

# JOURNEY

## TO FREEDOM

N a r r a t i v e s

### CONTRIBUTORS

Eduard Fourie, George King, D Johan Kruger, Mandla Makhanya, Mogomme Alpheus Masoga, Gwenneth Miller, Zodwa Motsa, Wendy Ross , Raymond Suttner, Puleng Segalo, Martin Terre Blanche, Thembela Vokwana  
With an Afterword by Mandla Makhanya.



JOURNEY  
TO FREEDOM  
Narratives

© 2007 University of South Africa  
First edition, first impression

ISBN 978-1-86888-458-2  
Published by Unisa Press  
University of South Africa, PO Box 392, UNISA, 0003

Cover & layout design:  
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Printed by CPD Printers, Pretoria

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with a preface by Barney Pityana and  
an afterword by Mandla Makhanya.

University of South Africa Press  
Pretoria



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# acknowledgements

During July of 2003 Professor Barney Pityana advised his colleagues at the University of South Africa (UNISA) that he had received an invitation from the University of Mississippi to join them in a celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the civil rights legislation in the United States and the tenth anniversary of the democratization of South Africa in 2004.

The music concept was imagined by legendary South African jazz player 'Bra' Hugh Masekela and Prof Michael Cheers of the University of Mississippi ('Ole Miss'). We were sad that both pulled out of the project in its early stages.


Prof. Pityana tasked the UNISA Department of Art History, Visual Arts and Musicology to develop the proposal. Thembela Vokwana was appointed to develop the choir performance proposal. Gwenneth Miller of this department proposed that a multimedia component and art exhibition be developed as part of the event and along with Wendy Ross developed the concept to become a collaborative project. George King and Thembela Vokwana were instrumental in developing the idea of the international conference. Vokwana and Miller penned the drafts that formed the core of the event. These drafts were then elaborated on and finalized by committees under the guidance of Prof. Mandla Makhanya, Executive Dean of Human Sciences, appointed by Prof. Pityana, to be the official coordinator of the UNISA-Mississippi Project.

Storyteller 'Gcina Mhlope provided the link to oral tradition in both cultures.


The cultural events for Journey to Freedom were managed by Prof. Zodwa Motsa and administered by George King.

We thank them all for the many hours of work they devoted to this project.






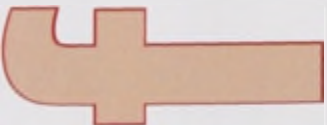
# preface




*The Journey to Freedom* is at once a fascinating enterprise and a unique articulation of the South African apartheid experience, the dawning of democracy and the ongoing transition to new society. What makes this publication so unique – even groundbreaking – is both its genesis, and the richness of artistic expression that has contributed to its content and format.



The bringing together of two institutions, the University of the Mississippi and the University of South Africa, to celebrate and interrogate America's fortieth anniversary of independence and the passages of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and South Africa's tenth year of democracy respectively, offered up evidence of the ties that bind, as well as the commonality of experience which is a condition of humankind, but which all too often goes unnoticed in the everyday insularity of our own experiences.



Most excitingly, the various journeys to freedom in this publication are reflected not only in the narrative, but also in the interdisciplinary nature of the format, which excites the imagination and captivates the senses in its richness, colour and originality, lending credence to the aphorism "every picture tells a story". The limitations imposed by the written word are thus rendered redundant, allowing for a more uninhibited expression of experience. Each "narrative", be it a story, song, embroidery, tapestry or the digital arts, is accorded equal dignity and status and in so doing, the human right to freedom of expression is upheld and celebrated. Every voice is heard.



The conference papers offer a fascinating, sometimes delightful, sometimes poignant insight into the life experiences and the cultures of their authors. *Kilts, drums and ancestors: Scottish Troops, Sekhwetshe and Turupa*, by Mogomme Alpheus Masoga reveals the fundamental connection and role of music and musical expression (in this case the Turupa) in every facet of African life, and through it, the assimilation of

life experiences, including cross-cultural experiences, into the history and culture of an individual, a family and a community. As such it offers an absorbing expression and view of the dichotomies of apartheid South Africa and the ensuing struggle in a manner that is entertaining yet immensely dignified. In the words of the author, "The Turupa" is about "power and dignity" in a society which was sadly bereft of both.

Raymond Suttner's *Democracy: Is it all doom and gloom?* deals with the persistent yet seemingly unfounded belief that democracy in post-apartheid South Africa is endangered – specifically because of a lack of a strong opposition to the ANC. Suttner speaks of a dogmatic adherence to a particular understanding of democracy that excludes the strong human rights orientation of the laws which frame our democracy and the space that is provided in the public sphere to express a diversity of opinions and challenge government initiatives. In imposing preconceived notions of liberation movements' evolution to political parties in newly formed democracies, the temptation is to assume a tendency towards authoritarianism and ultimately, autocratic rule that is antagonistic to democratic rule – and yet it was these liberation struggles which secured democracy following on years of undemocratic rule.

In *Re-imagining community: The Unisa community psychology experience*, the authors Puleng Segalo, D Johan Kruger, Eduard Fourie and Martin Terre Blanche discuss the initially unproductive development of community psychology under apartheid and the ensuing innovation in community psychology heralded by democracy in 1994. The

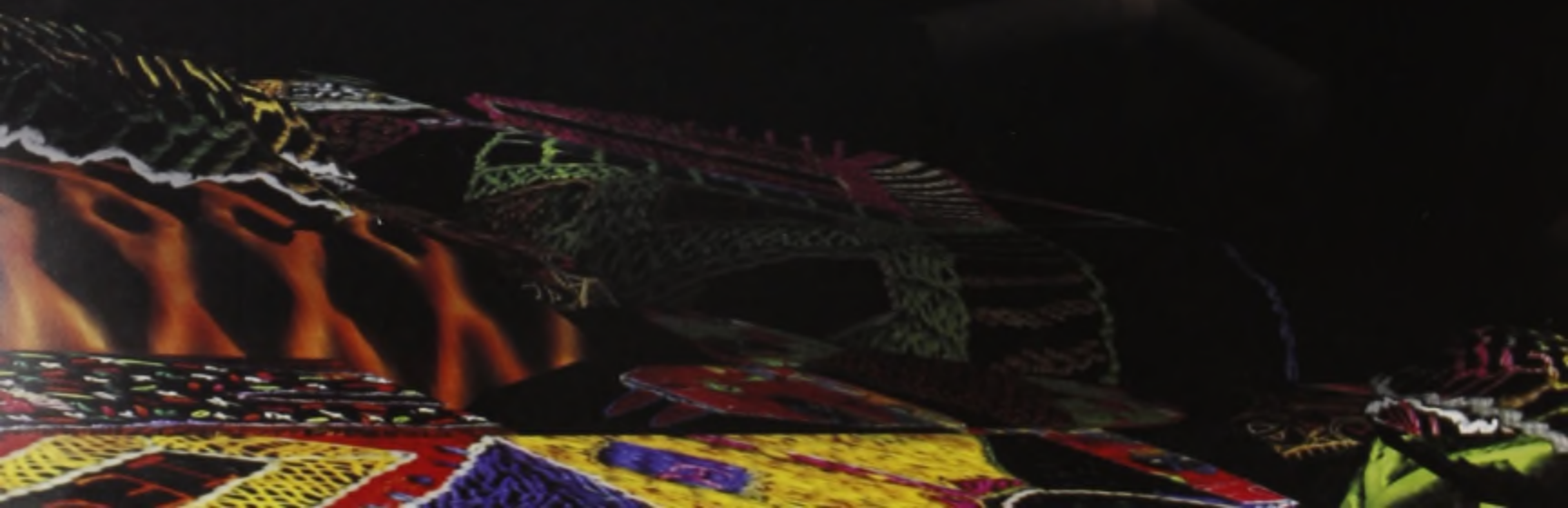
authors speak of the important role of community psychology in social justice and reconciliation as evidenced in their participation in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Academic scholarship and undergraduate training has also thrived post 1994 and we find evidence of this in the significant increase in locally authored text books which reflect a more African understanding of psychology, including the individual and collective agencies that characterize modern South African communities. The exposition of the three "destinations" (modules) along the journey provides evidence of enthusiasm and an openness to explore a sense of our African identities both in a personal and communal sense.

The stories provide an informative and compelling snapshot of life under apartheid. They bring to the fore the pathos, the idiosyncrasies and the contradictions that characterise South African society and that have formed and influenced our sense of self, our sense of being and belonging, and our sense of nationhood. As such the authors in a sense, lay themselves bare, offering to us the reader, their thoughts, feelings and emotions in a way that touches and awakens, even as it facilitates understanding and reconciliation.

*The Journey to Freedom* is a publication of which we can be justifiably proud. In providing an intellectual space for the diverse expression of life experiences under apartheid and beyond, this publication offers the opportunity for South Africans of all cultures to tell their stories and share their insights without rancour and in a manner that informs and engages, that is cathartic, reconciliatory and empowering, and that facilitates the renaissance of a new identity.

**by Barney Pityana**

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# u n c t i o n

## i n t r o d u c t i o n

The dismantling of the apartheid system and its replacement by the creation of formal democratic socio-political structures is cause for celebration. South Africa had a peaceful transition to democracy that is widely regarded as an option for such transitions globally. South Africa's constitution is praised by democracies everywhere as is its vibrant representational democratic multi-party political system.

South Africa has laws to address the inequalities of the past and to affirm those who were historically disadvantaged by the apartheid system. Furthermore, it has a stable, growing economy, and politicians who are making their mark in both the African and international political arenas. Reconciliation is seen as a constant process which requires constant commitment and reassessment of the problems that continue to dog the country.

In many ways, South Africa's current non-violent struggle against racism mirrors that of African Americans in the American South in the 1960s. Mississippi, through its history with comparable incidents to South Africa's own apartheid past, forms an ideal space for comparative studies and collaborative efforts. Forty years into their Civil Rights Acts, Mississippi has much to say about its experience of confronting race and segregation,

issues that continue to trouble the South Africa of 2007. There is a dialogue that has begun, hurdles that must be circumvented or crossed and decisions to be made on these parallel journeys towards peace and reconciliation.

During October 2003 Gwen Miller and Thembela Vokwane accepted an invitation from Professor Michael Cheers and Dr Susan Glisson of the University of Mississippi to be observers in the *First International Conference on Race: Racial Reconciliation* hosted by the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, University of Mississippi. A highlight was the workshop on non-violent action and the keynote address by Reverend Dr James M Lawson, a key African American figure in desegregating the American South. Reverend Lawson, who studied under Mahatma Gandhi after resisting the draft in the Korean War and returned to the US after Rosa Parks famously refused to give up her bus seat in 1955. Shortly after that he began to work as a strategist for Martin Luther King, who became his close friend and comrade. Lawson worked tirelessly for the African American Civil Rights Movement, co-ordinating the 1961 Freedom Ride and the 1966 Meredith March in Mississippi. The Mississippi conference also presented the UNISA delegation with the opportunity to meet Dr James Meredith, the first black person to study at the University of Mississippi.

The UNISA-Mississippi project constitutes a milestone in the history of the newly merged departments of Art History, Visual Arts and Musicology at UNISA. It marks a collaborative effort that cements the relationship between the sections of the department on an academic level and also through outreach activities (such as the embroidery project involving the sewing groups Boitumelo and Intutuko, and Melodia UNISA Chorale) entailed in the larger project. The focus on music and visual arts as 'tools' with which people negotiate and tell their histories holds a special place in the academic sphere of UNISA and also in the history of South Africa. It charts the path that has been taken by ordinary South Africans to move towards reconciliation and peace in the aftermath of the landmark 1994 elections. Through focus on the **everyday** and individual **narratives**, this project opens up an intellectual space through which we can gain illuminating insights into the ways artistic individual and collective expressions in general **contribute** to the project of memory, (re)making of history and

**expressing trauma** while also seeking routes towards healing, empowerment and nation building.

*Journey to Freedom* is about apartheid and its formal ending, but it is also about **reconciliation**. It tells of the **resilience of the human spirit to overcome atrocities**.

Celebrating South Africa's tenth anniversary of independence and America's fortieth anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, this project showed how storytelling and song, embroidery, tapestry and digital arts – in combination with a commitment to academic freedom – can become universal tools to collapse the walls of racial and political divisiveness. Such tools can build bridges towards reconciliation – both in and across America and South Africa.

*The Journey to Freedom* speaks of a **trans-Atlantic experience** in its combination of songs and story.



The project shared the richness of the cross-cultural music genres of **gospel and spirituals from Mississippi** and the **South African choral tradition** rendered by the Melodia UNISA Chorale.

*Journey to Freedom's* concept of **the thread that binds** us together is as central in the physical embroideries as in the digitally animated embroideries.

UNISA's department of Art History, Visual Arts and Musicology extended the concept to include South African embroideries from the Boitumelo and Intuthuko Sewing Groups detailing the theme of the songs. These were digitalized, animated and projected onto a screen above the performers to contextualize the music. The interdisciplinary multimedia nature of the project was ground-breaking in the way it translated cloth work into digital images.

Central to the project was the concept of the **working together** of artists with different backgrounds, different racial groups, different educational levels and different points of reference. The dynamic of a group project was respected, with discussions and open debates enriching and critically enhancing the process. While the bulk of participants were women, there were also five men in this multimedia project.

'Working together' was unfortunately a concept that never materialized. UNISA ended up dealing with the project on its own, but attempted to reflect the **parallel histories of the struggle for freedom, reconciliation and social transformation** in South

Africa and the US, particularly the issues of freedom of the American South.

The following events constitute the initial program of the *Journey to Freedom* project:

- An International interdisciplinary conference and public lectures at UNISA in Pretoria during 8-9 July 2004, called *Celebrating and Interrogating Freedoms*.
- The *Journey to Freedom* – musical performance incorporating the multimedia project (embroidery and digital art), 9-10 July 2004.
- Art Exhibition at the UNISA Art Gallery in Pretoria, July and August 2004, titled *UNISA reflects on its collection of resistance art*.

Outcomes that were realized:

- An international conference
- Book of event
- Curated art exhibition
- Concert tour with multimedia projections
- Wall hangings (South African embroideries and African-American quilts)
- Bags at the conference
- Empowerment of people at grassroots level
- Documentary video showcasing the genesis and culmination of the entire project including CD recordings of the choirs
- National and international exposure of the project



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# Conference concept documentation

## Celebrating & Interrogating Freedoms: South African Democracy & US Civil Rights

The University of South Africa held the first International inter-disciplinary conference in Pretoria in July 2004. In early calls for proposals, the conference was conceptualized as follows:

As South Africa celebrates its tenth year of democracy and the United States of America celebrates its fortieth anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the conference organisers invites interested academics and human rights activists to participate in an interdisciplinary conference framed by the broad theme of interrogating freedoms. The conference is to be focussed on these three sub-themes.

**[Re-] imagining our social world:** inviting papers on the possibilities and limits of the constitutional imagination; other political/legal issues. Convener: Mr PFG Mtimkulu, Political Science (UNISA)

South Africa's constitutional democracy is premised, inter alia, on the right of individuals and communities to re-invent their identities, to imagine new social worlds, and to participate in the public contestation of alternative political imaginations. This is in stark contrast to the apartheid state, where social identities were legally imposed, where individuals were not allowed to transcend the strictures of rigid classifications, and where the space for political action was severely restricted.

We invite papers dealing with the following, and related, themes:

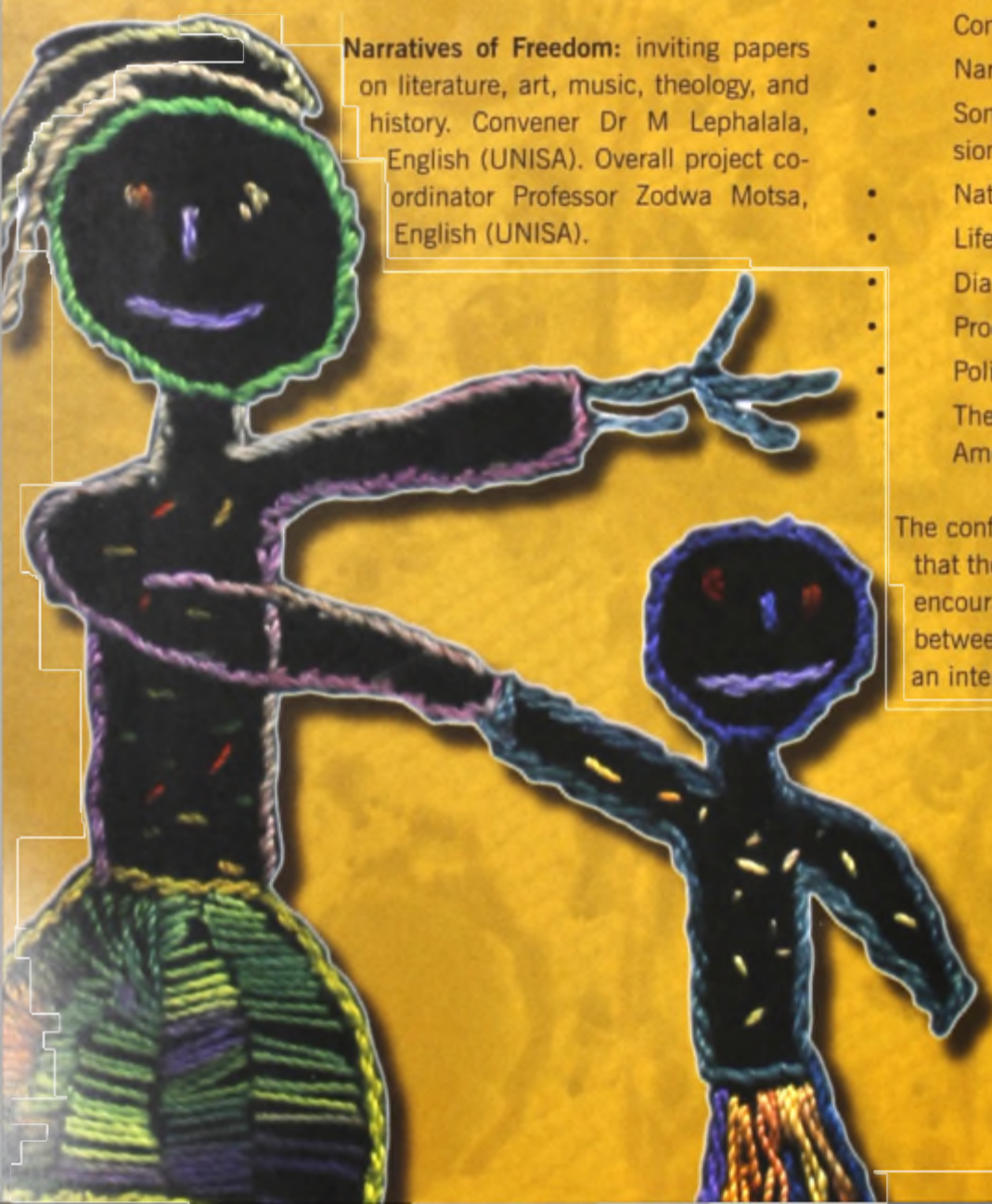
- the creation, through political action, of public spaces in which different identities can flourish, and in which conflicting social visions and imaginations can coexist and contend with one another
- the possibilities and limits of constitutional discourse in securing such a plurality of visions and identities
- (re)-visioning the world through art, by disrupting and rethinking identities

**Patterns of inequality:** inviting papers on community themes, the margins of society, fighters for particular rights, the homeless and the labour movement. Convener: Professor JSS Shole, African Languages (UNISA)

The year 2004 marks ten years of formal democracy in South Africa. This, along with the dismantling of the formal apartheid system and its replacement by the creation of formal democratic socio-political structures, is in itself cause for celebration. We had a peaceful transition to democracy. We have a constitution in place, a vibrant representational-democratic multi-party political system that mirrors the best political systems in the world as well as legislation to address the inequalities of the past and affirm those historically disadvantaged by the apartheid system. We also have a stable, growing economy.

However, poverty levels have increased, along with unemployment and inequality; the latter most markedly among the previously disadvantaged. We have high levels of crime. Alarming, crimes and discrimination against women and children seem to be rampant. And we have a growing HIV/AIDS problem. Finally, political corruption at all levels seems to be rife.

Thus, for this sub-theme, we seek to come to some seriously considered conclusions about where we are and what we still need to do, after a decade of formal democracy.



**Narratives of Freedom:** inviting papers on literature, art, music, theology, and history. Convener Dr M Lephala, English (UNISA). Overall project coordinator Professor Zodwa Motsa, English (UNISA).

The title *Narratives of Freedom* is intended to capture the rich tapestry of stories we weave around what it means to be human and free within a democratic society. 'Narratives' should be interpreted in its broadest application to include performance. Papers or performances may look back to an era of slavery and oppression or forward to a possible future of a true African renaissance. Possible topics could include:

- Revising conventional notions of nationality and the colonial subject
- Rethinking imperialism
- Competing discourses around globalization
- Narratives of slavery and freedom
- Song (e.g. Jazz) as a form of freedom expression
- Nationality, ethnicity and hybridity
- Life-writing or writing/performing the self
- Dialogues / translations of freedom
- Producing nationalities/ narrations of nation
- Political interventions / negotiation freedoms
- The historical imagination in African/African-American writing.

The conference organizers do not wish to suggest that these three themes are discrete entities and encourage papers which blur the borderlines between the three subsections and which have an interdisciplinary focus.

The conference succeeded in bringing together participants from diverse disciplines. The paper focused broadly on issues of nationality and re-thinking of identities in a new South Africa dispensation.

What follows is a selection of extracts from the conference presentations.

During my lifetime I have dedicated my life to this struggle of the African People. I have fought against white domination and have fought against black domination and I have cherished the ideals of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to see realised.

MANDELA 1962



**Journey to Freedom**

**Conference papers 1**

# Kilts, drums and ancestors: Scottish Troops, Sekhwetshe and Turupa

Mogomme Alpheus Masoga

UNISA Department of Art History,  
Visual Arts and Musicology



I should, perhaps, begin by explaining to the reader the background to this study. In my early childhood in the village of Ga-Ramotse, I was privileged to grow up under the guiding influence of my maternal great-grandfather, Khathuthu Johannes Nthite. When I was six years old, he was already about seventy-five. At ten, I was ready to herd sheep and goats, as was expected of all boys of that age in the community. This responsibility was a mark of maturity, though my eldest brothers had the higher responsibility of herding cattle. I was born into a society in which music was lived and was an integral part of the community experience.

My own clan had a rich musical background. I still recall being introduced to basic esoteric knowledge and the skills of handling oracular tablets; songs and dances were used during the entire process of gathering herbs and administering medicines. Novices in healing and divining also had to use music, such as the clapping of hands, drumming and dancing, to induce ancestral trances on a daily basis. Songs such as 'khalel'nkanu, khalel'nkanu, nkanu y'baba b'yi buzi nkanu' ('I am crying for the healing horn, let my ancestral spirits bring the healing horn to me') were repeatedly sung by the novices, led by their seniors in the sangoma lodges ('izindomba'). With drums beating in the background, the novices danced and invoked their spirits.

My great-grandfather had a trumpet that he played only on Saturdays. This trumpet became an important instrument of power and recognition in the village,



STOP

as well as a symbol of acknowledgement and respect throughout the community. All the members of the village spoke highly of my great-grandfather's bravery and the fact that he had been courageous enough to face the 'enemy' in the war. My elder brother and I used to follow him, marching, clapping hands and cheering the rhythmic melodies that came from the trumpet. While playing, our great-grandfather would interject comments such as: 'I was a soldier during the Second World War. I fought, and this trumpet is a sign of victory and honour bestowed on me after winning the war.'

My great-grandfather used the trumpet to perform local music – the music that the people around Ga-Ramotse understood and could identify with. It should be mentioned in this family context that my great-grandfather was on the council of elders that advised both the King and the police officer (*Kgosi ya Matebele a Mmabolepu*), whose great place (*moshate*) is situated in Majaneng, about fifteen kilometres from Ga-Ramotse. Community people from Ga-Ramotse would table issues of concern at the King's great place. This means that my home was a meeting place for the community, and most performances would be brought to my home in honour of the King.

As members of the Nthite family, we were expected to welcome community people and show respect to everyone, whatever their status. The family became a community family, and the community became part of the family. In most exchanges with the elders of Ga-Ramotse, Khathuthu never ceased to mention his experiences as a soldier in the war. I became aware that he had been joined in the war

by his elder brother, Mogomme Alpheus Nthite. They fought side by side, but Mogomme did not return. It was my great-grandfather who came home to narrate their war experiences, never omitting any aspect of his own bravery. I have always tried to understand how my great-grandfather was able to treasure his war experiences in Egypt, England, Italy and elsewhere, how he was accustomed to Western ways of understanding, and yet at the same time managed to retain his 'Africanity'. My great-grandfather would proudly announce that he understood *sekgowa* ('the white man and his way of doing things') and brag to his counterparts in the village, scorning them for never having been in a helicopter or a warplane. He would make a big noise, mixing his speech with Afrikaans and English words to make his point about the ignorance of certain village elders. He was well known for jokingly addressing people as *ja jou kaffir!* (*yes, you kaffir!*), an expression used without any ill intent, at least in his case.

All the same, Khathuthu did not compromise the fact that he was an African, and lived the life of an African. This is better explained with reference to the following matters: first, he allowed and encouraged my great-grandmother, Motlatsi Nthite (née Sekele) (see R Devisch 1985:50), to practise as both a herbalist and a diviner-healer. Motlatsi was well known for her indigenous knowledge, healing skills and mastery of medicinal plants. She is best remembered as a healer of children ('o be a alafa bana'), in particular of 'malwetsi a phogwana', literally, 'head-related illnesses'. Our house was full of containers of medicinal powders and liquids intended for various healing practices. This meant that the house had space and time for ancestry, *badimo*. The corners





of the mud walls at the entrance of the house had 'thithikwana' ('Modimo wa fase') and 'lehwama' (a sacrificial spot for the veneration of the ancestors - see Coplan 2002). Furthermore, Khathuthu allowed musical performances in honour and praise of the ancestors ('mmino wa malopo', or 'badimo mutshino wa malombo', divine-healing musical performances by VhaVenda that connect us with those that have departed into the spiritual domain, and have begun to function as spiritual custodians of those who are still living). And I still recall instances when Khathuthu woke up before dawn and faced the east, waiting for the sun to rise. He would then spit to the four corners of the earth ('botlhaba, lebowa, borwa and bodikela': east, north, south and west) and then go into his room to start preparing himself for the day's tasks. I believe that he did this every day as his morning devotion to his ancestors.

Khathuthu ensured that his trumpet performances found their own 'local' space. He had no sense of confusion about the two contexts within which he had to live. The award of the trumpet had given Khathuthu a sense of power and authority. He felt strongly that he had been part of the war and that the victory in it was very much his own. This sense of power and its space impelled Khathuthu to shift it to his local community. In turn, his local community

became a virtual part of his war experience. I recall some instances when we, the young boys in the family, were sent to Ga-Boloko (the Boloko family), renowned for their beer brewing, to buy beer ('sekala', derived from the English 'scale' in the sense of 'measure'). We were instructed to wash ourselves before undertaking this task. Khathuthu used to remark, 'byala ke ba badimo' (traditionally, brewed beer belongs to the ancestors).

On our return from Ga-Boloko, we were welcomed by songs and dances *Ono ntonkisa kae ga ke le malabulabu? Malabulabu, malabulabu!* and *Basadi ba mo ke baloi bahloka le mekgolokwane, mmalo, mmalo, mmalo* and *Matome ke lewalawala*. Laughter and joyful shouts dominated. While these performances were taking place, my great-grandfather and those of his peers who had taken part in the war would parade in their war-garb to convey their bravery and importance in the war. The rest of the men sitting around would chat about their *baas* (boss, master) or *miesies* (madam) back in Pretoria, Tshwane ya Mmamelodi. These intense and passionate discussions centred around power dispositions with which these local communities had to grapple on a daily basis: *my baas en my* ('my boss and I') or *my miesies en ek* ('my madam and I'), *they know in this whole village that I do not wear*

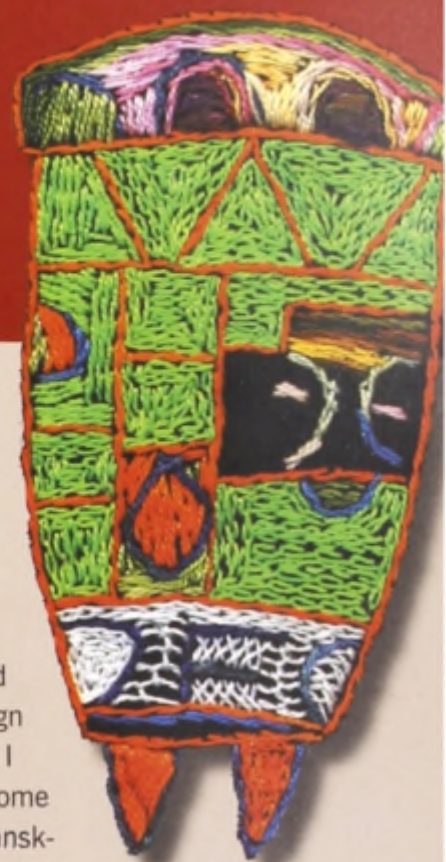
*majaja* (less expensive clothing, of poor quality), *ek is nie 'n baarie* (I am not stupid), *ek is nie 'n moegoe* (I am not stupid), *ek is 'n outie* (I am a hunk), *kyk na daai toppie* (look at that old man); and the list continues.

These examples from the author's own experience led him to look more closely at other examples of 'Western' music forms being transferred into a local context, with specific reference to the appropriation of military band music by migrant labourers. These types of musical performance were commonly known as *turupa*, meaning a gathering and group performance with particular rules. *Turupa* is an indigenous form of the English word 'troop', and in its specific musical context is a term for the music of the troops (that is, a military band). In the year 1922, General Jan Smuts, then Prime Minister of South Africa, inspected a military parade (saluting the troops), accompanied by music during a public ceremony in Pretoria. This event was witnessed by black South Africans who went on to recreate the music of the military band as an indigenous African musical style in rural communities such as Ga-Ramotse and neighbouring communities such as Majaneng, Surumane, Makapane, Lefatlheng, Marapyane, Kgomokgomo and Mogeelo.

What is of particular interest to the present writer regarding the creation of the musical genre now



known as *turupa* is the manner in which indigenous African musicians were able to analyze and internalize the foreign military band music. I myself performed in some of the *turupas* in Hammanskraal when I was young. For this



paper, I investigated the music of three groups: *Turupa ya Ntate Nyuzi* from Majaneng, *Turupa ya Ntate Ratlhagane* from Majaneng and the *Sekampaneng turupa*. Informal conversations were held with the musicians, while video and tape recordings were made of their performances.

The precise origin of *turupa* performances is not documented. For this reason, the oral input provided by various members of *turupa*, as well as members of their audiences in the local community, are of crucial importance. Mr Nyozzi from Majaneng (aged 66) gave the following account when interviewed about the origins of *turupa*:

We were taught by our elders in the village that Christmas is an important time for the community. We were taught that we should be organized

and entertain our community. When the time for Christmas approached, we organized ourselves and practised our movements and songs. Our practices were usually in the evening, from seven in the evening until twelve at night. Boys and girls together: we did not experience problems as it is the case today when boys and girls meet. Today there are problems ranging from AIDS/HIV, rapes, assaults, thugs at night and so on. During our time this was not the case. Part of these preparations was to look for a cow hide that was slaughtered for a merry feast and not for a funeral. The funeral cow hide would not give a sharp sound, as the occasion for its slaughtering was a mourning one. This was different from a merry occasion when performances were joyful. Part of our practices would entail organizing ourselves into ranks and lines. We were to march like soldiers, and the line had to showcase the army marshal officers, senior officers, the flag carriers, soldiers – boys and girls with toy guns. Silver flutes were used by the leading army marshals. Boys were expected to wear khaki clothing, while girls wore a reddish-white Scottish dress code. The performance was known as *Sekhwetshe* (Scottish). White *Batas* (sports shoes that were usually white in colour) were also worn. In the middle, we would have the nurses, teachers, doctors to symbolize 'progress' and advancement. We were not only singing and drumming but had games for the elderly and the children. One of the children's games I can recall was what whites called hoola-hoops: a small girl twirling a bicycle tyre around her waist while drums were played (small hand-held drums called *ditempedi*) and clapping, shouting, and whistling carried on. Cheerful crowds enjoyed these and other games we played. Children were prevented from loitering without doing any work; instead they were kept busy in the context of the performance with music, games and so on. Christmas would not be the same without *turupa* or *sekhwetshe*.

Asked about the origin of *turupas*, Mr Ratlhagane (77 years of age), also from Majaneng, reported as follows:

*Diturupa* started when we were in Pretoria and watched the army marshal in honor of Prime Minister Jan Smuts. I still recall the day, a day full of activities, marching, gun salutes, clapping of hands, black women from the periphery ululating in honour of 'heroes'. We watched and heard gun salutes, noises of bravery. Among these 'heroes' were Scottish armies wearing the reddish and, for that matter, stylish Scottish costume. They had pipes, lyres, drums, and skirts – Scottish skirts [kilts] – what a colourful event that was. We, the audience, were impressed to the extent that we wanted to start such performances in our local villages. We wanted to show our local fellows back home that a lot was taking place in Pretoria – the honour of seeing the prime minister of the country and his powerful army was something. We could not avoid sharing this knowledge experience with our local communities. Upon returning to our respective local communities we began recruiting performers, schoolchildren. We even went to the King's great place to request permission to stage such performances. The response from the King's great place was positive on condition that we had to start performing in the great place before showcasing ourselves to the entire village. We immediately started with our musical performance practices, created flags to identify ourselves with, gathered a group of responsible elders to act as guides to the children. You cannot believe me.

Starting *turupa* and maintaining it requires determination and purpose. It demands all of your time; it is not child's play. Please understand that



we used these performances of power to empower ourselves. We gained respect, dignity, and paved a way for our own powerful space. In fact *turupa* is all about power and dignity – note saluting, hand waving, peculiar army aesthetics, the structure and patterns organized for the monitoring and control of *turupa* performers. We felt good about what we did. People came as far as Pretoria to watch us perform. We performed in rainy times, in sunny times, until late at night. The whole thing was all about dedication and commitment. Schoolchildren grew up and matured as members of *turupa*. Most of them have families and are responsible adults in the community. All credit goes to the *turupa* performances. Our flags showed our *turupa* totem, usually that of the founder and leader; or in some cases the totem used in the entire local community. For instance, Mmabolepu is symbolized by an elephant, Tlou Mmabolepu

which is both a praise-form and identification form for our *turupa*. This means that our performances identified with the context in which we performed. The context was very important. It should be mentioned that most of our instruments were made from local 'stuff'. For instance, we made drums from cow hides, *mokgopa* or *letlalo la kgomo*. We were taught by our forefathers how to create a drum and let it perform for some time. Again it should be noted that even indigenous healers found affinities with our performance, since what we performed resonated with the *malopo* performances, meaning the dance and performances of healers and their healing communities. In fact, some of the performers in our group were indigenous healers to the extent that our performances themselves were said to be *mmino wa malopo* [divine-healing musical performances].

Mrs Ratlhagane, asked about her support for the *turupa* performances and her involvement in them, said:

You will be shocked to learn that I found Ratlhagane in the *turupa*. He was handsome and I loved seeing him take part in this special performance group. I supported the group and allowed all practices to take place here at our home. Our home became a home for many adults and children in our local community. Performances were given inside and outside our village. I do not regret the fact that I was once associated with these performances.

Mrs Nyuzi had the following to say about the *diturupa*:

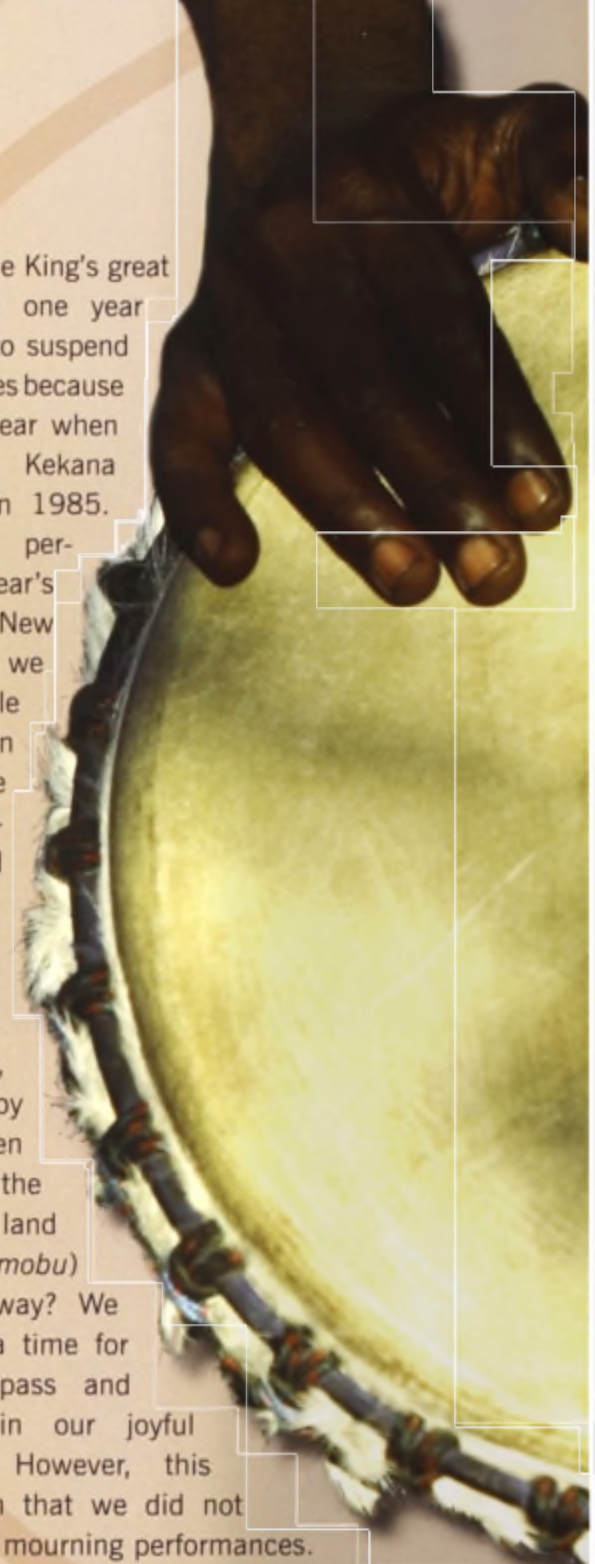
We no longer experience rain consistently. We have rain problems. *Turupa* drumming helped to evoke the ancestors and the drum beat echoed mother earth, the beat of African spirituality, *mmino wa badimo – badimo ba meropa* [musical drums and drumming associated with ancestors]. We need to resuscitate this type of performance; we need to rejuvenate it. Low morale or the absence of it is a cause for concern – the identity and purpose of Africa that children lack. Go to the mountains and ask the ancestors to help you restart this. Even the school curriculum needs it.

Asked about respect for authority (i.e. the King's council and authority) and the *turupa* performances, Mr Ratlhagane remarked that

We respected our community leaders. We could not embark on anything unless we obtained per-

mission from the King's great place. I recall one year when we had to suspend our performances because that was the year when King Lepheng Kekana died, it was in 1985. We did not perform for that year's Christmas and New Year's Day as we joined the whole community in mourning. The whole community mourned the death of the King. How could we have performed, danced happily, shouted with joy and so on when our father, the owner of the land (*mong wa mobu*) had passed away? We had to allow a time for mourning to pass and thereafter begin our joyful performances. However, this does not mean that we did not have funeral or mourning performances.

We were trained and we trained our followers how a comrade in our performances should be laid to rest in a full, dignified manner. Some of this training included a different way of beating the drum. It was drummed slowly with a deep sound, echoing the deep sound of ancestors. So this simply





When we started with *diturupa* [plural for *turupa*], we took it as part of the community socialization process. *Diturupa* are all about community music and about us as the community. They [referring to *diturupa*] mirror community life and experiences [*ke setshwantsho ka rona*]. Most of the children who participated in our *diturupa* have now become responsible members of the community. I still recall some of the songs that were performed during that time: *Bagesho a re tsamayeng, a re tsamayeng, rena re sepela* ['Please, people let us go, let us go, we are going!']. We had drums backing this up and movements of young boys and girls. We used to call it 'shake, shake!' meaning the performers should be able to 'shake' their waist in a manner that won approval from their audience. Young girls were expected to 'shake and shake' and took pride in doing it. One of the games that girls played for their audience was the 'hoola hoops' – meaning being able to move the bicycle silver-steel wheel [*lebili*] around their waist while the drums were played. The audience and the other performers would clap and encourage them. Furthermore, we combined the traditional dances with *sepantsola* (pantsula) names like *tsotsi* (gangster). *Tsotsi* dances were really enjoyed by our audience. You have to understand that our performances were meant for all and were all about all the life experiences of the community.

means that our performances paid high respect to the King's authority.

Mr Chabangu from Surumane, better known as Suurman ('sour man'), the community that falls under the greater community of Majaneng a Mmakola, had the following to say about *diturupa*:

Most of these comments from the above research participants were confirmed by others who did not want their names to be recorded. The origin of *turupa* points to the interface that took place between two 'worlds', the West and Africa. One notes the centrality of migration as a transporter of city 'baggage' to the local communities. Those who came



to be labelled *makarapa* returned home to showcase their experiences and show off their life in the city. At the core of their 'city experiences', they could not change the fact that they were local and had to deal with their local context, interfacing it with the 'city or outside experience'. Becoming *makarapa* challenged these migrant labourers to feel welcome in both the local and outside contexts. If I may here interject a pertinent personal anecdote: my own grandmother herself had to deal with the fact that she, as a domestic worker, was regarded at home as special because she was sleeping in town, working for whites in town and associating with them. She was commonly known as *motho wa makgoweng* or *wa sekgoweng* (literally, a person who has 'white city life and experience'). The label itself challenged her position in both contexts, white and African, rural and urban. She recounted the following to me:

I had to wash properly and wear nice clothes. The city was associated with wealth, style, everything that was of 'development'. We were called *batho*

*ba sekgoweng* – 'people of the city' – and I had to carry a handbag just like my *miesies* ('madam', the employer) and walk like her, *le leidi* ('a lady'). I had to wear a nice perfume, and I had high heels *ke tsamaya ka di tsetsenkwana*. Those were the days of apartheid. Remember that there were few of us who had identity documents. We were very few indeed. At times one would have police raiding our back rooms where we were working. The irony is that I carried an 'overall dress' and had to change into it before reaching my madam's place as she told me that I could not compete with her. My madam said she could not have a situation where there were two madams. I had to live between these worlds, my local world and the city world. But I could not cope with or be sincere to either of the worlds I had to face on a daily basis.

To return specifically to *diturupa*: we need to remember that these performances were established within the context of the struggle for equal rights. This is particularly relevant to our understanding of




the communal struggle in the face of the oppression of the apartheid system. The communal response to this suffering caused communities to rethink their practices and performances. *Diturupa* originated in response to a particular context and was first de-contextualized, then re-contextualized. The de-contextualization process challenged the community to rethink its identity in the face of a 'lack', and hence it had to re-contextualize.

One's identity is naturally challenged by situations of change that force that identity to be reconsidered. This does not mean that one changes from being an African as a result of interaction with others from elsewhere. *Diturupa* is an excellent example of how communities wrestled with their African identity in the face of challenges from apartheid. It is one example of how one experiences the forces of power – for example, in the person of Jan Smuts and his army, and by extension his system of government – and still remains who one is. *Diturupa*, as already demonstrated, can show us how identity becomes crucial and critical in the face of the colonial experience.

When observing performances such as *diturupa*, one notices a high level of creativity and advancement, rather than the mere adaptation or appropriation of an alien culture. Local knowledge finds its place in foreign, forceful, powerful and strange performances – the figure of the Scots trooper being relocated into the context of a local indigenous community.

If we were to argue the absence of analytical procedure in oral cultures, then we could not account for the evidence of stylistic advancement or the creative adaptation and transfer of musical types within and across cultures; and these facts have been characteristic of the African traditional music milieu. The study of *turupa* music is important in African musicology in the context of investigating the 'indigenizing' of foreign musical practices. In *turupa*, the structural features of European music were 'documented' mentally, the *turupa* style being imparted with a peculiarly African sound by being transferred to African traditional drums. A significant feature of the cultural rationalization of the *turupa* music is that it was compelled to find a suitable context for its performance and appreciation.





Appropriately, it became a musical type intended purely for entertainment in the context of Christmas celebrations, and with a strong visual element in the form of costumes that suited the act of cultural re-creation.

The structure of *turupa* is well thought out and organized, with a clear sense of procedure on the part of all the performers. The facilitators decide on the dates and venue for rehearsals, which usually take place at the house of the leader as a mark of the respect and acknowledgement bestowed on him by both the performers and the local community. The practice sessions are organized in such a way that the local community and the performers approve. Rehearsal times are respected, and order is kept during the actual rehearsals. Only those who take part in the practices are allowed to take part in the performances. The songs and dances that are played and sung are not written down, but learnt by the performers orally, on a communal basis.

Orality uses repetition as a device that both situates and maintains progress in any genre of orature. Performers perform within, and from the context of, their place in the community. This is also the case with *turupa* musical performances. They share meaning in the community world-view, and place the re-created music and performances in their own context. Variation in performance is understood and accepted by the audience, in this case their community, since the audience comprises performers at a different level. In this case, the notion of performance should not only be confined to 'conspicuous performers', but instead broadened to include the audience. Gerd Bauman's views of ritual as implicating 'Others' is instructive in this regard. Bauman (1992:8) regards public rituals as being directed to an outsider by making statements

about the definition and redefinition of 'outsider' and 'insider'. When public rituals are performed, the messages are transmitted to both the inner and outer groups (1992:8). This is because even outsiders participate in the rituals performed, either visibly or invisibly. Therefore, the presence of 'Others' during a public performance, to use Bauman's theory, suffices to alter the intentions and meaning of that performance. Both sets of performers (*turupa* performers and their communal, or audience 'performers') share in the negotiation of meaning and redefine the performance contextually. As an example, the following song was recorded at a *turupa* performance in Hammanskraal-Sekampaneng:

**Sepedi original:**

*Mahodu bo Lesoka*

*O we, we e e e*

*Ba utswa le dipitsi*

*O we, we e e e*

*Baetsa bo Letsoka*

*O we, we e e e*

*Mphehle le dipitsi*

*O we, we e e e*

*Mmapule Mpule*

*O we, we e e e*

**English translation:**

Thugs, the Lesoka

*O we, we e e e*

They steal horses

*O we, we e e e*

Emulating Letsoka and his group

*O we, we e e e*

Emulating Mphehle his horses

*O we, we e e e*

Mmapule Mpule

*O we, we e e e*

The repetitive use of 'O we, we e e e' by the performers helps to maintain verbal stability and at the same time invites their audience to join in. The audience in this case is engaged both verbally and intellectually. The audience has to reciprocate with *O we, we e e e*. Ong (1982:45) rightly mentions that the violence and struggle of verbal and intellectual combat in oral art forms are connected to the structure of orality. In this case, the audience and the performers achieve closeness and communal identification among themselves and in the context in which they all are situated. This makes the entire performance a shared one.

As already discussed, the *turupa* performances articulate two worlds and world views with considerable differences in terms of life orientation and distribution of political power. But the colonizer, in the form of imperial and colonial Western performance, was accommodated and located within the *turupa* genre, without its indigenous performers losing sight of their own Africanity.

The work of Duffy (1999) should be acknowledged here. In her examination of the performance of identity in a community music festival in Australia, she notes that a specific performance in Sydney Road 'is a negotiation of the between place and identity, one where the official definition is multicultural but where, within this framework, individuals and groups renegotiate their subject positions.' One may draw the same conclusions from the *turupa* performances, in which Scottish military band music is performed within the framework of African music, with meaning re-articulated and re-created for the local context.

One may conclude that *turupa* performances are constituted by inside-stories and imply outside-

stories, created and woven into the ongoing discursive activities in relation to local experience. As we have attempted to show here, 'outside stories' can be used creatively, 're-creatively' and in a re-articulated manner within the 'inside frames'. The challenge is for us to look beyond what is 'within' and instead look at the results of the interface when the 'outside' comes into contact with the 'inside' paradigm, and observe the resultant shifts and broadening frames of musical genre within the overall context of African music.

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# Journey to Freedom



## Conference papers 2

# The quality of South African democracy: is it all doom and gloom?

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In the prelude to and aftermath of the 2004 South African elections a number of academics and sections of the media have generated an atmosphere of gloom. Admittedly, this was not on the scale preceding the 1994 elections when some whites hoarded long-life milk and other supplies in the expectation of war-like conditions after the inauguration of democracy. All the same, the tendency in these comments deriving from the strength of the ANC and the weakness of opposition have helped to create an atmosphere suggesting that democracy in South Africa is endangered.

The commentaries do not come from one perspective but represent a consistent theme that dogmatically insists that there must be a strong opposition for democracy to be secure. In some variations, that its absence and the unlikelihood of the ANC suffering electoral defeat in the foreseeable future means that democracy is not secure in South Africa.

The weakness of this literature lies not only in dogmatism, but also in its failure to give adequate weight

to the reasons why the opposition is weak in South Africa and to dismiss the electoral strength of the ANC as a simple 'ethnic census', that is people voting for their own color. Despite this racism, which is discussed below, this is a lazy form of analysis or not even analysis. It does not unpack why the ANC is securing the support that it gains, and what conditions either support its retention or future diminution.

In general, there is a hastiness to draw conclusions about South Africa's transition, to say that it is a 'liberal democracy' or that it has or has not been consolidated as that. The attachment of labels like 'liberal democracy' may be premature. They tend to freeze a phenomenon at a particular moment with the characterization often remaining long after it fails to correspond with a changing reality.

Democratic development in South Africa remains fluid and is still unfolding. The quality of South African democracy and what constitutes it remains to be seen. A 'liberal democracy', which refers to rep-



representative democracy, free and fair elections with the possibility of a change of government, is only one of a range of qualities that may be embraced within the word democracy. In the recent history of South Africa, we have also seen other democratic manifestations, in particular instances of direct democracy or popular power. Should such forms of democracy find expression in the future, it will no longer be adequate to use the label liberal democracy. Indeed, liberal democracy generally discourages such forms of democratic expression.

A vast literature has appeared over the last two decades on democratic transition and subsequently on democratic consolidation. Sometimes both of these phrases are embraced under the word 'democratization'. The literature initially related to case studies of Eastern European and Latin American transitions from 'authoritarian' to 'democratic' rule. Subsequently other 'waves' of democratization, in particular in Africa, have been identified. Unfortunately there have been 'flaws' identified by these experts. In par-

tical, while the transition to 'democracy', equated with multi-party elections, has occurred, there has been reversion to one or other form of 'authoritarian' rule (Huntington, 1991). Indeed, many of the transitions in Africa have been reversed in many cases, or have seen military regimes transform themselves into political parties. Electoral laws, which favour them, and conditions which make it difficult for opposition parties to generate resources (Sandbrook, 2000:119) have often secured continuation of quasi-military rule.

The question is how to ensure not only that there is democracy, but also that it is sustainable. That is unobjectionable if it means ensuring there is no reversion to previous authoritarian rule and that democratic rights are protected and the freedom of political activity defended. But the current advisers have other concerns and criteria for assessment that are open to question. In their application to South Africa, various 'problems' have been identified. These include the failure of the African National Congress (ANC) to adapt completely to 'normal' politics and remain a liberation movement (Jung and Shapiro, 1995: 268ff).

Another feature of the South African situation that has caused eyebrows to rise among specialists is the character of the ANC as a 'dominant party' and the unlikelihood for the foreseeable future of a 'circulation of elites', i.e. its defeat by any opposition party (Huntington, 1991:267, Jung and Shapiro, 1995, Giliomee and Simkins, 1999, Southall, 2003a: 68). The weakness of the opposition, though not related to significant electoral irregularity, is seen as a basis for withholding accreditation of the South African

transition as a democracy that has been consolidated. Thus, Jung and Shapiro, though they write mainly of the period of the transitional constitution (1994-1996) say there is a lack of 'a system of opposition institutions that any healthy democracy requires' (1995, 270. See also Giliomee and Simkins, introduction). Habib and Taylor (2001), despite having quite different solutions to these writers, also accept the broad position of the essential nature of a strong opposition for democratic consolidation.

Jung and Shapiro say, more broadly, that a functioning political opposition is essential to democracy. Although the notion of a loyal opposition finds its origins in monarchical rather than democratic politics, democratic systems rely on institutionalized oppositions, and it is doubtful that any regime could long survive as minimally democratic without them... If democratic politics has as a minimum requirement that there be turnover of power among elites, then there must be sites for counter elites to form and campaign as potential alternative governments.

If there is not the possibility of an opposition being perceived as a 'realistic alternative to the government of the day' then the likelihood of turnover is diminished and crises for the government are correspondingly more likely to become crises for the democratic regime (2003a, 68). Using a similar paradigm, Southall (1995, 272), under the heading 'The decline of opposition' writes of this absence of a powerful opposition signifying the 'hollowness of South African democracy'.

The combination of these factors, the continued existence of the ANC as a national liberation movement

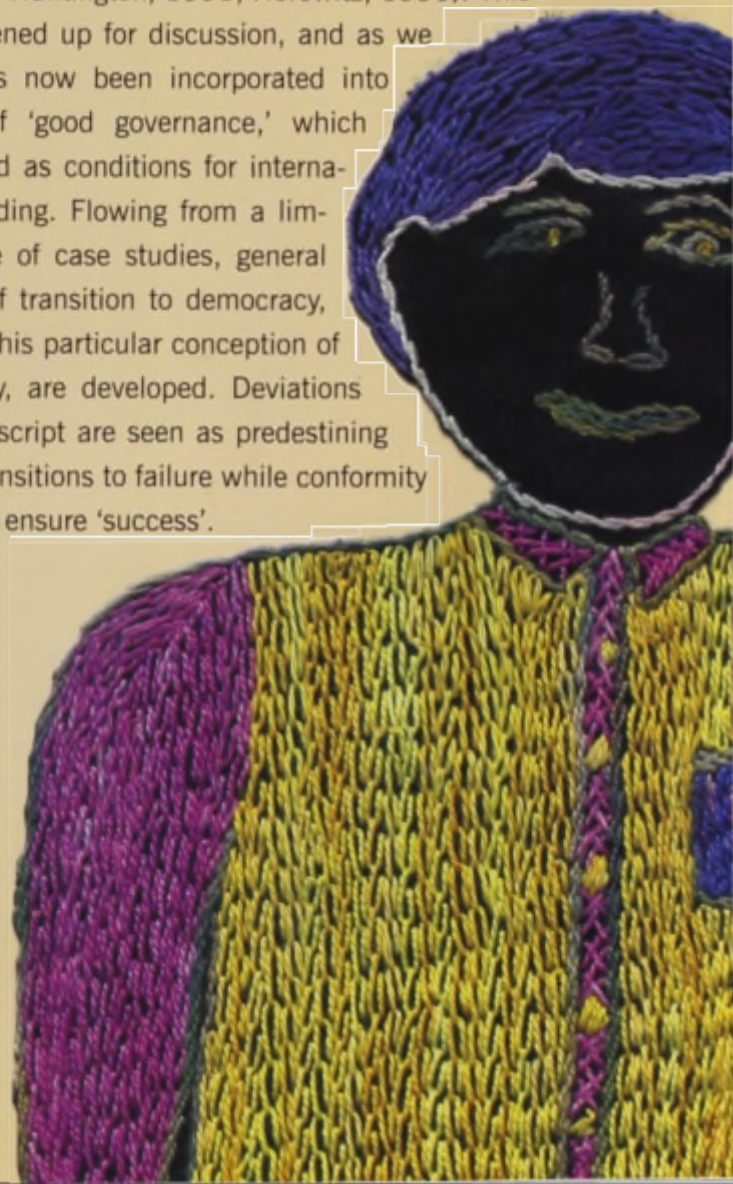
(NLM) and the unlikelihood of a turnover of ruling organization/party, is said to impede accountability and preclude the type of monitoring that is possible where an opposition is strong (Jung and Shapiro, 1995: 272-3, Giliomee and Simkins, 1999: introduction). Also, NLMs are said to have certain inherent features that make them inimical towards transparency and other values necessary for democratic consolidation (Southall, 2003).

Unfortunately much of this literature is in fact very dogmatic, not only current discussions but also the earlier theories on transition from authoritarian rule. Based on specific case studies, some theorists sought to erect universal rules towards the building of democracies from what they saw as successful transitions (e.g. Huntington, 1991, Horowitz, 1991).

In reality, the notions of democracy and the character of the transitions envisaged could not be value neutral, and are based on deeply conservative ideas. In particular, the end product is meant to be a specific version of democracy, that of formal, representative democracy without substantial social and economic transformation or significant popular involvement. To avert the danger of these limitations being transcended, it was important that deals be struck by elites who would agree on common objectives to limit the outcome to what was reasonable or likely to be 'successful'. This would not be possible unless the process also avoided mass activity, that is, involvement of those who might wish to see substantial transformations that would fundamentally change their lives.

It was therefore essential to have, on the one side, an authoritarian government able to satisfy its constituency that the transition would not threaten fundamental features of their privileged existence and on the other a partner who, while battling for elements of democratic change, also agreed on the limitations. The partner would ensure that the transition did not go beyond the bounds necessary to ensure 'success', thus containing or marginalizing the more radical elements among their leadership and followers (Jung and Shapiro, 1995).

The first reason this literature is dogmatic is that it equates democracy with a particular notion of the term (esp. Huntington, 1991, Horowitz, 1991). This is not opened up for discussion, and as we know, has now been incorporated into notions of 'good governance,' which are treated as conditions for international funding. Flowing from a limited range of case studies, general theories of transition to democracy, meaning this particular conception of democracy, are developed. Deviations from this script are seen as predestining certain transitions to failure while conformity is likely to ensure 'success'.







Some transitions have not conformed precisely to the rules but nevertheless enjoy substantial accreditation in the world at large and, as in the case of South Africa, cannot easily be dismissed by virtue of the 'flawed' manner in which they were achieved. But this is where the same body of theorists achieve a new lease of life, as theorists of democratic consolidation sometimes cynically referred to as 'consolidology' (Beetham, 2000). In this new situation they point to the dangers of South African democratic consolidation not being sustained by virtue of the dominant character of the ANC and the lack of an opposition capable of ousting the organization from power in the foreseeable future (See Giliomee and Simkins, 1999: introduction). This is in breach of a fundamental rule derived from the theory of 'successful consolidation' (Huntington, 1991, Jung and Shapiro, 1995: 293).

The statement is of course totally dogmatic in that it chooses to select certain aspects of democratic life as the only test for democratic consolidation. In reality there are a number of features in the South African situation, which may provide far greater protection of democratic rights and contribute far more towards consolidation than the existence of strong opposition. In particular, one can point to the extensive constitutional machinery in support of democracy, much of it in advance of that found in countries from which many of these theorists emerge. In this regard, mention can be made of the Constitutional Court, the Public Protector, the Human Rights Commission, and the Commission on Gender Equality, the Chapter 9 institutions of the South African constitution (See Cachalia, 2003. For exactly the opposite conclusions, see Giliomee and Simkins, 1999: xvii).

In addition, one has in South Africa, a 'public sphere' where citizens and organised civil society can express a diversity of opinions, indicating another important variable influencing the strength of democracy. The importance of this space is illustrated by the impact that the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), organized around treatment of HIV/Aids, has made.

This literature is also dogmatic in its understanding of 'normal' politics. The implicit assumption is that engaging in struggle is abnormal and that NLMs are characteristically vehicles of 'struggle politics'. This is depicted as representing an immature phase of human development, compared with the 'normal politics' of Western Europe and the USA. This immature politics must be put behind the NLMs in favour of conventional politics. The predominant Western model is treated as the normative model. This means the masses are hardly involved, electorates are generally apathetic and apolitical and politics is mainly the concern of professional politicians. The electorate is left in peace between elections and resuscitated every four or five years when an election takes place.

Now liberation movements often do not conform to this model although it is a mistake to see NLMs as uniform. In reality many NLMs act very much like political parties in Western Europe. It is also true that some political parties have a popular character very different from that of the 'normal' model of politics. In this regard, the Brazilian PT (Party of Labour) is an example, as were social democratic parties in many countries in the earlier phases of their existence.

NLMs do not meet the model of 'normal politics' because they often insist on the continuous involvement of their followers or 'the masses' in driving the

processes of change. For some commentators this evokes notions of the 'tyranny of the majority' or 'mob rule', while many of the NLMs instead see this as an expression of democratic activity.

Another reason NLMs are seen as immature forms of political organization, is that they often or for some phases of their existence tend to be much broader than conventional political parties. There are some problems in this purported 'national' character of NLMs, to which I will return, but there is nothing inherently inimical to democratic consolidation in broadness, nor in that broadness allowing a variety of cross-memberships. In particular, the dual membership of the South African Communist Party (SACP) members, to which some object, is something that is part of the history of the ANC, though possibly fairly unique to South Africa. It may not last forever, but it is not clear that this is inherently antagonistic to consolidation of democracy. It is only if one resorts to theories about control by communist parties of other organizations, inevitably leading to dictatorships, that this can have any credence.

Another dogma is the suggestion not only that the transition from NLM to political party is necessary and desirable but that it is inevitable or that it has already happened in South Africa (See Jung and Shapiro, 1995: 285 and 300-301). The inevitability is said to lie partly in the qualities attributed to political parties as opposed to NLMs. In contrast to the undemocratic, secretive and closed nature of NLMs, political parties are said to be inherently democratic, open and accountable. This is an obvious fiction and we need only look at Tony Blair's involving Britain in war, without the consent of his own caucus, to

know that both democratic and undemocratic practices may well be found in political parties (McKibbin, 2003).

Equally, NLMs are not inevitably secretive and closed. How much openness and debate one finds, depends partly on the location of personnel, whether in militarized or civilian situations, but even in military situations, according to interviewees, there was considerable debate (Cf. Interview with Z Pallo Jordan, 2003). That is obviously not the same as impacting on decision-making, but it is nevertheless an important qualification on the stereotype that is found in some of the literature.

There is no law of history that predestines liberation movements to become political parties. There may be a variety of reasons why a particular movement wishes to remain a NLM and what we need to assess is not what form of organization is adopted, but what quality of democracy ensues. We need to measure this against an openly stated notion of what we understand by democracy.

That means that democracy itself must be problematized, and part of the argument of this paper will be that achievement of representative democracy is a crucial gain for any people. But it is not the only version of democracy and may well coexist with both participatory and direct democracy. In South Africa we have had experience of these and this paper argues for their desirability (Neocosmos, 1998, Suttner, unpublished, 2003).

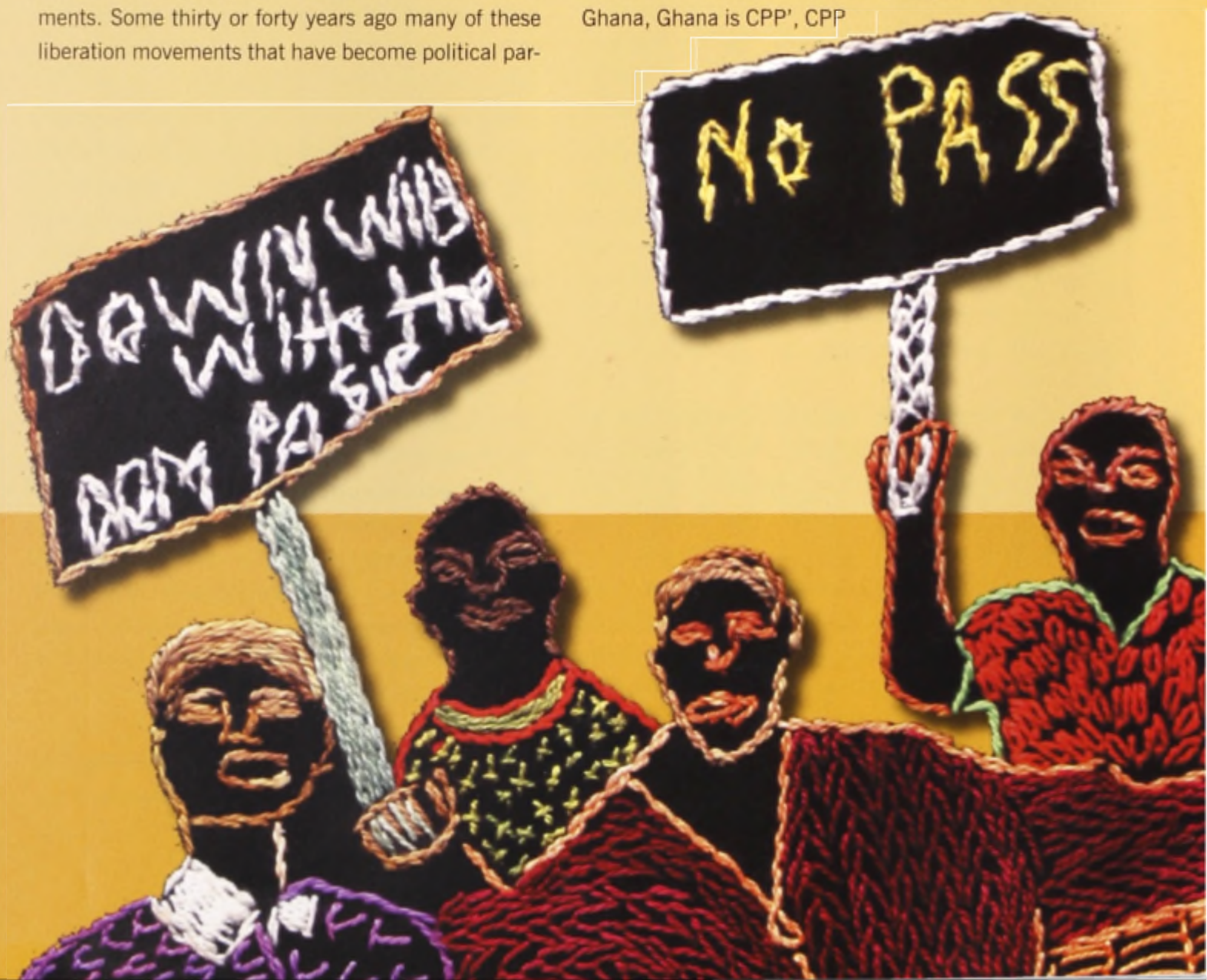
But first there needs to be a closer look at the NLM model, partly because it has some problematic fea-

tures, but also because of the way some scholars have discussed it, attributing certain inherent qualities that are said to lead NLMs in an inevitable direction. This contribution relates the discussion of the importance of viable opposition parties to the broader question of pluralism. It concludes by referring briefly to the model of democracy that it is contended needs consolidation in South Africa and how best it may be achieved (see Suttner, 2004a).

Many of the political parties that came to rule African states were originally constituted as liberation movements. Some thirty or forty years ago many of these liberation movements that have become political par-

ties or that remained liberation movements were crucially involved in the process of achieving independence. They enjoyed considerable legitimacy.

In addition, many of the adverse economic conditions in the world at large, that have affected African exports especially harshly, had not yet started to bear their full impact, although the problem was always there. That was also a period when a particular model of the African NLM or political party was in vogue, a party depicted as representing the nation as a whole. This was exemplified by slogans like 'CPP is Ghana, Ghana is CPP', CPP



being the Convention People's Party of Ghana. Or later SWAPO's 'one people one nation'. SWAPO is the South West African People's Organization of Namibia. In Kenya one had 'Kenya African National Union ni mama na baba', meaning KANU is the mother and father of the nation. And a slogan to be found on a wall in South Africa, declares 'ANC is the nation'. The problems with this model were not always evident, partly because the leaders of many of the parties propounding these views were then popular in their own countries and enjoyed prestige on the continent.

This NLM model predisposed these parties or liberation movements towards a particular type of politics, self-conception and relationship with other organizations and the people or nation as a whole. It is a model of organization now in crisis. Many of the assumptions of the colonial and immediate post colonial period, which held the organizations and countries together, no longer exist.

The reasons for the rise of nationalist movements and their unifying quest in Africa were intimately connected to the overlordship of colonial authorities. As that experience has receded in the public consciousness, the reasons for unity behind a national liberation movement have less resonance.

But generalized references to the crisis in the national liberation model in existing literature remain insufficiently specified, partly because the nature of NLMs, as such, has not been adequately theorized. While important writers like Fanon and Cabral have intervened on questions, tendencies and strategies of NLMs, this has not been to characterize what a NLM is or the range of features it may possess (Fanon, 1963, Cabral, 1979).

But this lack of specificity in references to the concept 'national liberation movement' may also be because there is a great deal of variety within the set of organizations that fall under the heading NLM, variations that are not adequately accounted for in some of the literature. From this failure to note or adequately consider the consequence of variation, there is sometimes a tendency to point to alleged inevitability in their trajectory and inherent or invariable characteristics.



The phrase national liberation movement encompasses a range of organizations on every continent with a variety of ideological orientations ranging from the communist-led movements through a number of versions of nationalism influenced or uninfluenced by Marxism or other forms of socialism.

The origins of liberation movements and political parties in Africa are very different from those of Europe and the United States (cf. Salih, 2003, 1ff, on parties, Tordoff, 2002 and Hodgkin, 1956, 1961 on liberation movements and parties). Some of these are well-established and mature organizations, existing from the early years of this century, as is the case of the ANC. Some were formed only a decade or so before attaining independence. Some have passed through a variety of phases of open organized politics while others were from their earliest stage forced to work underground and then embarked on armed resistance. Some had little experience of open organised activity and have seen participation in a liberation movement as primarily secretive or military activity. There is no inherent or inevitable strategic or tactical path, for the route adopted in struggling for liberation has been mainly determined by the context in which the resistance movement has arisen.

Likewise, the social base of these movements has varied, some having for most of their existence a small, primarily elitist base and leadership, others a more working class or peasant membership, generally with an elite leadership. Ideologically, these movements have been united by anti-colonialism or anti-imperialism and in some cases adopted radical postures of a variety of kinds.

Some have engaged in popular struggle, that is, mass activity and organization, others have prima-

rily related to institutional structures as negotiators or petitioners. Some NLMs have developed extensive organizational structures; many have not and have had a fairly loose relationship between leaders and followers. In some or possibly most cases, the identity of the movement has been closely related to the character of the leader.

Some have during the pre-independence period related to or been in alliance with social movements. In other cases, there have been few social movements other than the liberation movement itself, assuming it is legitimate to characterize a liberation movement as a species of social movement (Younis, 2000, 22). The tendency in the pre-liberation period has been for liberation movements to encourage activities of other social movements since this has tended to supplement the pressure that the NLM has exerted on the colonial authority.

The extent of diversity in the character of NLMs does not preclude speaking of a model. There are elements in common as well as factors making for significant differentiation. These must be identified since the commonalities and the differences qualify the potential trajectory of these movements. They indicate what factors, if brought into play or more forcefully brought into play, can impact on the outcome of contestation over the democratic (or undemocratic) character of these organizations. Far from outcomes being inevitable, it is by no means settled in many cases, and possibly not finally settled anywhere.

In a significant and wide-ranging contribution on democracy in Africa, Roger Southall includes consideration of national liberation movements, though

he presents a somewhat rigid and teleological notion of their character. In particular, he argues that there is an inherent and inevitable anti-democratic and authoritarian trajectory. Under the heading 'Liberation against democracy?' he writes:

[T]he logic of national liberation struggle itself... appears reluctant (or unable) to engage with democracy, whose own logic it had subsumed. Or in other words, once having attained national independence, the inexorable logic of national liberation seems to be to suppress rather than to liberate democracy (Southall, 2003: 31).

The 'authoritarian logic of the phenomenon came to greater fruition', Southall argues, in the southern African states where colonial and apartheid resistance was strong and 'much greater determination was involved (not least in the form of armed struggle)' (Southall, 2003, 32, italics in the original).

The argument is that an inherent tendency towards authoritarianism may be mitigated, but is nevertheless inherent in the assumptions and character of these organizations. The argument in the present contribution, in contrast, acknowledges that elements of the NLM model or what is broadly held in common in a variety of such movements may become antagonistic to democracy. But the emphasis on the NLM as 'the nation' coexists with the NLM also being the bearer of democracy, the organization providing the first opportunity to vote. Obviously cynics would point to that often being the last opportunity. But that democratic component is also part of the model of the NLM and this is clearly seen in the South African conception of a national democratic revolution. It should not be

forgotten that whatever the later outcomes, it was the liberation movements that brought democracy to Africa. Colonialism was an inherently undemocratic system. It was the liberation struggles that ensured people voted for the first time. What ensued afterwards is a separate question and whether it was inevitable or is irreversible needs more than assertion but argument.

In Southall's formulation the notion of inexorable logic seems to override the reality of contestation, indicated by his limited references to hegemonic battles. Even where some tendencies are not contested at the moment, or openly contested within a ruling party or organization, that is not to say they are uncontested in some less visible form or that they will not be contested some time in the future. Politics in an environment unfavourable to democratic contestation often means these are semi-underground or manifested in other, less obvious modes.

Most NLMs comprise a variety of tendencies and cannot be assumed to simply succumb to an authoritarian logic. They are likely to struggle over the organization's direction as well as the relationship that the organization, prior to and after attaining power, has with other organizations outside its camp. That may well be the case with the ANC today. None of this is to deny the existence of tendencies in the NLM model that present dangers, conditional as these may be.

Mona Younis (2000: 22) defines national liberation movements in relation to their character as specific types of social movements: