

*development  
dialogues*



\* monograph 4



isandla  
institute



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

# THE UNSPOKEN FACTOR: RACE AND RACISM

## \* monograph4

ISANDLA INSTITUTE / OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION

### About Development Dialogues

*Development Dialogues* is a joint initiative of Isandla Institute and the Open Society Foundation - South Africa. The aim of the public dialogue series is to create a space for critical reflection and dialogue among key development stakeholders in South Africa. In doing this, the organisers seek to make a (rather modest) contribution to enhancing the quality of debate in the development sector. Through *Development Dialogues*, Isandla Institute and the Open Society Foundation intend to bring about creative and constructive multi-stakeholder meeting opportunities that push stakeholders to think beyond the confines of their immediate interests and theoretical paradigms.

This monograph captures the speakers' inputs and discussions at the *Development Dialogue* on 'The unspoken factor: Race and racism', which took place on 8 December 2005 at the Centre for the Book in Cape Town.

Published in 2005



Isandla Institute  
PO Box 12263  
Mill Street, Gardens 8010  
South Africa  
Email: [admin@isandla.org.za](mailto:admin@isandla.org.za)  
Website: [www.isandla.org.za](http://www.isandla.org.za)



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

Open Society Foundation – South Africa  
PO Box 23161  
Claremont 7735  
South Africa  
Email: [admin@ct.osf.org.za](mailto:admin@ct.osf.org.za)  
Website: [www.osf.org.za](http://www.osf.org.za)



**born in africa but**

born in africa but  
breastfed another mother tongue  
put to sleep on foreign lullabies  
praying for a jesus-heaven  
when i die

born in africa but  
into a designated cultivated patch  
flung far from the indigenous tree  
strategy for carving out my destiny

born in africa but  
mixed equals inferior,  
rearrange that exterior  
scorned for the secret  
exposed by my skin  
enslaving beliefs  
this child was bathed in

born in africa but  
i have died to  
the hiding  
dividing  
fearful deciding  
of what i am  
who i should be

born in africa but  
a self made prisoner  
i release captivity  
i am free to unfold the sacred map  
no other will dictate my individual destiny

born in africa but  
living before and beyond  
a universe awakens in me

- Poem by Malika Ndlovu

It is a great privilege to make my humble offering of reflections related to my work, but also just a journey as a South African, especially someone of mixed descent.

The poem I shared is quite a signature in terms of my own journey. It might sound like a very personal journey and it is. I think it is best that we write what we know about and write from that home base. But it is also a universal story. It is a story of a thousand other people. For me it embodies a lot of the stations that I have journeyed on personally, but also reflects my work say ten years ago, where a lot of it was my form of protest theatre and protest poetry because that was the nature of the weapons of the times. When I think about where I am now, the essence of what I mean to say is what I said in the last stanza - that I am a self-made prisoner.

We are living in a very incredible time in which we have an opportunity to make choices - use different kinds of weapons for a disease that still permeates our society and our mentality and our interactions with each other. Anyone who is in a state of denial about that is actually hindering our progression. For me there are two very simple phrases that come to the surface. The one is Gandhi's 'be the transformation you want to see in the world'. The equivalent is "thupelo" in Sesotho, which is 'teach by example'.

**When I think about** where I am now, the essence of what I mean to say is...that I am a self-made prisoner.





As a young person born in 1971, which means I was five years old when 1976 happened, I often felt that I do not have a right to speak in terms of what the struggle was about. But actually that is not true. Every station has been a site of great struggle. For me there is no national TRC, there is no singular formula or cure. Each of us has to take ownership of that process of transformation and of healing. We have to find our own tools and our own spaces and our own ways of expressing that grief, that rage, that sorrow and acknowledging that it is there. We also have to acknowledge that we have a phenomenal opportunity to have different responses now, that we have opportunities that two or three generations before really did not have.

The point I want to make in relation to our topic is that protest art and theatre and poetry still have a vital role to play in current times. Political satire and commentary in theatre and in the arts can show us where our racism sits and how it inhibits us. But I also think that our responsibility as artists is to take that conversation further. We have to do something more. We have to be raising questions rather than throwing out statements that do not offer an opportunity for conversation, for engagement, for contact. I think it can be extremely intimidating when we think about how much needs to be changed. One can feel paralysed and numbed by how much you need to change and some may feel that change is not happening fast enough. Then there are those who wish we could just fast-forward the process and forget. But in that space of feeling, that is where we have the power to make a difference in an individual capacity. And if each of us takes on that work with full responsibility, we would connect with each other and recognise that

there are more and more of us who are taking ownership of that experience together.

I have also been thinking about the generation that follows. My son is not umbilically connected to the struggle. He does not even know half of the story. One day, when he was in pre-school he came home and told me: 'Mommy, I want to be white'. Immediately my alarm systems went off. I thought about phoning the media and to tell them what nonsense they are teaching my child at that school. Later on I realised that he had been learning about a snowman at school. And he loved the idea that if he was in a place where it snowed a lot he could be invisible. This created possibilities for him. And that was such a beautiful lesson for me. It really showed where I was at, at that time.

Another moment like that happened when I first came to Cape Town and started to work at the Robben Island Museum. Being born in 1990 my son only knows of Madiba as a very luminous, smiling face that everyone loves. So coming to Robben Island was for him like going to Madiba's home. When he was on that boat to Robben Island he was in absolute awe. He kept saying: 'Wow, Madiba had this whole island to himself and all these people to look after him.' And that was really his perception. That level of awareness of our youth may be shocking sometimes, because people may feel this is the lost generation. We need to rectify that. It is vital that we teach them what they do not know. That is definitely one part of a process of understanding why we still speak to each other the way we do. But another part is that young people who come from another generation are embodying a kind of hope and optimism, while we are more umbilically conditioned and connected to the apartheid era and



may not ever experience that kind of detachment from the past, in terms of our inner liberation.

There are examples of how and where we can make an impact on them and obviously teach the history, the context from which we and they come. But it is inevitably an interaction that we have with each other, in the moment, coming from the generations we come from. How we choose in that moment to respond with anger, with our own racism, with our own prejudices and judgement is how we are really teaching them whether apartheid is dead or not.

I like the idea that at today's event race and racism has been referred to as a notion. It is a notion, it is an idea that gets fire and life blood from us and the sooner we unplug from it and plug into the things that we are dreaming of for our society, the better. That is my approach pretty much to the work that I am doing. There is an emphasis on what is wrong with the situation, the raising of questions, a sending up of the ludicrousness of racism, and towards the end there is always a focus on our commonality, about the core of our humanity and about the affirming of faith in human kind and human kindness. Those are honestly the kind of lessons I want for my son. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of 'practice what you preach'; they do not listen to what you say, they listen and learn from what you do. That is something that sits like a little policeman on my shoulders all the time in terms of those interactions. How do I manifest what I say I believe, in the world? Also as an artist I think it is a vital responsibility to play that role of reminder. At the moment I am working on an anthology called 'let's not wait to praise you when you are dead'. It is a

**This continuous process** of taking ownership of where race and racism play out in my own life, and what I have to contribute as a South African, going through my own process of healing, that is the contribution I have the capacity to make, that is where each one of us can truly make a difference.

series of tributes to South Africans who have inspired me across gender, race and age. For me it is another way to tell that history, but also to acknowledge that I have great faith in our capacity to transcend racial classification and racism. I think it is that faith, not seeing and then believing, but a believing that allows me to see and experience many of these phenomenal South Africans I am surrounded by. It is for me essential that I believe in such a reality; that is where I wish to create from and those are the stories that I wish to tell. Because I really do believe that what one feeds grows. If we feed our perceptions about race and racism - that is what will grow. We have to acknowledge where racism exists and target those situations through institutions and programmes. But for me this continuous process of taking ownership of where race and racism play out in my own life, and what I have to contribute as a South African, going through my own process of healing, that is the contribution I have the capacity to make, that is where each one of us can truly make a difference. ■





I am already quite intimidated by both by Malika's remarks and the warm content that they brought to the topic that I think is just let loose on the Cape Flats and the potential to run away with us. Like we have seen with the Blackman Ngoro episode, it fires up the passions if we do not deal with it in proper organised ways. I think that is the temptation for many of us in South Africa and in Cape Town who tackle difficult issues from the angles from which we are most comfortable, where we fire up our rage and our outrage and our fears.

Three months before municipal elections I am sure we are going to see dollops of all of those passions and emotions being manipulated for various purposes. Some people are being reminded about the deprivation, while other people are guilty about the privilege. That is probably how the elections are going to be fought. I spoke once before about how we tackle the issue of race and racism, but from an angle that makes it theoretical debatable. Then hopefully we can begin to get some of the emotions out of the way and begin to ask the question: why in the Western Cape particular, but in South Africa in general, are we speaking past each other when we speak about race? Why is it that the debate is difficult and lends itself to manipulation? Why is it that there are unsatisfactory outcomes through the debates and we never seem to be moving forward? The specific question that I have been trying to ask relates to the problems that speak about the Western Cape being a home for all.

I want to share with you some of my thoughts on the matter so that at the end of it you must decide whether I am presenting the vision of a

home of all as a kind of mask and as a kind of feel good factor, another version of rainbowism, to paper over the real problems and contradictions in the Western Cape, or whether the invitation to be in the home for all that we are building is an invitation to struggle, debate, to problematise and to deepen our understanding of race - and then hopefully things get slightly more hectic before they start easing out as we are trying to reach this notion or this vision of a home for all.

**Our ideological and political perspectives influence how we think of our apartheid past and how we create a set of methodologies to deal with the task of building a non-racial South Africa.**

In my view we are dealing largely with the appearance of race and its manifestations because we are not deconstructing or unpacking our different approaches, our different terminologies, our different solutions, to the issues of race and racism. So what in our years of political struggle against apartheid, and before that against colonialism, and our struggles in the last decade to deconstruct South Africa to build a single nation, are we missing? I think we are missing theoretical rigour. I think we are missing an analytical ability.



I think we are not deconstructing how we got here, and before we can begin to speak about the methodologies of building this single nation with all its diversities and so forth, I think we are not getting down to where we all come from to enter this debate.

I would want to put, very tenuously, to all of you that there are probably five perspectives which governed a struggle against apartheid and which continue to govern our struggle to make sense of race and racism.

I have deliberately drawn it out into five perspectives in order that we can get a little bit more nuance and detail in thinking about them and in debating them. The first perspective that I want to deal with is a liberal perspective towards a struggle against apartheid and work towards the reconstruction of a new South Africa. Of course, I am really doing shorthand so it is going to be somewhat inelegant and sometimes unfair. In essence, the liberal perspective saw the problem of apartheid as being the denial of certain civil liberties and civil rights. The five freedoms are the most famous ones, the separation of people and the judgement of people on racial categories as opposed to equal abilities. Therefore, the restoration of those freedoms into society and civil liberties to individuals solves the problem. So that once the constitution, which is the grandest and best constitution anywhere in the world, enshrined those freedoms, what we have achieved is a state of equilibrium in society and hence the notion of *simunye* - we are one. Hence the notion of a rainbow nation - different colours all nicely linked to make a beautiful appearance in this country. I think those two metaphors had a very powerful

## We need to tackle race and racism from an angle that makes it theoretically debatable.

impact in the first few vulnerable years of democratic South Africa, in that they created an atmosphere for reconciliation. But I would go on to say that the liberal analysis of society, and therefore the methodology for the reconstruction of a new South Africa, found its limitations as poverty increased and remain colour coded. The idea of the restoration of civil liberties and the five freedoms by themselves was not sufficient to overcome the disjuncture of race and racism in our society. It was unsustainable because of the material inequalities that apartheid and colonialism had brought.

A variation of this perspective in recent times is what I call the muscular liberalism that has been brought in particularly by the successive generations of the Democratic Party, and particularly the Democratic Alliance. It shares the fundamental perspective of liberalism, but it adds to what liberalism sees as individual rights and individual freedoms. It begins to superimpose over that the notion firstly of group and minority rights, which in the powder keg of South Africa is often racially defined minorities and class defined minorities whose rights need to be preserved. In other words, bring the others up to that level as opposed to equalising society. Added to that is a brand of market fundamentalism where the economic situation in South Africa is sacrosanct. It is bequeathed by the market as opposed to bequeathed by successive decades and centuries



of colonialism and apartheid, and you do not tamper with that market in order to create racial equalities and racial harmonies between people. So it is not only liberal in the sense that we understand it. It fights actively to retain group rights and minority privileges because those privileges were bequeathed by the market and hard work and the ingenuity of certain communities as opposed to others. Everyone else must strive towards that model and raise themselves as opposed to equalising horizontally.

I think the third broad perspective that informs the way in which we understood society historically and the methodologies to overcome discourse in race and racism is what we call the ultra left perspective to society. It has almost the opposite problem of liberalism because it is based largely on a perspective that apartheid was essentially and primarily a class disjuncture: those who work and those who own. And therefore it is based on a simple divide between working class and the bourgeoisie. Again, the characterisation of this perspective is unintelligent and unfair. But if one wants to use that as a sustainable, theoretical model, we will repeat certain mistakes and we will not be able to deal with the real feelings, the real issues of identity, the real issues of race and ethnicity. It will not be able to explain how Inkatha mobilised in KwaZulu-Natal, or what the conditions of the coloured community in the Western Cape are, or the insecurity of other communities and aspirations, even of the african community, beyond their job and beyond a fair wage. This perspective is dismissive of issues of race and ethnicity, identity and national consciousness. It reduces that to the extreme of a super structure

**We are not dealing with a boiled egg, where the yolk and the white can be separated very easily; we are dealing with a scrambled egg, where race and class are mutually reinforcing.**

and argues that what we need to be doing is to simply get on with issues of race, of the economy. It is not helpful, I think, to understand completely what we are busy with in South Africa and particularly in the Western Cape.

The fourth perspective, and I do not have an elegant name for it, uses blackness or race in much the same way that I think liberalism or muscular liberalism uses the notion of groups and the economy. It mobilises to have preferential access to the economy, to jobs, to services, to a range of other benefits in society based on the fact that we are black. If gone wrong, it gives a bad name to black economic empowerment. If gone wrong, it gives a bad name to affirmative action. It is the kind of perspective that will lead to elitism in society. And it is the kind of thing that we need to guard against.

The fifth perspective is what we called the national democratic revolution perspective, or alternatively it was called colonialism of a special type. It begins to argue on the relationship of race and class in South Africa. If I can oversimplify it: a lot of the fourth perspective that I have spoken



about deals with the phenomena of a boiled egg, where the yolk and the white can be separated very easily. You see the egg white and you choose what to deal with, you choose what is primary and what is secondary or what is discardable. I think that the national democratic revolution approach begins to say that in South Africa we are dealing with a scrambled egg. It argues that race and class are mutually reinforcing. You can describe dispossession as the primary motive of apartheid and colonialism. That is it. It is material dispossession of people. It is the denial of access to the economy and to the benefits of society. But the form it took was not defined in elegant ways or sophisticated ways. It found the simplest form in South Africa, by dividing people into racial communities. And hence the fusion of race and class in such a way that your race determined your access to the economy and the access to the economy determined that you are an inferior race.

So it recognises that inequality was the primary outcome of the apartheid experience, but that inequality was not between individuals but by and large between racial groups within South Africa.

**We need to recognise that apartheid fundamentally distorted the way people thought of themselves and behaved, not only in relation to each other, but in relation to others.**

I am raising all of those things as a useful way of understanding how our ideological and political perspectives have influenced the way in which we struggled against apartheid, and especially the way in which we think a way out of our apartheid past and create a set of methodologies to deal with the task of building a non-racial South Africa, ignoring the kind of rainbowism that comes from the various forms of liberalism, ignoring the simplicity that come with the ultra-left perspective and ignoring elitism. Instead, we need to begin to problematise things in such a way that we can start to deal with colour and the dispossession that goes with it. Because that is what it is about.

That can we begin to deal with the distortion of identity that apartheid has brought about. That we recognise that apartheid fundamentally distorted the way people thought of themselves and behaved, not only in relation to each other but in relation to others. That becomes important. That kind of approach begins to allow that we address openly the wounds of slavery. That we begin to say: the Western Cape was the only province that had a slave experience. How is it that this has not reached the public discourse, the way that our mothers were raped at the work place, the violence that was done? Does that not bring into some kind of perspective the kind of violence that is everywhere on the Cape Flats? We came from a violent situation like that, where slavery itself was the dispossession of your person, was the rape of your women and the violence done to your fathers. Is it a surprise that we have high homicide rates and battery rates today?



Now, I am saying that our methodology allows us to understand some of these things. How do we understand the issue of genocide? Between us in the Western Cape and the Northern Cape, those that were put on display once were Khoi and San. What does it explain about our society today, even though it explicitly says that genocide took place? What about the killing of the language? We have restored the Khoi-San language in the Coat of Arms of the country. But language is the transmitter of values, of culture. If language is the transmitter of who we are, of an identity, and language was killed, are we surprised that we are confused? Are we surprised that there is a whole group of people that are referred to as coloureds today, who struggle for identity, who can be manipulated in elections by the fear that is put into them? The point that I am making is that we need to understand all of that: the coloured Labour Preference Act and what it did to africans in the Western Cape; the application of the Influx Control Act that created this rift between african and coloured people because they were made to compete for jobs, unfairly. Africans were not allowed in the Western Cape because it was a coloured labour

**When I speak** about the Western Cape as a home for all I am inviting you to problematise things and to help us in the search, not only for where we come from, but how we best get to where we want to be.

preference area. Does that not create the conditions for permanent hostility? And are we surprised that africans and coloureds cannot find each other in the discos and nightclubs and in the restaurants? I am of the opinion that these are the kinds of things that we need to be problematising. And so hopefully, if nothing else, I have been able to demonstrate to you that when I speak about the Western Cape as a home for all I am inviting you to problematise things and to help us in the search, not only for where we come from, but how we best get to where we want to be. ■



I must admit that I was hamstrung by the magnitude of the topic and I have been thinking about what to say. In fact, I want to tell the Premier that I do not think our problem is about racism but about a question of identity. I will get to that just now.

First, I want to get to a clearer and much more straightforward story, and the first thing to note is that coloured people are racist. I am socialised in the ways of the Western Cape - in fact, I am the first one to go and declare and publicly that I am from the Western Cape. But you know that we go to Pentech together, african and coloured people, but what they are suffering from is the post-second class syndrome. They just cannot shake it off. Now I left for Johannesburg eight years ago, and there are the nice liberals and so on, and I come back here and I still hear people calling, 'hey, jou Kaffir'.

But before we say anything about coloured people, let me tell you that white people are very racist. In fact, whereas in the past you would hear about white liberals, now that is replaced by what I call 'white trash'. These are the people who go to the township and go to visit M'zoli's and all these other hide outs. Afterwards, on Mondays, they tell everyone else that they know black people. These are also the people and agencies that think up all these advertisements and other things that are supposed to represent our identity as african

people. Meantime, these very same things are at the core of our being and they are misrepresenting us as african people. These are the advertising agencies that we hire day to day, and we enjoy what they are doing and we pay them.

But you know what? Black people or african people are very, very racist. They come with this chest-beating bravado of who they are and what they represent. But deep down they are very racist people. And you know why they are racist? It is because of our past.

Let me tell you about Muslims. Do you know why Muslims are racist? I go to Rylands or Surrey Estate and I go look for a job during school holidays and these people look at you as though you are a piece of nonsense. For me, the saving grace is that I was raised by Tatamkulu Afrika who is a Muslim. So I can see through the Muslims. They are pretending to be the exploiters, to be racist. But they are not like that; they are not supposed to be like that. I have seen them through the image of Tatamkulu Afrika. That is the saving grace.

I have seen white people through the image of others who also came before them and those have mentored me. But I still ask white people the same question until today: Why is that you cannot speak Xhosa? Language is meant to force the dialogue amongst us so that we can understand each other, but you are just refusing to learn the language.

**Our problem** is not about racism, but about a question of identity.



This year we celebrate 20 years of the Kairos document, a most definitive document that defined where we were going in terms of the struggle. People have been killed and maimed by our erstwhile government. They were being killed even by our own comrades, such that the church intervened and came forward and said: 'We are taking a stand on this. Never shall this continue, so we are taking the lead as the church.' But I want to ask the question now: Why is the religious community silent on these issues when we need them the most? Where are all those Imams to pronounce on these matters so that they can give us direction? Likewise, our artists are eloquently silent on these issues. Have they been co-opted because of money? We need to ask these things. Where are they now, because they were the voice of reason in the past. They were the voice of the voiceless.

**Why are the religious leaders** and the artists, who were the voice of reason, the voice of the voiceless in the past, silent on these issues now?

The other problem is the problem of leadership here. You know we need to begin to say to ourselves what the solution to all of this is. I think that the Premier has the solution, but the only problem with his solution is that it starts with an advertising campaign. Now advertising is important. But people must own that process. Let me make an example. Pick 'n Pay has blue as its corporate colour. The uniform, everything else at Pick 'n Pay is blue. Now if you are going to say to the Western Cape that this is a home for all, we must begin to live it in every aspect. How do we then begin to have advertising programmes that begin to live in true communities? Because our problem really is the fact that coloured people tell you about their German or Irish ancestry and yet their core is right here in the Cederberg mountains. You can talk about that great Irish soldier, but the question remains: who are your real people? You are here with us now so let us engage about Sara Baartman - are you not proud that she symbolises that there will never be exploitation of women again? We are supposed to own her and say we are proud people, we are gorgeous, we can do these things.

To overcome the racism in this province we need to say that this is a home for all, whether you are black or white, whether you are from Namibia or Tanzania, it is your home. ■



### AFTER THE INPUTS, THE FLOOR WAS OPEN FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS. ISSUES RAISED INCLUDED:

- We need to have a memorial that records the names of all the people who have given their life to the struggle to remember and find our common past.
- Building on the Premier's discussion of liberalism, under liberalism racism becomes privatised and so it becomes permissible.
- So many of the people who have shaped Cape Town are migrants and they continue to be migrants. This needs to be incorporated into the idea of a home for all - one of the most worthwhile ideas that has been put forward.
- For some it is striking how much Cape Town seems to be stuck in its racism in a way that Johannesburg is not. Cape Town seems to lack an engine of change, and a question that arises is, is the way to deal with the development of a black middle class, or is it by bringing on board marginalised people that have always been marginalized?
- How do we talk to children about what has happened in the past, when much of the language we have available to us is the racial classification of apartheid - african, coloured, indian, white. And how do we think about the relationship between ethnicity, colour and race?
- What does it mean to be an african? We talk about the notion as if it is a static notion. Is this a new platform for discussion in how we engage the notion of race and racism, what it means for us. Is there a new configuration in the sense of being african?

### THE SPEAKERS MADE A ROUND OF CONCLUDING COMMENTS

#### Malika Ndlovu

Nowhere in my input did I use the word 'coloured'. For me it is disturbing to still have blanket phrases like 'coloured' and 'black' and 'white' being the nature of how we talk about this. I grew up in KwaZulu-Natal and I did a play in an absolute rage about the fact that the only reference point for 'coloured' was a Western Cape media-projected image which did not apply at all to my KwaZulu-Natal experience. On a positive note, and in contrast to some of the negative comments made here, my experience of Cape Town has actually been phenomenal. I may have lived in all the bohemian hippy quarters but I experienced a very alive interaction between people across its boundaries, not only artists. Capetonians have a spirit and energy about change that is very rooted in the fact that this is where the problem started. My experience has been phenomenal in this space. I grew up in Durban and I never had a single so-called 'coloured' who expressed and who taught me black consciousness, through the activity, through language, through their way of being. On the suggestion to create a memorial, I think the idea of a memorial is acknowledging a necessity for that kind of feeling which includes all of us, no matter what angle we contributed to and are coming from.



### **Vukile Pokwana**

The memorial is very important. The sad thing about some processes is that we tend to deface the names of those icons of the past. We need to acknowledge all the unsung heroes and heroines. Let us say that we are able to migrate towards a truly Western Cape identity and promote a Home for All. This provides us with a concept we can all embrace and it will allow us to cleanse our wounds. In my view, the sooner we interact with this thing, the better. Then we will be halfway to solving our problems. So a Home for All is the solution.

### **Ebrahim Rasool**

Regarding the Home for All I think it was probably necessary to get the concept out for a variety of good reasons. I think that we have put the minimal criteria to this Home for All, but we have to open it up and we have to ensure that it is owned by local people. I think the basic concept needed in a sense to be constructed and maintained. But we also have to understand why we use the term 'coloured' or 'bruin mense', and why we need to acknowledge africans in the sense of Xhosa-speaking people in the Western Cape.

There was a time in 1994 when people retreated into the term 'coloured' and the term 'coloured' was the fear of equality. We also need to understand what tri-cameralism meant. We think we defeated tri-cameralism politically because people did not vote. But tri-cameralism, if I look back at it now, was not about the politics of tri-cameralism; it was about creating a buffer zone. It was creating an inequality. I think that africans in the South African sense of the word also need to relinquish the exclusive use of 'african'. For as long as they hold onto the term 'african' to describe themselves they are not allowing others to get into the spirit of what President Thabo Mbeki meant when he said 'I am an african'. He goes into such poetic detail about who is an african that we should all be proud and wanting to say 'I am an african'. We want to be african in the fundamental sense and share this term with everyone. We are beginning to see that people are integrating. Where race plays itself out is in poverty stricken areas. In the townships, coloured and african, that is where the powder keg of race is. My point is that the basis of it is access to material benefits. ■





## THE UNSPOKEN FACTOR: RACE AND RACISM

8 DECEMBER 2005

CENTRE FOR THE BOOK, CAPE TOWN

### ABOUT THE PANEL:

**MALIKA NDLOVU** is a poet, playwright, performer, arts project manager and mother of three, with a wide range of experience in the Arts and Arts Management arenas. She has two of her own poetry anthologies, *Born in Africa But* and *Womb to World: A Labour of Love*, besides her work being featured in several local and international publications. She is dedicated to creating indigenous multi-media works in line with her personal motto "healing through creativity". Malika is a founder-member of Cape Town-based women writers' collective WEAVE and co-editor of their multi-genre anthology *WEAVE's Ink @ Boiling Point: A selection of 21st Century Black Women's writing from the Southern Tip of Africa*. Malika has recently joined *The Mothertongue Project*, a women performing artists, writers and visual artists collective, scripting for their highly successful Grahamstown Festival 2004 production - *Uhambo!: Pieces of a Dream*. She has also initiated the *And The Word Was Woman Ensemble* of 14 local performance poets, bringing together established Cape Town writers and fresh writing talents.

**EBRAHIM RASOOL** is the Premier of the Western Cape since April 2004. He has been a member of the Western Cape Provincial Legislature since 1994 and has been the MEC for Health and Social Services in the Western Cape (1994-1998) and the MEC for Finance and Economic Development (2001-2004). He is a Life Patron of the Protocol for Child Abuse and Neglect (1997) and the recipient of the prestigious Kaiser Foundation Nelson Mandela Award for Health and Human Rights (1997). Despite his hectic schedule, he still manages to indulge in some of his favourite pastimes, which include african history, literary reading, rugby and cricket.

**VUKILE POKWANE** is the editor of Roots Magazine since 2004. Before that, he worked for six years as the Showbiz Editor with City Press. He is also documentary filmmaker, two of which have been shown on SABC television, titled 'YCS (Young Christian Students) - The review of life' and 'Schoenstatt'.



# THE UNSPOKEN FACTOR: RACE AND RACISM



[www.isandla.org.za](http://www.isandla.org.za)



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

[www.osf.org.za](http://www.osf.org.za)