

## Article 10

**My Spirit is not Banned:  
A Rhetorical Analysis of the  
African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL)**

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### **Abstract**

This paper is a rhetorical criticism of a speech given by Lindiwe Mabuza, an African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) activist, during the period when South Africa was transitioning to a triacameral parliament to include black South Africans. The (ANCWL) helped to shift South Africa to more progressive and less sexist policies regarding women. There has been extensive research on the transition of South Africa from apartheid to full democracy as well as the immense difficulty the country currently faces because of such a radical transition, but very little research addresses the most violent period leading up to the governmental transition, specifically looking at the role South African women generally, and the ANCWL specifically played in the anti-apartheid movement. This paper works as an invitation for further research on the rhetoric of the ANCWL and the importance of women's contribution to the anti-apartheid movement.

**Keywords:** African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL), rhetoric, rhetorical criticism, Lindiwe Mabuza, women, patriarchy, apartheid, South Africa.

Revolutionary struggles and mass sociopolitical movements have a history of lumping women's issues into the category of the whole and discarding them as insignificant and trivial. The fight for equality has always been within the context of male-dominated struggles, which have helped to impede the development of a feminist consciousness. If women continue to work within the realms of patriarchy then their issues will continue to be forgotten, ignored and trivialized. In order to break through these barriers, women must create an individual identity, as well as use rhetoric that takes their cause outside of patriarchal terms.

An example of this—though not the only one—can be seen in South Africa, a country that was created with some of the most devastating segregationist policies but has now implemented legislation to protect women and has made being a “non-sexist” country part of its mission. Patriarchy and sexism are still alive and well in South Africa, just as they are in almost every other country around the world, but the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) has helped to shift South Africa to more progressive and less sexist policies regarding women. There has been extensive research on the transition of South Africa from apartheid to full democracy (Alexander, 2003; Kotze, 1994; Weisse & Anthonissen, 2004) as well as the immense difficulty the country currently faces because of such a radical and dramatic transition (Hart, 2003; Nowak and Ricci, 2005; Singh, 2008; Wilson, 2001), but very little research addresses the most violent period leading up to the governmental transition, specifically looking at the role the ANCWL played in the anti-apartheid movement. The ANCWL was particularly powerful in their ability to mobilize and bring attention to their causes (Waylen, 2007). The success of their mobilization techniques was inherent to their rhetoric, which helped to both cultivate an identity that divided the struggles of black South African women from the larger anti-apartheid movement and also empowered them by reconstituting their agency through a reliance on their historical successes. The rhetoric of the ANCWL merits attention both for its ability to create an individual voice for women and to create rhetoric that diverged from its oppressors. The deficit in research is unfortunate but not detrimental to this paper; however, this paper will only analyze

one speech in order to work as a platform for further study of this area. This paper looks specifically at a speech given by Lindiwe Mabuza, an ANCWL activist, in 1983 when the government was making a transition to a triacameral parliament to include black South Africans. This paper works as an invitation for further research on the rhetoric of the ANCWL and the importance of their contribution to the anti-apartheid movement.

### **The history of the Black South African psyche**

The creation of apartheid was relatively recent in comparison to America's segregationist policies. By the time apartheid was officially formed in South Africa, America was six years away from legally ending its version of apartheid and declaring it unconstitutional, though the de-jure end of segregation didn't end its de facto implementation. The segregationist policies are similar in many aspects, but there is one glaring difference: in America, African Americans were both a minority in actual numbers and in power, but in South Africa blacks were only a minority in terms of political strength. In South Africa blacks made up 87% of the country's population. However, the country was "ruled by and for the whites who form[ed] 17% of the population" ("Women Under Apartheid", 1981, p. 8). For such a small minority to oppress such a large physical majority the history behind South Africa's apartheid is riddled with extreme tyranny and brutality.

In order to maintain control of such a large population the government created a dehumanizing existence for blacks and undermined their legitimacy as human beings. In his groundbreaking work, *Black skin, white masks*, Frantz Fanon (1952, tr. 1967) argues, "The non-white population of South Africa is at an impasse. Every modern form of slavery prevents them from this scourge. In the case of the African, in particular, white society has crushed his old world without giving him a new one. It has destroyed the traditional tribal foundations of his existence and bars the road to his future after closing the road to his past" (p. 162). During the 1960s, the system of apartheid radically evolved to "Grand Apartheid" in which racial discrimination permeated all aspects of the lives of black South Africans and worked to further create white

hegemony. According to Henrard (2002), “the government “implemented a broad plan of social and political engineering called separate development or ‘Grand Apartheid’ which attempted to concentrate and limit African political rights to the respective ethnically defined Bantustans. Indeed ‘ethnic homeland loyalty was to replace national political aspirations in a move which the state hope[d] would defuse calls for the moral necessity for African self government within South Africa itself” (p. 50).

The psychological effects apartheid had on black South Africans cannot be stressed enough; the consequences were profound and widespread on the black South African psyche. In *The psychology of apartheid*, Peter Lambley (1981) asserts that colonialist policies of the South African government worked as a form of “psychological terrorism” (p. 3). Psychological studies on South Africa during apartheid have found that the segregation system inhibited healthy psychological development (Bulhan, 1993). According to Richards, Pillay, Mazodze, and Govere (2003) apartheid also led to the formation of negative identities among black South Africans “because of how the colonizers perceived them racially, culturally, ethnically, and genderwise” (p. 1).

Fanon utilized similar research and extended it to have a much more personal focus. Using similar clinical studies listed above, Fanon combined this with self-analysis and social examination to better understand the true implications of such dehumanization (Bulhan, 1985). One of the many effects of oppression was the violence that it caused, which is often masked as a legitimate part of the social structure. This violence not only manifested in its most obvious forms but also in what Fanon calls “structural violence”. In situations where the hierarchy within a country’s socioeconomic structure bars individuals from social and scientific advancements within society, structural violence is evident. As Farmer (1999) asserts it is the many mechanics of society that are to blame: “neither culture nor pure individual will is at fault; rather, historically given (and often economically driven) processes and forces conspire to constrain individual agency” (p. 79). Such a desolate situation can leave individuals with no other choice but to act out violently. In *A dying colonialism* Fanon (1965) states that acting out in a desperate manner is “one of those laws of the psychology of colonialism” (p. 47). Indeed this is evident in South Africa’s apartheid during the 1970’s when one of the most horrifying

and memorable events took place: the Soweto Uprising. According to an article in *Time* magazine (“The Soweto Uprising: A Soul-Cry of Rage”, 1976) written a few days after the event, the night before Prime Minister Vorster flew to West Germany to meet with US Secretary of State Kissinger,

...the racial tensions that seethe just beneath the surface of South African life exploded in Soweto, a ramshackle, overcrowded satellite town for blacks on the outskirts of Johannesburg. In three bitter days and nights of wild rioting and skirmishes between club-wielding, stone-throwing blacks and heavily armed police, at least 100 people were killed and more than 1,000 were injured; only a handful of the victims were white. The turmoil spread to at least seven other segregated black townships surrounding South Africa's largest industrial city. At week's end the violence subsided, although police remained on guard in Soweto and other neighboring townships. (p. 30)

This event rocked South Africa to its core, not only for the ultimate and terribly brutal outcome, but for what the occurrence of such an event signified. In *Black skin, white masks* Fanon (1952, tr. 1967) argues blacks are “toy[s] in the white man’s hands; so, in order to shatter the hellish cycle, he explodes” (p. 140). Ironically both Fanon and the author of the *Time* magazine article can find no other word to best describe what occurred and this is not because of a lack of creativity on their parts but rather because no other word is so applicable in illustrating what transpired. The psychological shackles that are inherent in any oppressive regime can drown the psyche in depths of such deep despair that to come up for air can only be done in a shattering burst. To lose oneself in a place of no agency or true identity is such a shattering experience that it comes as no surprise that time and time again history—and Fanon—seems to agree that explosive forces are the only way in which oppressed individuals find a means to hold onto their collective power.

The Sharpsville Massacre (another earlier uprising that led to the death of many blacks) and the subsequent Soweto Uprising worked as heartbreaking reminders to the blacks of South Africa that their lives had no value in the eyes of their government and that they lived under the heavy hand of a very privileged minority in South Africa. Somerville (1985) recalls, “After the Soweto uprising in 1976 an ever growing number of black people—especially the youth—no longer accepted political subservience. They mobilized into numerous organizations. The rise of trade unions in 1979, the growth of civil and student organizations and a stepped up guerilla campaign by the ANC attest to this newly found strength and resilience among black people. Black protesters were prepared to take on the apartheid system and its strong security forces” (p. 14).

The 1980's, the time period in which Mabuza made her speech, was the most violent and deadly stage of the anti-apartheid movement. Once again stunned by the chilling actions of the government, blacks mobilized in politically prudent and militaristic ways. The 1980s was the time of apartheid reinvention. No longer could the oppressive system hold together in the face of increasing internal and international pressures, and worsening economic difficulties. During this period Black South African youth rallied around protests against 'Bantu education' after the devastation of 1976 Soweto Uprising. The combination of economic and political pressures, along with changes in attitudes among the youth, shaped the 1980s to be the worst decade of political violence in the anti-apartheid movement (Horwitz, 2004).

After the two major massacres and the current recession the government knew it needed to adapt. It could no longer exist in its current form and continue to survive, so it put on the façade of reform by proposing the creation of a tricameral parliament. Naidoo (1989) notes, “Most of the ‘reforms’ brought by the South African government have, in one way or another, been primarily provoked by resistance activity. The triacameral parliament...reflect[s] the state’s increasing ‘sophisticated’ responses in attempting to contain the emergent wave of resistance (p. 172).

The newly proposed parliament did give a limited political voice to the country's minority population groups. However, an article published by the Centro de Estudos Africanos in Lisbon, Portugal (1987) notes “the government’s approach to power sharing has been cast within the parameters of apartheid and with the backstop of a white veto....so-called coloured and Asian South Africans were in theory given representation in parliament for the first time, but in separate racially exclusive Chambers. The Nationalist dominated white Charter had a permanent built-in majority and the newly created Executive President was given wide powers vis-à-vis parliament” (p. 6).

The election for the proposed change in government was only a few months after Mabuza’s speech. The United Democratic Front had been protesting the tricameral parliament and the subsequent elections to implement the policy, but to no avail. Their protests were ignored and marginalized by the government. Others who tried to protest were imprisoned and threatened as Mabuza states in her speech: “The unpopularity of the coming bogus elections is no deterrent to the regime to proceed. Rather, it continues to harass and detain those patriots who call for a boycott of the elections” (1983).

### **The rhetorical situation and Foucault**

Bitzer defines the rhetorical situation as a "complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence” (qtd. in Burghardt, 2005, p. 62). Mabuza faced a particularly difficult exigence because the government was working in due diligence to cover up past actions of its oppressive regime and put on the façade of change. The fact that many were being tricked into believing that this was a positive change and a step in the right direction for the government as well as the fact that those who could see through it were being detained (as shown in a quote from Mabuza earlier) each manifested the situation Mabuza felt forced to address.

The power of blacks in South Africa had been weakened by apartheid's emotional theft; it had stolen the emotional and psychological strength of those that it oppressed. The one force that was working on the side of the anti-apartheid movement was a consciousness of the inequity that existed in South Africa. During the 1980's more attention was starting to be paid to what was happening in the country, but the government's change in policy weakened the anti-apartheid movement's argument – or at least had the ability to do so if it was only looked at face value. The combination of anti-apartheid activists inside South Africa and those within the international community willing to take a stand against South Africa formed a strong army but were now faced with a weakened arsenal, because of the government's deception.

In Bitzer's definition of rhetorical situation, he focuses on the constraints that are placed on the rhetor and the audience. Bitzer's understandings of constraint can be connected to Foucault's ideas on how individuals conceptualize their identity<sup>1</sup>, "for subjects are constrained according to the kind of narrative characterizations with which they identify and by the institutional subject positions they find themselves obligated to fill" (Bruner, 2005, p. 314). The way in which a person forms their identity and "emerges as a subject" plays a particularly important role in South Africa because of the psychological effects of apartheid. The deteriorating effect of apartheid's all encompassing grasp needed to be thwarted in order for the audience to become, in the words of Black (1970, p. 109), Mabuza's "auditors". The constraints of living in a segregating country worked as a powerful backdrop to South African blacks' identity formation, and unlike traditional social constraints found in non-oppressive governments the psychological detriment of the constraints posed by the South African government left black persons without a complete sense of selfhood or worth. This absence created an inability for them to reach their full rhetorical ability as auditors. Apartheid left black South Africans obligated to full subject positions in which they were only slightly better than animals. The ideals created by the South African government and the narratives used by the Afrikaners – enacting their divinely ordained rule over blacks – worked as a "hegemonic narrative" that posed discursive limits on their articulation of self (Gramsci, 1971).



Apartheid “drew voters together behind the revived Afrikaner nationalist political movement” (Worden, 2007, p. 99). The party was able to create a strong and captivating appeal for apartheid in order to keep themselves in power. “Afrikaner nationalism is a topic surrounded by mythology. Like all nationalist movements it has created its own symbolism and its own history stressing the unified experience of the Afrikaner *volk*: born on the old Cape frontier, trekking away from the British in 1863, surviving hostile attacks from Africans in the interior, defending themselves against the British in the 1870’s and again in the South African War” (emphasis in original) (Worden, 2007, p. 99).

The “truths” blacks in South Africa were constantly fed about their inferiority created an identity which immobilized them. “The effects of these various truths make us both subject *and agent*: as we come to ‘know’ ourselves, we are enabled to think and act on the basis of what we believe to be true and to resist what we do not accept. We commit ourselves to a particular version of self, giving us a platform from which to think an act, and we simultaneously begin to reject anything that does not conform to that self” (Thomas, Mills, & Helms-Mills, 2004, p. 29). By the early 1980’s domination, inferiority and worthlessness were deeply ingrained in the black South African psyche. Black persons were often only able to see themselves within the mythic frame that had been created by the Afrikaner narrative in which those with “inborn dignity”<sup>2</sup> were oppressing the inferior beings and in doing so were acting out their ultimate role. This narrative worked as a hegemonic force keeping black persons within their governmentally defined roles. In order to reject her audiences’ notion of self, Mabuza needed to reconstitute their agency and did so through a reliance on the historical successes of their ancestors.

### **Monumental history and identity creation**

August 9<sup>th</sup>, the day the speech was given, was a historic day for South African women, marking the success of the anti-pass campaign. Before 1955, when the government decided that women would carry identity documentation required to enter white dominated areas (or passes), men had long been forced to endure the demeaning and

sometimes dangerous practice. “Women had reason to fear the carrying of passes, having been forced to witness all their lives the effect of the pass laws on African men: the night raids, being stopped in streets by police vans, searches, job loss through arrests” (Bernstein, 1985: 88). Women of the ANCWL, knowing the men of the ANC would see this as only another consequence of apartheid and not an issue that deserved much attention, saw this as both an opportunity to be seen as a legitimate group with political might and to change the terrible fate that had befallen the black women of South Africa.

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1956, as Mabuza states, “some 20,000 strong women, their hearts and minds fixed on one goal: to confront the hierarchy in the very citadel of apartheid power” marched through the streets of Pretoria to the Union Buildings in protest of legislation that forced women to carry reference documents (p. 1). This was one of the largest women’s demonstrations in ANC history and it is seen as one of the most successful campaigns of the ANCWL. Although the pass laws were not changed until the 1980’s, women were able to show their “organizational ability and capacity and, above all, the [effects of their] exemplary united action” (Mabuza, 1983, p. 1). “The women’s anti-pass campaigns did not end sexist attitudes or abolish passes but they did succeed in building a new gender identity through the mobilization of thousands of African women” (Switzer, 1997, pp. 320-1).

It is this strength and symbolism that Mabuza harnesses in her speech. In *Permanence and Change* Burke (1974) states: “man must not *surrender* to the environment that oppresses him; he must *change* it” and Mabuza attempts to employ Burke’s sentiments in her speech (p. 172). Women in South Africa faced the hardest position all: being the oppressed of an already oppressed group. Their life was devoid of meaning because of the cruel policies of their government, but most importantly, because they were seen as less valuable and less deserving of a voice and rights. In South Africa at the time there was little feminist consciousness, few leaders or voices telling women to mobilize; many women couldn’t even gather together because they were isolated by their work as servants, but these women risked what little they had in order to stand up in a bold manner to tell their government that no matter what, they couldn’t break their spirits.

Mabuza's nostalgic and heroic conception of the anti-pass campaigns works to, in the terms of Nietzsche (1980), "use history as an incentive to action" (p. 17). For Nietzsche, history can be used as a means to achieve different purposes. Based on his definitions of the three types of histories, Mabuza would be employing "monumental history" which "acknowledges the fundamental role of 'great men,' 'great actors,' knowledge of whose roles in history can be useful at the present time...it minimizes the distance between the great person and the ordinary people...It can offer the promise of self-transcendence and betterment" (Akermann, 1993, p. 64).

Using history as a driving force, Mabuza connects and makes real the power and strength of her audience's ancestors: "We are here today to honour the defiant bravery, the resilience, the spirit of 'no surrender to dehumanization'" (p. 1) She completely ignores the fact that the anti-pass campaign didn't succeed in ending the pass laws and instead focuses on the immediate success of the assembly of such a large group of women who "pulsed with one heart". The connection the audience can make to these freedom fighters gives them the ability to transcend the demeaning—but most importantly, immobilizing—subject positions that apartheid has obligated them to fill. The monumental characterization of the anti-pass campaign works to break the psychological chains weighing on her audience by supplying them with a new position to fill. She is letting her audience identify with past ancestors in order to give them an opportunity to see themselves in a different light and identify themselves outside of the Afrikaner narrative. Just as the Afrikaner narrative took on a mythic life of its own within South Africa, Mabuza is trying to create anti-pass campaign leaders like Helen Joseph, who she also reads a poem about, as mythic figures within the story of black South Africans. These figures have done what her audience has yet to do: rise above the positions the government has forced them to be in. She is placing before her audience exemplary individuals who have the power to inspire her audience to finally see the great possibilities of black activists in South Africa.

Although this can be seen as a positive force on the audience, Nietzsche (1980) warns about the ethical implications of this since monumental history has the potential to "deceive through its analogies" (p. 20). By monumentalizing an event there is intent to

replicate it, but is it possible to recreate history, and more importantly, is that a noble and rational goal? With different persons, policies and time periods it becomes impossible to recreate an event, unless one distorts the past for it to better fit with the future. To gain the same effect of the past there is a tendency to present history in a misrepresented manner, which is the biggest problem Nietzsche finds. Ultimately one can never repeat history, but when there is an attempt to do so people end up destroying history by altering and reinterpreting it to become something more beautiful and poetic than it actually is, and in doing so distort it to such a point that it becomes mythic fiction. Nietzsche (1980) asserts “monumental history is the theatrical costume in which they pretend that their hate for the powerful and the great of their time is a fulfilling admiration for the strong and the great of past times. In this, through disguise they invert the real sense of that method of historical observation into its opposite” (p. 21).

It is obvious to see where the deception occurs since Mabuza doesn't mention the inefficacy of the event, but she does make clear the differences between the events occurring during each time. The beginning of her speech has a nostalgic tone in which she discusses the many people who stood up to the government and succeeded, including those in the anti-pass campaigns. She never mentions the bloodshed that occurred along the way or the many unsuccessful attempts that happened before a successful one. Many of the radical actions of the past she discusses seem to occur with ease and triumph, but when stepping into the present she leaves nostalgia there, entering with an abrupt changing focus from the past to present. Her speech no longer concentrates on feats and success, but instead moves to the tragedy and devastation that currently afflicts the movement. This sharp transition manifests in one statement: “Never has apartheid's total disrespect of human life and values been at today's level. Those who attempt to oppose it can expect...torture, imprisonment...and even assassination for their belief in a free non-racial and democratic society” (p. 3). Her direct, and yet daunting declaration brings the audience straight to the present making it clear that political climate in which past freedom fighters fought no longer exists.

Mabuza also changes her characterization of the foe her audience is up against. Unlike the enemy faced by the women of the anti-pass campaign who had “to confront the hierarchy in the very citadel of apartheid power” (p. 1) her audience now must face a power so cruel it can only be described in comparison to Nazism:

The new constitution brandished in the name of reform is yet another grossly backward piece of legislation. It is contrived to cause confusion, bitterness and division amongst the oppressed and ultimately it is aimed at entrenching white supremacy, especially Nazi-inspired Nationalist Party domination over everybody...To understand fully the scope, the dimensions, of the criminality of apartheid, it is incumbent upon us to remember the words of John Balthazar Vorster, one-time Prime Minister of South Africa...who said: “We believe in Christian nationalism, an ally of fascism in Italy. You may call this undemocratic principle a dictatorship, if you wish...In Germany they call it national socialism...Clearly, our peoples are victims of Nazism revisited. And the authors of this anti-black, anti-people doctrine need no gas chambers or concentration camps. They are more shrewd in their ways than their predecessors. (p. 4)

This severe criticism not only works as a deep contrast between the government of the past and present but also as chilling warning about a second holocaust. The holocaust as both an occurrence and a symbol has profound persuasive and emotional effects. The horrific images that came to light after knowledge of the Holocaust surfaced caused both guilt and revulsion for the public. Attaching the symbolic significance of the Holocaust to the South African government warns the international community and Mabuza’s immediate audience of the true exigence at stake as well as casts the government in a new light that takes away from any attempts it is making at rectifying its past actions. Another important aspect of this characterization is it plays on the guilt caused by the Holocaust. In this statement she seems to be employing a Burkean Guilt-Redemption cycle in order to motivate both the government and the international community to take action. She has connected the horrifying crimes of Germany to South Africa and through this identification she is hoping to cause enough guilt in the minds of

South African leaders so that they will engage in mortification, and it could also work to connect the international audience as well since they play a part in letting the government continue their actions.

### **Interpellation and second persona**

Although much of Mabuza's speech works to sober her audience to the atrocity that surrounds them, she ultimately believes that "at the end of the day we shall reap a good yield: the establishment of a free, non-radical and democratic South Africa" (p. 1). Much of her use of monumental history has worked to revive and strengthen her audience. The audience has long experienced a discursive construction of their subject position (Wess, 1996) as being the inferior and less worthy members of South Africa, but Mabuza, through her use of second persona, is now positioning her audience for a different role. She has connected them to the strength and successes of their past with statements like "when these stalwarts did converge...they pulsed with the single beat of one gigantic heart" (p. 1) and "there, in Kiltown, women and men stood together, refusing to wear blinkers while being herded into colonial apartheid's separate, unequal and destructive compartments. They rose in one solemn voice" (p. 2), and she is now asking them to use that power to become the next generation of freedom fighters, continuing the story of their ancestors. The role that she is creating for her audience through the use of monumental history is important to note because it explains why she left out certain parts of history. Discussing events like the Soweto uprising or the fact that pass laws were not changed till the 80's takes away from the spirit she wishes to capture; it is the emotional and spiritual strength she wants her audience to take on in order to enter into a mobilizing subject position and rebel against the government.

A persona, as Black (1965) argues, is an artificial identity created by the author and implied in the discourse. The creation of a second persona becomes an identity or role created for the audience, what Black terms an implied auditor. He states the second persona is "a model of what the rhetor would have his real auditor become" (p. 113). Hammerback, who expanded upon Black's ideas of second persona, adds that it is also "the rhetor's rhetorical creation in audiences of an expectation for a leader who

possesses particular qualities which are identified by the rhetor” (p. 183). Essentially, the rhetor is inviting those capable in the audience of enacting change to step into the role that has been created for them.

Mabuza’s invitation of second persona doesn’t only focus on reviving the roles of the past. She also addresses current freedom fighters and invites her audience to join alongside those who are already taking on their role. This becomes clearly stated: “the unpopularity of the coming bogus elections is no deterrent to the regime to proceed. Rather, it continues to harass and detain those patriots who call for a boycott of the elections. It is a fraudulent scheme to hoodwink a section of the oppressed, and it is known to the majority of the oppressed to be just that” (p. 4). Here she is calling those who are defying the government “patriots”, once again glorifying those who defied the government the same way she nostalgically relives the successes of the anti-pass campaign. Rather than calling them boycotters or protestors, she gives them a label of significance and greatness. This is a much more subtle invitation since it is only obvious by a small choice in diction. Glamorizing the actions of the protestors makes the audience want to capture this glory as well. Using “patriots” becomes a symbolic inducement of invitation, creating a persona that has been glamorized and therefore causing the audience to want to fill that role. It’s not an obvious second persona, but her specific diction creates a symbolic invitation.

When Mabuza addresses a different audience, the international community, her approach to second persona changes. She states “the international community is absolutely correct in branding apartheid a crime against humanity” (p. 4). But she warns them that an awareness of the situation is not enough: “the South Africa of the future will need only 2.5 million Africans for all its labour needs...The rest, 21.5 million, must be compressed into lifeless Bantustans. In fact, these are our latter-day concentration camps” (p. 4). During this time more attention was paid to what was happening in South Africa. Divestment campaigns were starting and many international protests took place, but not all countries took part in criticizing South Africa. The entire international community had not, at that time, brandished apartheid as a crime against humanity. By characterizing it otherwise, she is giving the countries that have not voiced an opinion

against South Africa an opportunity to do and also is forcing them to align with those countries that have made the correct choice. In order to disconnect itself with the atrocities occurring in South Africa the international community would have to say that apartheid is wrong, but by implying that all countries have already distanced themselves from such this creates a pressure for those that have not yet distanced themselves to follow in the footsteps of others and avoid any connection with apartheid.

### **Transcendence through identification**

Burke asserts that because there is a division between human beings, each of us being separate entities, we seek the ability to identify and communicate with others in order to overcome the feeling of separation (Quigley, 1988, para. 2). Although we are separated physically, humans are also very much alike in that we experience many of the same things—what Burke (1969) refers to as consubstantiality—which leads to an ambiguity in our separation since humans are “both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another” (p. 21). This ambiguity in human separation works as an avenue for persuasion since “the human need to identify provides a rich resource for those interested in joining us or, more importantly persuading us” (Quigley, 1988, para. 4). More recently the theory has been expanded and refined, and for a speaker to create identification with the audience he or she has three routes of persuasion. According to Cheney (qtd. in Jasinski, 2001) those three strategies are (1) establishing a common ground, making it clear how the audience and speaker can connect, (2) identifying through antithesis, creating a dialectical opposition between the audience and the “other” and then uniting them to face a common threat, and (3) transcendence, rising above petty differences to move towards much greater commonalities that exist in humanity.

Mabuza uses all of the identification techniques Cheney discusses. She establishes common ground based on her and her audience’s shared history and ancestors and also their common experience as suffering because of apartheid. She also creates a dialectical opposition by separating her audience from the evils created by the government. She constantly makes connections between the current state of South



Africa and the government. Within the Afrikaner narrative the subject positions black South Africans are relegated to is because of their inferiority, which would place the blame of the situation on blacks. Mabuza erases the blame by connecting the poverty, food shortages and other problems the country faces to the government. They are divorced from any wrong doing or participation in their own strife or continuance of the system. She vindicates the audience's innocence and puts the government on trial for their crimes. The audience stands for what is good and right, but also those who are powerless and defenseless, while the government stands for all that is evil and powerful. She divides the audience from the government to once again unify them and also to show them what they are not. The creation of a clear antithesis works as a unifying technique because it gives the audience a clear understanding of what they can disassociate or distance themselves from. In *A rhetoric of motives*, Burke (1969) states "that terms used to create identification work to include the members of a group in a common ideology" (p. 990) and Mabuza has created a common ideology among her audience against the government for being the force that has created the misery in their lives.

In her speech Mabuza has a strong emphasis on unifying the audience and also connecting them to herself. In her speech, she states "we are indeed proud of...our history-makers", "custodians of our living tradition", and "our people will recall" (p. 2). She strives to make a personal connection to the audience through the uses of "we" and "our" and also by speaking of their common hardships and similar history. She also uses history to unify and lift up her audience by discussing the success of the anti-pass campaigns and "the organizational ability and capacity and, above all, the exemplary united action of some 20,000 strong women, their hearts and minds fixed on one goal: to confront the hierarchy in the very citadel of apartheid power, racist Pretoria" (p. 1). She also unites them through the organization of the ANC, gender and sisterhood: "we are here today to bring you the assurances of *the women of South Africa and of the ANC* that there is no power on earth which can divert us from the path of liberating our country" (p. 5) and "the Women's Section of the ANC salutes *the heroic bravery of the women inside South Africa* who are waging a tireless struggle inside the belly of the

beast. To them we make a solemn pledge never to tire until apartheid colonialism has been overthrown by the might of a united people. To *our sisters*...we extend *our embrace* and vow never to desert *our common trench* even beyond the attainment of Namibia's independence" (p. 6, emphasis not in original).

To create transcendence she relies on dialectical terms to include her other audience as well. One of her third audiences was the international community, which at the time was starting to pay more attention to what was going on in South Africa. In order to include this audience she cannot rely on the same commonalities she had before, but she still needs to have them identify with her and with what is going on in South Africa. By relying on terms like "justice", "democracy", and "freedom" she can dislodge any barriers her heavy focus on the experiences of those within the apartheid system might have had on her international audience. Each of those terms and many other dialectical terms she uses in her speech, transcend cultures and the specific experiences of people, and elevates them to the essence of humanity. The idea of identification transcendence is very similar to interpellation. In Mabuza's specific use of transcendence she is also using interpellation "by constituting subjects as participants in a distinctive culture, identification on a sub- or unconscious level make possible the activity of persuasion on a conscious level" (Wess, qtd. in Jasinski, 2001, p. 307). Mabuza's use of dialectical terms and reliance on an "assumed we" takes culture out of the equation and creates an environment where all individuals are involved and take part in the issues of South Africa.

Another aspect of identification that Mabuza uses is identification through representation. Another way that we identify with others is through "sharing vicariously in the role of leader and spokesman" (Burke, 1973, p. 195). Many individuals connect themselves to people they feel are greater themselves because of the commonalities they can see in the other person and also so that they can share in the leader's greatness and triumphs (Quigley, 1988). In Mabuza's speech she needed to produce a clear understanding that will eventually lead to action, and to do so she needed to come across as a person who is effected by the situation, but more knowledgeable about it than her audience. She could have easily relied on her past experiences as an ANC

Women's League activist or even her personal experiences as a woman living in South Africa, but she makes no mention of either of these things. Using specific instances and examples that mostly involve her and those around her, although applicable to the entire audience, would not elicit the same response she was looking for. By using events that don't mention her life, she makes herself part of the audience by placing herself not above them but with them as another casualty of apartheid. She—like all the members of her immediate audience—is directly affected by the actions of the government, and she chooses to place herself among the audience by not directly referring to herself in her examples. By leaving her specific experiences out of the speech she was giving her audience an opportunity to further identify with her. Many leaders and speakers set themselves apart from the audiences by speaking of their successes and accomplishments but Mabuza gives her audience a chance to see commonalities in her by not dividing herself from the audience.

## **Conclusion**

The creation of an individual voice as well as a compelling subject position for her audience gave them the strength and identity that they needed to continue to fight against apartheid. Mabuza embraced the cultural practices of that time as well as persuasive techniques of female freedom fighters by using song and poetry. She employed the more creative forms of rhetoric to incorporate the black South African spirit in her speech. She chose to step outside the constraints of form that her male predecessors—as well as oppressors—had created in order to reach her audience on a much more deep and profound level with the intention of freeing them from the emotional shackles apartheid had imprisoned them with. This is only one example of rhetoric from the ANCWL, and this paper has worked to showcase the necessity for further study of this particular area. The issues and accomplishments of women who are working within mass sociopolitical movements needs to be looked at as separate but equally important issues. The role the ANCWL played in the anti-apartheid movement leaves rhetorical critics with a breadth of material to analyze that has great significance in both the anti-apartheid movement and in women's role within social movements.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The connection of Bitzer and Foucault is discussed more in depth in M. Lane Bruner's (2005) article "Rhetorical Theory and the Critique of National Identity Construction".

<sup>2</sup> Referring to one of the four troupes Burke (1973) discusses in "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle".

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