contexts and were used as a mechanism to further causes in the public domain. As such songs and poems could affirm or criticise individuals and groups in society. More recently, songs and poems have been vital in the political sphere and have been used to articulate the demands of the oppressed masses. The songs and poems of the Mayibuye Cultural Group were examples of such performances and were used to mobilise people and to express political resistance to the then minority government.

The Mayibuye Cultural Group performed political songs and in particular, struggle or anti-apartheid songs. The characteristics of the songs of the association corresponded with the characteristics of political songs generally. The potential and style for the songs of the association derived from the traditional choral song. However, their songs clearly displayed missionary influences particularly with regard to the musical structures and rhythm of the songs. The content of their songs clearly characterised them as a relatively new urban form. The dominant themes in the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group dealt with the liberation struggle, agitated for a new society and the replacing of the apartheid system.

The association performed worker poetry which was performed as part of song cycles. The characteristics of the poems corresponded with worker poetry generally and displayed characteristics of traditional praise poetry. The language in which the poems were performed, namely English, clearly illustrated their emergent nature. The poems emphasised hope, death and violence. The fact that men, women as well as students sang and recited poems about war, political prisoners and political rights was reflective of the shift that had taken place in the exercise of political powers in

indigenous societies generally, where students and women played an important role in the liberation of the masses.

The Mayibuye Cultural Group did not compose songs, but only wrote lyrics which they grafted onto the melodic structures of school, church and popular songs. The lyrics were a product of a strong individual input by the writer of the lyrics and a communal creative process by the other members. This communal approach reflected the group orientation of the association which was also emphasised by other elements in the songs. Some of these songs were written in response to demands made by the ANC alliance whereas others drew on struggles and historical events. The poems of the association were largely the product of individual creativity and drew mainly on historical events which corroborated the view that history was a resource of mobilisation in South Africa.

The songs and poems of the Mayibuye Cultural Group existed in and thrived on performance and aimed at unifying and mobilising workers in their opposition to the apartheid state. The songs and poems were usually performed at trade union and political meetings of organisations which were affiliated to the ANC alliance. The songs and poems were therefore part of larger politicised events and were framed around the ideology and strategies of the ANC alliance, and demonstrated the association's solidarity with the ANC alliance despite their claim to the contrary.

Nonverbal elements of the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group emphasised solidarity and unity among the members as well as with their audiences and broke down the boundary between the audience and the performers. Such elements also visibly demarcated identities, and distinguished between "insiders", that is members and supporters of the ANC alliance, and "outsiders", that is those who did not support the ANC alliance. The textual elements of the songs and poems evoked specific sociocultural and historical resonances. The lyrics and poems demonstrated support for the ANC and its affiliates, affirmed identities within the ANC alliance, created solidarities, called on the leaders of the ANC and MK for help, addressed leaders of the ANC alliance that had been in jail or in exile, paid tribute to people or organisations that were connected to the ANC alliance, demonstrated defiance and even called on people to join the ANC alliance. However, none acknowledged or celebrated female leaders or the role of women in the ANC alliance. The songs and poems also attempted to strengthen the links between the various groupings within

the ANC alliance, namely the workers, the students, the oppressed masses and the unemployed by referencing and combining the various struggles which these groupings respectively faced.

The songs and poems of the Mayibuye Cultural Group had a definite militant and militarised content and in this sense reflected the "people's war" strategy which the ANC pursued from 1983 to August 1990 when the armed struggle was suspended. The nonverbal elements, namely the toyi-toyi and interpretive gestures, heightened the militancy of the songs and more so than the textual elements of the songs were efficacious in unifying the respective constituencies and in strengthening their resolve to persist with their demands for a democratic South Africa. The lyrics of songs suggested the armed struggle or fighting as a suitable course of action to be taken against the then minority government. They celebrated and referenced *Umkhonto weSizwe* and its leaders as well as weapons which were associated with the liberation movement. As such the lyrics and the nonverbal aspects of the songs emphasised a militarist conception of masculinity.

The lyrics were also used to threaten those who opposed the transformation of South Africa and promised death to the Boers and collaborators. The members of the association attempted to mitigate the overt militant content of their songs by arguing that the references to the killing of whites should not be taken literally, and that they did not condone violence in any way; all they wanted to achieve was majority rule in South Africa. As such, the efficacy of the songs of the Mayibuye Cultural Group lay in the calling for behaviour that threatened to burst through the boundaries of accepted behaviour (the killing of the Boers) and in the context of continuous efforts to reach a negotiated settlement, the militancy was seen as dramatic rhetorical displays that attempted to build solidarities, mobilise support and undermine the opposition. Several songs also reflected negotiation as a strategy.

In Chapter 4 the play of the Mayibuye Cultural Group will be discussed. However, where the songs were written mainly in response to the strategies, measures and actions of the then minority government as well as people and organisations which were associated with them, the play *Women stand up for your rights* was written in response to a heated debate within the liberation movement itself, namely that of gender equality.

CHAPTER 4

"YOU STRIKE (FOR) A WOMAN, YOU STRIKE A ROCK":[18]
PARADOX IN WORKER PERFORMANCES AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the view was advanced that the songs and poems of the Mayibuye Cultural Group were composed in reaction to the strategies, measures and actions of the liberation movement's political adversary, the apartheid state. In this chapter it is argued that the association's play, in contrast, was composed in reaction to ideas, attitudes and behaviour that were prevalent in the liberation movement itself. The play *Women stand up for your rights* was a response to a heated debate on gender equality in the liberation movement at the time. It aimed to mobilise women around women's rights, and to challenge the ideas, attitudes and behaviour of trade union members and township residents towards women in society.

Women stand up for you rights was not the only play that was associated with the Mayibuye Cultural Group or members of the association. Some members had been involved with *Worker's lament*, a play that was composed and workshopped by the association's precursor, the UNIPEC Group. Performances of this play, however, were discontinued in 1987, three years before I met the association, and the play was never part of the collective repertoire of the Mayibuye Cultural Group. The general secretary was also involved with two literary plays, *Law of a jungle* and *For the sake of our children* (see Appendix D), which he wrote while he was a member of the association, but the other members of the association were not involved in the development of the plays and they were never performed by the association. *Women stand up for your rights*, in contrast, was created and workshopped by the association as a whole, and formed part of their collective repertoire.

The fact that the play aimed to mobilise women and to challenge the ideas, attitudes and behaviour of trade union members and township residents towards women in society, gave rise to the question whether it was a continuation of the indigenous tradition in terms of which performance genres could be used to express sanctioned

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[18] On 9 August 1956, around 20 000 women marched on the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the pass laws, singing defiantly "Strydom, you have tampered with the women, you have struck a rock" (Lodge 1985:145). This anthem gave rise to the liberation struggle slogan "You strike a woman, you strike a rock" on which this chapter title is based.

criticism against institutions of society or dominating and harmful practices (see 1.1.2.1). In this chapter this notion is explored. The development, nature, characteristics and sociocultural meaning of the play are consequently examined, and an attempt is made to assess whether the message of the play was congruent with its aim and those of the association. The analysis takes cognisance of how the negation of women's rights in the structure and functioning of the association (see 2.3.2.5) impacted on the story, production and performance of the play, and projects the sociocultural meaning of the play against the position of women in the trade union federation at the time, as well as against the *de facto* position of many black South African women in contemporary South Africa.

4.2   *WOMEN STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS* AS A PERFORMANCE GENRE

4.2.1   The nature of the play

Although there were various performance genres in precolonial South Africa that had well-developed dramatic elements with which visual as well as oral representations of character and conflict could be created (Coplan 1987:8; Fleischman 1990:93; Kavanagh 1985:44), the formal concept of theatre, in the sense of a play or drama, was introduced by the missionaries and colonial societies (Fleischman 1990:93; Peterson 1990:229; Sitas 1986:90). An examination of various indigenous words that refer to such genres seems to support this view (Fleischman 1990:93). The words are generally derivatives, for example *umdlalo* (Xhosa for a play or drama, from the verb *ku dlala*: to play around) or *tiragatšo* (Northern Sotho for a play or drama, derived from the verb *go dira*: to work, act or deal), or loanwords, for example, *terama* (Northern Sotho: a play or drama) and *ithiyetha* (Xhosa for theatre). Not surprisingly then, the plays that were produced in the context of the labour movement during the decades leading up to the change to a democratic government in 1994, were grounded in this formal theatrical tradition. The appropriation of this notion, however, does not presuppose that such plays were devoid of indigenous performance influences and conventions. On the contrary, an analysis of the characteristics of *Women stand up for your rights*, for example, reveals continuities with various indigenous performance genres, as will be demonstrated below (4.2.2).

Various labels were given to the performance genres that were associated with and thrived in the liberation struggle. Some commentators, for example, defined them as

being oppositional to the established theatre in the apartheid state. They emphasised the revolutionary nature of the performance genres which challenged the white patriarchal norms and values of the apartheid state, and described it, for example, as "alternative theatre", "protest theatre" and "theatre of resistance" (Mda 1996:197, 200, 202). Much of this scholarship located the oppositions exclusively within a perspective that foregrounded class as the dominant factor in terms of which the different performance genres were described (Steadman 1990:211).

Other scholars attempted to establish an authentic "popular" base for the theatre that promoted the interests of the oppressed masses, by claiming mass-based legitimisation for these performance genres (Coplan 1987:6). These scholars, in spite of the many difficulties which they conceded were involved in arguing for the primacy of class and race in such an enterprise, nevertheless drew upon these factors to establish the base for such majority support (Orkin 1996:49-50), and invoked classifications such as working class theatre and black theatre.

The members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, in contrast, classified their play and other plays which were performed in the liberation movement in terms of their content as "political plays", and used the phrase *umdlalo wase siteje* (Zulu: a stage play), which they translated as a play, to refer to it. In terms of their definition, a play was "a collective of dialogue or a combination of dialogues, where characters have roles to play". Some members, particularly the general secretary, his cousin and the chairperson, occasionally also referred to their play as a worker play. It is argued, however, that the use of this term was a consequence of these members' frequent contact with officials at the WCL who exposed them to the debates on and ideology of the worker theatre movement, and that it did not reflect its classification in the association as a whole.

None of the above classifications proved to be suitable to describe the characteristics of *Women stand up for your rights*. As Coplan (1987:6) has noted with respect to the term "alternative theatre", it implied a sort of "permanent marginality and a negative or diminishing definition-by-what-it-is-not". The play *Women stand up for your rights* was also not predominantly oppositional to the apartheid state, but rather a reflexive, introspective play on gender equality in black townships and the liberation movement itself (see 4.3.4). Similarly, an attempt to identify an authentic

"popular theatre", whether it was based on class or race, was subverted by the fact that the theatre movement in the liberation movement was characterised by interventions of practitioners from different classes and racial groups (Gready 1994:185; Orkin 1996:57). For example, some worker plays were initialised, produced and publicised with the involvement of nonworking class agents and were performed in commercial theatre venues to nonworking class audiences in South Africa and abroad (Sole 1984:70-71). The term "political play" proved to be equally problematic. A wide spectrum of South African plays with diverse characteristics, performance conventions and ideological frameworks was classified as political plays because they dealt with political themes, and therefore, in my opinion, rendered the term virtually meaningless as a way of classifying the play of the association.

In contrast, I have drawn on the notion of a workshop play, a notion that emphasises the way in which the play was produced, to describe the nature and characteristics of *Women stand up for your rights*. In terms of Fleischman's definition (1990:89),workshop plays in South Africa are plays that are created collaboratively for performance, have more to do with life than literature, are syncretic combinations of various performance genres, focus on collective experiences or types rather than on individuals, are rooted in the urban experience, and, at least at the time of the fieldwork, were overtly political. These features were all characteristic of the play *Women stand up for your rights*.

The origin of workshop plays in South Africa can be traced back to Athol Fugard's 1957 play *No Good Friday*. The play was written after the author observed black actors improvising scenes within the skeletal structures which he set up for the production. This production started the collaborative creation process which became the hallmark of workshop plays. Workshop plays gained prominence during the early 1970s through the work of three groups, namely that of Athol Fugard and The Serpent Players, Barney Simon and The Phoenix Players, and Workshop '71 (Fleischman 1990:97-99). The latter group, in particular, was seen by some of its members as an instrument through which the oppressed masses could be educated and mobilised against the apartheid state (McLaren 1996:34).

4.2.2   The characteristics of the play

4.2.2.1   *The play as collective creation*

Typical of workshop plays, *Women stand up for your rights* was composed through collaborative workshops. According to Kerr (1996:16), the composition of indigenous performance genres generally were characterised by collaborative creativity, and one can infer therefore, that the collaborative nature of the play's composition was a continuation of indigenous performance tradition. Members of the association argued that their contributions towards its composition made them co-authors of the play. This view was corroborated by their descriptions of themselves as being first and foremost playwrights when they were asked to rank the type of performer they primarily were (see 2.3.2.3). However, they conceded that the cousin of the general secretary played an essential role in its composition. He drafted the outline of the play on which members elaborated during workshops. Such collaborations between one person and a performance association are characteristic of workshop plays generally, where plays have been created by one person and workshopped by all (Gready 1994:182).

4.2.2.2   *Orality as characteristic of the play*

Women stand up for your rights was not a literary drama, but, typical of most workshop plays at the time, it was created for performance. It did not have a formal script, only a broad outline of events that was followed in performances. Actors therefore could improvise dialogue and actions during performances. The spontaneous improvisation which characterised their performances, and which, according to Fleischman (1990:102), characterised workshop plays generally, emphasised the oral nature of the play. Fleischman (1990:89, 100) maintains that if a text of a workshop play existed, it usually was created after the play was completed, and that it often was produced for other reasons than to serve as a guide for actors. *Women stand up for your rights*, therefore, was marked by orality, a characteristic which was typical of indigenous performance genres (Callinicos 1991:3; Fleischman 1990:113; Gready 1994:163).

4.2.2.3   *The didactic nature of the play*

In general terms, workshop plays in the labour movement were created to educate and mobilise workers towards supporting specific issues. Educational plays focused on a broad range of issues and presented a consistent interpretation of the apartheid state (Gready 1994:177; Von Kotze 1988:102). The plays often slotted into specific educational campaigns of the unions, e.g. on retrenchment. The purpose of the plays was to stimulate debate on a wide spectrum of issues, and to expand workers' awareness as well as understanding of issues that affected their lives. The plays were performed at large worker gatherings, workshops, seminars and meetings of various unions, but were not always relevant to or appropriate in the context of meetings and seminars.

In terms of the above categorisation, *Women stand up for your rights* was an educational play. Similar to most workshop plays that were performed in the context of the labour gatherings (see Gready 1994:163, 177 and Von Kotze 1988:102), *Women stand up for your rights* was created specifically to educate workers. It was workshopped for a specific campaign — to educate workers on the issue of the so-called threefold oppression of women by the government, their bosses and within their own homes (i.e. the multiple layers of discrimination to which women were subjected in apartheid society), which featured on the agenda of COSATU's Women's Forum in 1988. According to members of the association it was composed in a week and initially was meant to be performed only at a specific occasion: COSATU's 1988 National Forum in NASREC Johannesburg, but due to the impact of the play at its first performance, various requests were received in the ensuing years for the play to be performed.

The didactic nature of the play is a continuation of indigenous performance traditions in Africa. Societal roles, responsibilities and obligations in Africa often are taught through performance genres (Kebede 1982:38-40; Ojaide 1992:44), and the plays that were performed in the mission schools taught converts Christian and "civilised" ideals and values (Peterson 1990:230). Members of the association maintained that the play criticised prevailing attitudes and behaviour in the ranks of COSATU and the broader society, stimulated discussions, and educated workers on issues that affected the rights of women and their future role in the labour movement. As such, it can be argued that in line with indigenous tradition, the association intended to

use the play to express sanctioned criticism against dominating and harmful practices in societal institutions, and that it facilitated the reproduction of ideas on womanhood and the rights of women in gatherings of the ANC alliance.

4.2.2.4   *Focus on collective workers' experiences in the play*

The central theme of workshop plays at the time of the fieldwork was the liberation of the oppressed black masses, a theme which the BC movement brought to theatre in South Africa (Fleischman 1990:98-99). Workshop plays were therefore overtly political. However, an insistence on the importance of worker experiences in the struggle for national liberation elevated workshop plays from most previous black plays in which the same subject matter was used to a much lesser degree (Sole 1984:69). Workshop plays focused on the centrality of work and the production process, such as accidents in the workplace, health hazards, working conditions, hostel conditions, boss-worker relationships, strikes, unionisation, scabbing, violence associated with the work process, and sexual exploitation of women to secure accommodation and jobs. The plays also attempted to resolve these issues and to realise a political vision of the future (Gready 1994:175; Sole 1984:69; Von Kotze 1988:104, 112).

The workshop play of the Mayibuye Cultural Group addressed some of these themes. Members argued that it explored unacceptable maternity benefits; unfair labour practice; unequal pay for equal jobs; sexual exploitation of women to secure jobs and accommodation; housing shortages; the unwillingness of husbands to share household responsibilities and to support their families financially; domestic violence: health issues and boss-worker relationships. Some of the themes associated with workshop plays are also found in the literary dramas of the general secretary of the association (see Appendix D). In *Law of a jungle* and *For the sake of our children*, for example, migrancy and violence in the townships are explored. *For the sake of our children* places the blame for the violence in the townships on Inkatha and the South African Security Forces, a view that members of the association supported, and that, according to Adam and Moodley (1992:486), echoed popular perceptions in the townships on the cause of violence.

Von Kotze (1984:108) argues that workshop plays which were performed in the context of the labour movement gave workers the opportunity to share some of their

experiences and afforded them the opportunity to come to grips with the roots of their dilemmas. Members of the association agreed with this view and felt that *Women stand up for your rights* gave them an opportunity to debate women's rights and to come to grips with various forms of exploitation which women endured.

4.2.2.5   The importance of historical truthfulness in the play

A frequently reported characteristic of workshop plays which were performed in the context of the labour movement at the time was that such plays often purported to represent real history. If a play attempted to represent an actual occurrence or incident, a high premium was placed on the "truth". Such plays obscured the division between the fiction of the imaginary world of the play and the real world of the spectators (Kerr 1996:14), and in the view of labour constituencies, the performers/writers had a deep responsibility to depict the events as accurately as possible, since there was much at stake in how events were interpreted by various role players and groupings in society (Steinberg 1990:73).

The uproar that emanated from the 1990 production of Mbongeni Ngema*'s Township fever* at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg seems to support this view. The play was inspired by a 1987 strike at the South African Transport Services which was organised by members of the COSATU-affiliated South African Railways and Harbour Workers Union (SARHWU) and that ultimately escalated into the killing of five "scabs".[19] COSATU officials, who attended performances of the play, were deeply unhappy about the way in which workers were depicted in the unfolding of events. They accused the author of the play of misquoting SARHWU, portraying some union members negatively, and not expressing the true reflections of the "working class" and its allies (Steinberg 1990:72-73).

Saltz (1991:38) contends that although an actor usually is not held responsible for the actions he/she commits on stage, if the reasons for not performing them outweigh the reasons for performing them, the actor or even the director and author(s) could be held responsible in the event of their portrayal, because the actions are then considered to be those the actor does as an actor and not as a character in the play. The controversy surrounding the production of *Township fever* suggests that in terms

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[19]   The term "scab" denotes a person who refuses to participate in trade union actions, especially strikes.

of the view of audiences sympathetic to the ANC alliance at the time, the reasons for not performing the deviations from the "truth" outweighed reasons for performing them. These deviations, consequently, were seen as being in opposition to the cause of the ANC alliance.

Although the workshop play of the Mayibuye Cultural Group did not represent a specific case history, the members maintained that they based the story of the play on their own real-life experiences as women, as well as on that of relatives, friends and neighbours. One can therefore infer that the perceptions of women's rights in the play reflected the members' views as well as those of relatives, friends and neighbours whose experiences were used in the play. Further, since the audiences, who were associated with the ANC alliance, did not reject the perceptions of women's rights in their play (see 4.3.4), one can infer that the perceptions resonated with the views of the audiences.

4.2.2.6   *The syncretic structure of the play*

Scholars who have studied the development of the black performing arts in South Africa argue that contemporary black performance genres can trace their structural characteristics to both western and African performance traditions (Balme 1996:66). This legacy is evident in the workshop play of the Mayibuye Cultural Group: indigenous as well as western structural elements and principles can be identified in the play. The play, typically of the western dramatic tradition, was divided into acts and scenes, and in the case of the literary dramas of the general secretary of the association, provided stage directions as well (see Appendix D). An analysis of the play's structure also revealed the use of songs to frame performances; a characteristic which was found in South African workshop plays generally (Balme 1996:83; Fleischman 1990:89; Peterson 1990:237), and which was a continuation of traditional performance traditions. In traditional Tsonga societies, for example, songs often provided the framework for stories (Junod 1927b:214-215, 218).

4.3   THE SOCIOCULTURAL MEANING OF THE PLAY AS REGARDS WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Since the play *Women stand up for your rights* was created specifically for performance, an attempt to unravel its sociocultural meaning has to include a detailed analysis of the performance dimension of the play. However, such an

analysis could not be realised fully because I never had the opportunity to see a public performance of the play. In the volatile political landscape of the time and amidst fears of possible police infiltration, organisations that requested a performance of the play did not readily permit researchers without a history of involvement in the liberation struggle or appropriate connections with the ANC alliance at their closed gatherings. Although I was trusted by members of the association, they were not in a position to influence such decisions. Attempts to secure permission to attend such gatherings also laboured under the disadvantage that the association received invitations for the performance of the play mostly on short notice, making attempts to obtain the necessary permission virtually impossible. Nonetheless, the construction of the sociocultural meaning of the play here is based on contextual, textual and textural elements of the play which were recorded during workshops of the play, as well as those of actual performances which members of the association related to me.

4.3.1 The context of the development, production and performance of the play

4.3.1.1   *The emergence of the play in the context of labour gatherings*

Introductory comments

Plays have been used in numerous liberation struggles to educate and mobilise the masses. In the Russian revolution of 1917, for example, theatre was employed as an instrument and site of struggle, and plays by Russian performance groups in the wake of the revolution inspired grassroots performance movements worldwide. Plays were also instrumental in various African liberation struggles. In Kenya, for example, plays were used in the years preceding and during the *Mau Mau* uprisings in the 1950s to discredit and attack British rule, and in the Zimbabwean liberation war during the 1960s and 1970s, to mobilise the masses towards supporting the drive for liberation (Björkman 1989:31; Kaarsholm 1994:226, 232-234; Theatre and the Struggle for National Liberation 1987:10-11).

In the South African liberation struggle, plays were similarly employed. In the pre-1950 period before mass political mobilisation took place, for example, plays such as *The Pass* and *The Workers* by H.I.E. Dhlomo attempted to protest against the racial oppression of the day (Fleischman 1990:96), and so-called worker plays

("*werkendeklas dramas*") by white Afrikaner women affiliated to the Garment Workers Union (GWU), attempted to promote the principles of trade unionism, the "class struggle" and the "proletarian revolution" (Brink 1984:32-46). However, it was only with the emergence of the BC movement during the 1970s that theatre became a significant site of black political action in South Africa (Oliphant 1992:19; Sitas 1986:92), and that an environment developed in labour gatherings in which plays manifested as a strategy to express opposition to the apartheid state (see 1.1.1 and 1.4.3).

More specifically, the use of plays to educate and mobilise ordinary workers in labour gatherings to a large extent can be accredited to the play *Security* which was produced in 1979 by members of JATC. The play was a response to FCWU's appeal to the public to support striking workers who had been fired from Fatti's and Moni's Pasta Manufacturers. Members of the theatre company, comprising white students of the University of the Witwatersrand and black members of a former theatre group which was associated with the SAIRR, Workshop '71 (Fleischman 1990:97-99; Fuchs 1990:88), developed the play in three weeks. The play, which addressed the issue of unemployment, raised funds for the workers' boycott campaign and established a basis for cooperation between trade unions and the JATC activists (Von Kotze 1984:93 and 1988:20-21).

In 1980, the bond between the JATC activists and the trade unions was strengthened by the activists collaborating with workers who were involved in dismissal disputes at the Rely Precision Foundry on the East Rand, in producing the play *Ilanga lizophumela abasebenzi* ("The sun shall rise for the workers"). Responses to the play, which explored the history of and analysed a dispute at the factory, were enthusiastic, and as a result it was videotaped and screened to thousands of workers throughout South Africa. The collaboration between the activists from JATC and members of trade unions who were involved in union struggles highlighted the potential of plays to promote and illustrate campaigns and strategies, and demonstrated that worker education could also be done through the medium of plays. *The Dunlop play*, which was produced in collaboration with members of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU), in particular, served to illustrate the usefulness of plays as an educational and mobilisation tool. The play, which was performed at MAWU's 1983 AGM in Durban and subsequently to various worker audiences, gave momentum to the resolution that "culture" should be an important

part of union affairs and the development of the so-called worker theatre movement (Von Kotze 1984:93-94, 106-107; 1988:20-21, 42, 48).

Arising from these initiatives, the DWCL was founded towards the end of 1984. This cultural local established itself as an organised movement and propagated the use of performance in the labour movement (Kromberg 1991:187). The influence of the JATC activists in this development was considerable: they influenced critical debates on the use of plays in the unions, elaborated on as well as systematised the ideology of plays and provided them with a theoretical framework (Gready 1994:185).

The DWCL, in turn, stimulated the national debate on the role and function of performance in the trade unions (Meintjies & Hlatshwayo 1989:3); produced numerous poems, songs, dances and plays; and assisted other worker performance groups in developing productions. One such production, *The Long March*, a play that was workshopped with the assistance of the DWCL and the Culture and Working Life Project, was taken on a countrywide tour and gave hundreds of thousands of South Africans the opportunity to see and experience the potential of plays as an educational and mobilisation tool (Von Kotze 1984:111; 1988:54, 82, 92-93, 95-6).

The success of the DWCL also triggered the establishment of cultural locals in various regions in South Africa, amongst others in the Gauteng area, to coordinate performance at the local level and to upgrade performance in the respective regions. The success and visibility of the association's precursor in the Witwatersrand area paved the way for its involvement with this network of structures and gave rise to the development of *Women stand up for your rights* (see 2.2 and 2.3.1).

The development of the play as a strategy to mobilise women

From 1960, increasing numbers of black women entered the manufacturing, commercial and service sectors of the South African economy. Their incorporation into the labour force gave rise to a set of women-specific demands from the shop floor involving issues such as calls for higher wages, maternity benefits and an end to sexual harassment in the workplace (Jaffee 1987:75-6).

The launching of COSATU in December 1985 saw women's rights placed firmly on the agenda of the trade union federation (Jaffee 1987:82). COSATU adopted a strong

position rejecting exploitation of and discrimination against women in the workplace, society and the federation itself. In a resolution released on December 2, 1985, COSATU called for equal pay for equal work and emphasised that it would fight sexual harassment in whatever form it occurred, claiming that female workers often suffered sexual harassment in recruitment and employment. COSATU also maintained that since most female workers lost their jobs when they became pregnant, it would fight for full maternity rights, child care and family facilities to make it easier for them to integrate work and family obligations (*The Cape Times* 1985:2).

However, this resolution by COSATU proved largely to be on paper only. As a result, the so-called threefold oppression of women was raised again at COSATU's National Forum in 1988 (Cullinan 1988:9). In anticipation of this, COSATU's Women's Forum approached the UNIPEC Group with the request that they develop a play on the threefold exploitation of women. The ensuing play, *Women stand up for your rights*, was performed at the national forum and thereafter at various labour venues up to the end of 1993, but it progressively lost momentum. Various factors could have precipitated the decline in the frequency of performances of the play. First, the decline could have been a consequence of the sensitive nature of the issues raised or because the story of the play did not reflect the complexity of the gender debate in the trade union federation. The women's issue was difficult to deal with in the ranks of the trade union federation, because it involved criticising the federation itself and the social attitudes and prejudices of its own members (Cullinan 1988:9). The rejection by male delegates of a motion condemning sexual harassment within COSATU's ranks at the federation's 1989 National Congress (Moodley 1989:11) certainly seemed to confirm the contentious nature of the gender debate (*Weekly Mail* 1989:11).

Second, there was a marked decline in the production of worker plays nationally (Gready 1994:190). According to Kromberg (1991:189), plays were abandoned at mass rallies when it was realised that the distance between the audience and the actors was too great for spectators to see facial expressions and gestures. This issue could have precipitated the decline in the frequency of performances of the play. Third, the decline in the frequency of performances also could have been a consequence of the diminishing role of culture and cultural units in COSATU at the time, mainly because the leadership did not understand "what culture is and its role in the transitional period" (Mufamadi 1993:9).

4.3.1.2　The performance of the play in the context of comprehensive politicised events

The play was performed to mainly female audiences at rallies and local branch meetings of trade unions and political organisations which were associated with the ANC alliance in the Witwatersrand area, notably at gatherings of COSATU's Women's Forum, POTWA, TGWU and FAWU, and in performance spaces which were linked to these organisations. The play, therefore, formed part of larger politicised performance events, which, as Sitas (1992b:93) points out, were organised and proscribed by agendas and embedded in power relations (see 3.3.4.2). As Von Kotze (1984:95-96) has observed with regard to the so-called worker plays in KwaZulu-Natal, even during workshops one was constantly reminded that the play was part of larger politicised contexts by members of other organisations interrupting workshops and conversing with performers.

The story of the play was informed by initiatives in COSATU to mobilise and organise women, and consequently was constructed to relate to the cognitive mode of gatherings (see 3.3.4.2) where people were invited to think about and discuss, as well as to ratify and endorse issues, grievances and struggles, and where workers were informed of these. As members of COSATU or organisations which were affiliated to the ANC alliance, audiences were exposed to the gender debate in the liberation movement, and therefore had particular expectations as well as a shared ideology with which they could debate issues that were raised in the play.

The members of the association maintained, however, that the story of the play was seldom directly related to the agenda of meetings, and its performance was difficult to accommodate in the time constraints of meetings, especially when the association insisted on performing the whole play. Consequently, the play was usually not performed during the cognitive mode of gatherings, but after the opening address or at the end of gatherings during the so-called festive mode (see 3.3.4.2), although the subject matter of the play and the way in which it was articulated, were not really suitable for performance in the festive mode. Instead of entertaining the audience, as was then expected, the play foregrounded sensitive and often painful issues. At some gatherings, the time constraints were such that only a scene of the play could be performed. The scope of the play and the time it took to perform, therefore, impacted negatively on continued requests for its performance.

4.3.1.3   *Audience participation in the context of performances*

The relationship between performers and spectators in indigenous performance genres differs from that which is found in western performance genres. In western plays, the behaviour of performers and spectators is usually governed by strict rules and conventions which exclude physical or verbal interaction between them (Balme 1996:73). In indigenous performance genres, however, spectators interact dynamically with the performers. The call and response pattern of the songs which is used in such genres, ensures audience participation and unifies performers and audience. Spectators also dance, ululate, stamp their feet, offer moral commentary, demand clarification of issues which were raised by the performance, and in some instances can affect the outcome of events. A disenchanted Xhosa audience, for example, may prevent the continuation of a performance of a folk tale by shouting that the story has ended and so pre-empt the performers and end the narrative (Balme 1996:76; Kerr 1996:14; Nixon 1985:57-59).

This dynamic interaction between actors and spectators was also characteristic of workshop plays which were performed in the context of labour gatherings. Improvised responses from spectators were incorporated into performances and plays were modified to suit occasions. The workshop play *Ilanga Lizophumela Abasebenzi*, for example, had different endings depending on the response of the spectators (Von Kotze: 1984:94). The members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group likewise claimed that spectators interacted dynamically during performances of *Women stand up for your rights* and reported that spectators ululated, chanted slogans, requested that sketches be repeated and toyi-toyied. Occasionally, members of audiences objected to aspects portrayed in the play, which prompted some members of the association to suggest that they should redraft the play to make it more "artistic", but the majority of members felt that they should not change the story of the play, because it had the right message and changing it would result in the play losing its meaning. On a few occasions, however, they decided to modify performances somewhat to accommodate audience responses.

4.3.2   Textual elements of the play *Women stand up for your rights*

4.3.2.1   *Workshopping the storyline of the play*

Because members of the association and the cousin of the general secretary, in particular, had experience in workshopping the play *Worker's lament*, the association accepted the invitation to develop a play on the exploitation of women, and appointed the general secretary's cousin to draft an outline for the new play. He played a prominent role in the association at the time and held a leadership position in COSATU's Tembisa local structures. He was also a member of NUMSA, which at the time was mobilising women around women's issues and encouraging them to participate in all spheres of the struggle. Members therefore argued that he was aware of how the gender debate was articulated in the unions and that he had all the necessary qualities and skills to undertake the task.

After he had drafted the outline, the members were given the task to create sketches of the characters in the outline. Significantly, in contradiction to the oral nature of the play, some members jotted down keywords which they used to brainstorm ideas and to construct their sketches. The sketches drew on their own experiences as well as on those of their families and friends. The housing problem and corrupt councillors that were featured in the play, for example, were recurring problems in Tembisa (see 2.4.8.4*)*. The character of the corrupt town councillor was partly based on experiences which members of the association reportedly had at the hands of corrupt town councillors in the township. The scenes depicting the conditions of a couple living in a backyard shack, and their exploitation at the hands of their landlady, illustrated experiences which several members of the association reportedly had suffered, and echoed their problem to secure proper housing, a problem which also had been raised in their songs (see 3.3.3.1 and Appendix B:1). The lack of maternity benefits, and the fact that the main female character earned less than men for the same work, reflected the experiences of the working adult female member in the association. The central conflict in the play between the husband and wife, however, did not relate directly to any female member in the association because none of the female members was married. However, two of the female members were single parents. The working adult female member had three children for whom she was solely responsible, and a student member had one child who was cared for by her family.

The themes in the play (see 4.2.2.4), were commonly reported problems which women in general experienced and were seen as being supported by tradition, women's own attitudes and by the law (Baskin 1991:369-70; Kooma 1989:9; Mofokeng & Tshabalala 1993:73; Motsapi 1992:20; Mufamadi 1993:28; O'Brien 1994:149; Von Kotze 1988:10). Some of these themes were also addressed in other workshop plays (Von Kotze 1984:99; 1988:104, 112) and the plays of the garment workers during the 1930s and 1940s (Brink 1984:32, 40, 41).

The next phase in the production of the play entailed that members selected sketches and ideas which in their opinion best reflected the struggle of women, and started to workshop them. Some sketches were accepted as they were, while others were reworked until consensus was reached that they conveyed the right message. The males and the general secretary and his cousin, in particular, generated most of the ideas for the play in the workshops. The characters in the play in each case were the end result of the collective experiences of the members and represented types rather than individuals.

The members thereafter integrated the sketches of characters into the story of the play and developed the play's structure. The broad outline of events was fleshed out and dialogue was developed, although actors were not required to follow the dialogue developed in workshops, but could improvise their own dialogue during performances, providing they kept to the broad outline of events. In practice, however, actors tended to follow the essence of the dialogue which was created in the workshops.

When members of the association decided to rework the play at the beginning of the 1990s, they again charged the cousin of the general secretary to draft an outline for the play, which he based on the preceding production of the play. Since several members of the association were not involved in the UNIPEC Group, and by implication the preceding production of the play, they decided to rework the play from scratch so that they could reflect the experiences of all members in the play. They also decided to call on recognised performers in the labour movement to assist them in developing the play and improving their acting, and in 1992, managed to enlist Victor Shingwenyana, a successful playwright and performer, to facilitate a workshop of their play.

Figure 4.1   *Characterisation is discussed during a workshop of the play*
Women stand up for your rights

At this workshop, Victor suggested that they should perform a scene from the play. After they had done so, he gave comprehensive feedback on the scene itself, as well as on their acting. His main criticisms related to the lack of detail in the story of the play, the lack of continuity between the story of the play and the lyrics of their songs, the implausibility of the actions of characters, and not least, poor voice projection and acting by the actors. His suggestions and criticisms were taken very seriously and were accepted in a positive light, and the actors, as far as was possible, attempted to address them. They elaborated on the story of the play, worked on their voice projection and attempted to improve their portrayal of characters.

The workshops of the play during this period were impeded by the fact that some members of the association were overcommitted and consequently could not participate in all workshops because they had to attend meetings of other organisations in which they were involved. Further, the workshopping of the play was constrained by the fact that new members had to learn the play from scratch. This, in turn, led to those members who knew the play well or who were not involved as actors in the play, in becoming bored with it.

4.3.2.2   The story of the play

There were three female and six male characters in the play. In practice, however, the play was often performed with only two or three actors. Two female and four male characters had minor roles and only featured briefly. The main character, the wife, as well as the pregnant woman, represented women who had suffered abuse and exploitation. The abusive landlady represented an example of people in township community context who exploited less fortunate residents, and the five male characters symbolised various forms of exploitation suffered by women. The play, therefore, offered women limited performing possibilities, and despite a high number of students in the association, did not specifically address the sexual exploitation of female students in their homes, schools or community.

Successive performances of the play differed depending on audience participation, the improvisation of actors and the absence of an actor or several actors. However, the following storyline which was reconstructed from reports of members and observations of the workshopping of the play, is representative of a typical performance of the play.

Act 1, Scene 1

The play opened with a scene in a factory showing an obviously pregnant woman operating a steel pressing machine (whose motions the other actors simulated). The woman worked very slowly, and was experiencing discomfort. A supervisor approached her and told her that if she was under the impression that she was working for a bed manufacturing company, she was mistaken, and took her to a white manager to report her inability to perform to the required performance standards.

On entering the manager's office, the supervisor told him that the woman was pregnant and not capable of working any longer. The manager consequently dismissed her, but informed her that she could report back for duty after she had given birth to her child. The supervisor, who had an affair with another woman seeking employment, saw an opportunity in the dismissal. The pregnant woman, too shocked to leave, started to cry and appealed to the manager not to dismiss her. Disregarding her tears and pleas, he ordered her to clear out her belongings, and to leave the premises. The other workers in the factory, especially the women, were angry and upset by the dismissal of the woman on the grounds of her pregnancy.

The following day, a woman who was hoping to find employment, arrived at the factory. She was taken to the manager who told her that there was an opening, and was rerouted to the personnel clerk to complete the necessary application forms. When she arrived at his office, the personnel clerk denied that there was an opening, despite being well aware of the dismissal of the pregnant woman. When the woman turned to leave, the clerk called her back and told her that she was beautiful and that he was sexually attracted to her. He told her then that should she be willing to have sex with him, he would do his best to secure employment for her.

The woman immediately objected and told him that she was married. In response, he assured her that she would get a job if she consented to his proposition, but if she did not, that he would not bother to help her in any way. After some consideration, the woman capitulated. He registered her as a worker, but appointed her on a lower salary scale than the men doing the same work, and took her to the supervisor.

Act 1, Scene 2

The scene was set in the backyard of a township dwelling, where the newly employed woman and her husband were renting a room. The scene opened with the husband coming home after work, discovering that his wife was not home. He switched on the TV, took up the newspaper and started reading. The woman finally came home, and on entering, lit the stove and proceeded to clean her baby. While she was busy with the baby, he asked her for a cup of tea. As she gave him the tea, he flew into a rage. He fumed because his dinner was not ready and accused her of being late on account of the fact that she was trying to solicit other men.

Act 1, Scene 3

The scene opened with the landlady, the owner of the township dwelling, and the woman arguing. The landlady was upset because the woman did not clean the backyard to her satisfaction. She whined that the woman did not clean the whole backyard, but only the area around the room which they rented, and upon leaving, issued the warning that should she find the backyard untidy again, they would be evicted. Late that evening, the husband of the woman came home from a shebeen where he had been spending time with his friends. The woman told him about the argument and grumbled that she was tired of living under someone else's control, that she wanted a house of her own. She then asked him to do something about their living conditions. He responded that they should go to the town clerk the next day and apply for a house, and that he would ask his employer for the necessary leave to do so.

Act 2, Scene 1

The scene was set in the municipal offices. The woman knocked on the office door of the town clerk and was called in. She greeted the town clerk and proceeded to tell him that she was desperate for a house. In response, he asked her about her marital status, to which she replied that she was married. He then told her that he would have to see a copy of her marriage certificate, and asked her about her husband and his work. He continued that if they wanted to secure a house, they would have to pay an additional R7 000 in cash.

The woman replied that she neither had the money nor the necessary documents. The town clerk's response was that he would have to check the availability of houses, and that she had to return with her husband the next day. He then told her that since they did not have money, he would have to put them on the waiting list. The woman pleaded with the town clerk to give them a house. She explained that she and her husband were living in a dilapidated room and compared it to a kennel with no comforts. The town clerk's response was that he would give her a house if she consented to have an affair with him. She objected, reminding him that she was married, to which he replied that so was he, and that he only wanted to have sex with her. When she refused again, he sent her away, reminding her that she should bring her husband along on the next day.

The next day the woman returned to the municipal offices without her husband. The town clerk asked her where he was, to which she answered that he could not get leave to come. She told him that she was so desperate that she, in contrast, would rather be late for work than not trying to persuade him to give them a house. The town clerk replied that the matter could not be settled without her husband, but should she accept his proposal, he would make sure that they would get a house that same day.

Act 2, Scene 2

To secure the house, the woman reluctantly succumbed to the town clerk's affections, and he, in turn, made good on his promise by allocating a house to her. As she turned to leave, he told her that it was nearly teatime and if she waited, that he would take her back to her workplace with his car. She accepted, and when they got to the factory, he got out and went to the supervisor to explain to him that she was delayed at the town clerk's offices.

Figure 4.2   In this scene, the town clerk (right) is making sexual advances towards the "wife" (left) who is applying for a house. Note the submissive posture of the "wife".

After work she went home to where her husband was waiting for her. He was in a foul mood and she tried to calm him down by making him some tea. He, however, refused it and told her that he did not like black tea that tasted like milk stout. He also reprimanded her for not ironing the jacket which he wanted to wear to the shebeen later that evening. He gave her R5,00 and ordered her to go and buy milk, mealie-meal, a bag of coal, and a train ticket for him. He also told her that he expected to get some change back and then left the house to meet his friends at the shebeen.

Act 2, Scene 3

The scene was set in a shebeen and opened with the husband complaining bitterly to a friend about his wife. He called her a bitch and complained that she was a poor cook and housekeeper. His friend advised him to go home and give her a beating, since it was the only way that a man could get a woman to toe the line. The husband, however, replied that although he should, he could not, because she had a baby. They ordered more beer and continued drinking. After he bought another round for his friends, he left for home.

At home he quarrelled with his wife, and told her that he was advised to give her a severe beating, since it was the best way to get a woman back into line. He also told her what he discussed with his friends and proceeded to accuse her of stealing his money for her parents. She calmly answered that he was given

the wrong advice and that his friends would do anything to destroy their marriage, since they did not want them to be happy. She served him supper, but he was not satisfied with it and told her that he could not eat chips and bread for supper. She replied that she could not prepare a substantial supper because he only gave her money for food once she got home that evening. Too tired to argue any longer, he retired.

The next morning, she woke him up for work. He got up and tried to wash up, but could not find soap, the mirror and comb. Before he left for work, he asked her whether anything was wrong. She replied that there was, but that she would discuss it with him later.

Act 2, Scene 4

The scene was set in the house that was allocated to the couple. Since they had moved to the house, the husband had been coming home very late, especially on pay days. He often came home without any money. Sometimes he contributed R10,00 to the household with which he expected his wife to buy food and paraffin. He, in contrast, spent his money on friends and alcohol. Fortunately for her, she was able to provide for herself and the baby with her own wages and the help she received from the town clerk. The affair between the woman and the town clerk had taken a turn: it turned out to be a very rewarding relationship for her and as a result, she had fallen in love with him. In comparing her husband to the town clerk, she realised that her husband did not provide for her, but that the town clerk did: he gave her money and often took her out. She realised that she had an empty life with her husband because he was either drunk, asleep or not at home.

One day the woman came home late from work, and as she opened the door of the house, her husband, who was drunk, started to argue with her. She did not argue back, but only said that she had nothing, and therefore could not lose anything if she decided to leave him. When he continued with the argument, she warned him that she was going to leave him and started to pack her belongings. In response, he chased her away, but when he realised that she was serious, he begged her to sit down and to resolve the issue. However, she could not take it any longer and left her husband, creating the opportunity for the town clerk to pursue his relationship with her.

4.3.3   Textural elements in the production and performance of the play

4.3.3.1   *Warming-up exercises*

Members started workshops of their play with warming-up exercises that consisted of voice exercises as well as stretching exercises. To warm up their voices, they sang songs from their repertoire (see Chapter 3). In the event of an actual performance of

their play, they warmed up their voices during the song that was sung just before the performance commenced which was meant to give them the opportunity to ready themselves for the performance. Apart from warming up their voices, as Von Kotze (1984:98) has noted with regard to workshops in KwaZulu-Natal, the songs also served to unify them and created a context that was conducive to workshopping or performing their play. They also did stretching exercises to warm up their muscles. According to members, these exercises, which they learnt as members of school sport teams, ensured that they were flexible on stage and could embody the essential qualities of their characters.

4.3.3.2   Structural elements of the play

The play was divided into two acts and several scenes. According to members of the association, this structure made the play more dynamic and interesting. It gave the audience an opportunity to reflect on the events portrayed in a scene and stimulated them to contemplate the next scene.

The songs which they sang just before and during a performance of their play also structured the play. The association usually started a performance of their play or scenes from their play with a song that urged women to unite, but depending on how many scenes they were performing, songs from their regular repertoire were also included (see Chapter 3). These songs, similar to songs in workshop plays in KwaZulu-Natal (see Balme 1996:73; Sitas 1986:103; Von Kotze 1984:110 and 1988:12), served to frame the performance of the play from the larger politicised event, introduced and concluded scenes, anticipated changes in scenes, and, according to members, aimed to comment on the content of scenes and to create appropriate moods. However, since the songs from their regular repertoire were not specifically composed for the play, they lacked topicality, and as Victor Shingwenyana pointed out during a workshop of their play, did not comment on the content of scenes.

The use of songs to structure a performance corresponds with cultural practice in the societies of which their audiences were members, and the call-and-response pattern of the songs facilitated audience participation and the formation of solidarity and mutual support among performers and audiences. Von Kotze (1988:37-8) argues that the representation of pressing issues also increased and underscored solidarity among performers and audiences. This emphasis on solidarity and unity, according to Gready

(1994:189), led to the suppression of criticism. It certainly could have been a factor that contributed to audiences' uncritical appreciation of the stereotyping of women as victims in the play, and created an environment that supported an interpretation of the play in terms of the ideology which the audiences shared as members of the ANC alliance.

4.3.3.3   Orality

The oral nature of the play, although at odds with the high level of literacy in the association, resonated with the level of literacy of their target audiences in the labour movement who, as Fleischman (1990:92) argues, were closer to the oral pole of the oralityliteracy continuum. It made the play more accessible to these audiences, as well as structurally flexible. Members reported that the absence of several actors on particular occasions did not necessarily stop performances, although such eventualities altered performances considerably. The orality of the play facilitated the dropping of characters if they were not crucial to its central themes.

4.3.3.4   Multilingualism

Typical of workshop plays at the time (Peterson 1990:237), *Women stand up for your rights* was characterised by multilingualism, a convention which, according to Fleischman (1990:97), originated from the use of language in Gibson Kente's township musicals. As a strategy during the liberation struggle, it was used to include or exclude specific groups of the multicultural society which the play addressed, and to alienate specific characters from audiences (Balme 1996:77; Brink 1984:44).

Members of the association, however, denied that they used language in such a fashion. Although different languages, namely Xhosa, Zulu, English, Afrikaans, Fanagalo, tsotsi language or even a mixture of African languages were spoken in the play, members maintained that the use of these languages was informed by practical considerations. They argued that different languages were used to contextualise characters and scenes, for example, that formal English (with Afrikaans interjections) was the logical language choice for the white Afrikaner manager when dealing with workers. Further, that some languages were selected because performers were comfortable with and preferred to speak such languages on stage, corroborating Von

Kotze's (1988:13-4) view that when they were on stage, performers in KwaZulu-Natal preferred to speak the language which they knew best.

However, an analysis of the use of language in the play indicates that their language choices were not altogether politically neutral, and marked boundaries between different racial and sociopolitical groups of the time. The oppressed female characters, for example, spoke Xhosa (with English interjections), while the abusive supervisor and manager spoke Zulu (and some Fanagalo) and English (with Afrikaans interjections) respectively. The characterisation of the supervisor (see 4.3.3.6) as a Zulu speaker, invoked references to Inkatha and its perceived collaboration with the apartheid state, a sentiment which was expressed in their songs (see 3.3.3.1; 3.3.4.3 and 3.3.4.4) and in the literary plays of the general secretary (see Appendix D). The characterisation of the manager as an Afrikaner who spoke formal English emphasised the "whiteness" of the oppressive apartheid structures.

Given the multicultural nature of their audiences in which, according to Coplan (1987:17), English served as a primary means of communication and as the language of black unity and resistance to the apartheid state, as well as members' own view that the use of English in their songs widened their influence and made their songs accessible to more people, their extensive use of Xhosa to the exclusion of English and Zulu in the play is significant. This is particularly so in view of the fact that all the members of the association could speak English and Zulu, the lingua franca of the townships, and that only 5,4% of their potential audience in Tembisa identified Xhosa as home language (see 2.4.8.1). Such choices, which also marked the literary dramas of the general secretary of the association (see Appendix D), foregrounded a Xhosa identity of the oppressed masses and alienated Zulu speakers, and, as was the case with their songs (see 3.2.2.2), contradicted their express wish to function as a nonpartisan performance association.

4.3.3.5   *Casting of roles in the play*

With regard to the representation of the characters in the play, the members of the association emphasised that realistic portrayal of characters was essential, and that the embodiment of the fundamental qualities of a character required an understanding of the character to enable an actor to select the appropriate gestures, mannerisms, posture and movement. Further, that good voice projection and

language proficiency were essential factors in the casting of roles. The role of the white manager, for example, required an actor who was fluent in English. Consequently, members allegedly were cast only to play roles if they were proficient in these respects. None of the members had any formal performance training nor had any of them acted in school or other plays prior to joining the association. The members nevertheless indicated that they drew on experiences and training gleaned from choral singing and dancing, and from watching television, films and plays by other performance groups.

Males, particularly the general secretary but sometimes also his cousin, were cast in the roles of females whenever female performers in the association were, in the words of members, "absent" or "unsuitable". Although it may have been necessary for males to deputise for absent females, for instance when on occasion males sang the voice parts of absent females, only men were cast in the roles of females during the fieldwork period despite female members being present at such performances. The female performers in the association did not come forward or object to their roles being played by males, tacitly condoning such casting. In South Africa, the performance of female roles by men occurred in other worker plays as well, and even in plays that were produced for a consumer public. The playwright Maishe Maponya, for example, used a male to play a female role in his play *The Hungry Earth*, because in his view black actresses were unreliable. Although he did not elaborate, he did acknowledge that women were subject to social pressures that limited their opportunities to perform (Fuchs 1990:93). Assumedly, he referred to childcare problems, housework, and the dangers associated with finding transport home at night, which according to Baskin (1991:375) were also reasons for women generally being regarded as "unreliable" union members.

During a group interview, the general secretary of the association defended the casting of male actors in female roles by stating that it had nothing to do with gender, and that my questions regarding males portraying females were sexist. He argued that the "role reversal" had a dramatic effect and that audiences found it comically entertaining. The performance of female roles by men, however, did not constitute a case of role reversal, since women did not perform the roles of males in the play. The male portrayals of females instead entrenched stereotypes of women as the weaker sex and passive victims. Since there was no formal script, but only a

broad outline that directed events, the dialogue and nuances were determined by men during performances.

The general secretary also argued that the female performers did not know the storyline of *Women stand up for your rights* since they had not been part of the association long enough to have learned it. Although this was true to some extent, it does not explain why female members had been excluded from the play in the first place, or why "suitable" female performers had not been identified when they decided to rework the play. It is also unclear how the suitability of female performers was assessed. In *Workers' lament*, the play which was performed by the association's precursor, a male was also cast to play the role of a female despite the fact that at the time UNIPEC Group had more female than male members.

4.3.3.6   *Characterisation*

The male characters had stereotypical authoritative roles. The husband was portrayed as an authoritative, selfish, abusive, aggressive and "spineless" drunk who pandered to the whims of his friends rather than caring for his wife and baby. In terms of his characterisation, he expected to be served at home despite the fact that his wife held full-time employment and cared for their baby. Financially he did not contribute significantly to the household, but squandered his money in shebeens. Msimang (1994:134) observes that the breakdown of the labour division between the sexes among black South Africans has resulted in men thinking that women are invading their space and are in competition with them. He comments that when a wife is an achiever in her own right her husband may suffer from an inferiority complex and so escape to shebeens where he buys drinks for those who cannot afford to buy their own. Although such a view may have been a factor in the sketching of the character of the husband, the breakdown of the labour division and consequences stemming from it were not explored in the play.

The white manager was portrayed as unsympathetic towards blacks, a portrayal which corresponded with the negative image of whites reflected in the songs of the association (see 3.3.4.4). He was deliberately portrayed as overweight and bespectacled, a portrayal which, so members argued, characterised whites generally and which corresponded with the characterisation of whites in other workshop plays within the labour movement (Sole 1987a:85; Von Kotze 1988:12). The town clerk was

portrayed as a corrupt and opportunistic windbag who sexually exploited women. The characterisation of the supervisor (*induna*)[20] to a certain degree corresponded with the characterisation of supervisors in other workshop plays (see Sole 1987a:85; Von Kotze 1984:104 and 1988:13). He was portrayed as a corrupt, unintelligent, unskilled Zulu-speaking worker, who was loyal to his white bosses, although he deliberately duped the white manager by mistranslating the responses of the other workers. According to members, he was a "watchdog" who "harassed other workers to prove his loyalty to the manager" and was rewarded for such behaviour with "promotions".

The representation of women was also stereotypic: they were represented as passive victims of circumstances beyond their control, but which men controlled. This was clearly illustrated by the main character (the wife) consenting to the *quid pro quo* sexual harassment to secure a job and a house, and the fact that the wife and women in the play failed to stand up for their rights, except to oppose the lack of financial support and threats of violence by the husband and the unfair dismissal of the pregnant woman respectively. The wife was portrayed as being dependent on and subordinate to her husband, and as wanting the house rather than her husband. She is shown as accepting her responsibilities of caring physically and emotionally for her baby, cleaning, purchasing the household goods, cooking and serving her husband, besides toiling at her job in the factory. A rather unexpected turn of events in the play, which is also reflective of members' perception of women, was the fact that she fell in love with the town clerk who exploited her. This, according to members, was justified by the town clerk's good treatment of her. In individual interviews, however, some of the male adults in the association interpreted the turn of events as indicative of the fact that women are "easily tempted".

The male portrayals of females also entrenched textual stereotypes of women as being the weaker sex and as passive, submissive and insecure beings. This subverted the aim of the play to advocate women's rights and to contest the stereotyping of women as passive victims: specifically, to represent females they used falsetto voices and spoke softly, displayed submissive behaviour, moved hesitantly on stage, drooped their shoulders and bent over slightly, presumably in an effort to appear smaller and submissive. One can infer that such portrayals represented at least the male members' perceptions of the essential qualities of women, particularly in view

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[20] The word *induna* (plural *izinduna*) is a Nguni term for headman.

of statements by males in individual interviews that "women are physically and mentally weaker than men" and that "women can be influenced easily".

Figure 4.3   In this scene, the husband (left) is asking his "wife" (right), who is busy preparing dinner and attending to her baby, for a cup of tea. Note the submissive posture of the "wife".

4.3.3.7   Decor and costumes

The members of the association used whatever was available in the venues for decor, for example desks and chairs (See Figures 4.2 and 4.3). As Von Kotze (1988:11, 14) noted with regard to the worker plays in KwaZulu-Natal, this ensured that their play could be performed anywhere with little preparation.

Costumes were used to differentiate between various categories of people and to establish power relations between them. The manager and supervisor wore jackets and ties, whereas workers wore overalls. Although male actors who played female roles did not as a rule wear female clothing, the male actor who played the role of a female in *Worker's lament* wore a dress at a particular performance.

4.3.4 Reflections on the rights and obligations of women as evinced in the play

Contrary to the title *Women stand up for your rights*, the play focused on the oppression of women rather than on their rights. The women in the play did not stand up for their rights, except for opposing the unfair treatment of women by men,

as was evinced by the wife objecting to the lack of financial support and threats of violence by her husband, and the factory workers objecting to the unfair dismissal of the pregnant woman.

In particular, the play focused on the oppression and sexual exploitation of women in family and township community contexts; issues that were considered to be some of the biggest stumbling blocks in creating a united workforce (Von Kotze 1988:104, 109, 112, 113). The play highlighted domestic abuse and violence, financial exploitation of people without housing by township residents, victimisation of female workers by *izinduna*, unfair labour practice, and sexual harassment of women by corrupt town council officials and males in positions of authority. In the opinion of the members of the association, however, the exploitation of the wife by the supervisor and town clerk did not constitute an example of exploitation in township community context because they were collaborators of the apartheid state and therefore constituted an example of exploitation by the apartheid state. The fact that people were living in backyard shacks was also relayed to the oppressive apartheid state. Members argued that the apartheid state did not provide adequate housing for blacks and therefore precipitated this kind of "suffering". Direct exploitation of women by the apartheid system features only marginally in the play. Inadequate maternity rights, separate wage rates for women and unsympathetic white managers are addressed in only one scene. It should be mentioned, however, that the unions had met with considerable success in their struggle for maternity rights at that stage (Cullinan 1988:9; Jaffee 1987:79-80).

The play did not define the rights of women nor speculate on what they should have been, but instead emphasised the responsibilities and obligations of women. Such a negation of the rights of a category of individuals, it would seem, resonates with traditional legal views on rights. In terms of customary law, women share in the collective rights of the agnatic group which was under the control of men (Bekker 1989:141; Hammond-Tooke 1974:287, 303; Msimang 1994:121, 125; Whelpton 1994:6).

The play did not incite women to take action nor did it offer any solutions to the oppression of women. Although the female members in the association had various identities (such as mothers, wives, workers, trade union members, ANC members, squatters, Christians, blacks and members of ethnic groups) which potentially could

have influenced the content and performance of the play, the play focused largely on their identities as mothers and wives. It did not contest the stereotyping of women as wives and mothers, nor their stereotypical responsibilities and obligations, but persisted in projecting the customary image and obligations of women. As such, it did not further women's equality, but rather entrenched male constructions of the roles of females.

Such representation of women in the stereotypical roles of wives and mothers corresponds with the media representation of women in contemporary South Africa where, unlike men, women are normally identified in their private capacities as spouses, mothers and daughters (Rabe 2002:159). Regarding the stereotypical representation of the responsibilities and obligations of women in the play, the wife is portrayed as being dependent and subordinate to her husband and as accepting of her domestic duties besides toiling at her job in the factory. These responsibilities and obligations largely correspond with traditional household obligations and responsibilities of women (Bekker 1989:142; Buys 1981:88; Hammond-Tooke 1974:158-9, 303; Msimang 1994:122, 129) and still shape the lives of many women in contemporary South Africa (Amien & Paleker 2000:331; Beresford 2009:400; Buur 2008; Jansen 2002:120, Nhlapo 1991:118; Suttner 2009a:84; Suttner 2009b:227).

It would appear as if notions of male authority associated with patrilineal societies in South Africa underpinned the conceptualisation, production and performance of the play, and underscored the negation of women's rights in the structure and functioning of, as well as decision making in the association (see 2.3.2.5). Further, that aspects of the customary role and function of traditional leaders had been assumed by and conferred onto the general secretary and his cousin. This, it would seem, offers an explanation for the fact that the general secretary and his cousin dominated the workshopping of the play and performed the roles of female characters, because in terms of such notions senior male members represent female members in the community.

The "gate-keeping" of the males in the Mayibuye Cultural Group was reflective of male attitudes in the trade union federation and broader society at the time. It was only when organised women's groups complained that they were left out of the negotiation process at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA)[21] that

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[21] CODESA met for the first time in December 1991 and provided the forum through which the

a gender advisory committee was proposed (*Sowetan* 28 August 1992:19). Despite the fact that women's equality was undeniably voiced in the unions' rhetoric and that women were in the forefront of militant shop floor struggles, they were not appointed in meaningful leadership positions in COSATU and were typecast in traditional female roles (Cullinan 1988:9). Since men tended to undermine women's forums and to disregard the stated need to share the double shift of women, women had to fight for women's issues to be placed on the agenda (Shefer 1991:8, 14, 18).

It was therefore contrary to expectation that the females in the association and the numerous women-orientated audiences for whom the play was performed and whom it intended to mobilise, appeared to have condoned the portrayal of women as victims and the confining of women to the roles of wives and mothers. While this may seem surprising it takes on meaning when seen in terms of Mamphela Ramphele's statement (see Bazilli 1991:11) that women at grassroots level often do not articulate their issues as citizens, namely as women who are entitled to equality, but rather as wives and mothers. Motherhood is a core symbol in the identities of black women because the reproductive capacity of a woman is crucial to the maintenance of her husband's lineage (Steady 1985:29), and consequently plays an important role in the shaping of their sociopolitical identities (O'Brien 1994:147). It was also a pressing theme at the time of the research because the apartheid state had placed the identity of black females as mothers under extreme pressure, and it was no contradiction that black females had joined the ANC as mothers. The theme of motherhood complemented their African nationalism and it did not constitute an acceptance of an imposed role (Walker 1995:435).

The play emphasised the obligation of men to treat women with human dignity. This could be inferred from the expectation of the wife to be acknowledged and treated fairly and respectfully. She seriously objected to her husband's behaviour when he threatened her with physical violence and refused to support her financially. These two themes are particularly relevant to the current oppression of women in family context (Beresford 2009:400; Matthews 2001: 46; Suttner 2009a:84; Suttner 2009b:227; *The Cape Times* 2003:9; *The Star* 1996:9). Members of the association reported that the threat of physical violence was also echoed by members of the audience at the first performance of the play. Several of the large number of women

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major political organisations and parties in South Africa began to negotiate the future democratic constitutional and structural system of governance (Buchler 1995:27).

attending reported that their husbands accused them of having extramarital affairs when they arrived late from union meetings and that these arguments sometimes led to physical violence by their husbands.

This emphasis on the obligation of men to treat women fairly reflected a traditional point of view because customary law emphasises obligations whereas South African law stresses rights (Vorster 2001:120; Whelpton 1994:8). In terms of customary law (Bekker 1989:191; De Beer 1986:470) a husband must treat his wife fairly, with love and understanding, and is not allowed to beat her or assault her honour and dignity. If a husband ill-treats his wife, she can report the matter via her mother-inlaw to the head of the household who may reprimand the husband, but if he continues with his objectionable behaviour, she can return to her parents. This usually leads to discussions between the two families to resolve the matter and if the husband is found guilty of misconduct, he will have to compensate his wife's family, should he desire her to return. If by frequent ill-treatment a husband makes his wife's life with him unbearable, she can, as is the case in the play, leave him and refuse to return. A husband was empowered nevertheless to exercise the right of authority over his wife, even, if deemed necessary, with moderate castigation (Bekker 1989:140-1; Hammond-Tooke 1974:304). However, the context of the play and the level of the husband's abuse exclude moderate castigation as causing the violence.

Since the association agitated for women's rights and gender equality continues to be a concern on political agendas today, as is demonstrated in Chapter 5 (see 5.6.2 and 5.6.3), one would have expected the association to have continued its performances on women's rights, albeit performances with a different content or agenda. Although this did not happen, the play continues to be relevant for contemporary South Africa and highlights issues which still shape the lives of many women.

4.4   SUMMARY

Plays were used in the South African liberation struggle to promote the "proletarian revolution" and to express opposition to the apartheid state, particularly from the 1970s when theatre became a significant site of political action, and were an effective medium through which ordinary workers were educated on a variety of issues. The play of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, *Women stand up for your rights*, was an example of this genre of plays. It was created in response to a heated debate

on women's rights in COSATU and was meant to be self-reflective and self-discovering. The play aimed to stimulate discussion on the various forms of exploitation which women endured, educate COSATU members about the rights of women and their future role in the labour movement, as well as challenge prevailing attitudes and behaviour towards women both in the trade unions and in broader society. Since COSATU's inception in December 1985, it adopted a strong position against the exploitation and discrimination of women in the workplace, society and the federation itself, but the resolution proved largely to be lip service only. Consequently, the threefold oppression of women again was raised at COSATU's National Forum in 1988. In anticipation of this, COSATU's Women's Forum approached the association's precursor, UNIPEC Group, with the request to develop a play on the exploitation of women as a strategy to educate workers about women's rights. As a result of this collaboration, UNIPEC Group members became involved in COSATU structures, particularly the cultural locals, which aimed to employ performance to consolidate and mobilise workers, as well as to promote education and unity among them.

An analysis of the characteristics of *Women stand up for your rights* revealed that the play was a workshop play (see 4.2.1). In the context of the South African liberation struggle, workshop plays were created collaboratively for performance, reflected true life experiences, were syncretic combinations of various western and indigenous performance genres, focused on collective rather than on individual experiences, were rooted in the urban experience, and were overtly political; all of them features which were characteristic of *Women stand up for your rights*. The play was conceptualised by the cousin of the general secretary but workshopped by all, giving rise to the view by members, despite acknowledging his pivotal role, that they were co-authors of the play. It did not have a formal script, only a broad outline of events. Actors, therefore, could improvise their own dialogue during performances, providing they kept to the broad outline of events.

The play focused on work and worker experiences in the struggle for national liberation. Although it did not represent a specific case history, it reflected the real-life experiences and perceptions of members of the association as well as those of their relatives, friends and neighbours. The characters in the play were the end result of their collective experiences and represented types rather than individuals. The themes in the play reflected commonly reported problems which women faced;

issues that were seen as being supported by indigenous tradition, women's own attitudes and the law. There were three female and six male characters in the play. In practice the play was often performed with only two or three actors. The male characters had stereotypical authoritative roles, symbolising various forms of exploitation suffered by women, while women were represented as passive victims of circumstances beyond their control, but which men did control. The play offered women limited performing possibilities, and despite a high number of students in the association, did not specifically address the sexual exploitation of female students in their homes, schools or community.

The males, particularly the general secretary and his cousin, generated most of the ideas for the play in the workshops and were cast in the roles of females whenever female performers were "absent" or "unsuitable". During the fieldwork period, however, only men were cast in the roles of females, a choice which the female performers tacitly condoned. A male was also cast to play the role of a female in *Workers' lament*, the play of the UNIPEC Group, despite the fact that at the time the association had more female than male members. This practice was found in other South African workshop plays as well, presumably because women were subjected to social pressures that limited their opportunities to perform, such as childcare responsibilities, housework, and the dangers that were associated with finding transport to their homes at night. The male portrayals of females entrenched textual stereotypes of women as passive, submissive and insecure beings. When I suggested that such a representation subverted the aim of the play, the general secretary countered with the claim that the casting of males in female roles had nothing to do with gender, and that my suggestions to the contrary were sexist. He explained that the female members did not know the storyline of the play because they had not been part of the association long enough to have learned it. Although this was true to some extent, it did not explain why female members had been excluded from the play in the first place, nor why "suitable" female performers were not identified when they decided to rework the play. It was also unclear how the suitability of female performers was assessed.

The play was constructed to relate to the cognitive mode of gatherings where people were invited to think about and discuss, as well as ratify and endorse issues, grievances and struggles. However, it was seldom directly related to the agenda of gatherings, and its performance was difficult to accommodate in the time constraints

of gatherings. Consequently, the play was performed after the opening address or at the end of gatherings, during the so-called festive mode. In this context, instead of entertaining the audience as was then expected, the play foregrounded sensitive and often painful issues.

Since it aimed to criticise prevailing attitudes, prejudices and behaviour towards women in the ranks of COSATU itself, it can be argued that its use to educate and mobilise workers was a continuation of the indigenous performance tradition in terms of which sanctioned criticism could be expressed against institutions of society or dominating and harmful practices. However, I would argue that the content of the play subverted the intended effect: the play merely represented abusive relationships and various contexts in which women were exploited. In particular, the play focused on the oppression and sexual exploitation of women in family and township community contexts; issues that were considered to be some of the biggest stumbling blocks in creating a united workforce. The play highlighted domestic exploitation and violence, financial exploitation of people without housing by township residents, victimisation of female workers by *izinduna*, unfair labour practice, and sexual harassment of women by corrupt township officials and males in positions of authority. The play did not criticise any attitudes, prejudices and behaviour per se, nor did it suggest alternatives to the abuse and exploitation of women. It also did not incite women to take action. I would argue that as such the play reflected the reluctance of males in the association as well as in ANC alliance at the time to pursue gender equality. At best, the play can be said to have stimulated discussion on the abuse and exploitation of women, and that it facilitated the reproduction of ideas of womanhood and the rights of women in the ANC alliance.

The play was performed to mainly female audiences at gatherings of labour and political organisations that were associated with the ANC alliance in the Witwatersrand area, and in performance spaces that were linked to these organisations. The audiences were an important contextual factor of the play and interacted dynamically with actors during performances. Occasionally, members of the audiences objected to aspects that were represented in the play, but the association generally did not heed these objections. They felt that the play had the correct message and that changing it would have resulted in it losing its meaning.

The songs which were sung during performances of the play framed it from the larger politicised event, introduced and concluded scenes and aimed to comment on the content of scenes. However, the songs were not specifically composed for the play and consequently lacked topicality. The call-and-response pattern of the songs which the audience sang with the actors served to unify them. The representation of pressing issues also increased and underscored solidarity among performers and audiences. This emphasis on solidarity and unity tended to suppress criticism, and certainly could have been a factor that contributed to audiences' uncritical appreciation of the stereotyping of women as victims in the play. Further, it created an environment that supported an interpretation of the play in terms of the ideology which the audiences shared as members of the ANC alliance.

The use of language in the play was not politically neutral, and contradicted the association's express wish to function as a nonpartisan performance association. Language marked the boundaries between different racial and sociopolitical groupings of the time. The oppressed female characters, for example, spoke Xhosa, while the abusive supervisor and manager spoke Zulu and English respectively. The extensive use of Xhosa in the play is significant, particularly in view of the fact that only 5,4% of the association's potential audience in Tembisa identified *hosa* as their home language, and that the association claimed that the use of English in their songs made them more understandable to the multicultural audience which they addressed. Further, bearing in mind that all sixteen members could speak English and Zulu, but that only eleven could speak Xhosa, I had to conclude that their use of Xhosa, Zulu and English in the play was deliberate. It foregrounded a Xhosa identity of the oppressed masses and alienated Zulu speakers, and corroborated solidarities and alliances which were expressed in their songs.

Contrary to its title, the play did not focus on the rights of women. The women in the play did not stand up for their rights, except for opposing the unfair treatment of women by men, as was evinced by the wife objecting to the lack of financial support and threats of violence by her husband, and the factory workers objecting to the unfair dismissal of the pregnant woman. The play did not define the rights of women nor speculate on what they should have been. Such a negation of the rights of a category of individuals, it would seem, resonates with traditional views on rights. In terms of customary law, women shared in the collective rights of the agnatic group

which was under the control of men. The play, however, emphasised the customary obligation of men to treat women with human dignity.

The play did not contest the stereotyping of women as wives and mothers. To the contrary, it reinforced the stereotypic obligations of women: the wife was portrayed as being dependent and subordinate to her husband and as accepting her domestic duties apart from her duties as a full-time worker in the factory. Such responsibilities and obligations largely correspond with traditional household obligations and responsibilities of women and still shape the lives of many women in contemporary South Africa. The females in the association and the female-orientated audiences appeared to have condoned the confining of women to the roles of wives and mothers. It should be noted, however, that motherhood is a core symbol in the identities of black women and therefore women at grassroots level often do not articulate their issues as *women* who are entitled to equality, but as *wives and mothers*. The result of such stereotyping nevertheless was that male constructions of the roles of females were entrenched.

It would appear that notions of male authority associated with patrilineal societies in South Africa underpinned the conceptualisation, production and performance of the play, and underscored the negation of women's rights in the functioning of the association. It certainly appeared as if aspects of the customary role and function of traditional leaders had been assumed by and conferred onto the general secretary and his cousin. This, it would seem, offers an explanation for the general secretary and his cousin taking the lead in the workshopping of the play and performing the roles of female characters, because in terms of such notions senior male members represent female members in the community.

Since the association agitated for women's rights and gender equality continues to be a concern on political agendas today, as is demonstrated in Chapter 5 (see 5.6.2 and 5.6.3), one would have expected the association to have continued its performances on women's rights, albeit performances with a different content or agenda. Although this did not happen, the play continues to be relevant for contemporary South Africa and highlights issues which still shape the lives of many women.

CHAPTER 5

PHOENIX RISING:[22] THE RESURGENCE OF SONG AS A DISCURSIVE PRESENCE IN SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICS

5.1   INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

In Chapter 3 it was argued that the texts of struggle songs evoked specific socio-cultural and historical resonances, particularly that of a people's war and a negotiated settlement, but nonetheless were often less instrumental than the nonverbal elements of such songs in unifying and mobilising ordinary black South Africans. In this chapter, the dialogue between textual and nonverbal elements is explored in the context of the contemporary performance of selected struggle songs.

In particular, the chapter explores the contemporary significance and meaning of the text and nonverbal elements of the struggle song *Umshini wami,* which South African President Jacob Zuma reintroduced into public consciousness at the trial of Schabir Shaik in 2005. Although other struggle songs were also sung at the trials of Jacob Zuma, as well as songs which expressed disillusionment with the marginalisation of the poor, *Umshini wami* was selected for discussion because more than any other song, its performance proved to be a catalyst for the involvement of different constituencies in the wider public sphere (Gunner 2009:28, 32).

The struggle song *Dubul' ibhunu* ("Shoot the Boer") which was sung by Julius Malema[23] during public appearances on various occasions in 2010, certainly also merits consideration in a discussion about the significance of the contemporary performance of struggle songs. However, the song has been excluded here for two reasons. First, early in 2010 the civil rights organisation AfriForum and the Transvaal Agricultural Union approached the Pretoria High Court with an urgent application for an interim interdict against Malema to prohibit him from publicly performing the song on the grounds that this struggle song incited violence against and even murder of Afrikaner people (link2media 2010). In his ruling on the application for the

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[22] The phoenix, a mythical bird which is associated with sites such as Heliopolis in Egypt, is said to set fire to itself when the time of its dissolution draws near and to rise anew from the ashes. It is often used to symbolise the regeneration of creative energy (Hall 1988:XC-XCI).

[23] Julius Malema is at the time of writing (2011) the president of the ANC Youth League. His singing of the song *Dubul' ibhunu* during public appearances polarised South African society and was one of the main news stories of 2010.

interdict, the judge found that the singing of the song constituted hate speech and that it was unconstitutional. An interim interdict was granted by the Pretoria High Court in March 2010, effectively prohibiting Malema from singing the song until the case brought against Malema by AfriForum Youth in the Equality Court has been decided (link2media 2010). However, in November 2010 this matter was referred to the South Gauteng High Court, where it has been postponed several times and is due to be heard on 11 April 2011 (Nuus24 2010). At the time of writing, this case is thus still *sub judice* in South Africa. Moreover, in June 2010 a complaint was lodged against Julius Malema at the International Criminal Court in The Hague (reference number: OTP-CR-203/10) on the grounds that the performance of the song was inciting ANCYL supporters to commit genocide against Afrikaners (see Wikipedia s.a.(b):4; Times Live 2011; scribd s.a.). It is unclear whether this complaint will lead to prosecution; if it is taken on at all by the International Criminal Court, the process might take several years.

Second, the song has given rise to conflicting views about the desirability of its performance in contemporary South Africa and has polarised communities. The ongoing debate and the complexities surrounding it fall beyond the scope of this study and merit an independent study of its meaning and significance.

Having said that, in my view the emphasis on *Umshini wami* does not detract from the significance and meaning of struggle songs presented here. *Umshini wami* epitomises the resurgence of the power of song in post-apartheid South Africa at a time when many thought that the power of song had diminished and that its presence had ceased to be significant in the new democratic dispensation (Gunner 2009:29).

5.2   THE RISE OF *UMSHINI WAMI* AS A DISCURSIVE PRESENCE

Umshini wami originated in the MK training camps and was used to build the morale of former MK soldiers. It was first sung in a song competition at one of the Angola military camps by soldiers from the military base known as Cetshwayo. The song won the competition and became widely known and popular, and was subsequently sung in the townships as well. In the context of the training camps, it formed part of the ongoing debate about how to fight a just war, and according to some sources was composed to express the desire of freedom fighters to return to South Africa and fight. Its resurgence in a transformed political context, that of post-apartheid South

Africa, with completely different constituencies and channels of communication, was not unprecedented: the months leading up to the trial of Schabir Shaik increasingly were marked by public performances of songs which expressed disillusionment with the sociopolitical situation in South Africa, and especially with the financial burdens which the poor had to carry (Gunner 2009:37-44).

5.2.1   The context: the ANC has to be regenerated

The ANC, COSATU and SACP have been part of a governing alliance, the so-called Tripartite Alliance, since South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994. However, various factors are increasingly pressurising the alliance and have given rise to debate concerning the durability and even desirability of the alliance. Some analysts argue, for example, that the ANC government's adoption of the conservative GEAR[24] macroeconomic strategy in 1996 and "its continued adherence to 'neo-liberal' orthodoxy" (Beresford 2009:392), as well as the diminishing and marginal role of COSATU in policy debates have strained relationships in the alliance. The adoption of free-market capitalism by the ANC government pressurised its alliance with the ostensibly socialist COSATU because it is increasingly unable to yield to the demands of the labour federation (Beresford 2009:393). Analysts therefore suggest that an alliance split is inevitable despite the historical and political symbolism associated with the alliance (Beresford 2009:392). The split in the ANC in 2008, resulting in the launch of a breakaway party, the Congress of the People (COPE), seemingly underscored these tensions and strengthened perceptions of a looming split in the alliance.

However, despite perceptions of a looming split and even that such a split is vital "for resuscitating a left-wing agenda in South African politics" (Beresford 2009:392), the rank-and-file membership of COSATU continues to vote for the ANC in elections and to support the alliance between the labour federation and the ANC (Beresford 2009:392). Reasons which have been suggested for the continuing perception of the ANC as the champion of black aspirations and for the reluctance of unions to turn against the ANC, are the historical significance of the ANC as the figurehead of the liberation struggle and the lasting bonds of solidarity that were forged between unions and the ANC during the liberation struggle (Beresford 2009:394).

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[24] Government of South Africa, "Growth, employment and redistribution: a macroeconomic strategy (GEAR)", cited in Beresford 2009:392.

In this regard, a diverse group of NUM members employed by Eskom, South Africa's electricity parastatal, argues that workers have come a long way with the ANC. They argue that the ANC has fought for them and continues to fight for them, and has their interests at heart. In fact, they identify strongly with the ANC despite being aware of its shortcomings. They believe that the ANC as an organisation is not lost, but that it has the ability to be regenerated. They dissociate their dissatisfaction with specific political leaders and the ANC government from the ANC as an organisation (Beresford 2009:392-395). They believe that the failures of the ANC government are a consequence of "the inability of individual leaders to meet expectations of representation, mediation, and accountability within the post-apartheid democratic era, rather than any irredeemable ideological shortcoming of the ANC itself" (Beresford 2009:392).

Beresford's (2009:395) findings suggest that workers expect political leaders to be accountable, to consult with workers regularly, and to represent workers' concerns directly, similarly to what is done in the unions. During the liberation struggle unions in the labour federation developed strong democratic structures with a strong commitment to shop floor democracy and accountability of leaders. Drawing on this legacy, workers tend to transfer their understanding of shop floor democracy to their understanding of parliamentary democracy, and expect cabinet ministers to come down to the shop floor to engage with them directly (Beresford 2009:395). They argue that by doing so, ministers would be in a position to be informed about issues and to be "… 'called to order' if they are deviating from their mandate" (Beresford 2009:396). What is central to their expectations regarding leadership, therefore, is to be heard and to be given a platform where they can engage on issues.

These expectations shape the way in which members of NUM view their political leaders and organisations. In their perception, the leadership style of former South African president Thabo Mbeki decayed representative democracy in South Africa, and they anticipated at the time of the ANC's leadership election in December 2007 that the election of Jacob Zuma as President of South Africa would contribute to the regeneration of the ANC and alliance structures, and the restoration of represent-ation to the South African democracy (Beresford 2009:392-393). The leadership of COSATU shared their optimism and also expected that Jacob Zuma's victory would herald a new era for the alliance in which some of the influence that it had lost during Thabo Mbeki's reign, would be restored (Beresford 2009:393).

Members of NUM consistently criticised government's inability to provide a decent standard of living for workers and argued that there had been no discernable change since the end of apartheid (Beresford 2009:392-393). Silke (2006:2) argues that particularly the poorer segments of the ANC's support base felt uncomfortable with the economic direction of the country, and increasingly were questioning their political leaders. Thabo Mbeki, in particular, was criticised for being too arrogant and deaf to the pleas of the people. They argued that he had his own way of doing things which was based on foreign sociocultural norms and practices, and that he did not honour the traditions which had been passed down by the ancestors. His long exile and education abroad were seen as reasons for his adoption of a foreign value system, and according to some, for him being seemingly too educated to understand mere workers. He was also criticised for thinking only of himself, and for being unsociable and unable to share his intelligence with anyone. In short, he was seen as representing a new elite that was out of touch with ordinary people and grassroots issues (Beresford 2009:392-393, 399-400). For that reason members of NUM saw the removal of Thabo Mbeki as a step towards the regeneration of the ANC and a return of representational politics in South Africa (Beresford 2009:411-412).

Jacob Zuma, on the other hand, was seen to be a man of the people and not a supporter of what was phrased as "the conservative and effectively elitist policies of the current government" (Gordin 2006b:25). Members of NUM based their positive perception of him on his personality traits, sociocultural background and values, and also on the perception that he is a hands-on leader and a listener. In their view he was accountable, dedicated to mediation and to the representation of ordinary people (Beresford 2009:402).

With his rural Zulu roots, Jacob Zuma drew support from the rural segments of society. He also drew support from those who considered themselves marginalised by government's economic policies, those in the ANC who resented what they saw as a centralisation of decision making, and from the ANC's trade union and communist allies where Thabo Mbeki's influence was weak (Economist 2006:49). Jacob Zuma was also well connected to the ANC Women's League, the ANC Youth League and the Young Communist League (Meldrum 2006:210), and he was respected for his role in ending the violence between the IFP and the ANC (Economist 2006:49). For these reasons many people believed that he was a suitable candidate for the office of the

President of South Africa. Some scholars argue that he extended his appeal in both the ANC and the alliance by his performance of stereotypical Zulu masculine values during his rape trial, his approach to traditional leaders, and by positioning himself as being sympathetic to conservative values (Beresford 2009:402).

5.2.2   Jacob Zuma in the crossfire: the corruption and rape charges

The expectations of workers regarding political leadership and the way in which they measure the performance of political leaders and organisations seem to be in accord with the view of some analysts (see Beresford 2009:393) that the broader political revolt against the political unfolding of the ANC over the last decade was funnelled into the narrower succession battle between Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma. The interpretation by ordinary South Africans of the corruption and rape charges against Jacob Zuma as being a conspiracy to marginalise him politically and to derail his chances of becoming Thabo Mbeki's successor as the president of South Africa (Africa Confidential 2004:1), similarly underscored this view. The conspiracy discourse was fed by the tension which existed between Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma and the perception that Thabo Mbeki did not want him to be his successor (Meldrum 2006:210). A local opinion poll at the time regarding the charges against Jacob Zuma revealed that more than 33% of South Africans believed that Jacob Zuma was innocent of corruption, and more still that he was a victim of a conspiracy (Africa Confidential 2004:1).

The corruption and fraud charges arose from Jacob Zuma's relationship with Schabir Shaik, a long-time friend and former ANC activist, who was a director of both the French arms company Thomson-CSF (which later was renamed to Thales and whose South African operations later were renamed to Thint Holdings) and the local company African Defence Systems (ADS) which had won a contract to supply management technology for navy corvette ships bought as part of government's arms procurement plan. In investigating possible irregularities surrounding the multibillion rand arms deal, the Scorpions[25] discovered a reference in the Thompson-CSF audit

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[25] The Directorate of Special Operations, also known as the Scorpions, was a multidisciplinary agency that investigated and prosecuted high-level crimes and corruption, including the irregularities that surrounded the multibillion rand arms deal which led to the indictment of Jacob Zuma on charges of corruption and fraud. The agency was established on January 2001 and was a unit of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) of South Africa. Its staff comprised some of the best police and financial, forensic and intelligence experts in the country. It was officially disbanded in January 2009 (Wikipedia s.a.(a):1).

working papers pointing to bribery in respect of the corvettes which involved a senior government minister (Gordin 2006a:13). Upon further investigation it transpired that the bribery might involve Alain Thétard and Jacob Zuma. In mid-2001, the investigations of the Scorpions led them to Alain Thétard's secretary. She claimed that Schabir Shaik had called a meeting of the ADS board in Durban and that upon returning from the meeting, Alain Thétard had requested her to type a handwritten letter and to fax it in encrypted form to Thales International in Mauritius and Thompson-CSF in Paris. The fax allegedly referred to an agreement between Jacob Zuma and Thompson-CSF that he would protect the company against investigation in respect of an arms procurement deal in the late 1990s in exchange for R500 000 a year until ADS started paying dividends, and that he would support and lobby for Thompson-CSF in future (Gordin 2006a:13).

By 2002, a picture emerged of an extensive and complex financial relationship between Schabir Shaik and Jacob Zuma. Investigations revealed that Schabir Shaik had made 238 payments totalling more than R1 000 000 on Jacob Zuma's behalf, purportedly in return for Jacob Zuma using his political muscle to help Schabir Shaik's Nkobi Holdings. In the Scorpions' view, the evidence gathered suggested that a generally corrupt relationship existed between Jacob Zuma and Schabir Shaik. They also alleged that Schabir Shaik's payments to or on behalf of Jacob Zuma had been made corruptly and recommended that a criminal prosecution be instituted against Jacob Zuma. However, Bulelani Ngcuka, the then National Director of Public Prosecutions, did not accept the investigation team's recommendation and on 23 August 2003 announced the NPA's decision not to prosecute Jacob Zuma despite a prima facie case against him (Africa Confidential 2004:1; Gordin 2006a:13).

In November 2003, Schabir Shaik was indicted on charges of corruption and fraud. On 8 June 2005 the trial was concluded and he was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment after being found guilty on two counts of corruption, and three years on the count of fraud. The court found that he was guilty of soliciting a bribe for Jacob Zuma from Thint Holdings and that he and Jacob Zuma were in a generally corrupt relationship (Gordin 2006a:13, Economist 2005:45). Jacob Zuma, who was implicated in the judgement, was consequently dismissed by Thabo Mbeki (the president of South Africa at the time) on 14 June 2005 from the position of deputy president of South Africa (Gunner 2009:28). However, Jacob Zuma managed to hold on to his position as deputy president of the ANC despite attempts to oust him (Meldrum 2006:210) and in

December 2007 he was elected to the position of president of the ANC at the expense of his contender, Thabo Mbeki, an outcome which the leadership of COSATU interpreted as greatly owing to the labour federation's efforts (Beresford 2009:393).

On 20 June 2005 Vusi Pikoli, Bulelani Ngcuka's successor as the national director of Public Prosecutions, announced that based on a reappraisal of evidence flowing from the case of Schabir Shaik, the NPA had decided to charge Jacob Zuma (Gordin 2006a:13) and on 29 June 2005 Jacob Zuma was formally charged with two counts of corruption in the Durban magistrate's court. Approximately 6 000 supporters gathered at the judicial institution to publicly express their opposition to the trial. Supporters periodically chanted "a*mandla* (Power)", toyi-toyied and sang former struggle songs in which Thabo Mbeki was reviled and insulted (Liebenberg 2005:1). They also protested Jacob Zuma's innocence and claimed that he was the victim of a conspiracy (Meldrum 2006:210-211). Jacob Zuma voiced similar sentiments in the media and maintained that the charges were designed to marginalise him politically, principally by maligning and investigating him continuously (Gordin 2006a:13). On 20 September 2006 Judge Msimang dismissed the charge of corruption against Jacob Zuma when the prosecution asked for yet another postponement of the case in order to gather evidence (Peters 2008:3).

On 28 December 2005 the NPA also served an indictment on Jacob Zuma in which he was charged with the rape of the 31-year-old daughter of a long-standing friend, a fellow activist and comrade in exile (Africa Research Bulletin 2008:17384; Gunner 2009:32). Many of his supporters believed that the rape charge was a honey trap "sent" to Jacob Zuma's home (Gordin 2006b:25). On 13 February 2006, the first day of the trial, more than 3 000 demonstrators gathered together in support of Zuma (Africa Research Bulletin 2006:16552), and mounted a vigil in front of the High Court buildings in Johannesburg (Economist 2006:49). Jacob Zuma denied the charges and claimed that he and his accuser had had consensual sex. On 8 May 2006 he was acquitted of the rape charges on the grounds that he was a more trustworthy witness than his accuser, and that consensual sex had taken place between him and his accuser (Palitza 2006:108).

In November 2007, the court of appeal opened the way for charges to be reinstated against Jacob Zuma by its decision that the seizure by the police of incriminating documents from Jacob Zuma's home and office on 18 August 2005 was legal.

Consequently, on 28 December 2007 the NPA served an indictment on Jacob Zuma in which he was recharged with fraud, corruption and racketeering (Peters 2008:3). However, top office bearers of the ANC, including cabinet ministers, came out in support of Jacob Zuma (Eliseev 2008:1), and together with COSATU and the SACP called for a political solution to the trial. They petitioned for the scrapping of the allegations and case against Jacob Zuma because in their view it was not in the interest of justice or South Africa to go ahead with the trial (Rademeyer 2008:1). On 23 June 2008 Jacob Zuma filed papers in an attempt to have his prosecution declared invalid and unconstitutional, and indicated that should his application fail he would reapply for a permanent stay of prosecution (BBC News 2009:2).

On 12 September 2008, Judge Chris Nicholson ruled that he was not convinced that Jacob Zuma was incorrect in alleging political meddling in his prosecution, implying that as part of a power struggle in South Africa,[26] Thabo Mbeki had conspired with prosecutors against Jacob Zuma. Judge Nicholson further ruled that the sacking of Jacob Zuma as deputy president of South Africa was unfair and that the decision by the NPA to prosecute him was procedurally unlawful; therefore it was set aside.[27] Five days later, the NPA announced its intention to appeal against the judgement, which sparked a fury in the ANC and culminated in the resignation of Thabo Mbeki as president of South Africa (BBC News 2009:2). In November 2008 Thabo Mbeki attempted to overturn the ruling that he had conspired with prosecutors against Jacob Zuma, but could not manage to do so.

On 22 October 2008 the prosecution was given leave to appeal the dismissal of the corruption trial against Jacob Zuma, which led to the Court of Appeal overturning the ruling of Judge Nicholson on 12 January 2009, just a couple of months before the general elections. The court also reprimanded Judge Nicholson because the high court

> had failed to confine its judgement to the issues before the court; decided matters that were not germane or relevant; created new factual issues; made gratuitous findings against persons who were not called upon to defend themselves … and overstepped the limits of its authority by injecting personal views and political preferences into its judgement.[28]

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[26] In the corruption trial against Jacob Zuma, he submitted affidavits to the effect that he was a victim of conspiracy; see *Zuma v National Director of Public Prosecutions* [2008] ZAKZHC 71, p 16, par 41, and pp 83-84, par 216.

[27] See *Zuma v National Director of Public Prosecutions* [2008] ZAKZHC 71, pp 93-94, par 247.

[28] See *National Director of Public Prosecutions v Zuma 2009* (2) SA 277 (SCA), p 278.

The Court of Appeal ruled that the High Court had erred in considering whether the allegations were true or not. It ruled that what was of consequence was not whether the allegations were true or not, but whether they were relevant to the merits of the case, a question which the High Court did not consider.[29]

This overturning once again opened the way for Jacob Zuma's trial to be resumed. However, on 6 April 2009 South Africa's chief prosecutor, Mokotedi Mpshe, announced that the charges against Jacob Zuma had been dropped. He said that phone-tap evidence proved that there had been political interference in the investigation of Jacob Zuma and he concluded that it was neither possible nor desirable to prosecute Jacob Zuma (BBC News 2009:2). This statement cleared all obstacles in Jacob Zuma's way to become the president of South Africa and on 9 May 2009, he was inaugurated as the fourth president of South Africa.

5.3   *UMSHINI WAMI* AS DISCURSIVE SITE

In Chapter 1 (see 1.1.2.1) it was argued that song provides an effective and powerful political platform through which a range of themes can be debated and public opinion can be affected. In Allen's (2004 cited in Gunner 2009:29) terms it is because music "is the most widely appreciated art form on the continent … and the one that is most comprehensively transmitted through the mass media", and it consequently has an extraordinarily wide reach. Songs, in particular, are thought to have the capacity to spread rapidly across wide-ranging social and geographical landscapes when the conventional means of expression and communication in communities has been restricted or proscribed (Gilbert 2005:11), and to become a space where people can gain visibility and stage their identities (Dolan 1996:11).

This was certainly the case with *Umshini wami*. From its first publicised performance in post-apartheid South Africa at the trial of Schabir Shaik in early 2005, and subsequently in varying contexts such as at the court trials of Jacob Zuma and the associated succession struggle with Thabo Mbeki for the office of president of the ANC, the 2008 xenophobic attacks in South Africa[30] and at Zuma's wedding in 2010, the song, in Gunner's (2009:34) phrasing, "spoke to and with different constituencies in a fragmented and plural polity". Gunner (2009:35-38) argues that *Umshini wami*'s

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[29] See *National Director of Public Prosecutions v Zuma 2009* (2) SA 277 (SCA), p 290, par 25.

[30] See SABC News (2008:1) in this regard.

popularity and swift passage through so many communities may have been rooted in factors such as the following:

- its appropriation by the electronic media at the time;
- its deep links with liberation struggle songs;
- its capacity to recall memories of the struggle against apartheid[31] and of the township unrest, and
- its association with the song *Msholozi*.[32]

This song, which was recorded in November 2005 by the *maskandi*[33] group Izingane ZoMa, made the assertion that everybody wanted Jacob Zuma to be president, and that even Nelson Mandela had expressed the wish. Thus the song called for all charges to be dropped against Jacob Zuma so that he could lead government.

To an extent, *Umshini wami* created different publics for Jacob Zuma. It united heterogeneous constituencies that cut across ethnic, class and regional boundaries, and its performance in diverse public gatherings and public debates provided opportunities for the expression of widespread anxiety and disillusionment with the unfolding of governance in South Africa as well as with the elitist and distancing policies of government (Gunner 2009:28-38). In Gunner's (2009:30) view, *Umshini wami*, and song in general, became the means by which diverse and often marginalised publics seized the power to participate in national debates and to influence the flow of transformation in the body politic.

An essential aspect of *Umshini wami*'s performance is that it was performed at sites of power, particularly at judicial institutions, namely at the High Courts in Johannesburg and Pietermaritzburg, the Magistrate's Court in Durban as well as at the public hearing in Durban into the dissolution of the Scorpions.[34] It was also performed at other politically significant sites such as at COSATU's Congress in 2006,

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[31] In this regard, Gilbert (2005:16) argues that struggle songs are becoming an integral part of how apartheid is historicised and remembered.

[32] *Msholozi* is a reference to the best known clan praise names of Jacob Zuma (Gunner 2009:45).

[33] *Maskanda* music, a popular genre of song, is one of the channels through which discontent with sociopolitical developments in South Africa has been aired, and which represents voices of those at the fringes of power (Gunner 2009:44).

[34] On Tuesday, 12 August 2008, supporters entered the building singing and toyi-toying. Many wore T-shirts with the logos and names of unions affiliated with COSATU and some wore T-shirts in support of ANC President Jacob Zuma. They sang *Awulethu mshini wami* to taunt Democratic Alliance supporters who had turned up for the hearings. The Democratic Alliance under the leadership of Helen Zille is the official opposition party in South Africa.

at the AmaZulu Royal Reed Dance ceremony in 2008,[35] where it was sung to welcome Jacob Zuma, and at Polokwane in December 2007 when Jacob Zuma was elected to the position of the new president of the ANC ahead of his contender, Thabo Mbeki.

In several instances where the song was performed at judicial institutions, thousands of supporters assembled at the institutions. They disrupted the normal flow around these sites and transformed them into performance spaces. In these institutionally framed spaces they made competing claims free from censorship about the events that were unfolding and demonstrated defiance to the government of the then president Thabo Mbeki. The gatherings evoked memories of similar gatherings during the liberation struggle and by so doing, connected supporters to a long history of struggle, a connection which was strengthened by the lyrics of the struggle song.

I would argue that in these contexts the performance of *Umshini wami* is reminiscent of those performances in traditional societies that had the capacity to provide metacommentary (see 1.1.2.1). It expressed sanctioned criticism against the government and what were perceived to be harmful practices in society; it audibly and visually demarcated identities and distinguished insiders from outsiders; and it emphasised unity and solidarity among members of such identities.

5.4   INFERENCES ASSOCIATED WITH THE LYRICS OF *UMSHINI WAMI*

The song has a call-and-response structure and was performed with rhythmic body movements (steps) which emphasised rhythm and harmony in performance. The lyrics of *Umshini wami* are simple and slogan-like. As such the song is reflective of struggle songs generally since the lyrics of struggle songs were often simplistic and no more than mere slogans which were used by the ANC alliance at the time (see 3.3.4.4). Translated from the original Zulu, the lyrics of *Umshini wami* read as follows:

Umshini wami mshini wami	My machine, my machine
khawuleth'umshini wami	please bring me my machine
Wen'uyang'ibambezela[36]	you're pulling me back/
	you must not delay me[37]

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[35] Hundreds of reed dancers sang *Umshini wami* when Jacob Zuma made a surprise appearance at the ceremony in KwaNongoma, northern KwaZulu-Natal (Hans 2008:4).

[36] According to Gunner (2009:31) the verse line was added after the corruption charges against Jacob Zuma were dismissed in September 2006.

[37] "*Wen'uyang'ibambezela*" can imply both "you, my comrade/colleague, are too polite

Umshini wami,	my machine
khawuleth'umshini wami	please bring me my machine

Although the word "machine" in the song is commonly understood to refer to a machine gun, there is no allusion or figures of speech in the song that suggest that the reference to "machine" in the song should be read as "machine gun". There are also no textual references to support such an assumption, except with reference to tsotsi language, in which the word for machine gun is "*mshini*" (Ntuli 2008), and Gunner's (2009:42) assertion that AK47s (Kalashnikov) machine guns were known as *imishini*[38] during the liberation struggle. It is noteworthy that Twala and Koetaan (2006:173) have documented an earlier version of the song that was sung at the time of the liberation struggle in which the last verse line read "bring that bazooka and that AK47". However, the word *umshini* should not be interpreted exclusively as referring to a machine gun, since Suttner (2009b:229) claims that the word has another layer of meaning as a euphemism for penis which apparently is widely used in certain villages and townships.

Textual inferences suggesting an interpretation of "machine" as "machine gun" are certainly supported by dominant nonverbal elements which accompany the perform-ance of the song. Wooden and cardboard replicas of AK47 assault rifles which frequently are brandished by supporters during performances as well as gestures mimicking the holding of a rifle which supporters and often Jacob Zuma himself adopt during its performance certainly underscore such an interpretation. However, such nonverbal elements are not at odds with an interpretation of *Umshini* as referring to a penis, as is demonstrated later (see 5.6.2.2).

The lyrics of the song evoke a specificity of sociocultural and historical reality which is essential to its interpretation. As Gunner (2007:10-11, 39) argues, it was a song of the people and it had the weight of a Zulu war song. It evoked powerful images and language which were associated with the liberation struggle. The song recalled a time when song captured the aspirations, anxieties and vision of the oppressed masses in South Africa. It had connotations of the rebellious youth during the struggle against apartheid and of township unrest. It also had connotations of the military camps in the neighbouring states where freedom fighters were trained and of how to fight a just war. By bringing back the imagery and language of the

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and therefore you are holding me back", or "you, my adversary, are preventing me from taking over now" (Ntuli 2008).

[38] See Gunner 2009:38 for another version of the song during the liberation struggle.

liberation struggle, "[t]he icon of the heroic guerrilla fighter was melded with that of the beleaguered senior politician, of impeccable freedom credentials" (Gunner 2009:43).

In the context of all kinds of public gatherings and public debates in post-apartheid South Africa, *Umshini wami* seemed to have enabled a dynamic expression of disillusionment with the policy direction of the ANC and how South Africa was governed. In the context of the corruption charges stemming from the arms deal with the French arms company Thomson-CSF, the singing of the lyrics "bring me my machine gun" may also have been a deliberate reference to the pending case and a deliberate challenge by Jacob Zuma, accompanied with a warning of potential violence to his adversaries, to bring his "French" machine gun. Similarly, in the context of the rape trial, the militarist tone of the lyrics may also have accentuated a militarist conception of masculinity, and in Suttner's (2009a:84) phrasing, heightened the potential for gender violence which is still prevalent in contemporary South Africa. Gilbert (2005:12) argues that as a symbol the wooden AK47s glorified the armed struggle and were part of a militarist conception of masculinity since women were largely excluded from traditional combat roles despite their network of support and contribution to the activities of MK. Be that as it may, the song was a defiant response by Jacob Zuma to those who attempted to derail him through an implication of irregularities in respect of the arms deal and of rape.

5.5   *UMSHINI WAMI* AS PROVERB?

Gunner (2009:33) argues that from its first performance in 2005, the song seemed to slip effortlessly into the stream of common speech. This passage was facilitated by the briefness of the song and its antiphonal call-and-response structure which engaged gatherings in its performance, and also by the fact that "[p]eople recognized it as part of a social language that they knew" (Gunner 2009:38). They knew how it was used in a variety of public gatherings, and how to behave in relation to it.

Gunner (2009:33-34) argues that in the way *Umshini wami* was used and re-used, it resembled a stock phrase or proverb. As a proverb the song assumed a life of its own, independent of its author and as such could even insult or mock the "owner". It was performed in different contexts and different constituencies appropriated it. For

example, the song, albeit with slightly adapted but still recognisable lyrics ("bring me my money"), was used by students from the University of the Witwatersrand to protest against the delay of the paying out of student financial aid grants (Gunner 2009:34). It was also recently adapted by the South African Police Services to mobilise support for the 2010 fire-arm amnesty campaign ("bring us your machine gun") (Comrie 2010:1). For Gunner (2009:43) this proverb-like quality or common wisdom of its lyrics enabled its use in a multiplicity of contexts and she argues that "[t]he instrument of the machine gun, *umshini wami*, suggests not so much the brute power of war but that of agency, and of the individual sanctioned by the group to bring about change". In this agency, she argues, lies its real power.

However, an analysis of its use against a colleague and the then president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, in contrast to its previous use against the political adversary of the ANC, the apartheid state, requires a more nuanced interpretation of its possible layers of meaning. The song retained its earlier definite militant and militarised tone and therefore falls into the category of songs which during the time of the liberation struggle resonated with the ANC's strategy of a people's war (see 3.3.4.4). As was the case with the songs which purportedly incited violence against whites during the liberation struggle (see 3.3.4.4), I would once again argue that the expression of violence in *Umshini wami* should not be taken literally. In Tarrow's (1991:7) phrasing, the power of *Umshini wami* lies primarily in its threat to burst through the boundaries of accepted behaviour, which in this case would have threatened the ranks of the ANC. Further, amidst attempts at the time to downplay fears of a threatening split in the ANC, the use of such militancy should also be read, in Colson's (1995:67) phrasing (see 3.3.4.4), as dramatic rhetorical displays that attempted to build solidarities and identities, to mobilise support and to undermine his adversaries.

In my view, the meaning of the lyrics of *Umshini wami* is less crucial than their intended effect. They intend to evoke emotional responses, and not primarily to convey factual statements. Such a use of lyrics corresponds with what Austin (1962) defines as a perlocutionary act: the achieving of certain effects as a function of language. Seen in this context such an utterance aims to affect the hearers psychologically, and to persuade them to take a particular course of action. If then, in Gunner's terms, the power of the song lies in its agency, I would argue that it does so because of the implied threat and process of identity formation which are

associated with the agency. Thabo Mbeki did not object to the performance of *Umshini wami* on the grounds that it incited violence against the state or civil war. In the light of the recent condemnation by the international community and many whites locally of Julius Malema's singing of "Shoot the boer" as an incitement to violence against whites, this reaction is significant and suggests an acceptance of its metaphorical meaning.

Further, although Gunner's (2009) analysis of *Umshini wami* uncovers important layers of meaning which go a long way towards an understanding of the song's significance in contemporary South Africa, it also falls short of adequately delineating how the somatic and other nonverbal elements of performance contribute to its use and influence the meanings that are ascribed to it. It is true that she acknowledges the song's capacity to serve as a powerful political platform and as a repository of cultural knowledge which is used to communicate and make identities and political positioning clear. It is also true that she carefully plots the song's linkage with the electronic media and the tradition of *maskanda* music and that she acknowledges the song's deep links with the liberation struggle songs. However, her analysis falls short of adequately explaining how somatic and other nonverbal elements contribute towards its centrality as discursive site in the African context, and what options the genre offers to its performers and audiences alike which other verbal art forms, such as poetry, oratory or plays, seemingly cannot. It is to these aspects that I now turn.

5.6   THE INFLUENCE OF NONVERBAL ELEMENTS ON THE USE AND MEANING OF THE SONG

A key aspect of an analysis of *Umshini wami* flows from the choice of genre: why are the proverb-like lyrics clothed in the structure of a song and not in the structure of one of the other verbal genres? What is the song saying in a vocabulary of sentiment and how does this influence its use and meaning?

In the words of Lucie Pagé (cited in Gilbert 2005:16) songs "reflect the rage, the suffering, the determination, the hope and the will of a nation". Singing provides a means of emotional expression (both positive and negative) in sociopolitical contexts where the normal expression of emotions carries the danger of retaliation because they have been prohibited by custom or law. Songs are therefore therapeutic because they facilitate emotional release (Twala & Koetaan 2006:176; Van Niekerk

1999:146). With regard to the steps and bodily movements which accompany performances, Twala and Koetaan (2006:166) argue that rhythmic bodily movements forge unity and connectedness among people from diverse sociocultural and geographical backgrounds. As was argued in Chapter 3 (see 3.3.4.3), this sense of unity is amplified by the antiphonal call-and-response structure of the song, the rhythm and harmony between the different voice parts which flow from a performance of song. These elements induce collective experience which in Eyerman's (2002:449) view is the core of collective identification.

The public performances of *Umshini wami* by the different gatherings wove emotive threads together and made Jacob Zuma's supporters visible to wider society. The performances distinguished insiders from outsiders and created identities among those assembled. Men and women who in many instances had never met face-to-face were welded into seemingly real communities. However, these communities of shared experience were dependent on direct face-to-face contact and consequently temporary, and visibly dissolved at the end of such gatherings.

5.6.1 The spectre of the conspiracy theory

Conspiracy theories fuelled by ethnicity proliferated after Jacob Zuma's indictment on corruption and rape charges. The conspiracy theorists argued that although Zulu speakers constitute 25% of the population of South Africa and were instrumental in the formation of the ANC, they had been denied the right to hold the top leadership position in the ANC for more than four decades (Hlongwa 2005:22), or as one of the sympathisers of Jacob Zuma to whom I spoke said: "Zuma's indictment is an attempt to prevent the Zulu's from eating." In the view of conspiracy theorists, political power, through careful orchestration by Thabo Mbeki, was in the stranglehold of Xhosa speakers (Africa Research Bulletin 2008:17385).

Nonverbal elements such as clothing which were introduced by those who participated in the performances of *Umshini wami* at Jacob Zuma's corruption and fraud trials underscored the conspiracy theory. Supporters wore T-shirts imprinted with phrases such as "Conspiracy Against Zuma: First corruption charges, Then Rape Charges, What Next?" or "Jacob Zuma for President". Supporters also held placards which proclaimed "Justice for our leader". Some supporters, according to Meldrum (2006:209-211), even burned T-shirts emblazoned with Thabo Mbeki's face. Such

ritualised acts expressed disapproval with the suspected author of the conspiracy, and were accompanied by toyi-toying, the chanting of liberation struggle slogans such as "*Amandla*" and "*Viva, Africa, viva!*", and insults which were directed at Thabo Mbeki. Images of these supporters were photographed and broadcast repeatedly by the national and international mass media and not only visibly kept the allegation of a conspiracy in the public consciousness, but also emphasised one of the key issues of the trial, namely whether the allegations were true or not.

Through the introduction of such nonverbal elements supporters increased the discursive possibilities of *Umshini wami*. In addition to the suggestion of agency, and the implied threat as well as the process of identity formation which were associated with its performance, the nonverbal elements foregrounded conspiracy as a framework for the interpretation of the proceedings, a conspiracy which at the time was still mere speculation. I would argue that supporters who had waited outside while the courts were in session, performing *Umshini wami* dressed in T-shirts proclaiming that Jacob Zuma was a victim of a conspiracy, added weight to his allegations of political meddling in his prosecution and suggested popular acceptance of the existence of such a conspiracy.

But the gatherings also added another layer of meaning through cultural artefacts which pointed to an ethnic root for the conspiracy. Some supporters embodied a particular manifestation of Zulu cultural identity by wearing traditional Zulu headdresses, beadwork, feathers and skins. Others emphasised a Zulu social identity by wearing T-shirts emblazoned with Jacob Zuma's photograph and the caption "100 percent Zulu Boy". The conception of a Zulu identity was also publicly emphasised by Jacob Zuma's use of traditional healers at public gatherings, and according to Da Costa et al. (2008:1) by the performance of ancestral rituals by supporters at his trials. Suttner (2009b:225-226) argues that Jacob Zuma did not distantiate himself from this and although Jacob Zuma in Suttner's opinion is not an ethnic chauvinist, he also "came to represent himself … as an embodiment of Zulu culture". His frequent choice of Zulu dress and emblems (Suttner 2009a:83), his invocation of Zulu practice as defence for his sexual behaviour on rape charges, and his choice to testify in Zulu in the rape trial despite the fact that he speaks English fluently, and at times, according to Palitza (2006:110), had to assist the court translator with the translation of his evidence, asserted his Zulu-ness and resonated with the display of Zulu-ness by supporters outside the court buildings.

By asserting their Zulu-ness, his supporters foregrounded ethnicity as root for the conspiracy and reasserted their claim for a Zulu state president. Not surprisingly then, and at the risk of oversimplifying the issue, the ANC under the leadership of Jacob Zuma, despite a general decline in votes for the ANC nationally, made significant gains in KwaZulu-Natal in the 2009 elections. Ethnicity as factor undoubtedly played a role in these gains. I would argue that the ANC under the leadership of Jacob Zuma offered voters who conventionally supported so-called Zulu values and the Inkatha Freedom Party an alternative choice.

5.6.2 The rape trial

Performances of *Umshini wami* featured prominently during the rape trial of Jacob Zuma and highlighted the fragile gender politics in South Africa, particularly concerns regarding gender equality, and government's apparent high tolerance of violence against women (Gunner 2009:32; Suttner 2009a:84; Suttner 2009b:227). Rape as a crime takes on serious proportions in South Africa and the country has one of the highest rates of rape in the world. In 2005 alone 55 000 cases of rape were reported to the police. However, women activists in the country maintain that the rate is actually considerably higher since in their estimation only one rape is reported for every nine that are committed (Meldrum 2006:11).

Aggravating concerns regarding gender equality is the apparent division in South African society regarding the issues of rape and violence against women. Despite constitutional recognition of women's rights and great advances in South African society at large, there still is an intolerance of women's rights at grassroots level, and many men do not respect a woman's right to say no to sex. When the rape charges were announced, Jacob Zuma lost noticeable support, particularly within the labour federation and the Communist Party (Meldrum 2006:11). An irreverent version of *Umshini wami* also began to circulate which mocked him with *Cherrie wami, cherrie wami/Awuleth ucherrie wami* ("My sweety pie, my sweetie pie/ O bring me my sweety pie"). The song as part of a subversive language which could criticise its singer, reflected on implied sexual impropriety, and called for justice (Gunner 2009: 33-34). This division was also visible in the gatherings which assembled outside the High Court. With their distinctive clothing in the colours of the ANC, wearing T-shirts with Jacob Zuma's face emblazoned on it or imprinted with slogans relating to his

trials, Jacob Zuma's supporters as a collectivity were distinguished from a much smaller collectivity of women who demonstrated in T-shirts imprinted with "People Opposing Women Abuse – POWA". The counterdiscourse which these demonstrators raised on their banners, in contrast to the discourse of Jacob Zuma's supporters, publicly declared that "Rape is always a crime", and displayed slogans such as "Against her will, against the law" (Meldrum 2006:209).

However, Jacob Zuma's grassroots supporters remained untroubled. Some claimed that rape was not a crime in "traditional culture",[39] and that only since the end of apartheid has government tried to turn it into a crime (Meldrum 2006:11). The rape charges were consequently interpreted as a strategy to derail him, as was publicly symbolised by supporters wearing T-shirts advocating the allegation, and suggested by the singing of *Umshini wami* and the song *Msholozi,* which was blared out from vehicles that were parked outside the high court (Gunner 2009:46). Supporters of Zuma consequently treated the laying of a rape charge by the accuser as tantamount to a criminal act. They set alight photos of the accuser and chanted "Burn, bitch, burn". At some point they also burned three lace panties which they said were used by Jacob Zuma's rape accuser to lure him. These ritual acts are significant in the light of the evidence which was accepted by the court that the accuser did not wear underclothes on the night of the alleged rape. To aggravate matters, Jacob Zuma occasionally appeared before his supporters in front of the courthouse and far from discouraging their behaviour, he danced, mimicking holding a machine gun, and waved his fist in the air (Meldrum 2006:209).

With regard to the flouting of the constitutional dictate of gender equality at grassroots level, Beresford (2009:400) reports that some members of NUM believed that the Mbeki government had undermined the position of male breadwinners in households, which threatened their gendered role as household heads. Workers complained that their wives were disrespectful and that their children were undisciplined. In their view the law was on the side of women and children and it had eroded their traditional authority. Some men consequently reasserted their gendered identities through domestic violence, affirming Lars Buur's (2008 cited in Beresford 2009:400) viewpoint that the vulnerable status of male breadwinners in post-apartheid South Africa has resulted in some men reasserting their gendered identities

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[39] Rape as a crime was well established in all South African indigenous societies. See Olivier (1989) in this regard.

through domestic violence. One of the members of NUM, for example, saw his wife's refusal to make tea for him as reason to beat her. Some NUM members anticipated that under Jacob Zuma's reign, the issue of domestic violence would once again be dealt with in a more culturally sensitive or African manner. His election as president of the ANC in December 2007 therefore gave cause for optimism that the traditional position of male head of the household would be restored (Beresford 2009:400-402). No doubt Jacob Zuma's polygynous lifestyle was seen to underscore such traditional values (see 5.6.3).

5.6.2.1   *The suggestion of a militarist conception of masculinity*

The inferences which were carried particularly by the nonverbal elements of *Umshini wami* contradicted the spirit of gender equality. For example, Suttner (2009a:83) suggests that Jacob Zuma's frequent choice of Zulu clothing and emblems may have been deliberate attempts to evoke imagery of the Zulu warrior tradition. Similarly, the traditional Zulu headdresses, feathers and skins which were worn by supporters, the wooden and cardboard AK47s which were brandished as well as the toyi-toying which accompanied the performance of the song, accentuated a militarist conception of masculinity and glorified the armed struggle, a domain from which women largely were excluded. The nonverbal elements, therefore, introduced a layer of meaning which in Suttner's (2009b:227) view contradicted the spirit of gender equality. Suttner (2009b:226) also argues that Jacob Zuma's resort to "Zulu culture" as defence for his sexual behaviour on rape charges equally did so. Jacob Zuma claimed that in terms of "Zulu culture" he was obliged to have sex with his accuser because a man may not refuse a woman's invitation to sex. Such an invitation, Jacob Zuma alleged, was extended by the accuser by her wearing a knee-length kanga (sarong) with no underwear, and her revealing of her thigh while lounging on the couch (Palitza 2006:110). He claimed that the abandonment of the accuser in a state of sexual arousal would have equalled rape in Zulu culture (Palitza 2006:110).

5.6.2.2   *Sexual inferences associated with* Umshini wami

Suttner (2009a:84) also draws our attention to another layer of meaning suggested by *Umshini wami*'s performance in the context of the rape case, which in his view, was symptomatic of the potential of abuse in South African society. The nonverbal elements associated with the performance of the song conjured up sexual imagery of

the rifle as a phallic symbol and of the firing of the gun as ejaculation, especially since the word *umshini* also carried the meaning of penis in some areas. The song was also accompanied by bodily movements which could be construed as simulating a sexual act, an association which apparently is common to warrior songs (Suttner 2009a:84).

5.6.3   Polygyny debate

Although polygyny is legalised in South Africa, Jacob Zuma's marriage in 2010 to his third concurrent wife, Thobeka Madiba, was widely and vociferously criticised by both prominent commentators and the society at large; locally as well as internationally. The leader of the Christian Democratic Party, for example, described the marriage and what he called the return of ancestral worship as a "giant step back into the dark ages", and in particular lamented the return of ancestral traditions (a view which presumably was precipitated by the ritual in which the bride was introduced to the ancestors) which in his opinion had kept Africa chained to superstition and poverty (cited in SAPA 2010:1).

The wedding ceremony, which was performed by a local *induna* at the rural home of Jacob Zuma in Nkandla, KwaZulu-Natal, was attended by South Africa's political and business elite as well as hundreds of villagers from the surrounding rural areas. The bride and the bridegroom were dressed in traditional clothing. Jacob Zuma, who wore a leopard-skin mantle and an animal-pelt loincloth, blended in with the many villagers who also wore skins, and the venue reverberated with the sound of Zulu and Xhosa traditional songs and dancing, and at the end of the ceremony, with the sound of his signature song, *Umshini wami,* which was performed by his in-laws (Liebenberg & SAPA 2010:1; News24 2010:1).

The performance of *Umshini wami* at his wedding ceremony was significant, seen against the broader South African context of concerns regarding gender equality of particularly rural women and regarding the status of wives in polygynous marriages, which were voiced by women's rights activists in the period leading up to the 2009 elections, and which flared up again at the time of his marriage (News24 2010:2). In the context of these debates, the choice of a traditional wedding, the ethnic clothing and emblems, the performance of Zulu and Xhosa songs and dancing, as well as of his signature song seemed to have flouted the concerns regarding gender equality and

the status of women in polygynous marriages. In fact, it seemed to have been a restatement of a singular notion of Zulu culture, similarly to what was projected during his corruption and rape trials, and which echoed his response in defence of his polygynous lifestyle at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland where he declared that polygyny was part of "Zulu culture", and that it did not contradict his belief in the equality of women (BBC News 2010:1). The problem, in his view, was rather that his polygynous life style was judged in terms of Eurocentric views on the institution of marriage. I would argue that the nonverbal elements which were associated with the performance of *Umshini wami* in this context, carried the implication that Jacob Zuma's period in office would be characterised by a return to traditional African values and would have given hope to those who were lobbying for a restoration of patriarchal values.

5.6.4 Jacob Zuma as a messiah figure

As a self-taught man with humble rural beginnings, Jacob Zuma is idealised by his supporters and some even ascribe a symbolic role of saviour to him. At Jacob Zuma's first appearance on charges of corruption in the Durban Magistrate's Court, for example, the crowd expressed their solidarity with and support for him by singing the well-known hymn "We will follow Jesus wherever he may go", but substituted the word "Jesus" with "Zuma". Some of his supporters also drew parallels between him and Jesus. Free State Provincial ANC leader Ace Magashule, for example, said that "Jesus was persecuted. He was called names and betrayed. It's the same kind of suffering Mr Zuma has had to bear" (Mail & Guardian 2008:1). It would appear, however, that not all ANC supporters ascribed the role of saviour to him. Some members of NUM, for example, did not necessarily see Jacob Zuma as the messiah figure that would lead them out of their misery and said that they would continue with mass action should he also fail to meet expectations (Beresford 2009:392).

I would argue that the context of his symbolic role as saviour and champion of the poor and dispossessed was invoked by the singing of *Umshini wami* during the xenophobic attacks in May 2008, when the poorest of the poor turned on the foreigners who were living among them. In this context, the weapons which were used against foreigners during the riots directly reflected the militancy of the lyrics of *Umshini wami* and in this case, rioters went beyond a mere threat to burst through the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, but did so in an effort to effect change.

These acts in a sense were an expression, although deplorable, of the frustrations of people under extreme pressure, and as a call to Jacob Zuma to deliver them from poverty, and to provide them with jobs, homes and opportunities.

5.7   SUMMARY

Umshini wami is a struggle song which originated in the MK training camps in Angola. As a song it formed part of the ongoing debate at the time on how to fight a just war, and apparently expressed the desire of freedom fighters to return to South Africa and fight. Its resurgence in the transformed political context of post-apartheid South Africa, with completely different constituencies and channels of communication, should be understood as part of a larger context of political revolt against the political unfolding of the ANC which was funnelled into the narrower succession battle for the leadership of the ANC and ultimately the country. *Umshini wami* gained prominence as the signature song of Jacob Zuma, the president of South Africa, due to its performance in varying contexts flowing from his succession struggle with Thabo Mbeki for the office of president of the ANC, at his court trials, the 2008 xenophobic attacks in South Africa and amidst a public outcry against polygyny at his wedding in 2010.

From its first publicised performance in post-apartheid South Africa at the trial of Schabir Shaik in 2005, the song spoke to and with different publics in South Africa and united heterogeneous constituencies that cut across ethnic, class and regional boundaries. The song also provided a platform through which these publics could participate in national debates and influence the flow of transformation in the country. *Umshini wami* was mainly performed at sites of power, particularly judicial institutions, and in these contexts provided a counterdiscourse free from censorship of the events that were unfolding in these institutions. As such its performance is reminiscent of those performances in traditional societies that had the capacity to provide metacommentary in times of political upheaval and to effect sociopolitical change. The song expressed sanctioned criticism against the government and audibly as well as visually demarcated different and often competing identities.

The structural characteristics of *Umshini wami* correspond in general with the characteristics of struggle songs. The lyrics evoke a specificity of sociocultural and historical reality, and particularly that of the liberation struggle. The song has a

definite militant and militarised tenor and falls into the category of songs which during the time of the liberation struggle resonated with the ANC's strategy of a people's war. The meaning of the lyrics is less crucial than their intended effect. Accordingly, the power of the song lies primarily in its threat to burst through the boundaries of accepted behaviour, which in this case would have threatened the ranks of the ANC, but also in its capacity to build solidarities and identities, to mobilise support and to undermine adversaries.

A key aspect in the interpretation of the meaning of *Umshini wami* flows from the choice of song as genre. The choice arises from the song's capacity to address and incite the emotions of performers and audience alike and its capacity to absorb and carry a wide range of nonverbal elements which may influence its meaning and the flow of transformation in societies. In particular, the nonverbal elements associated with *Umshini wami* such as the antiphonal call-and-response structure, rhythm and rhythmical bodily movements, harmony, and tenor of performances wove emotive threads together and made Jacob Zuma's supporters visible to wider society. The performances distinguished insiders from outsiders and created identities among those assembled. Men and women who in many instances had never met face-to-face were welded into seemingly real communities. These elements also facilitated the expression of solidarity among members of such groups and unified them against adversaries.

The nonverbal elements also added various layers of meaning to the interpretation of the lyrics of *Umshini wami* and as such the song functioned as a discursive presence in the public sphere. Nonverbal elements associated with performances in particular introduced the contexts of a conspiracy and of ethnicity as frameworks for the interpretation of the song's performances in the various contexts. Accordingly, when one analyses the sociocultural meaning of the song in the light of the conspiracy, the performance of *Umshini wami* during the public hearings of the Scorpions makes sense, since their investigations were used as basis for the case against Jacob Zuma. Further, some nonverbal elements associated with performances of the song during the rape trial of Jacob Zuma highlighted the fragile gender politics in South Africa and introduced the additional contexts of a militarist conception of masculinity and of sexual imagery as frameworks against which the song was to be interpreted.

With regard to the performance of *Umshini wami* in the context of his recent marriage, nonverbal elements could be interpreted to have conveyed that Jacob Zuma's period in office would be characterised by a return to traditional African values which would have given hope to those who were lobbying for a restoration of patriarchal values. Further, regarding its performance in the context of xenophobic attacks in 2008, nonverbal elements invoked his symbolic role of saviour and of champion of the poor and dispossessed which could be interpreted to have conveyed a message that Jacob Zuma should deliver them from poverty, and provide them with jobs, homes and opportunities.

Umshini wami as discourse transmitted and produced power. It reinforced Jacob Zuma's power through affirmation of him as a suitable candidate for the presidency of South Africa and simultaneously undermined Thabo Mbeki's power through criticism that he had eroded representational democracy in South Africa. *Umshini wami* expressed sociopolitical tension in society, but supported the process of social integration by facilitating the forging of a new identity and attempts to redemocratise South African society.

CHAPTER 6

HALL-OF-MIRRORS: REFLECTING ON AND REFLECTIONS OF MEANING

6.1   REFLECTING ON THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In an attempt to construct layers of sociocultural meaning arising from the performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group as well as of *Umshini wami*, interpretive anthropology was selected to serve as theoretical framework. This approach, as Drewal (1991) argues, shares many of the central concerns of performance studies (see 1.2.4), and to an extent has shaped research on performance. For example, both fields of enquiry take as the object of their study the symbols which societies use to give meaning to the things they observe and experience, as well as which they use to make sense of themselves and their world, and to represent themselves to themselves and to others in their world. Both fields of enquiry also suggest that such symbols provide a discourse on society and the relationships between individuals and groups in society; that context is a fundamental part of an understanding what symbols signify, and consequently have become deeply engaged with possibilities and limitations which flow from the concept of context.

As a theoretical framework for the investigation of the contexts of members of a common interest association, interpretive anthropology has proved to be particularly useful. Proceeding from the interpretive premise that meaning flows from individual consciousness but that it is actualised in a public way and consequently realised culturally (see 1.2.4.4), it was possible to investigate the diverse contexts of members who did not share the same sociocultural background nor lived in the same circumstances, who had diverse ethnic origins and associations, and as a group transcended specific cultural boundaries (see 2.4). Although the sociocultural worlds of the respective members were connected to the local Tembisa community and the broader South African society which had the consequence that as workers, as students and as residents of an urban township in Gauteng they had much in common and were exposed to similar and collective experiences, performance of the association could not be understood only in these terms, but required an approach which also examined the other significant fields of interaction and activity in which members were involved. The interpretive approach, commencing from the individual to the group, made an analysis of the individual members' respective fields of

activity possible (see 2.4.1) and proved to be a useful technique to uncover the webs of significance in which members became entangled, either as individuals or as members of the association, and that were spun around the association.

The selection of a performance association with identifiable members, with whom I could establish relationships of trust and whose various fields of activity I could analyse contextually, provided a research setting which was germane to thick description. The layers of meaning presented here arose in the resulting discourse between us. Thick description foregrounded context as a crucial component for an analysis and interpretation of performance (see 1.2.4.1), and necessitated contextualisation both of me, the researcher (the so-called observer), and of those who agreed to be investigated (the observed). In this process of contextualisation I was continuously challenged to consider how I as an "actor" influenced the context of the research, and consequently the meaning of performances, and was therefore at pains to consider the impact of such characteristics which were foregrounded by the ethnographic encounter as I became conscious of them. The resultant construction of the sociocultural world of the association reflects such inferences and therefore do not intend to present an authoritative account about the sociocultural world of the performance association. I acknowledge that my construction of the sociocultural world of the members of the association is *my* reflection of the reflections of members of their worlds under investigation, and as such the layers of meaning presented here are open-ended.

With regard to my approach to the study of performance, the research findings support the notion that the meaning of performance flows from contextual, textual, and textural elements and underscore the necessity of an approach which accommodates these various fields of enquiry. In an attempt to delineate how textual, contextual and nonverbal elements contribute to an understanding of the meaning of the performances of the association as well as of *Umshini wami*, Dundes's (1980) approach to the study of performance was useful as was Schechner's (1985) for an understanding of the processual nature of performance. As the analysis of layers of meaning of the songs, poems and play of the association as well as of *Umshini wami* revealed, the texts of the performances evoked specific sociocultural and historical resonances, but were often less instrumental in unifying and mobilising ordinary black South Africans than the nonverbal elements of such songs. Consequently, an approach that failed to give a voice to the voiceless aspects of

performance would have fallen short of adequately uncovering various layers of sociocultural meaning.

6.2   REFLECTING ON THE FIELDWORK

Conducting fieldwork during political turmoil and under a state of emergency proved to be particularly challenging since access to political organisations and consequently a suitable research group was primarily dependent on one's political ideology and association. Since I did not have the appropriate political connections or profile, and seemed to conform to the stereotypic representation of the political adversary of the association and the ANC alliance, that is of a white oppressor in a position of economic power, members of the association treated me with caution because of concerns that I might have been an undercover government agent who was tasked to infiltrate the association. Consequently, it was difficult to secure relationships of trust with the members of the association and the initial lack of trust to an extent mapped out the possible research roles I could assume in the context of the research with the association. However, despite such experiential baggage I was drawn into a dialogical relationship with the research participants to the point where we became active participants in a performance discourse and acted as catalysts to each other's processes of meaning making. This reciprocal process did not only enable me to transform their practice into anthropological knowledge but also transformed me as a human being and sensitised me to the complexities of human life.

With regard to the technicalities involved in documenting performances of songs, poems and plays, my anthropological training left me wanting. Because of my lack of experience and training with respect to the production of film and video recordings, I was unprepared for the challenges in the field in my endeavour to produce an acceptable and commercially viable video recording of the performances of the association. It was only after the fact that I realised that within the constraints of the research setting and context, the undertaking was too ambitious. The project was logistically too complex and technically too demanding to execute within the scope of research which was done to obtain a formal qualification.

6.3   THE NATURE OF THE MAYIBUYE CULTURAL GROUP IN PERSPECTIVE

The decade leading up to the election and institutionalisation of a Government of National Unity in 1994 was characterised by severe repression and the blocking of institutional means to protest against the actions of the apartheid state. These conditions of large-scale sociocultural change provided a seedbed for the establishment of the Mayibuye Cultural Group, a voluntary common interest association, to meet the demands of domains of experience to which ordinary blacks in South Africa were subjected. The association became part of a network of COSATU performance structures and a network of social movement associations which shared the same ideology, focused on grassroots politics and were involved in collective action against the apartheid state (see 2.4.8). As such, the association focused on matters of social, economic and political transformation and linked these through performance. The common interest that united the members of the association was their aim to mobilise and sensitise people to the liberation struggle, and therefore it was not surprising that the association disbanded with the change to a democratic government in 1994 (see 2.3.2.2).

The association was first and foremost a choir and the oeuvre of the association included political songs and in particular, struggle or anti-apartheid songs, as well as poems and a workshop play, *Women stand up for your rights*. The profile of the association corresponded with that of most other worker performance groups in South Africa and the association did not have a kinship, territorial or a geopolitical basis (see 2.3.3.4). The only fields of activity that were shared by all members in the association were that they lived in Tembisa, had a common interest in performance, participated in political activities and supported the ANC. The individual fields of activity of members did not account adequately for the establishment, nature and functioning of the association, nor for the involvement of and cohesion between the respective members. These aspects were founded in the combined effect of all the various fields of activity and networks in which the members were involved and accounted for the creation of webs of significance and interaction that drew members into the association and shaped the nature and functioning of the association (see 2.4).

The ideology and strategies of the ANC alliance informed their performances and altered the nature of the association, as evidenced by the severing of their formal

links with COSATU in 1991 and subsequent joining of SAWCU in accordance with the strategy to discontinue these structures within COSATU and to broaden the base of a united front against apartheid by opening up ranks to the unemployed and workers from independent trade unions (see 2.3.1). The association was a novel combination of males and females as well as of adults and adolescents from various language and ethnic groups. The composition of the association was a logical consequence of the labour movement's strategy in the 1980s which called for the convergence of worker and township issues and the establishment of alliances between groups, organisations and movements (including those of women, the youth and students) that were involved in township and civic struggles. The association performed songs and poems about political rights, political prisoners and war in politicised contexts and as such was reflective of the functioning of the broader South African society at the time when the struggle was fought across society and where adolescents, adult females and adult males all were involved in the struggle (see 2.3.2.4). It was indicative of a shift that had taken place in the exercise of political powers in indigenous societies generally, and certainly was a departure from the traditional context in which the performance of political songs fell exclusively in the domain of adult males (see 1.1.2.3). In post-apartheid South Africa young people largely withdrew from public action and their role in society seemingly reverted back to what it was before the intensifying of the liberation struggle and the advent of Black Consciousness in which they became a central pillar.

The association had sixteen members, and young people dominated the membership and leadership positions (see 2.3.2.5). Given their youthful age and level of education, the association was thus representative of the situation in the broader South African society at the time when black youth with school education were at the forefront of struggle-related political activities.

However, the composition of the association was fluid. Although there was a core of members consisting mainly of males, the association had a relatively high turnover of members which impacted on the gender and age distribution in the association. There were no meaningful differences between the male and female members with regard to age, place of origin, language group, level of education and church membership (see 2.3.2.4).

6.4   THE ROLE OF THE MAYIBUYE CULTURAL GROUP IN THE RAPIDLY CHANGING SOCIOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF SOUTH AFRICA

Similar to what has been reported on the nature and role of common interest associations elsewhere under conditions of large-scale sociocultural change, the association functioned as an adaptive mechanism in the changing sociopolitical landscape of South Africa of the 1980s and early 1990s. As such the association served the following purposes:

- It appropriated performance as a weapon of struggle to oppose the oppressive nature of the apartheid state in the absence of constitutional means to express opposition to the coercive reforms in South Africa, and to suggest alternatives which promoted its interests and that of the ANC alliance.

- It acted as a point of contact with organisations associated with the ANC alliance at local and regional level since they usually performed at the meetings of trade unions and political organisations which were affiliated to the ANC alliance (see 2.3.3). Their songs, poems and play were therefore part of larger politicised events. In these contexts the performances of the association affirmed, reinforced and complemented "performances" by others, such as the chairpersons of and speakers at the gatherings. The songs, poems and play also aimed to strengthen the links between the various groupings within the ANC alliance, namely the workers, the students, the oppressed masses and the unemployed by uniting the struggles which these groupings respectively faced. Consequently, the association performed amidst the intensifying township political protest and radicalisation of township-based organisation in Tembisa, the ANC's continued official commitment to the armed struggle until they agreed to suspend it in August 1990, ongoing conflict between ANC and Inkatha supporters, tension in rural towns between black protestors and right-wing groupings, the continuation of the schooling crisis, mounting white fears about the militancy, criminality and lack of control over the youth by the ANC and the negotiation of future organisational and constitutional structures by the major South African political organisations (see 2.4.8.4).

- It provided occasions for the meeting of like-minded people who were segregated on the basis of their adherence to the ANC ideology. In

collaboration with other role players in their webs of interaction, members stimulated the "culture of debate" and through exposure to other performers and performance groups, were influenced in their approach to their own performances. In their capacity as leaders in the ANC at local level, as well as in organisations affiliated to the ANC, the chairperson, vice-chairperson, general secretary and his cousin in particular were instrumental in negotiating such performance opportunities and spaces (see 2.3.3).

- It enhanced the status and prestige of (some) members by distinguishing them as concerned and motivated individuals which were an embodiment of resistance to the struggle. Participation in the association provided members with leadership opportunities, made members visible in public performance spaces, gave members an opportunity to debate issues and to increase their sociopolitical awareness and understanding as well as honed the organisational skills of members. Accordingly, some members became involved in local politics and assumed leadership positions. The resulting qualities and skills which members developed as well as the experience gained, in some instances even furthered the careers of members after the association was disbanded (see 2.3.2.12).

- It provided members with an opportunity to participate in leisure-time activities and consequently with an opportunity to increase their networks of social relationships as evidenced by the analysis of the fields of activity of the respective members (see 2.4 and 2.3). The rapid sociocultural change in South Africa which ensued from factors such as colonialism, westernisation, Christianity and urbanisation had forged the development of new kinds of societies. In these new societies the importance of kinship relationships had decreased, and commonality of interest had emerged as basis for the organisation of new social groupings and the reorganisation of existing social groups to meet the demands of new domains of experience.

6.5   THE MIRROR HAS TWO FACES:[40] CONTRADICTIONS ARISING FROM THE NATURE, STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE ASSOCIATION

The structure and functioning of the association displayed several contradictions.

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[40] The heading of this section is based on the title of the 1996 feature film, *The mirror has two faces,* which was produced and directed by Barbara Streisand.

First, in terms of its constitution, members of the association committed themselves to maintaining a nonpartisan and democratic performance association and therefore aimed to distance themselves from representing specific political organisations. However, the contextual, textural and textual elements of their performances reflected direct support for the ANC alliance (see 3.3.4.2, 3.3.4.3 and 3.3.4.4).

Second, although the association and its precursor for the greatest part of their existence were connected to a trade union movement, it only had a few economically active members or members that were involved with the trade unions and was rather an alliance between trade union workers, unemployed people and students. However, the students and unemployed workers in the association identified strongly with worker issues and identified themselves as workers, since in their definition a worker was any person who was exploited, participated in the struggle for national freedom and who "had no control over the means of production" (see 2.3.2.2) and they consequently felt that COSATU as an organisation represented their interests.

Third, although the association agitated for women's rights and their play revealed discriminatory issues that are still relevant today, authority and creativity vested mainly in male members, while female members seemed to conform to entrenched gender roles and were not involved with meaningful leadership positions in the association. One would have expected greater involvement of the females in leadership positions which would have been in line with the aim of COSATU's Women's Forum to prepare women for leadership positions in the federation and its affiliates. Be that as it may, the general secretary in particular played a dominant role in the association and in some respects his status in the association corresponded to that of a traditional leader in such matters. Males, particularly the general secretary of the association but sometimes also his cousin, performed the roles of females in the play whenever the female actors were not present or when the association in the opinion of the males did not have "suitable females" for the roles. The fact that the general secretary's role in some respects seemed to comply with a traditional leader would offer an explanation for the fact that he and his cousin played the roles of female characters. Traditionally females were represented by the traditional leaders and senior male members. It would also explain why the females in the association did not come forward nor objected to the fact that the males were playing the female roles and were dominating the decision-making

process in the association. In this respect, the association mirrored the situation in the labour movement and broader South African society where women did not occupy meaningful leadership positions despite rhetoric and resolutions of the ANC and COSATU that women should play a significant role in decision making and be acknowledged for the contribution they have made in the struggle against apartheid.

Fourth, the association preferred orality as a mode of delivery despite the fact that all members could read and write, emphasising the continued importance of oral genres in contemporary South Africa as was illustrated by the recent wide appeal and popularity of *Umshini wami*. Orality was an important means of mobilisation and education under a state of emergency which severely restricted the media and political gatherings. Orality was not easily detectable and not subjected to censorship, and was consequently a safer choice than documentation. However, the choice of orality as medium of delivery by the association also appeared to have been deliberate because it resonated with the sociocultural expectations and literacy levels of most of their target audiences, who were significantly closer to the oral pole of the orality—literacy continuum than the members of the group.

Fifth, in spite of the association's express wish to perform in all languages and to unite people across traditional ethnic boundaries, an analysis of their performances revealed that they mostly performed in Xhosa. It may have been the logical consequence of the fact that most of the members were Xhosa speakers, but I would argue that it was a deliberate choice since all members of the association could speak English and Zulu while only eleven of the members could speak Xhosa. Language choices in the workshop play of the association were not politically neutral and marked boundaries between different categories of people, and corroborated solidarities and alliances which were also expressed in the songs and poems of the association. Xhosa was an identity marker of the oppressed, while English (with a few Afrikaans interjections) and Zulu (mixed with Fanakalo) were identity markers of oppressors.

The choice of English (and Afrikaans) as language of a character in the play implied that a character was part of or sympathised with the white minority, while the choice of Zulu implied that a character supported Inkatha, an organisation whose members were not considered to be part of the oppressed masses. This view of Inkatha was also corroborated by representations of the organisation in the

association's songs and poems which carried the implication that Inkatha collaborated with the apartheid state.

Significantly, an opposition between Xhosa and Zulu and what the opposition evidently represented during the liberation struggle, also resurfaced during the recent trials of Jacob Zuma which may point to the existence of a layer of ethnic distrust in South African society. Many of Jacob Zuma's supporters asserted that ethnicity lay at the base of the conspiracy against him and that Xhosa speakers were attempting "to prevent the Zulu's from eating" (see 5.6.1). Although there was a latent ethnic consciousness in the association, the emphasis on conformity and unity across traditional ethnic identities as a countermeasure to the threat of apartheid and division, muted ethnic diversity and its significance in the association, and discouraged members from focusing on signs of their distinctiveness. They feared that ethnicity and tribalism would impact negatively on nation-building, which, in their opinion, were the root causes of the conflict and confusion in South Africa. It is significant then that in post-apartheid South Africa several groupings are reasserting a sociocultural identity as evidenced for example by the large number of land claims which are framed in terms of such cultural identities. It would appear then that the suppression of ethnicity in the association was a reaction to the threat of apartheid and its associated policies of separate development which had diluted a united resistance to apartheid.

6.6   INTERROGATING THE NATURE OF THE PERFORMANCE

The form and content of the songs, poems and play of the association emerged within and reflected diverse ideological, linguistic, religious and ethnic influences. The textual themes of the songs and poems focused on the liberation struggle, the quest for a new democratic society and the replacing of the apartheid system, which clearly characterise them as relatively new urban forms. The songs and poems were a product of a strong individual input by the poet or writer thereof and a communal creative process by the members of the association. The structural elements of the songs, poems and play were syncretic, drawing on traditional as well as western influences. Poems predominantly were performed as part of larger song cycles. In some instances the association adopted western models of performance, as in the case of their workshop play. However, indigenous as well as western elements can be identified in the structure of their workshop play; for example, most of the

performance conventions used were indigenous. The potential and style for the songs of the association were derived from traditional indigenous choral song but the songs also clearly displayed missionary influences. The characteristics of the struggle song *Umshini wami* are similar to those of the association and as such its form and content reflect the nature of struggle songs generally.

6.7   LAYERS OF MEANING ARISING FROM THE PERFORMANCE OF STRUGGLE SONGS, POEMS AND PLAYS

To return to the central question of this dissertation: why did songs, plays and poetry play such a marked role in the liberation struggle in South Africa, and what does the contemporary performance of such genres signify regarding present-day South African society? My research findings suggest the following:

a.   A key aspect of the sociocultural meaning and significance of a large part of the performances of the association as well as of performances of *Umshini wami* lies in the choice of song as the primary means for the expression of messages. Song is accessible and has the capacity to convey messages which are easily understood. Song facilitates the expression and encapsulation of the emotions of performers and has the capacity to absorb and carry a wide range of nonverbal elements which may influence its meaning and the flow of transformation in societies (see 3.3.4.3). These emotive elements in particular made song, in Groenewald and Makopo's (1991:88) phrasing, "*the* mode of expression for the comrades, constituting their liberation discourse".

b.   The association as well as the heterogeneous constituencies which performed *Umshini wami* drew on a traditional sanctioned mechanism which provided a context for metacommentary (see 1.1.2) to audibly and visually demarcate sociopolitical groupings and to pay tribute to organisations, leaders and heroes in the ANC alliance. However, none of the songs and poems acknowledged or celebrated female leaders within the ANC alliance. Song texts demonstrated support for the ANC and its affiliates; affirmed identities within the ANC alliance; portrayed their challenges and issues; articulated their hopes and aspirations; created solidarities; called on the leaders of the ANC and MK for help; addressed leaders of the ANC alliance that had been in jail or in exile; demonstrated defiance, and even called on people to join the ANC alliance. However, they also condemned the apartheid state and its institutions, its

leaders and policies. Such performances presented an image of members of the association as being an embodiment of resistance to the apartheid state. The lyrics of the songs as well as the militant tenor of the songs and poems suggested support both for the violent and nonviolent strategies which the ANC pursued (see 1.4.4), and emphasised and glorified a militarist conception of masculinity which underscored prevailing gender biases which were expressed in their play.

The workshop play of the association, *Women stand up for your rights*, attempted to educate worker audiences about women's rights but instead the nonverbal elements of the portrayals of characters and the textual elements entrenched patriarchal and chauvinistic stereotypes of women as the weaker sex and passive victims. The play, which was a response to the heated debate in the liberation movement about the rights and future role of women in South Africa, attempted to mobilise women and to challenge prevailing patriarchal attitudes and behaviour within the trade unions. It was performed for audiences comprising mostly of local political and trade union leaders as well as members of various organisations and therefore it focused internally on the alliance itself. As such it was intended to be a self-reflective and self-discovering performance consistent with the tradition of introspective plays in South Africa, which, according to Rahner (1996:68), critically re-evaluate the experiences of blacks and addresses so-called homegrown problems and holy cows. The textual and nonverbal elements of the performance of *Umshini wami* during the apartheid era suggested support for the people's war strategy of the ANC and emphasised a militarist conception of masculinity. Its contemporary performance similarly may have echoed a militarist conception of masculinity, which in Suttner's (2009a:84) phrasing, heightened the potential for gender violence which is still prevalent in contemporary South Africa. Its performance also may have fostered the hopes of those who wanted to see a return of traditional patriarchal values (see 5.6.2).

The nonverbal elements associated with songs of the association such as the antiphonal call-and-response structure, rhythm and rhythmical bodily movements, harmony, and the tenor of performances wove emotive threads together; visibly distinguished insiders from outsiders and created identities among those assembled. Nonverbal elements also added layers of meaning to

the interpretation of the lyrics of their songs. For example, nonverbal elements such as clothing indicated direct support for the ANC alliance; the rhythmic movements and martial tone of their songs which provoked the security forces at the time of their performance strengthened their efficacy by calling for behaviour that threatened to burst through the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, and as was argued above, emphasised and glorified a masculine conception of the struggle and of South African society; and above all, emphasised and facilitated unity and solidarity among heterogeneous constituencies that cut across ethnic, class and regional boundaries.

Similarly, nonverbal elements associated with the performance of *Umshini wami* wove emotive threads together and made Jacob Zuma's supporters visible to wider society. Nonverbal elements in particular also introduced the contexts of a conspiracy and of ethnicity as frameworks for the interpretation of the *Umshini wami*'s performances in the various contexts. Some nonverbal elements which were carried by performances of the song during the rape trial of Jacob Zuma highlighted the fragile gender politics in South Africa and introduced the additional contexts of a militarist conception of masculinity and of sexual imagery as frameworks against which the song was to be interpreted.

The resurgence of song in post-apartheid South Africa as a mechanism to effect sociocultural change vindicates a view of such performance as a continuation of the traditional mechanism to express sanctioned criticism against the state or its institutions in times of political upheaval. Further, the resurgence demonstrates that the use of song and poetry in this fashion was not confined to the expression of opposition to and dissatisfaction with the apartheid state only, but that it has remained a vibrant mechanism for the expression of sanctioned criticism especially for the marginalised and for those at the fringes of power, and demonstrates the resilience of cultural practices in the face of constant sociocultural change.

c. The performances of the association, similar to the performances of *Umshini wami* recently, exposed gender fault-lines in South African society. Various factors that still shape the lives of many South African women were raised in the play of the association, particularly sociocultural practices and concomitant sociocultural rules, rooted in male authority, which discriminate against women

in the supposed safety of the household. These include the sexual abuse of and violence against women. Although there have been significant gains in achieving gender equality in South Africa which are entrenched in the Constitution and associated legislation, it has been suggested that women will not achieve gender equality until there has been a change in underlying values towards and a greater acceptance of the concept and content of women's rights. This statement, read in the light of Beresford's (2009) and Buur's (2008) findings regarding the reassertion of gendered identities through domestic violence, is particularly worrying, and resonates with concerns that in South Africa the transformation of the underlying values and attitudes towards women's rights may run over a considerable period of time.

d.   Songs and poems, in the phrasing of Gilbert (2005:16), are not only a subject of historic memory, but also serve as a vehicle for the transmission of memory. As such, the songs and poems which are recorded here contribute in emotive and evocative language to how apartheid is historicised and remembered. In the case of *Umshini wami* performances evoked memories of its performance during the liberation struggle and by so doing, connected supporters to a long history of struggle.

e.   The songs, poems and play of the association, as well as *Umshini wami,* transmitted and produced power. Furniss and Gunner (1995:3) argue that apart from being commentators, performers are often also involved in power relations themselves "in terms of supporting or subverting those in power". Further, that the performance genres with which they work are also invested with power and that they have the ability to change social reality. Accordingly, the association's songs and poems reinforced the power of the ANC alliance through affirmation and simultaneously undermined the power of the apartheid state through criticism (see 3.3.4.4). Similarly, *Umshini wami* reinforced Jacob Zuma's power through affirmation of him as a suitable candidate for the presidency of South Africa and simultaneously undermined Thabo Mbeki's power through criticism that he had eroded representational democracy in South Africa (see 5.2.1). The songs of the association as well as *Umshini wami* expressed sociopolitical tension in society, but, particularly through nonverbal elements of their performances, supported the process of social integration by facilitating the forging of a new identities. In contrast, the play of the

association attempted to reinforce the power of women but subverted it; likewise it attempted to challenge the chauvinistic attitudes and behaviour of men in the broader ANC alliance but reinforced it.

f. The performances of the association as well as performances of *Umshini wami* made sense of the world and were about other public "performances". The songs and poems of the association were performances about the performances of the erstwhile minority government and apartheid leaders, as well as of individuals and organisations in the ANC alliance, while their play produced performances about the performances of individuals and organisations in the ANC alliance. The performances of *Umshini wami* by Jacob Zuma was about the succession battle between him and Thabo Mbeki for the presidency of the ANC and ultimately of the country. Thus the performances of both the association and of *Umshini wami* were reflective of the sociocultural context in which they emerged, as well as reflexive of this context.

g. The performances of the association reflected the social matrix and forces which constituted the association as well as the broader South African society under the apartheid state (see 6.3 above). Similarly, the performances of *Umshini wami* in the context of the succession battle between Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma for the presidency of the ANC and ultimately of the country reflected the social matrix and forces which constituted the crowds of supporters at the various sites of power as well as the broader South African society.

h. Under the conditions of apartheid, the performances of the association provided a site in which important principles such as unity, solidarity, hope and pride could be expressed. As regards *Umshini wami,* its performances as part of a larger context of political revolt against the political unfolding of the ANC and its policy directions similarly provided a site in which principles such as unity, solidarity, hope and ethnic pride could be expressed.

i. The performances of the Mayibuye Cultural Group as well as that of *Umshini wami* functioned as debate and as a discursive presence in the public sphere. The performances commented on numerous phenomena and "ills" within society, particularly in the spheres of politics, gender, social organisation,

labour division, rights and obligations, and violence and as such provided a platform through which various groupings participated in national debates and attempted to influence the flow of transformation in the country. Thus the use of struggle songs as a mechanism to further a cause in the public domain has reasserted itself in the contemporary political dynamic.

6.8   RECENT TRENDS AND POSSIBLE AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

To return to Gilbert's (2007:423) concerns regarding the lack of research on how songs in particular were used by political organisations during the liberation struggle, this study positions itself as a contribution to the retrieval and analysis of such performance genres to enable the study of long-term transformations in South African society, but acknowledges that much still needs to be done. There are many examples of struggle songs in the various regions of South Africa which have not been researched yet; this also applies to the contemporary use of struggle songs in South Africa, of which the recent appropriation in 2010 of the struggle song *Dubul' ibhunu* ("Shoot the Boer") by Julius Malema in all probability is the most publicised (see 5.5). Such performances fell outside the scope of this study but can contribute considerably to our understanding of the reflective and reflexive qualities of performance, and are indicated as possible areas for further research.

Workshop plays have also given rise to innovations such as industrial theatre which came into prominence after 1991. In an effort to harness what was "... a social movement with its dissonance and alterity into a confluence of interests" (Sitas 1997:107), the managements of companies across South Africa took the most exciting ideas which were developed in the creative divisions of the trade union movement and employed them to serve the interests of productivity. In this process worker theatre was transformed into industrial theatre, workshops and political role plays were transformed into problem-solving practices, and worker self-expression was transformed into self-empowerment and training (Sitas 1997:107). Numerous companies in South Africa subsequently have used industrial theatre to identify, confront and deal with contentious issues within their own organisations in a nonthreatening way; as a management sensitisation tool; to foster an awareness among various groupings within the organisations; to stimulate brainstorming sessions, and to increase production in organisations (Isaacson 1995:33-34; Hough 1998:6; Hlahla 1997:6; Raboroko 1997:7; Cole 1997:3).

The use of workshop plays during the liberation struggle has also given impetus to the use of the theatre of development in South Africa, which, although not a new theatrical application, was used to involve communities, particularly rural and marginalised communities, in a community dialogue so that they could, through theatre, identify problems and solutions for these (Mda 1996:208, 214). But theatre has also increasingly been employed to engage burning issues such as reconciliation (Mda 1996:214); the relationship between members of communities and the police (Gibson 1997:4); and in the case of the performance association *Sibikwa* to teach young people in townships about their history and culture, which produced plays that dealt for example with the effects of the system of migratory labour; with child abuse, and with gender equality (De Villiers 1997:23; Ndebele 1997:13). Many issues arising from such performances such as lines of causation, an exploration of connections between various genres, and processes involved, still need to be researched, but fell outside the scope of this study and are therefore indicated as possible areas for further research.

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Photo credits

Weinberg, P. 1989. Agitprop from the Tembisa cultural group, Cosatu Cultural Day, Johannesburg, 1987. *Staffrider*, 8(3&4):105.

All other photograhs used were taken by the author.

APPENDIX A

This is a copy of the constitution of the association as drawn up by the members.

Mayibuye Cultural Group: Constitution

This paper relates to all members of the above-named group

1. **Name of the group: Emblem and Colour**

    –   shall be called Mayibuye Cultural Group. The name shall be changed if members so wish to do. The colour of the attire and emblem shall be determined by the group.

2. **Office/Rehearsal/Place**

Our office will be determined by the members from time to time.

3. **Aims and objectives**

We commit ourselves

    –   to maintain a non-sexist, non-partisan and democratic cultural group.
    –   to develop entertaining and educational productions.
    –   to organise training so as to develop cultural skills and capabilities of our members.
    –   to establish and administer funds for the benefit of all our members, provided such funds will be administered in a very disciplined way.

4. **Executive Committee**

The Group shall

    –   elect amongst themselves an Executive Committee to monitor the daily affairs of the group. Such elections shall take place at a meeting (once a year) of all members who shall be given a week notice thereof. The Executive shall hold office for a period of a year.
    –   meet regularly as in Clause Six (6) of this paper.
    –   also elect two people who will act as conductors assisted by the group.

Portfolios

    Chairperson
    Vice-Chairperson
    General secretary
    Vice-Secretary
    Treasurer

NB: 1. The two conductors shall also be given tasks by the Executive Committee.
    2. One of the conductors can also be elected to the committee.

5.   Duties of the Executive Committee

a. Chairperson
– shall preside at all the Executive and General meetings of the group.
– shall generally exercise supervision over the affairs of the group.
– shall perform such duties as pertains to the office.
– shall have a deliberate vote but shall not have a casting vote in the event of a split-vote.

b. Vice-Chairperson
– shall perform such functions of the chairperson as s/he may temporarily or permanently be unable to perform.

c. General secretary
– shall receive requisitions of the meetings, issue notices of the meetings.
– shall conduct all correspondences and record the meetings/minutes.
– shall submit monthly reports regarding the progress/problems and financial position of the group to the monthly meetings.

d. Vice-Secretary
– shall perform such functions of the general secretary as s/he may temporarily or permanently be unable to perform.

e. Treasurer
– shall perform or be in charge of money and assets of the group.
– shall present together with the general secretary the monthly financial report to the members.
– shall also generally exercise supervision over the financial affairs of the group and perform such other duties as by usage and custom pertain to the Office.
– shall present statement of finances to the members' monthly meetings.

f. Vice-Treasurer
– shall perform such functions of the treasurer as s/he may temporarily or permanently be unable to perform.
– shall assist the general secretary as s/he may request him/her to do.

6.   Group Meetings

– General Meetings (annually) shall be held on a date fixed by the Executive.
– Special General Meetings/Mid-year Meetings shall be called if desired by a majority of the group.
– Any one in the group desiring the Special General Meeting of the group shall set out in writing its reasons to call such meeting.

7. Executive Meetings

- shall meet as regularly as possible, at least not less than twice per month.
- members of the committee shall notify the Executive in writing of their absence at meetings.
- in every monthly meeting an agenda shall be prepared for the next meeting.
- failing to attend meetings:
  - the disciplinary code will be implemented.

8. Monthly Meetings

-
- the group shall meet every month to assess and discuss problems/ progress of the group.
- members shall be notified by means of writing or otherwise of such meeting. A member shall notify the Executive in writing of his/her absence at a meeting.
- an agenda will be attached to the notices of the General Meeting or members will be physically informed.
- failing to attend such meeting:
  - disciplinary action will be taken.

NB: Members are urged to attend all group meetings as tough measures will be taken.

9. Rehearsal Days

- the group shall rehearse every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.
- items to be rehearsed shall be determined by the members of the group.
- member/s shall notify the group in writing of their absence at the rehearsals.
- failing to attend:
  - disciplinary action will be taken.

10. Workshop

The group

- shall have workshops/seminars three times per year. Members shall acquire the skills from skilled members.
- skilled people (outsiders) shall be called in to train members.
- failing to attend workshops/seminars:
  - disciplinary action will be taken.

11. Performances

- members will be informed of any invitations in advance.
- failing to attend without valid reason:
  - disciplinary measures will be taken.

12.   Account

– funds shall be received by the general secretary and treasurer on behalf of the group and shall be deposited in our account.
– the account shall be named M.C.G. Account - referred to as the Mayibuye Cultural Group Account.
– the general secretary, chairperson and treasurer shall be the signatories of the account.

Mayibuye Cultural Group

Contract form

Particulars of a Member:

Name and Surname   :

Address   :

Other group/s or choir/s to which I belong:

 1..
 2..

I .... have read and fully understand the Mayibuye Cultural Group Constitution and its disciplinary procedure.

I hereby pledge myself to abide with it.

I also want to confirm that I will be a member of the group from the date of signing this contract form until the same date the following year.

I will thereafter renew my contract if I so wish.

This contract has been signed on .... before us.

Witness: 1.........................
Parent: 2.........................

I undertake to dedicate and commit myself to all the aims/objectives of the group.

Signature: ....
Date: ....

Received by chairperson: .... and
general secretary: .... on behalf of the group.

APPENDIX B

Mayibuye Cultural Group: Songs

Below are the texts of the songs sung by the Mayibuye Cultural Group. These texts were recorded at workshops, rehearsals and performances. Where songs or parts of songs are in the form of calls and responses, the calls and responses have been identified with the abbreviations **C** and **R** respectively. Where the original lyrics are in an African language, an English translation is provided in the second column.

1.   *Slovo*

C:	*Slovo, Slovo*	Slovo, Slovo
R:	*eMzants' Afrika*	South Africa
C:	*Slovo, Slovo*	Slovo, Slovo
R:	*eMzants' Afrika sizongena*	We'll get into South Africa
C:	*Sivulele indlela*	Open up the way
R:	*eMzants' Afrika*	South Africa
C:	*Slovo, Slovo*	Slovo, Slovo
R:	*eMzants' Afrika sizongena*	We'll get into South Africa
C:	*Sifun' amalungelo*	We want rights
R:	*eMzants' Afrika*	South Africa
C:	*Slovo, Slovo*	Slovo, Slovo
R:	*eMzants' Afrika sizongena*	We'll get into South Africa
C:	*Sibuya emazweni*	We've come back from other countries
R:	*eMzants' Afrika*	South Africa
C:	*Slovo, Slovo*	Slovo, Slovo
R:	*eMzants' Afrika sizongena*	We'll get into South Africa

2.   *We'll never compromise*

C:	We'll never
R:	We'll never, never, never, never
	Abandon the struggle
	We'll better die in our struggle
	We'll never compromise

3.   *Mvezeni simbone*

C:	*uVlok bath' unetyala*	Vlok is guilty
R:	*Mvezeni simbone*	We want to see him, show us
C:	*uMalan unetyala*	Malan is guilty
R:	*Mvezeni simbone*	We want to see him, show us
C:	*Bath' unetyala*	They say he is guilty

4. *Owu yini Hani*

C: *Owu yini Hani*   Oh! Hani
R: *uGqozo noMangope, Hani*   Gqozo and Mangope, Hani
C: *Baxolele Hani*   Forgive them Hani
R: *Abakwaz' abakwenzayo*   They don't know what they are doing

5. We demand

C: We demand
R: Interim government
C: We demand
R: Constituent assembly
C: We want one-person-one-vote
R: We want constituent assembly

(During performance, after a few cycles of the song, the choir started to hum the melody whereupon the following poem was recited. Once the poem was completed, the choir continued with a new cycle of the song.)

The winds of change are swaying in South Africa
The freedom bird is weavering in our country
The last kicks of the NP are becoming powerless every passing minute
This tyrant monster refuses to die
As the sun is about to set for the junior government
The law of a jungle is collapsing
Listen to our song - listen to our demand

From the Infogate to Inkathagate scandal
From the Inkathagate to 1985 death orders
From 1985 death orders to the exit gate
I say now is the time for the government to quit
Listen to our song - listen to our demand

How long must our people suffer these oppressive laws?
How long must we tolerate the chains of bondage?
Our people cannot postpone their hunger
This is the situation we are not willing to accept
This is the demand we cannot compromise
This is our last mile we intend to run
Listen to our song — listen to our demand

(This poem, *Interim Government,* was written by the general secretary of the association. The text varied somewhat from performance to performance. This version of the poem was recorded at a performance of their songs. See Appendix C for the full text of *Interim Government.*)

6. *Saphela isizwe*

C: *Saphela isizwe*   The nation is being destroyed
R: *Nkosi yami,*   Oh Lord,
     saphela isizwe ngamaBhulu   the nation is being destroyed by the Boers
C: *Nkosi sisindise*   Lord save us
R: *Nkosi yami,*   Oh Lord,
     saphela isizwe ngamaBhulu   the nation is being destroyed by the Boers

(During performance, after a few cycles of the song, the choir started to hum the melody whereupon the following poem was recited. Once the poem was completed, the continued with a new cycle of the song.)

Here lies the soldier killed by apartheid forces
He died for the liberation of the workers
He died for the liberation of the students
He died for the liberation of the unemployed
Now he is no more — killed by apartheid forces
Oh! Koze kube nini na?   For how long?

Along the dusty streets of our townships
Along the factory alleys
Along the hundreds of the unemployed
You always find him
Preaching the gospel of peace
Now he is no more — killed by apartheid forces
Oh! Koze kube nini na?   For how long?

Oh! My brother, I shall never forget you
I shall never forgive your assassinators [sic]
Let your spirit of non-surrender remain with us
Now he is no more — killed by apartheid forces
Oh! Koze kube nini na?   For how long?

(This poem, *Koze kube nini na?*, was written by the general secretary of the association. He dedicated the poem to Temba, an organiser of the Transport and Allied Workers' Union who was shot by "warlords" in Pietermaritzburg (when asked, he could not remember Temba's surname). The text varied somewhat from performance to performance. This version of the poem was recorded at a performance of their songs. See Appendix C for the full text of *Koze kube nini na?*)

7.   *Gomomo noJay Naidoo*

C: *Gomomo noJay Naidoo*   Gomomo and Jay Naidoo
          Siyanibonga maqhawe   We thank you brave warriors
R: *Sebenzi, sebenzi*   Workers, workers
C: *Huntshu COSATU*   We salute COSATU
          ngokuhlanganisa abasebenzi We salute you for what you have done for the
                                                workers
R: S*ebenzi, sebenzi*   Workers, workers

8.   *'Khonto weSizwe*

C: *Sinomkhonto wethu weSizwe* We have our own national spear
R: *'Khonto weSizwe*   National spear
C: *Sibuya nawo eLusaka*   We've brought it with us from Lusaka
R: *'Khonto weSizwe*   National spear

9.   *Ligcwele iimpimpi*

C: *Ligcwele iimpimpi izwe lami* There are many spies in our country
R: *Sizolilwela, sizolilwela*   We will fight, we will fight
          Size silithole izwe lami   Until we get our country back

10. *Siyawaz' umbala*

C: *Siyawaz' umbala*   We know the colour
R: *Black, green gold*   Black, green, gold
        Joyina Umkhonto weSizwe   Join the MK
        Sibulal' iSADAFU ngeAK   and kill the SADF with AK's

11. *Sinik' umkhonto lo*

C: *Tambo*   Tambo
R: *Sinik' umkhonto lo*   Give us the spear
C: *Tambo*   Tambo
R: *Sinik' imakharov*   Tambo give us a Makharov

12. *Sayiwela iLimpopo*

C: *Sayiwela, sayiwela, Tambo*   We crossed it, crossed it, Tambo
R: *ILimpopo sayiwela, Tambo*   We crossed the Limpopo, Tambo

13. Dilika we ntaba

C: *Dilika we ntaba*   Come down you mountains
        Sibon' uMandela   So that we see Mandela
R: *Dilika we ntaba*   Come down you mountains
        Dilika sibon' uMandela   So that we see Mandela, come down

14.   *Mandela, simthini uVlok?*

C: *Mandela, simthini uVlok?*   Mandela, what do we do with Vlok?
R: *Ufun' ukumenz' umkhomanisi* We want to make Vlok a Communist

15.   *Niyaboyika na?*

C: *Niyaboyika na?*   Are you afraid of them?
R: *Asiboyiki. uProf uzoba nathi*   We are not. Strength will be with us
        Thath' ibhazuka[1]   Take a bazooka (knife)[1]
        Thath' igrineyida   Take a grenade
        Ulalel' amaBhulu   and kill the Boers

[1]   According to Groenewald and Makopo (1992:137) it could also mean "knife" in the
        Tsotsi language.

16. *Angatheth' COSATU*

C: *Wiwiwi-i-i*   Wiwiwi-i-i
R: *Angatheth' COSATU*   When COSATU speaks
        ubokwazi seleduma kude   you must know that the whole world hears him
C: *Seleduma, seleduma*   They hear him, hear him
R: *Seleduma lonk' ilizwe*   The whole world hears him

17.   *Thina singama cadres*

Thina singama cadres   We are the cadres
Sidubula ngembayi-mbayi   We shoot with a tank

Sibuya eLusaka	We come from Lusaka
Sidubula ngembayi-mbayi	We shoot with a tank
Sizobusa	We shall govern
Sizonqoba	We shall win

18.   *Makana*

Kudala kudala kwakukhw'	Long ago there was a
ndoda ekwa kuthiwa nguMakana	man called Makana
Igorha ikhalipha elanikezela	A brave man who sacrificed his soul
likhusela ilizwe loobawomkhulu	to protect our forefathers' land
lijongene neentshaba nabacinezeli	faced by enemies and oppressors

Watheth' umfo kaNcede	So said Ncede's son
amazwi akhe okugqibela athi:	his last words were:
Zikhona izizukulwana eziya	There will be a generation that
kulwela iAfrika	will fight for Africa
ibuyele koonyana bayo	to come back to its sons

Alele amohlophe qhwa amathambo	Snow white are his bones as they
kodw'ambelwe esiqithini	lie buried in the island
Kwaqhubeka emhlabeni	Things happened on earth
kuzalisekiswa isiprofetho sakhe	which made his prophecy come true
Umbhalo uqaqambile eludongeni	The writing is bright on the wall

19. Joe Modise

Here is Joe Modise
He is the champion, the great fighter
He's coming back home
I see him going up and down
across the borders of other countries
He's the champion, the great fighter

APPENDIX C

Mayibuye Cultural Group: Poems

The following poems have been copied verbatim from a book which was in the possession of the general secretary of the association. The general secretary wrote all the poems except for *The days I shall never forget* which was written by his cousin. However, only four of the poems, *Interim Government*, *Koze kube nini na?*, *The days I shall never forget* and *I am Politically Bankrupt* (see Appendix C:1, 2, 3 and 4) were part of the collective repertoire of the association and were included in performances. The rest of the poems were considered to be those of the general secretary and have been included here only for the sake of completeness.

Where words have been misspelled, this has not been rectified, but where the original text is ambiguous or unclear, the correct spelling or interpretation is provided in square brackets. Idiosyncratic use of capitalisation, punctuation and writing conventions has been kept as written in the original.

1.   Interim Government

(This poem was performed as part of Song 5 (see Appendix B:5).

The Winds of change are Swaying in South Africa
The freedom bird is weavering [wavering] in our Country
The last kicks of the N.P. are becoming powerless every passing minute.
This tyrant monster refuses to die
As the Sun is about to Set for the Junior Govern. [Government]
The law of a Jungle is collapsing
Listen to our demand — Listen to our Song

From the Infogate to Inkathagate scandal
From the Inkathagate to 1985 death orders.
From 1985 death orders to the Exit gate
I say now is the time for the Govern [Government] to quit.
This is a blatant attempt to destroy the will of our people
The ship is wrecking for the PTA regime. [This verse line was deleted in the original but has been included here to demonstrate the development of the poem as well as for the sake of completeness.]
We demand the installation of transitional Government.
Listen to our demand — Listen to our Song.

How long must our people suffer these oppressive laws,
How long must we tolerate the Chains of Bondage
Our Masses cannot postpone their Hunger for freedom.
This is the situation we are not willing to accept.
This is the demand we cannot compromise
This is our last mile we intends to run.
Listen to our demand — Listen to our Song.

2.   *Koze kube nini na* [For how long]?

This poem was performed as part of Song 6 (see Appendix B:6).

Here lies the Soldier of the People

He died in the Struggle of the Oppressed Masses.
He died for the liberation of Workers.
He died for the liberation of Students.
Here lies the hero — died for us all.
Now he is no more — killed by Apartheid forces.
Oh! *Koze kube nini na* [For how long]?

Along the dusty streets of our township
Along the factory
Along the Apartheid Schools
Along the hundred thousands of Unemployed
You always find him there.
Preaching the gospel of Peace
Now he is no more — killed by Apartheid forces.
Oh! *Koze kube nini na* [For how long]?

Oh! My brother
I shall never forget you
I shall never forgive your assassinators [sic].
Brothers and Sisters
Let his spirit of non-surrunder remain with us.
Now he is no more — killed by Apartheid forces.
Oh! *Koze kube nini na* [For how long]?

*(The above poem was edited and reworked by the general secretary. The reworked
version of the poem is included here to emphasise process, i.e. how the poem
developed until it became crystallised in print.)*

Koze kube nini na [For how long]?

Here lies the Soldier of the People
He died in the liberation of the oppressed masses
He died for the liberation of the Workers
He died for the liberation of the Students
Here lies the Hero — died for us all.
Now he is no more — killed by Apartheid forces.
Oh! *Koze kube nini na* [For how long]?

Along the dusty streets of our townships
Along the factory alleys.
Along the Apartheid Schools
Along the hundreds of the Unemployeds [sic]
You always find him
Preaching the gospel of peace
Now he is no more — killed by Apartheid forces
Oh! *Koze kube nini na* [For how long]?

Oh! My brother, I shall never forget you
I shall never forgive your assassinators,
Brothers and sisters
Let his spirit of non-surrender remain with us,
Now he is no more — killed by Apartheid forces.
Oh! *Koze kube nini na* [For how long]?

I salute you my dear Comrade

for your dedication to end unjust system of Apartheid.
for your dedication to end draconian laws in S.A. [South Africa]
I say your death is not a fate to us.

I say it is not dreadful
Not dreadful under abnormal society
Society which claims to be normal.
Abnormal Society that legalises death
Yesterday it was Comrade Sizwe
Today it is you.
All the same your spirit of resistance remained.

Today it is you Cde. [Comrade]
To your family and friends.
I wipe their tears by this tribute.
I am not trying to open the wounds which are already cured.
How ever — Rest in Peace — *Qhawe lamaQhawe* [Greatest among greatest]!

3.   The days I shall never forget

(Dedicated to our fallen heroes of 1976)

Let me remember the days of sorrow
Let me remember the days of no retreat
The day the people vowed not to surrender
when all stopped with mourning and weeping
and all long flowing tears were wiped
Vithumete ishu ntze bechu biti izinyo izinyo [A tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye]

For all peace channels were exhausted
and all amicable means were not to be found
Allow me to honour you December 16
for embracing me in the peoples' army
Umkhonto weSizwe
Formed in bloodstains of multitudes in Sharpeville
in order to meet the apartheid violence
Allow me to remind you once more
of the heroic sacrifice by the youth
who dared to take determined decisions
and raised high the banner of the founding fathers
and sowed to all corners of the country
their unwavering and militant spirit
despite heavily armed police actions
tragically they sank
Noma besidubula siyaya [Even if they shoot us we are going forward]

Allow me therefore to remember June the sixteenth
for the glorious blood that painted red
the streets of our township
the blood that paved the way to freedom
freedom or death was the only provision for the journey
Allow me therefore to quench my thirst from that blood
the blood of heroes like Hector Peterson and others
who paid their last price for my freedom
for their crucible blessed dedication to the struggle

4.   I am Politically Bankrupt

Allow me to say that I am a Cow to be slaughtered.
Allow me to say that the A.N.C is selling the Black Masses.
Allow me to say that we will continue with the Armed Struggle.
The struggle I've never been to[o] good at
I am opportunistic enough to come with such a claim.
As the A.N.C had decided to suspend it.
I always want for the A.N.C to make a move.
There after I hope to improve on it.
Oh Yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

It is pointless for me Sounding purist and holier-than-thou.
I would not like to see the Collaborators on the negotiating table.
Hence the reality is that they have a role to play
I am calling Baba Madiba a sell out
But he sacrificed his life in Jail more than the years of my life.
Don't you think he would have sold us out and get his freedom.
Oh Yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

Codesa is not the only Sole mechanism by which democracy can be attained
I have embarked on a campaign to disband it.
I want to make a way for a new Negotiating forum
To have tricameral & home leaders on the Constituent Assembly is to commit suicide.
I say Codesa is little more than a talking shop.
Oh Yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

I appreciate that Organ [Organisations] have their independent right to do what they wish.
As for now I have also embarked on Police killing campaign.
I say the Police men are Apartheid apparatus
I had some people appalled because of my Campaign.
They say it won't achieve my aims.
I have been asked to explain on the killing of these people.
I foresee a problem with my explanation as it will expose my Bankrup[t]cy.
Oh Yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

I say how can people of more than 7 million be excluded from Codesa.
The lesser number of A.N.C/S.A.C.P and T.C.I Govern [Government] were given first hand service.
The denial of my King brings more serious doubts about this CODESA [sic].
How can such millions of my people be excluded from this great Indaba.
As long as the King is excluded from the talks
I say this Codesa will be Null and Void.
Oh Yes forget me not — I am politically bankrupt.

(The first two verses and the last verse of this original version of the poem were crossed out by the general secretary soon after its completion, but the original and its subsequent versions have been included here to demonstrate process, and in particular how the final published version of the poem developed from its original. The version which mostly was performed by the association reads as follows.)

I am Politically Bankrupt

Allow me to say that I am a Cow to be slaughtered.
Allow me to say that the A.N.C is selling the Masses.
Allow me to say that we will continue with the armed struggle.
The Struggle I've never been to good at
I am opportunistic enough to come out with such a claim.
As the A.N.C had decided to suspend it.
I always wait for the A.N.C to make a move.
Thereafter — I hope to improve on it.
Oh Yes forget me not — I am politically bankrupt.

It is pointless for me Sounding purist & holier-than-thou
I would not like to see the Collaborators on the Negotiations table.
Hence the reality is that they have a role to play.
I am calling Baba Madiba a Sell out.
But he sacrificed his life in jail more than the years of my life.
Don't you think he would have sold us and get his freedom.
Oh Yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

CODESA is not the only Sole mechanism by which democracy can be attained.
I have embarked on a campaign to disband it.
I want to make a way for a new negotiating forum.
To have tricameral & home land leaders on the Neg [Negotiation] table is to commit suicide.
I say CODESA is little more than a talking shop
Oh Yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

I appreciate that Organ [Organisations] have their Independent rights.
As I have also embarked on Police killing Campaign.
I say these people are apartheid apparatus
I had some people appalled because of my Campaign
They say it won't achieve my Aims
Some asked about the killings of these people.
I foresee a problem with my explanation
As it will expose my Bankruptcy
Oh yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

From Village to Village
From Township to township.
Is the name of my game.
This is another attempt to smash CODESA.
This is another try to excite the Ghost.
I was expelled from the Patriotic front
Due to my foolishness
This expellision [expulsion] is about to expose my bankruptcy.
I say "NO" I cannot be left out.
The enemy will get me nacked [naked].
Oh Yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

Some people talk about Mass action
This is an attempt to denounce the spirit of our Masses.
They are merely doing so to enable CODESA to sit again.
Our Masses must ignore this meaningless call.
I-for-one will nor participate in such a useless exercise.
Oh Yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

(In the original the last verse of the poem was marked as "cancelled for a while". The following transcription of this poem was published in The Shopsteward, vol 2(2), April/May 1993.)

I am Politically Bankrupt

Allow me to say that I am a Cow to be Slaughtered
Allow me to say that the ANC is Selling the Masses
Allow me to say that we will continue with the Armed Struggle
The Struggle I have never been too good at
I am opportunistic enough to come out with such a Claim
As the ANC had decided to suspend it.
I always wait for the ANC to make a move
Thereafter — I hope to improve on it
Oh — Yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

It is pointless for me Sounding purist and holier-than-thou
I would not like to see the Collaborators on the Negotiation table
Hence the reality is that they have a role to play
I am calling Baba Madiba a Sell out,
But he sacrificed his life in jail more than the years of my life
Don't you think he would have sold us and get his freedom
Oh Yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

Codesa is not the only Sole mechanism — by which democracy can be attained.
I have embarked on a Campaign to disband it.
I want to make a way for a new negotiating forum
To have tricameral & homeland leaders on the negotiation table, is to commit suicide
I say Codesa is little more than a talking shop.
Oh Yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

I appreciate that Organisations have their Independent rights
As I have also embarked on Police killing Campaign.
I say these People are apartheid Apparatus.
I had some people appalled because of my Campaign.
They say it won't achieve my Aims.
Some ask about the killing of these People
I foresee a problem with my explanation
As it will expose my Bankruptcy
Oh Yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

From Village to Village
from township to township
Is the name of my Game
This is another attempt to smash Codesa
This is another try to excite the Ghost
I was expelled from the Patriotic front, due to my foolishness.
This expulsion is about to expose my bankruptcy
I say "no" I cannot be left out.
The enemy will get me naked
Oh Yes forget me not — I am Politically Bankrupt.

5.   *I — S.A.C.W.U.*

Hoyina! Hoyina
Kwakh'a kwanje phina Mz'ontsundu
Kwakh'a kwanje phina Mathol'endlw'emnyama
Kwakh'akwanje phina Sizukulwana sika Phalo
sizukulwana sika Shaka - Umzilikazi
Ndibala ntonina?
Nditsho kuninina nancancw'igazi ngabasemzini.
Nathi nenzu'velwano kanti nifak'utshab' e nkundleni.
Ndiphen' indlebe ndiniphakele.
Kaloku esam'isifuba asiyo khabathi.

Ndihlab'ikhwelo kuni bathandi bomculo.
Ndicel'indlebe kuni badlali beqonga.
Ndingaba libal'abathanda ukuthetha njengam.
Nditshw'iimbongi zoluntu jikelele.
Namhla ndino thulel'umnqwazi
Kukhul'oko nikwenzileyo
Ngokuthi nisizalele lo mhtwana.
Khon'ukuze oluqapho lube noku phumla
Phantsi kwaw'umthunzi ka S.A.C.W.U.

Kaloku lomhlaba wathinjwa
Suke senziw' amabanjw'abasemzini
Wangco lisw'umhlaba ngegazi lenu.
Siyabulela ngokuthi "Ngoku kwanele".
Kuba kalok'olungakhaliyo lufel'embelekweni.
Yizani ke sakh'umkhomba ndlela
Phantsi kwawumthunzi ka S.A.C.W.U.

Igqirha nguy' u SAWCU mbala
Umth'omny oziqu zininzi
Sithi nguy' u Nina wabasebenzi baka COSATU/NACTU
Nguy'uNina wabaka UPUSA no B.A.W.U.
Nditshw'ababhal'a bangasebenzi bancanca kwaku lo mbele.
Yinkunqel'enkul'eMzantsi Afrika
Yizani kaloku sihlanganis'iintloko
Phantsi kwawumthunzi ka S.A.W.C.U.

Lo mbuso ka De Klerk uxhob'uficala
Uqul'intiyo - upheth'inko hlakalo.
Asizakhel' indlel'ixesha lisavuma.
Kuba amangomso asesihogweni.
Yizani silungis'indlel' ezizukulwana
Lentw'ikukwanda kwaliwa nguMthakathi
Kutsho mna Mbongi yoluntu
Batshw'a basemfuthweni wolwazi

Bathi 'Phambili S. A. Workers Cultural Unit'.

The translation of the poem reads as follows.

SAWCU

Hail! Hail!
Where have you ever seen such a thing, black nation?
Where has such a thing ever happened, you children of the black house?
Where has such a thing ever happened, you great grandchildren of Phalo,
great grandchildren of Shaka (and) Umzilikazi?
What do I count?
I mean you whose blood has been sucked by the foreigners.
You thought that you were sympathising whereas you were bringing the enemy home.
Give me your ears so that I can dish out [Listen to me so that I can tell you].
Remember my chest is not like a cupboard [I do not keep any secrets].

I call upon you who like music.
I plead that you listen to me, you actors.
I mustn't forget those who like to talk like me.
I mean the traditional praise-poets generally.
Today I salute you
It is great that which you have done.
By giving this child to us
So that this family can get rest
under the shade of SAWCU.

Remember this soil had been taken by force
and then we were made slaves by the foreigners
and the soil was made dirty by your blood.
We thank you by saying "It is enough".
Because the child [the workers] who does not cry
dies on her mother's [management] back
under the shade of SAWCU.

The healer is SAWCU
This one tree with many branches
We say SAWCU is the mother of all the workers of COSATU and NACTU
She is the mother of the workers of UPUSA and BAWU
even those who work in offices suck from the same breast.
He is the super healer in South Africa
Come so that we can put our heads together
under the shade of SAWCU.

This regime of De Klerk is well armed
They have this hatred and they are carrying cruelty.
Let us build a way forward for ourselves while time still allows us
for tomorrow may land us in hell.
Come let us prepare the way forward for our generations to come
because coming together, helping each other, working together is something not
allowed by the evil-doers.
I say so, me, the traditional poet.
They say, those who know [those in the spirit world]

They say: "Forward South African Workers Cultural Unit".

6. *Ah Rolihlahla Mandela* (Lyrics)

Kuyo lo lali yaku - Qunu
Phezu kwalo mlambo - i Bha-a-she
Kulondlela yazo inqwelo
Eziye Ncambedlane - Phesh'ya koMtata
Kukho umzi omhle kunene
Ndithetha ngomz'omkhulu
Wakwa - Madiba

Ah Mandela! Ah Mandela!
Ah Mandela! Baba wethu!
Ah Madiba! Ah Madiba!
Ah Madiba! Baba wethu!

Sithi - Phambili - phambili - Dlom'elihle
Ungabisa jong'emva - emva
Sijonge - i - Nkululeko
Yalo ilizwe le thu Umzantsi Afrika

Rolihlala - Rolihlala Mandela
Freedom is in your hand
Freedom is in your hand
Show us the way to freedom
Show us the way to freedom
In this land of Afrika [sic]
In this land of Afrika.

The translation of the lyrics reads as follows.

We salute you Rolihlala Mandela

There in that village of Qunu
above the Bashe river
on the road for cars
going to Ncambedlane over Umtata
there is a very beautiful home
I mean a great home
of the Madiba clan.

We salute you Mandela, we salute you Mandela
We salute you Mandela our father
We salute you Madiba, we salute you Madiba
We salute you Madiba our father

We say forward, forward, you beautiful Dlomo
don't look back
we are looking forward to freedom
of our country South Africa

Rolihlala -Rolihlala Mandela
Freedom is in your hand
Freedom is in your hand
Show us the way to freedom
Show us the way to freedom
In this land of Afrika

In this land of Afrika.

7.   My Tribute to People's Movement

The day I shall never forget
When the birth of A.N.C sounded to my ears.
The Regime was celebrating
Celebrating the defeat of Dingane at the battle of Ncome
A.N.C emerged

The poem was updated and rewritten as follows.

My Tribute to People's Movement

The day I shall never forget
When the birth of MK sounded to my ears.
The Regime was celebrating
Celebrating the defeat of Dingane at the battle of Ncome.
MK emerged in the midst.
In defence of our people.
Caught the enemy nacked [naked]
The Regime lost nerve and panicked.
The sharpenest of *Umkhonto* was too much to be swallowed.
I respect the fearless courage of our Cadres.

I have been to the bushy mountains of Uganda
I have seen the Commissars of our Army
Listened to the music of *Umkhonto Wesizwe* [sic]
Listened to the sound of their guitars.
Betsho besithi [They say] "Freedom or Death" - *Songena ngomnyana* [We will come by night]
Singing and marching to the freedom mt [mount].
Betsho besithi [They say] "The sounds of our Guitars will be the best language to PTA [Pretoria] Government".
Betsho besithi [They say] "Whether death will be an outcome
What we are fighting for is honourable
Nevertheless - forward we go - backward never".

I have fought alongside Zimbabwe Liber [Liberation] fighters
In the dark forests of Zimbabwe
I have fought along side MK Commander and Chief of Staff.
Manouvering our routes to South Africa
Sending Cadres to build MK back Home
To consolidate the Mass resistance of our People.

I have been to the graveyards of our fallen heroes
Our cadres who have lost their lives in the struggle for liberation.
Gave my last respect to Cde [Comrade] Barney Molokoane - Thani Muyele - Solomon Mahlangu
I have been to the homes of our fallen heroes.
Who dead [dared] crossing the borders of Lesotho
Zambia - Botswana & Mozambique
Cool the ever-burning hearts of their families
Wipe their tears! *Nditsho ndisithi* [I say]!

Freedom or death - Victory is Certain
Long live the People's Army.

8. Listen — the Prodical Son is talking

Listen to your Son - listen - *Umntwana uyakhuluma* [the child is talking].
I have never accepted the Governments nominal independence
I fought bravely - securing my people from the hands of apartheid.
Some people use their Slogans
In attempt to destroy me and my Organisation
They keep on blaming Violence on me.
Whilst the flags of black liberation Organ [Organisations] are flying high in my Country.
Listen the prodigal Son is talking
Listen to your Son - *Umntwana uyakhuluma* [the child is talking].

Some people continually accuse me & my people
Saying we are the one's who perpetuate violence
Hence the Military wing is devastating our Country.
The killing power of their Cadres is the Cause of this Violence.
As long as this private army exists
There can be no peace in South Africa
My present police force is not trained enough to face their Cadres
I am in the process of forming my "Own Battalion"
The S.A.D.F. is not doing enough to still my forces.
Listen the prodical Son is talking
Listen to your Son - *Umntwana uyakuluma* [the child is talking]

I have been accused of rejecting Const [Constituent] Assembly
I say no progress can be made with out my final word.
My people will be represented by three different reps at CODESA.
The reality is that I want to be a Centre of Attraction.
I am the bastion of Strength in defence of my people.
I am prepared to throw blow to any one who take over my Super power.
Listen the prodical Son is talking
Listen to your Son - *Umntwana uyakhuluma* [the child is talking].

I have been dragged by throat by those who are hungry for my power.
My people are murdered daily by their Military wing.
They always claim to represent the majority of South Africans.
They want to claim easy victory
Hence they were in exile for many years.
I have fought for the release of their leader.
I am one of the great fighters in this Country
I stood my ground and fought at home.
Listen - the prodical Son is talking.
Listen to your Son - *Umntwana uyakhuluma* [the child is talking].

My Nation do not want the Western influence.
I don't want an Interim Government
I want it to be delayed - because I'll be caught nacked [naked]
Some people are whispering about the Third force.
This force has been hiding in the bottom of their Military Wing.
They are also accusing the Defence force
Saying they are butchering their people
Saying they are responsible of Assassinations and disappearance of their members.

I say to the Government - Ignored all these accusations
Listen - the prodical Son is talking
Listen to your Son - *Umntwana uyakhuluma* [the child is talking]

"*Bayete*" (We/I salute you).

9.   Justice on Trial

They talk about Justice.
Justice which was on trial
When Jan van Riebeeck arrived here.
Justice was on trial when the Racist Gover [Government]
Set up Racist Judges.
Justice was on trial when unjust laws and Constitution were passed.
Yes! Justice was on trial when SAP/SADF shot and detained the peaceful
demonstrators in 1976.

They talk about Justice
When our people get evicted from their Mikhukhusi [shacks]
When the Economic Injustice has not been addressed
When the Majority People of this Country do not Vote
Justice is on trial

10.   My Message to De Klerk

How long will you implicate yourself to the problems of the African States.
How long will you be a Chauvinist destabilising the winds of change in Africa.
How long will you sabotage the Victories of democratic forces in Africa.
Back home our people are dying like flies.
Killed by Apartheid apparatus under the banner of Pretoria Regime.
How long! How long must we live in fear and uncertainty.
When we should make a progress towards democratising our Country.

Our Country is in a State of ungovernability
The Agencies of law and order took the law to their hands
The means of production is in tatters in our Country.
The way of life has also Vanished
Rather listening to the Voices of the Oppressed people.
You keep on pointing accusing finger to the A.N.C. [sic]
You are the useless and unholy monster in the whole world.
How long! How long must we live in fear and uncertainty.
When we should make a progress towards democratising our Country.

Now our Country is up in flames
Flames which are inflamed by You
Crying are our Mothers and Fathers
Not to mention our Children & Widows
All this in the name of promoting peace and harmony.
You have abandoned your responsibilities as the government of the day.
I am made to believe that you have perpetrated Violence in our Country.
Attempting to destabilise the People's movement
Attempting to silence the Voice of the Majority
Trying to gain support during the Negotiation process
How long! How long must we live in fear and uncertainty

When we should make a progress towards democratising our Country.
How long! How long! How long!!!

APPENDIX D

The literary plays of the general secretary of the Mayibuye Cultural Group

The plays, *Law of a jungle* and *For the sake of our children*, have been included here for the sake of completeness. *Law of a jungle* was meant to be a film script. It is set in Lady Frere in the Eastern Cape as well as Johannesburg in Gauteng, and addresses issues such as migrancy (reflecting on the author's own experience) and corruption. *For the sake of our children* deals with the educational crisis during the liberation struggle and the violence in the townships at the time.

1.   Law of a jungle

The working title of the play was **Homeless! Jobless! What a Shame**. The text of the play, the stage directions and the introduction to the play below have been copied verbatim from a book which is in the possession of the general secretary. Although italics were not used in the original, italics are used here for dialogue which is written in Afrikaans or an African language. The translation of the dialogue in these cases follows immediately in brackets.

Where words have been misspelled, this has not been rectified, but where the original text is ambiguous or unclear, the correct spelling or interpretation is provided in square brackets.

The generally accepted meaning of the words "act" and "scene" is not followed in the plays; however, these indications are retained as written in the manuscript.

The names of three characters in the play are derived from Xhosa words: Nkululeko (lit.: freedom), Nosizwe (lit.: mother of the nation) and Mehlo (lit.: eyes).

Scene 1, Act 1

The play is about Badula independence which was enforced to the people with out their wish or concern. People were told that they must vote for candidates whom they did not elect. After that chaos people start resisting against that independence. As they have noticed that this Ind [Independence] was just another Puppet. <u>Start</u>: State within the State.

<u>(Three men play: Nkululeko (1) Poor Africa (2) and Nosizwe (3))</u>.

<u>Nkululeko</u>:   The Mbhumbhulu Independence of Badula [from the verb *ukubhadula* meaning to roam about aimlessly] which came uninvited in 1976-10-26 - Which brought hungry and miseries in our Country, I remember....

<u>Poor Africa</u>:   We were told that we are nolonger South Africans, we are Badulians. We were promised that we will live a better life not like before. But all those promises never became realities. Instead people became more poorer than before. Oh - October - the 10th - 1976 I cannot forget you. You came like a lightening which caused havoc and Anarchy in our country.

Nosizwe: We were forced to join the Badula National Independence Party which we never formed. When we refuse to join we were told that we cannot get a job. People were forced to buy land of which before they used to get free from the Headmen.

Both Actors: Away with Badula independence! *Asiwufuni umbuso wobaNdlululo* (We do not want separate development)! (Showing the sign of *Amandla*): We want free ; Non-racial and democratic Society.

Nkululeko: We were told to pay about R150.00 for the tractors, promised that we will be given *Mahure** and our fields will be ploughed. *Yonke lo mali yangena eSakeni elivuzayo* (All that money was put in a sack which was open at the bottom). We were forced to donate Money for the Aeroplane which was brought for Ma....

(Interrupt)

Poor Africa: There is no use to call a Snake a fish. Now its time that we call a Spade a Spade. What I know is Truth doesn't break any friendship. (Whispering): *Kanene xa bengandiva bangathi ndiya'politika* (By the way, when they do not understand me, they would say I am talking politics).

Nosizwe: (Laughing): That simple means if Jesus was here at Badula; He should be in jail long ago. (Shouting): We were forced to pay for our Domestic Animal something which never happened before. (Pointing herself and Poor Africa): *Saxelelwa ukuba njengo.* Mfazi ne Ndoda Siza kubhatala i-Tax* (We were told: Wife and husband, you have to pay tax).

Both Actors: (Looking to the audience knee down [sic]): I cannot forget you October 1976! You came up as Sattan to Jesus! You brought hunger and Starvation to us! You forced us to live [leave] our places of birth to be the Slaves of foreigners. But we promise that we will fight and fight until the Victory is on our Side!

(Pause)

Poor Africa: I cannot forget you October 26 1976. The year of Miseries and War. South African Children died as if they were flies. You came as a Sheep; While you was a Jackal wearing a Sheep Skin. The Badula Government promised to built us School, hence we were forced to donation for Ma... family....

(Interrupted)

Nkululeko: We use to have Big Mielie-field [sic], but now we survive by begging to the White people, who are exploiting us. It seems as if even God gave his back to us. But I believe that even Isareals after suffering many Years, God led them to the land of honey.

Nosizwe: *Besisiya ezintabeni siyo kuthandazela imvula, emva koko imvula ine, kodwa namhlanje konke loko akusenzeki* (We used to go to the mountain to pray for rain, and afterwards rain would fall, but today all that doesn't happen anymore). *Ndibona ngathi neziNyanya sele ziSilibele* (I see that even the ancestors have forgotten us).

Poor Africa: Our passports were taken, and the Badula Government introduced useless travelling document. Which forbided us freedom of Movement. When this so-called toy President visit us we are forced to pay all the expensises of the visit. This toy Government forced our Children to pay high School fees, failling to pay your Children will be instantly expelled at school. All these things fobided us freedom of Expression and movement. As they are trying to practice the law of a Jungle I think one day they will meet the people's anger.

Nosizwe: The poor local Headmen were given Names of the candidates of which we were forced to vote for, whether you know him or her or not, it was a matter of do or die. We were promised with so many things which bribed our minds. 90% of the Business owned by the Ministers who are already rich more than any one else.

Nkululeko: All the Schools were named after the so-called purpets [puppet] Ministers. Even the Airport is called ....

All of them: (Whispering): Sh...h...h.... Don't call his name. (Showing with Hand): *Igama lomntu yi-Ponti* (The name of a person is one pound) [It constitutes slander].

Nkululeko: We were told that there will be no Political Organisations or Workers Unions in badula. As people will enjoy the fruits of their people's Government. To my surprise there was also a warning that all those who defy a dispute what have been said will face the Music. (Dancing).

Poor Africa: (Looking at the Audience): No, that doesn't mean they will dance, but they will end up in jail. Mr Nelson Mandela was a Good example to them. *Basixelela ukuba kuzobakho umsebenzi owaneleyo, asinakudinga iindawo zokusebenza, kodwa namhlanje kufanele siye e S.A. ukuze sifumane umsebenzi* (They told us that there would be enough work, that we will never be without work, but today we have to go to South Africa to get jobs).

Poor Africa: Even in SA, we have to struggle before we get work since we are coming from this unaccepted State within a State. We were taken from the World of Honey to the World of Sorrow. I can't forget you 1976: I can't forgive you.

All Actors: (Poem): HOMELESS!! JOBLESS!! WHAT A SHAME

Loudly I speak: Speak ashamed of the Victims
Victims of the Capitalism.
The deprieve [deprived] proletariats of my land
Deprieved their right to work.
Deprieved their right to speak.
Deprieved their right to live.
Oh! They are depreived their right move.

Homeless and jobless is their only monopoly
Man[-]made disable to get high profits.
Allow me therefore to condemn Capitalism forever.
Phew! I need you Capitalism no more.
JOBLESS! HOMELESS! WHAT A SHAME.

One say:	Jobless!
Another:	Homeless!
Last one:	What a Shame.

BLACK OUT

live [leave] the Stage

Scene 2, Act 1

Two weeks late [sic]: On the Stage is: Poor Africa and Nosizwe.

There comes somebody who is working for the Gover... local Offices. The Guy is here to collect money for the preparation of the President's visit, who will visit the location about Three weeks to come.

Lucky:	Knock!! Knock!! Knock!!
Poor Africa:	*Azi ngubani ke lowo ekuseni kangaka* (Who could it be this early in the morning)?
Lucky:	Knock! Knock! Knock! Is Somebody here or not.
Poor Africa:	(Opening the door): Yes my Child, come in.
Lucky:	I've knocked at this door for 20 minutes and you've heard that there is somebody who's knocking but you took your time to open. Why.
Poor Africa:	My child, days are gone: Some times you may hear Some thing but takes you time to respond on that.
Lucky:	(Seemingly shouting): That is unaccepted [unacceptable] to me. You cannot tell me that you are old. What was your problem by Saying "Come in". I should have came [sic], now I've waisted [wasted] my time standing out side [sic], waiting for God to come and Say "I'm old enough to respond in time". That is more than a nonsense [sic].
Poor Africa:	Please my Child forgive me. I didn't know that this thing will hurt you.
Lucky:	That will only be done by God not me. I've argued for a long time with you. I may even forget what I'm here for.
Poor Africa and Nosizwe:	We apologies - my Child - please, forgive us.
Lucky:	Okay, I understand you now, Can you please also do me a favour. I'm here to collect R70,00 which is for the preparation of our President's visit. I don't think you will need any clarification for that as we have done so about two weeks ago.

Poor Africa: (Ashamed): You may say I'm joking my Child. I don't remember you telling us about the visit. (Looking at his wife): May be my Wife knew about this thing.

Nosizwe: No my dear I don't think we were told about the Visit ....

(Enterrupting) [sic]

Lucky: Whether you were told or not. Now I'm telling you, and you cannot say you wasn't told, neh.

Poor Africa and Nosizwe:
    Can you please give us a chance so as to tell you the Story.

Lucky: Look here *Taima nawe* (old man and) Ou lady, I don't take liquor during working hours. I mean I only kiss the Bottle of a beer on Week-ends. So now I'm not drunk, but I doing my Work. So stop fooling me. I've got many houses to go. Do you comply with what I've said or not.

Poor Africa: (Looking at his pocket): How much do you want.

Lucky: For the last time: its R70,00, but If you want to contribute more I can also appreciate that, cause you have waisted [wasted] my time here.

Nosizwe: *Se wudelela ngoku wena Mfana* (You are cocky, you boy).

Lucky: (Laughing): Cool down *Ma-Grieza* (old woman); I'm joking.

Poor Africa: That is your money: Can you also please me - leave my house.

Lucky: Maybe I will come back be 4 2 days for something else (kiss the money and left).

    BLACK OUT

    MUSIC

Scene 3, Act 1

Poor Africa is with his wife discussing about what happened during the past weeks. He further suggest that, since the Badula Government showed no mercy by demanding money now and then, He rather go and look for a job -'cause they have got no money now even to keep the family.

Poor Africa: My dear wife - I think now is the time for me to live [leave] my place of birth and go to Jhb ....

(Enterrupted by his wife.)

Nosizwe: Please my Husband don't do that. You mean now you are going to live [leave] me here facing these dillemas alone.

Poor Africa: Bear with me my Wife; Instead of facing these problem I rather go and look for a job so as to get the money.

Nosizwe: I think there are many ways to manoeuvre from this problem. Why don't we sell these Cattle and Horses. We may even Sell the Sheeps and Goats if the situation doesn't improve.

Poor Africa: If the Situation doesn't favour us; What will we do, what to sell again.

Nosizwe: I think all these problems will be overcomed by then.

Poor Africa: My wife this is Badula: We will face this Starvation until we die. Instead of overcoming these problems we will became more poor than before. We can sell all our Cattle, but that won't make things easy: that won't take off my Shoulders these problem. I therefore feel duty bound to live [leave] you here, may be I will get what may be our Bread for tomorrow.

Nosizwe: I agree with you now my Husband. You can go because there's nothing else we can do. Rather facing this law of a Jungle of Badula Government, you can go. I still pray for his Government to be there when we reach our destination. One day we will sing our Song: "AHOY, We have conquered".

Poor Africa: When this honey turn to be sour! *Ngelo langa kogoba okwaphukayo xa sebefikile abafana bezokusihlangula kolu Sizi Sikulo* (The day when the young man comes to save us from this poor state of affairs that we are in, would be too tough).

Nosizwe: *Abaninzi bophathwa Si - Stroke abanye uve beSithi Nathi siyaya eNkululekweni* (Many will suffer from a(?) stroke, others will say we are going to freedom).

(Standing; looking at the Audience)

Both: That will be the day when our Sons and Daughters return from "*Emahlathini*" - the Bush. That will be an end to the Exploitation and Oppression of the people by those who are claiming to secure them. Ah! these puppet Governments will come to an end. The voice of the Voiceless will be heard even by those forces who are behind these puppet homelands. That will be the day when "our Father" who waisted [wasted] all his days behind the Apartheid doors, come and take his seat as our President. That will be the day when the Government in exile come home and take its rightful and deserved position. That will be the day when we sing with our Truly tested leadership, marching to the freedom mountain.

BLACK OUT !!! BLACK OUT !!!

Song

Will [While] the Song goe's on, the Actors round the Stage, like a Train.

Scene 4, Act 1

Poor Africa is already in Jhb [Johannesburg]. Going up and down looking for a job. He

get disappointed in many factories, but that doesn't discourage him. He arrives at other factory which is guarded by old man at the Gate: As he approaches him, before he say[s] even a Single word:

Security: *Yini le manje ngiyi bonayo* (What is this that I see now)? *Ungubani wena ndoda* (Who are you, man)? *Ubuya kuphi* (Where do you come from)? *Ufuna ni lana* (What do you want here)?

Poor Africa: *Ndingu - Mehlo, mhlekazi* (I am Mehlo, Sir). *Ndibuya e Badula* (I come from Badula). *Ndicela umsebenzi* (I am looking for work).

Security: [*Elungisa isaGila* (Getting his knopkierie ready)]: *Ngizo ku Sakaza iKhanda, uzwe bethi la ekhaya sinomsebenzi* (I will smash your head into pieces, did they say we have a job here at home)? *Noma ukhona ucamanga ukuthi singa yeka abafo bethu lana abahluphekayo sinike wena umsebenzi* (Even if there was a job, do you think that we would leave our brothers here who are very poor and give you a job)?

Poor Africa: *Hayi Bawo bendingatsho njalo kuphela bendizicelela umsebenzi, ndingatsho ukuba uyeke abantakwenu abahlupheke nje ngam* (No father, I didn't say so, I was only just asking for a job. I didn't mean that you should leave your brothers who are as poor as me).

Security: *Uma kunjalo ke ufunani lana* (If it is so, what do you want here)? *Khona manje lana sekugcwela nina* (Even here now, there are a lot of people like you). *Obo dadethu nabafowethu abasebenzi* (Our brothers and sisters do not work). *Nisuka se nizo Siqedela umsebenzi lana* (You come here to deplete and to take over our jobs here).

Poor Africa: *Hayi akuyonjongo yethu leyo, Mhlekazi* (No, it is not our intention, Sir).

Scene 4, Act 2

Poor Africa: *Ntonje kuku hlupeka awukho umsebenzi e Badula* (There is no work in Badula, only poverty).

Security: *Bheka lana Mfo - Uzo ngimoshela isikhathi sami lana* (Look here man, you have come to waste my time). *Lalela lana ke (esondela kuye)* [Listen here (moving towards him)]: *Uma ufuna umsebenzi la ekhaya kufanele wenze into, intshotsho phela* (If you want a job here at home, you must do something, you must give me a nippy). *Akukho ekwa mahala* (Nothing comes for free).

Poor Africa: (*Esothuka*) (Shocked): *Awu* (Hey)! *Ndenze into* (I have to do something)! *Ufuna into enjani ke kuba andinamali ngokwa ngoku* (What do you want because I don't have money now)?

Security: *Ungabangi umsindo wena Mfo* (Don't make a noise here, man)! *Uma abe lungu bengakubona, ngiyakutshela, uzophelela khona la e Gatini* (If the whites could see you, I'll tell you, you will end here in the gate). (*Ehleka*) (Laughing): *Letha phela - Uma ungenza into ngizokuvumela ungene ngaphakathi uyothola umsebenzi* (Give me something - if you can do something, I will let you go inside so that you can get a job).

Poor Africa: *Kaloku ndithe andinamali - ke ndiphelele kwezizinto ndiziphetheyo* (I said that I do not have money - what I am carrying is all I have).

Security: (*Embamba ngempahla*) (Threatening him): *Bheka lana - Angizokhuluma into enye nawe* (Look here, I am not going to ask you again). *Uma kungenjalo ngizokufakela ama Sondo* (If not, I am going to beat you up)*. (*Embetha entloko*) (Hitting him on the head): *Bamba laa* (Take this)!

(*Kufika umlungu ... xa aqalayo ukumbetha.*) (The white man approaches as he starts hitting him.)

Whiteman: Wait John! What's going on here! What is he looking for. Doe's he want to get in with out Permission! Heh tell me!!

Security: *Yhazz yini Bass lo mntu yena funa ngena la pha kalo nkani* (You know what Baas, this man wants to get in by force). *Kade mina bhala lo Makhulu - Bass manje lo ndoda yena funa ngena* (I was busy writing my big Baas, when this man tried to force his way in).

Whiteman: What do you mean now John. How does the man want to get in because the Gates are still locked.

Security: *Buka Bass: kade yena funa Jump (a) phezulu kalo fence fana ka lo*. (Look Baas, he wanted to jump over the fence like this.)

(He shows the W/Man how the Man tried to jump the fence.)

Whiteman: Okay John - I understand you know. I don't believe to what you are saying hence you want me to. Well if he was looking for [a] job - tell him that we've got no job.

Security: Okay my Bass - *Mina ziyenza fanakalo* (I will tell him so).

Whiteman: Okay John: Keep well.

Security: (*Efaka u P.Africa isaGila ngasemuva*) (Pushing Poor Africa with the knopkierie in the back): *Ngikutshelile ukuthi hamba lama asinamsebenzi* (I told you that we don't have any work here)! *Lahleka*!* *Hamba la* (Go away)!

Scene 4, Act 3

Other Actor join[s] the two on the Stage. They recite a Verse from the Poetry:-

> Sleepless nights add to their nightmares
> Always thinking of the means
> to get their next meal.
> Some even risk their lives in robbery
> Theft and murder becomes standard
> in their memories
> Yes the product of Hunger
> and Humiliation is a Shame.

Poor Africa: Jobless!

Nosizwe: Homeless!

Nkululeko: What a Shame.

As soon as they finish the Poetry they leave the Stage.

Poor Africa is on the Stage! Alone!
Daily activity: He is looking for the Job again.

Scene 5, Act 1

Poor Africa is at the Industrial area, looking for a job. After many hour[s] going up and down he decide to get in at the Carlton Metal factory. As he enter[s] the factory - there comes a Young White man.

W/Man: *Madala* (Old man)! Who are you? What do you want here?

Poor Africa: *Ndifuna umsebenzi Mhlekazi* (I want a job, Sir).

W/Man: Who told you to come here?

Poor Africa: *Hayi mhlekazi andi xelelwa mntu, ukuba ndize lana* (No sir, nobody told me to come here).

W/Man: What Nation are you?

Poor Africa: *Ndingu Mxhosa Mhlekazi - yaye ndibuya e Badula, ndibhadula ndifuna umsebenzi* (I am a Xhosa Sir, and I come from Badula, I wander about looking for work).

W/Man: Why didn't you tell you Boss in Badula to give you a job. I've got no job for people like you here.

Poor Africa: (*Eguqa ngedolo phantsi*) (Kneeling on the ground): *Ndiyacela* Baas assebrief (pronaunce [pronounce] wrong) Baas (I ask you Baas, please Baas).

W/Man: (*Ezibamba eginqeni*) (Putting his hands in his sides): Ag - Shame! Jy sy [sê] my Baas. Ja ek is die Baas. Go and tell Bishop Tutu and Nelson Mandela that you are looking for a job. They are good in politics. I think they will also be good in offering a job. Try Mandela first - because he haven't got a boy to clean his cell.

Poor Africa: *UMandela use jele Baas; ngekhe andinike umsebenzi* (Mandela is in jail Baas, he can't give me a job).

W/Man: Hey! you Kaffir, let me not argue with you! Do as I say. Live [Leave] my premises I have got enough of you now. Live [Leave] my Companies.

(He is coming nearer to Poor Africa.)

As Poor Africa engage[s] himself in a reverse gear, he falls down. Unfortunate this W/Man [Whiteman] is already next to him. He try to wake up trying to retreat the W/Man.

As he woke up he kicks the W/Man in the Stomach.

Both they fall down: DIZZY!

BLACK OUT: BLACK OUT

SONG

2. For the sake of our children

The text of the play and the stage directions have been copied verbatim from a book which is in the possession of the general secretary of the association. Although italics were not used in the original, italics are used here for dialogue which is written in Afrikaans or an African language. The translation of the dialogue in these cases follows immediately in brackets.

Where words have been misspelled, this has not been rectified, but where the original text is ambiguous or unclear, the correct spelling or interpretation is provided in square brackets.

The generally accepted meaning of the words "act" and "scene" is not followed in the plays; however, these indications are retained as written in the manuscript.

Scene 1, Act 1

All Actor[s] enter the Stage - Marching to different directions. Director of the play stops them. All of them stand on a non-moving position (White Noses).

Actor 1:   All children should be treated equally -

(Other one intervene)

Actor 2:   No matter what their colour, race, Sex, language or Religion.

Act 2

The other Actor approaches the Stage - Wearing formally (1 Painted white nose)

Actor 3:   Good morning pupil[s]. I am very happy to see you all today after such a long time. I thought when we close for December holidays - some of you won't come back. Keep it up! You are the future of this Country.

Actor 3:   (Looking to the newcomer who ott [ought] to be at this School by mistake. A black boy): My boy - you supposed to be not here. Who are you. Who allowed you to be at my School. You have disobeyed the rules and regularities of my School. I there fore want you out of my School.

Actor 4:   (Kneeing down): Sorry Sir.

Actor 3:   Look here my boy - I am not the one who gave birth to you. There fore dono't blame me for the colour of your skin. (Shouting and pushing the boy): If I let you in my School - who is gonna be my Gardenboy [sic]. I say out of my School.

Actor 4:   He leave[s] the School crying.

CURTAINS

Scene 2

Actor 1:   All Children should be protected from all types of Violence.

(All Actor - moving to the front part of the Stage. Others kneeing down - others Stand behind.)

All Actors:
    THINA BANTWANA SAFA YINZONDO x2 (We the children are victims of hatred)
    AMA POYIS'A ZONDA THINA x4 (The police hate us)
    NAMA SOYA SONDA THINA x4 (and the soldiers hate us)
    Sitsho ne NKATHAZ' IYASIZONDA (We say that even Problem hates us)
    THINA BANTWANA SAFA YINZONDO (We the children are victims of hatred)

After the Song all actors rush to the Background of the Stage. Change the attire. One Actor approach[es] the Stage (Soldier uniform) and one actor wearing informally [sic]. Soldier -intimidate the boy.

Actor 2:   Hey - you black boy; I've heard that your father is a Communist. Is that true or false. *Praat-maan* [man]-*praat* (Speak man speak).

Actor 3:   No Sir, my father is not a terrorist.

Actor 2:   Bull shit *maan.* You want to die or tell the truth. You son of a beach [bitch]. *Praat! Praat!* I'll kill you now.

Actor 3:   That's the truth Sir, I do not hide any thing [sic].

Actor 2:   (Push the boy with his gun): This Country is up in flames, because of you. You are the one's who cause[s] the Country to be ungovernable.

Actor 3:   (Crying): No - Sir. Thats not true.

Actor 2:   (Still pushing him with a Gun): Shut up - Go home.

    ALL OTHER ACTORS SING THE SAME SONG [ABOVE] BEHIND THE CURTAINS

Scene 3

NB ONE ACTOR APPROACH THE STAGE

Actor 1:   All Children should be protected from Drugs, Cigarettes and Alcohol.

NB (One actor approach the Stage)

Actor 2:   Approach the Stage - having two beers & smoking cigarette [sic].

NB: Another Actor get on Stage (Child) [sic]

Actor 2:   Pass a Beer to Actor 3 and Cigarette [sic].

Actor 3: Light the Cigarette and drink the beer [sic].

Actor 4: Please my brother - for the sake of our Children stop that. Why are you destroying the future of our country. Why do you destroy the leader of tomorrow. This child is going to be a bright light which will show us a way in the near future. For God's sake - please stop poisoning the seeds of our new Generations.

Actor 2: (Drunk - unbalance - pointing finger to the Actor 4 [sic]): *Kuphuza mina - kudakwa wena* (I drink and you get drunk). Look boy - I am old enough be fucked around by you, you get my point. This is my Child - Leave me alone - *Ngidla imali yami* (I eat my own money).

Actor 3: looking drunk also point finger to the Actor 4 [sic].

Actor 2: Pull actor 3 and leave the Stage [sic].

Actor 4: Leave the Stage to the other direction [sic].

ALL OTHER ACTORS SING THE SONG

CURTAINS

APPENDIX E

1.   Mayibuye Cultural Group: Questionnaire 1

No: ....

Date: ....

1) Sex

M	F

2) Age

5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Other

3) Place of Birth

Rural	Urban	RSA	TBVC countries	Other

4) Place of residence (address):
....

5) Place of residence
a) Owner: Give details, e.g. leasehold:
....

b)Tenant: Give details, e.g. live with relatives
....

c)Other:
....

d) Number of rooms:...........

6) For how many years have you been living at above address?

0-1	2-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20 +

7) Previous places of residence

Rural	Urban	RSA	TBVC countries	Other

8) Reason for moving

Parents moved	Cheaper accommodation	Work opportunities	Forced removal
Eviction	School	Marriage	Other

9) First language

N/Sotho	Tswana	S/Sotho	Zulu	Xhosa	Ndebele
Venda	Tsonga	Other			

10) Competency in other languages

a) Speak

English	Afrikaans	N/Sotho	Tswana	S/Sotho	Zulu
Xhosa	Ndebele	Venda	Tsonga	Other	

b) Read

English	Afrikaans	N/Sotho	Tswana	S/Sotho	Zulu
Xhosa	Ndebele	Venda	Tsonga	Other	

c) Write

English	Afrikaans	N/Sotho	Tswana	S/Sotho	Zulu
Xhosa	Ndebele	Venda	Tsonga	Other	

11) Church affiliation

Roman Catholic	Protestant	Anglican	ZCC
Other Zionists	Ethiopian	Methodist	Other

12) Highest qualification

None:.............................	Form/Std.........................	Diploma:.........................
Certificate:......................	Other:.............................	

13) Economic sector

Economic inactive, e.g. housewife, pensioner	Economic active
Unemployed	Student

14) Occupation

Administrative	Labourer	Artisan
Semi-professional	Professional	Other

15) If you are unemployed, how do you generate an income?

Casual jobs	Pension of family member	Other

16) Do you have relatives in rural areas?

Yes	No

17) Where?

TBVC	RSA	Other

18) Do you still visit them?

Yes	No

19) Why?

Social	Economical	Religious	Other reasons

20) Do you think that a drama (play) is part of everyday life?

Yes	No

21) Explain your answer in question 20:
....
....

22) Are the two plays that you have been involved with, based on actual events?

Yes	No

23) Have you personally been involved in these actual events?

Yes	No

If yes, please explain:
....
....

24) Organise the following occupations in order of your preference by numbering them from 1 to 21 – 1 indicating your first choice, 2 your second choice, etc.

actor...
accountant...............................
businessman............................
cultural worker.........................
doctor.......................................
lawyer.......................................
musician...................................

nurse..
writer of plays............................
policeman..................................
politician...................................
priest...
professional sportsman.............
shebeen king/queen..................
shopkeeper...............................
shop-steward.............................
singer..
taxi-driver/owner........................
teacher......................................
trade union official.....................
worker.......................................

25) Indicate which word describes you best by numbering them from 1 to 10 – 1 indicating your first choice, 2 indicating your second choice, etc. If one or more of the words are not applicable, ignore them in your answer.

actor..
ANC member.............................
COSATU official.........................
cultural worker...........................
musician....................................
PAC member.............................
writer of plays............................
singer..
student......................................
worker.......................................

26) Indicate which word describes best how you see yourself <u>while you are performing</u> in the UNIPEC Group by numbering the words from 1 to 11 – 1 indicating your first choice, 2 your second choice, etc. If one or more of the words are not applicable, ignore them in your answer.

actor..
ANC member.............................
COSATU member.......................
COSATU official.........................
cultural worker...........................
musician....................................
PAC member.............................
writer of plays............................
singer..
student......................................
worker.......................................

27) Indicate which word describes best how you think the audience sees you while you are performing in the UNIPEC Group, by numbering the words from 1 to 11 – 1 indicating your first choice, 2 your second choice, etc. If one or more of the words are not applicable, ignore them in your answer.

actor..
ANC member.............................
COSATU member.......................
COSATU official.........................
cultural worker...........................

musician.......................................
PAC member...............................
writer of plays.............................
singer...
student.......................................
worker..

28) Indicate which word describes best the <u>kind of activity that you are doing</u> when you are performing, by numbering the words from 1 to 8 – 1 indicating your first choice, 2 your second choice, etc.

art..
contribution to the struggle............
enjoyment...................................
glamour.......................................
play...
relaxation....................................
socialization................................
work..

2.   Mayibuye Cultural Group: Questionnaire 2

Date:................................

1) Full Names:
....

Nicknames:
....

2)

Male	Female

3) Age:.............................

4) Place of birth:
....

(Indicate where this place is in South Africa.)

Rural	Urban	Bantustans	TBVC

5) Place of residence

a) Address:
....
....

b) Civic structure zone:

....

c) Are you the owner of the house? If so, give details on ownership, for example lease-
   hold:

....

....

d) Are you a tenant in the house? If so, explain your position, for example, live with
   parents/relatives/friends:

....

....

e) If you are only living temporarily at the address, give details:

....

....

f) For how many years have you been living at the above address?

0-1	2-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20 +

g) Previous place(s) of residence:

....

....

(Indicate where the place(s) is/are in South Africa.)

Rural	Urban	Bantustans	TBVC

h) Reason for moving to current address:

Parents moved	Cheaper accommodation	Work opportunities	Forced removal
Eviction	School	Marriage	

i) Do you live together with other members of the Mayibuye Cultural Group?

Yes	No

If yes, indicate with whom:

....

6) Competency in languages:

a) First language:

N/Sotho	Tswana	S/Sotho	Zulu	Xhosa
Ndebele	Venda	Swazi	Tsonga	

b) Competency in other languages:

i) Which of the following languages can you speak?

English	Afrikaans	N/Sotho	Tswana	S/Sotho	Zulu
Xhosa	Ndebele	Venda	Tsonga	Swazi	

ii) Which of the following languages can you read?

English	Afrikaans	N/Sotho	Tswana	S/Sotho	Zulu
Xhosa	Ndebele	Venda	Tsonga	Swazi	

iii) Which of the following languages can you write?

English	Afrikaans	N/Sotho	Tswana	S/Sotho	Zulu
Xhosa	Ndebele	Venda	Tsonga	Swazi	

7) a) Highest academic qualification:

No schooling:......................	Form/standard:....................	Diploma:............................
Certificate:..	Degree:...	

b) Students: Name of school:
....

c) Leadership position:
....

8) Church affiliation:

a) To which church(es) do you belong?

Roman Catholic	Dutch Reformed	Anglican	ZCC
Other Zionists	Ethiopian	Methodist	

b) How often do you attend church activities?

More than once a week	Once a week	Once in two weeks	Once a month	A few times per year

c) Do you still believe in the ancestral spirits?

Yes	No

d) Do you still pray to/observe/make sacrifices to your ancestral spirits?

Yes	No

If yes, how often?

More than once a week	Once a week	Once in two weeks	Once a month	A few times per year

9) Political affiliation:
a) To which political organisation(s) do you belong?

ANC	PAC	AZAPO		

b) Specify the forum(s)/youth groups that you belong to:
....

c) If you have a leadership position in any organisation, specify:
....

d) How often do you attend political meetings/rallies?

More than once a week	Once a week	Once in two weeks	Once a month	A few times per year

10) Economic sector:

a) Indicate which of the following is applicable:

Economic inactive, e.g. housewife, pensioner	Economic active, i.e. working	Disabled
Unemployed	Student	

b) Occupation:

Administrative	Labourer	Artisan
Semi-professional	Professional	

c) If you are economic inactive/student/unemployed/disabled, how do you generate an income?

Casual jobs	Supported by relatives	Pension of family member	Supported by friends	

d) If unemployed, state for how long have you been unemployed?
....

e) If you are working, state for how long have you been working:
....

f) If you are working, indicate where, and how long you have been in this job:
....

g) To which trade unions do you belong?
....

h) If you belong to any other workers' organisations, please specify:

....

i) If you hold a leadership position, please specify:

....

11) a) Are you married?

Yes	No

b) If yes, indicate type of marriage

Customary (traditional) marriage	Civil (church) marriage
Customary and civil marriage	

c) Did you/your family pay/receive lobolo?

Yes	No

d) If yes, please specify:

....

e) For how long have you been married?:

....

f) Is your husband/wife also part of the Mayibuye Cultural Group?

Yes	No

g) If no, does he/she support your participation?

Yes	No

h) If yes, please give reasons:

....

i) If no, give reasons:

....

j) Do you have any children?

Yes	No

If yes, give details and indicate whether they influence your participation in the Mayibuye Cultural Group:

....
....

k) Do you have any relatives in the Mayibuye Cultural Group?

Yes	No

l) If yes, indicate whom and the relationships:

....

m) Who in the Mayibuye Cultural Group would you consider as being your close friends:

....
....

n) Did you know them before you joined the group?

Yes	No

o) Have you attended a tribal (mountain) school?

Yes	No

If yes, give details:

....
....

12) Do you have any relatives in **rural** areas?

Yes	No

a) Where?:

....

Indicate where the area(s) is/are in South Africa

TBVC	Bantustans

b) Do you still visit them?

Yes	No

c) If yes, indicate why

Social	Economical	Religious

d) If no, give reasons:

....

e) Do you have a specific *isiduko*?

Yes	No

f) If yes, give details:

....

g) Do you belong to a specific *isizwe*?

Yes	No

h) If yes, give details:
....

13) a) Did you have any training in singing/acting/dancing before you joined the group?

Yes	No

b) If yes, give details:
....

c) Before joining the UNIPEC/Mayibuye Cultural Group, did you ever perform in any concert/play (including school/church concerts/plays)?

Yes	No

d) If yes, please give details:
....

e) How often does the Mayibuye Cultural Group rehearse/meet?
Meet:

More than once a week	Once a week	Once in two weeks	Once a month	A few times per year

Rehearse:

More than once a week	Once a week	Once in two weeks	Once a month	A few times per year

f) What voice do you sing in the Mayibuye Cultural Group?

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Baritone	Bass

g) Do you have a leadership position in the Mayibuye Cultural Group?

Yes	No

h) If yes, give details of position and function:
....
....

i) Who do you think makes the biggest contribution to the group, and why?
....
....

14) Do you belong to any cultural organisation?

Yes	No

If yes, give details:
....

15) Leisure time
   a) Indicate how you spend your leisure time

Reading newspapers	Reading books	Listening to the radio	Watching TV
Visiting friends	Going to political meetings	Participating in sport	Playing games
Watching videos/films	Rehearsing in the Mayi-buye Cultural Group	Going to clubs/shebeens	Listening to live music
Watching sport			

b) Indicate how many hours per week you spend on these activities:

Reading newspapers:...........................

Reading books:.....................................

Listening to the radio:..........................

Watching TV:..

Visiting friends:....................................

Going to political meetings:...................

Participating in sport:...........................

Playing games:.....................................

Watching videos/films:..........................

Rehearsing in the Mayibuye Cultural Group.................

Going to clubs/shebeens:.....................

Listening to live music:.........................

Watching sport:....................................

(The prioritiing grids used for items 16 to 19 on the next pages are adapted from Bolles (1991:216))

16) Career preference

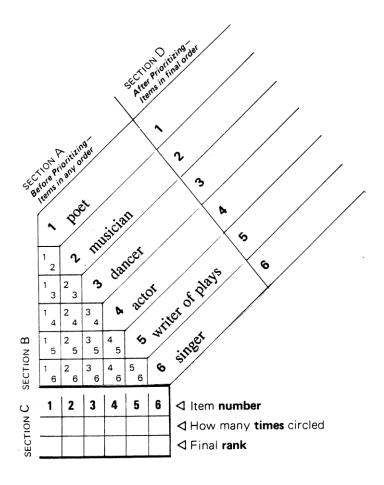Which one of the following careers is most important to you?
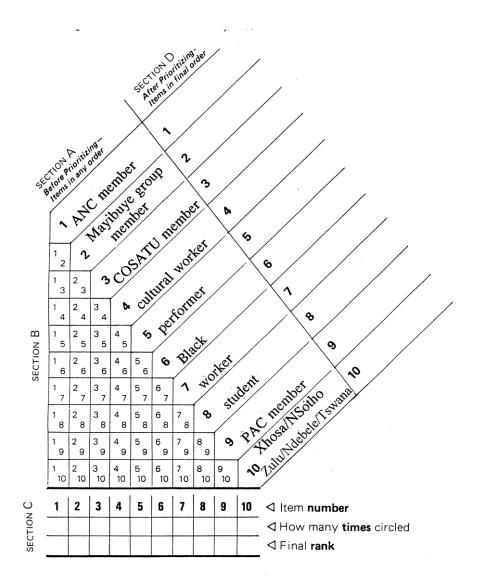
Procedure: Compare two careers (items in Section A) at a time, circling the number of the one you prefer (between the two) in Section B. Begin with Item 1 and compare it to Item 2, then compare Item 1 to Item 3, etc.

SECTION D — After Prioritizing — Items in final order

SECTION A — Before Prioritizing — Items in any order

SECTION B

1 policeman
2 trade-union official
3 priest
4 teacher
5 ANC official
6 taxi-driver/owner
7 lawyer
8 professional sportsman
9 worker
10 Mayibuye group member

SECTION C	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	◁ Item **number**
											◁ How many **times** circled
											◁ Final **rank**

17a) <u>Description of yourself as a performer</u>

Which one of the following words describes you best as a performer?

Procedure: Compare two words (items in Section A) at a time, circling the number of the one you prefer (between the two) in Section B. Begin with Item 1 and compare it to Item 2, then compare Item 1 to Item 3, etc.

17b) <u>Description of yourself</u>

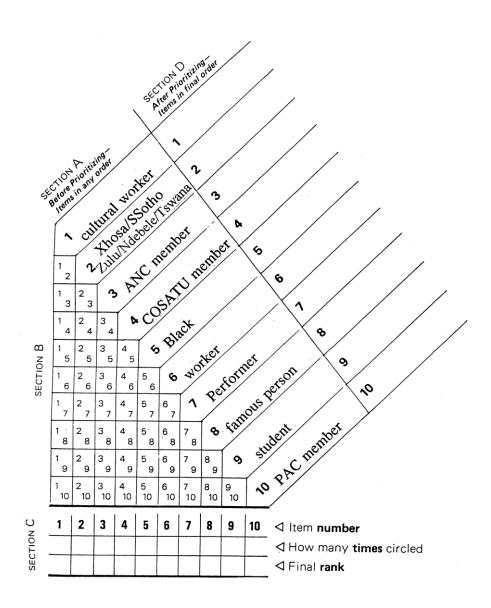Which one of the following words describes you best?

Procedure: Compare two descriptions (items in Section A) at a time, circling the number of the one you prefer (between the two) in Section B. Begin with Item 1 and compare it to Item 2, then compare Item 1 to Item 3, etc.

18) Perception of self

Indicate which one of the following words describes best how you think the audience sees you while you are performing in the *Mayibuye* Cultural Group?
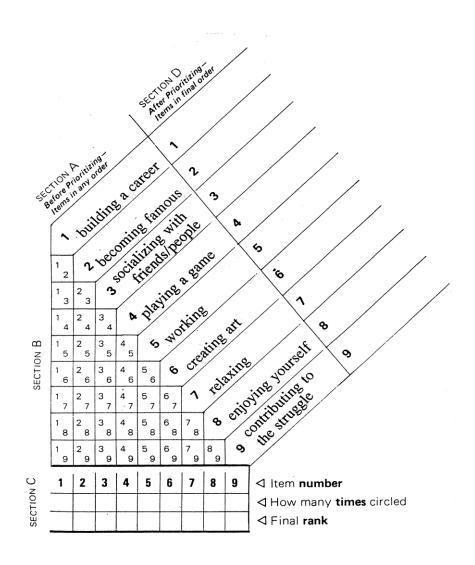
Procedure: Compare two descriptions (items in Section A) at a time, circling the number of the one you prefer (between the two) in Section B. Begin with Item 1 and compare it to Item 2, then compare Item 1 to Item 3, etc.

19) <u>Perception of activity</u>

Indicate which of the following words describes best the kind of activity that you are doing when you are performing?

Procedure: Compare two descriptions (items in Section A) at a time, circling the number of the one you prefer (between the two) in Section B. Begin with Item 1 and compare it to Item 2, then compare Item 1 to Item 3, etc.
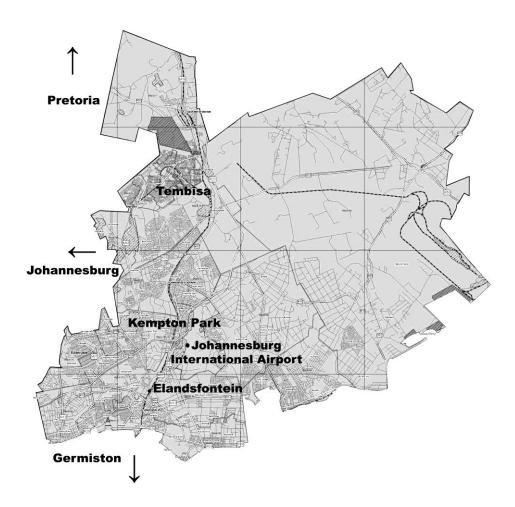
APPENDIX F

: Map 1: Location of Tembisa shown within South Africa

Map 2: Tembisa as part of the Northern Service Region (Ekhuruleni)

Map 3: Detail map of Tembisa showing Ethafeni Section