Commentary on the First National Arts Council (NAC) ArtSpeak Seminar

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On the 19th August 2009, the National Arts Council of South Africa held its first of the ArtSpeak seminar discussions with the title *Cultural Diversity: Essential for World Peace or the Root of all Conflict?* This seminar was part of the build-up to the forthcoming 4th World Summit on Arts and Culture scheduled to be held in Newtown, Johanneburg at the Museum Africa, 22nd to 25th September 2009. Invited to address this topic were Dr Véronique Tadjo: Head of French Studies in the School of Literature and Language Studies, University of Witwatersrand - Cote D'Ivoire; and Andile Magengelele: Creative Industries Consultant, writer and critic - South Africa. The discussion was facilitated by Mike van Graan, Programme Director for the World Summit. Below is my review of this seminar.

First to speak was Dr Véronique Tadjo, whose talk was largely focused on cultural diversity and pan-Africanism. She kicked off with a positive remark about the notion of cultural diversity i.e. that for her it entails a positive worldview which advocates tolerance and respect for diversity and difference. Hence guided by such worldview, people can live in harmony. Tadjo however pointed out that such tolerance is evidently missing today as people are turning on each other through violence as seen in the 2008 xenophobic attacks in South Africa. For her, the root causes of this violence are economic factors such as unemployment and lack of income as well as poor service delivery. These led to frustrations manifesting themselves in violence against the non-locals wrongfully perceived to be a problem. Cases in point, she argues, were the attacks on Somali micro entrepreneurs in the Western Cape accused of taking business opportunities from the locals. She calls this opportunistic violence as it was directed at what other people have.

Tadjo believes that this kind of violence and intolerance undermines the potential benefits of cultural diversity, and that for it to be stopped, requires intervention and condemnation from higher authorities and leadership. She expressed deep concern with the fact that no justice was displayed by authorities including in the form of arrests and trial of those who perpetrated the violence against those seen as foreigners. She also believes that art and artistic activities could be used to promote productive cultural diversity that discourages intolerance and violence. This, she argues, would however only be enhanced in a supportive environment. The role of the arts, she further argues, is made even more relevant by the fact of its location and grounding within society.

Implications of such intolerance, together with other impeding factors, make any talk about pan-Africanism highly difficult. Those others factors include difficulties for Africans to travel easily within and/or around the continent; the language barriers to

communication due to divides amongst the Franco-phone, Anglo-phone and Luso-phone areas of the continent; and currency exchanges difficulties.

Second to address the seminar's topic was Andile Magengelele. His talk focused largely on the issue of historical divisions and inequalities in SA, and their persistence today. Like Tadjo, he sees diversity in SA as a source of conflict rather than peace. He attributes this to apartheid legacy of separate development which has kept South Africans apart, making it difficult for them to share and appreciate their differences and commonalities. He cited the case of training institutions which, in the past, were divided on racial lines, with blacks not allowed access to tertiary training. Included here were community arts centres such as Funda Center in Soweto, Diepkloof, established to cater exclusively for blacks living in townships. The problem for Magengelele is that with the dawn of democracy in 1994, these training centers were discontinued and were not replaced with new ones. A further indication of conflict, he cited, is that of historical religious divisions which saw black people being exposed to Christianity at the expense of other religious faiths. The result, he argues is religious intolerance as evidenced by the case in Soweto whereby residents' objected and protested against the construction of a second Mosque, complaining about "noise" emanating from the first Mosque.

He however noted that people such as those living in Soweto did not end up there out of will but were there as a result of historical forced removals under the apartheid regime which led to establishment of black townships. This occurred in the context of residential segregation which saw whites living in exclusively white suburban areas, Indians as well as coloureds living in segregated townships/suburbs of better quality than black Africans cramped in black townships with two or four roomed houses, unpopularly known as match boxes.

These divides, he argues, persists in the present time making it difficult for the arts and cultural diversity to help bring South Africans together. Hence the notion of rainbow nation remains far-fetched. Here, he made a mention of the "us" and "them" mentality that continues to divide SA, as could be seen in the case of some seeing their culture as being superior to that of others (alluding to ethnic divisions amongst black Africans) as well as divisions between so-called high culture (represented by ballet, opera and theater) with largely white audience and mass culture consumed largely by blacks. That racial divides and prejudices are still a reality in SA today is evidenced by the 2008 incident at the University of Free State whereby white students forced black female cleaners to feed on urinated food. Other similar racist occurrences include those reported in the press and media such as some white farmers' painting of their black workers in paint as punishment, shootings of black farm workers by some white farmers claiming to have mistaken them for animals, and a case of white farmer who got his black farm worker thrown into the lion's den resulting in him being killed by the lions. Also raising doubt about the SA's reconciliation and rainbowism was the song released by one of top playwrights, Mbongeni Ngema, titled Ama'ndia. Through this song, Ngema was hoping to generate an open debate about the nature of relationships between black Africans and Indians in SA, which he described as exploitative. Rather than this song leading to debate, it was instead condemned and even censored from airplay by the public

broadcaster, the South African Broad Casting Corporation (SABC). Magengelele also raised concern about the inequitable distribution of funding to arts and cultural practitioners by the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC). He was critical of the DAC's failure to extend funding to artists from within the African continent working in SA, such as the Mozambican arts festival. This, he argues, makes any talk about pan-Africanism nothing more than a lip-service. Rather, he sees divisions between the advantaged and the disadvantaged locally as well as between the locals and the non-locals continuing to widen.

His further criticism was leveled at whites within the arts industry who he accused of failing to open up doors to blacks. He argued that unlike in the past when the arts served everyone, the Newtown Arts Precinct, in the post-apartheid period, this is no longer the case with the DAC not being clear about its role in the promotion and transformation of the arts. Today, he argues, there are arts festivals such as Macufe which only cater for blacks, and the Arts Alive which has not gone beyond simply being a music festival.

A Response and Critique
A closer inspection of both presentations points to a common thread marking consensus between the presenters in terms of how they view the issue of cultural diversity and the role of culture and arts in the present day Africa, especially in helping to forge unity and promoting tolerance as well as enhancing synergies for joint advancement. For the two presenters, while diversity should ideally promote social cohesion and productive synergies, the harsh reality is today the opposite i.e. cultural diversity has instead led to conflicts and divisions, which undermine the vision of African renewal, as symbolized by the founding of the African Union in place of the former Organisation of Africa Unity. Hence for them it is hard and pre-mature to talk of pan-Africanism, as conditions are not conducive and there are some serious obstacles that need to first be addressed. In the light of this, it could be argued that for both Tadjo and Magengelele, their responses to the topic would be that while cultural diversity is ideal for peace, currently this is not the case and instead seems to be the root of conflict.

It was nevertheless clear, as Tadjo correctly pointed out, the prevailing violence and conflicts have other sources i.e. material economic conditions which have seen in SA eruption of violent protests in various communities in demand for improved service delivery. Tadjo did not however elaborate more on this as causal factor, failing to draw connections between unemployment problem and the broader neo-liberal macro-economic framework whose emphasis is on cost reductions (often leading to retrenchments and jobless economic growth) and profit maximization. The recognition of this wider structural constraint would have enabled Tadjo to realise that her suggested measures such as arrests and prosecution of those who led the 2008 xenophobic attacks in SA, would not bring a lasting solution to the problem without attending to the underlying causes.

Notwithstanding, I however find Tadjo's argument that for the arts to have desirable effect on the society such as promotion of creative and innovative harnessing of cultural diversity for promotion of peace and progressive development, requires a supportive and

conducive environment, rather persuasive. This view is consistent with and falls within the non-materialist dialectic theoretical paradigm. In terms of this theory, rather than material conditions (i.e. the base) being sole determinant of change and history or even social behavior, this influence is achieved in the context of other active factors arising form the superstructure e.g. philosophy, culture and religion (see Engels, 1975, McLellan, 1977, and Williams, 2002). Proceeding from this premise, it is sound for Tadjo to argue that the role and effect of the arts would be enhanced where there is conducive political and economic as well as social environment. The implication therefore is that the debates around the arts and what they can achieve within society should avoid rigid determinism and instead acknowledge the dialectic, complex interaction of various other forces including both the material, religious and political conditions. Thus, the arts would need to speak to these for them to have an enhanced desirable effect (both intrinsic and instrumental) on society.

A weak point in both presentations is what appears to be rather too much of emphasis on divisions which diversity is said to have perpetuated and widened. This needs to be balanced with examination and appreciation of unifying and cohesive role that cultural diversity may have played in the post-1994 period. Theory and evidence on cultural diversity in the present context of increased globalization suggests that diversity could be a source of strength and competitive advantage in what is rather a highly competitive climate. This is a widely held view as advanced by amongst others Mbigi (1995), Mbigi and Maree (1995), Lessem (1996), Lessem and Nussbaum (1996), Lessem (1996), and Kamwangamalu (1999). Note for instance, Mbigi (1997)'s argument to this effect with reference to the role of indigenous African value system of ubuntu in the context of SA's cultural diversity: "ubuntu will create a rainbow mentality in organisations characterised by cultural, racial, religious, tribal and political tolerance and thus a celebration of cultural diversity …" Similarly, Kamwangamalu (1999), making reference to the same debate in SA, asserted that the use of ubuntu in the business sector in South Africa is meant to enable business leaders to understand the cultural and behavioral context in which they are developing their approach to business. It also, he argues, enables them to develop management principles which incorporate African values; and to give cultures that were previously kept apart by apartheid an opportunity to celebrate their diversity and build on the strengths of that diversity; as well as to enable business leaders to shift paradigms in the conduct of business.

Cultural diversity is strictly speaking about diverse cultures existing side-by-side. To understand how culture can influence social behavior and society at large, it is necessary to recall the definition of culture around which there is a broader consensus. This is best represented in the review by Bocock (1997), according to which culture is a "distinctive way of life, shared values and meanings common to different groups and historical periods." Cultural meanings and values, it is argued, are produced, conveyed, communicated, and shared through social practices such as language. In terms of this definition, language is understood as transcending spoken and written words to include symbolic language using for instance symbols, sounds, gestures (see Bocock, 1997). Informed by this understanding, the arts then constitute a form of social practice that serve as a medium through which cultural values and meanings are communicated. This implies that the arts products and artists from diverse cultural backgrounds are an ideal

vehicle through which cultural diversity could be harnessed for instrumental benefits such as social cohesion, peace, solidarity, and innovation. South Africa, both during and after apartheid, presents plethora of evidence in support of this point.

A case in point is the post-1994 national anthem which is a fusion of three historically distinct and antagonistic songs. Those are *God Save the King* which served as national anthem representing colonial, imperial British regime's interests; *Die Stem van Suid Africa*, previously a poem but later to be converted to national anthem representing a segregatory, racially exclusive white Afrikanner interests; and *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika,* which was initially a church hymn but later was harnessed as a protest song for defiance of the apartheid system. Today, these songs have been creatively and innovatively fused together into a national anthem that seeks to promote a single national identity and national unity in strife for a common vision for the country that has a history of racial and ethnic divisions.

The extent to which this ideal is being achieved is a question that requires a separate inquiry, but it is no doubt important given evidence in South Africa today of contrasting signs of unity across racial and ethnic lines, on the one hand, and those of persisting divisions from the past. This brings up the point by Magengelele critical of persisting white domination in the arts and lack of will to fast track transformation. This point was also raised at the Moshito music conference held at the Museum Africa, September 2nd to 5th 2009, during a session on music festivals, whereby concerns were raised by black festival organisers and music promoters about lack of both racial integration and financial support for their festivals. These are not isolated problems within the arts fraternity. Not too long ago, there was a controversy at the Naledi Theatre Awards when a prominent artist and composer of the Lion King musical, Lebo Morake (well known as Lebo M), leveled criticism at the dominance of white and lack of transformation in the theatre sector. This even prompted the former National Minister of Arts and Culture, Dr Pallo Jordan, to re-iterate similar concerns about the sector.

All of these support the earlier theoretical point that for culture to have desirable effect on society, such as enhancement of social cohesion, it has to be within a supportive and conducive environment. Even more important is the need for support and a will from people as active agents. Currently in SA, the neo-liberal macro-economic framework and the exploitative capitalist system undermine this potential. Unemployment and poverty are rife in the midst of wealth and resources plenty which only benefits few. This environment creates a sense of insecurity amongst most of the privileged, making them less willing to support the disadvantaged.

While it is indeed correct that racial divisions persist in the post-1994 SA, criticisms of this should however take into account and be balanced with an acknowledgement of new forms of inequalities amongst black Africans. The post-1994 period has witnessed a gradual increase of both a middle class and upper-middle class categories within black communities. This phenomenon and its initial prospects during negotiations for political change from apartheid to democratic dispensation has been a subject of scholarly research and debate (see for instance Modisha, 2005). Although this is sure to continue to

grow, it however remains a tiny minority relative to the entire population i.e. just about 2.6 million of the total South African population of about 48 million(see University of Cape Town's Unilever Institute Report on www.unileverinstitute.co.za, accessed on 2nd October 2009). The situation has been exacerbated by the macro-economic environment defined by government programmes such as the Black Economic Empowerment which tended to benefit only few, mainly from within the above-mentioned classes at the expense of the majority stuck in poverty. These classes are often dubbed "the black diamonds" meaning those black South Africans who are considered wealthy or are in salaried employment earn at least R7, 000 a month, are well educated and credit-worthy, and own or are acquiring homes, cars and household goods (see University of Cape Town's Unilever Institute Report on www.unileverinstitute.co.za, accessed on 2nd October 2009). Within this class category, is an even tinier minority who benefited from the government's black economic empowerment (BEE) programme deals, making them the most privileged as the upper middle class.

The question then is: are there no members of this group within the arts fraternity that is benefiting more than many others? Has the BEE epidemic not hit the arts sector? If there are such BEE beneficiaries, what is it that they are doing to help reverse the apartheid injustices? Besides the BEE question, are there no highly established, successful and influential black personalities in different spheres of the arts who could be helping to fulfill this role? Or are they making efforts but without government and perhaps even private sector support? This reminds me of a while ago when there was initiative for the establishment of *the Native Club* (it seems to me that there is no more talk of this) in the wake of the former State President, Thabo Mbeki's concerns about lack of black intelligentsia.

The question of Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) and National Arts Council of South Africa (NAC)'s non-funding of artists from within the continent is indeed a serious challenge, especially in the context of political instability in some of African countries, underdevelopment, general skills shortage in South Africa due to apartheid legacy, and the espoused need for renewal of Africa to ensure that the 21st century becomes the African century. How should this be addressed? How can this be realised? What are the constraints and what are the possibilities? This is what should be taken into account when trying to figure out a way towards funding non-South African artists from within Africa.

Perhaps a major constraint is the reality that we all need to acknowledge i.e. geographical and political borders are real and cannot simply be wished away. Borders are a worldwide reality and have a long history in spite of their having been extensively discussed, debated and questioned, especially as expressed through the notion and practice of national sovereignty. National sovereignty is defined as follows:
- "A legal expression of the right to self-government by a state or nation" which "entails the declaration by a political system to operate independently of foreign rule or control". (See http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_national_sovereignty , accessed on 2nd October 2009).
- "The supreme, absolute, and uncontrollable power by which an independent state is governed and from which all specific political powers are derived; the intentional

independence of a state, combined with the right and power of regulating its internal affairs without foreign interference". Hence it is referred to as the quality of having supreme, independent authority over a territory. (See http://legaldictionary.thefreedictionary.com/National+sovereignty, accessed on 2nd October 2009).

The questioning of national sovereignty and attendant borders it promotes has intensified in recent times in view of globalisation processes and increased emphasis on human rights. As Vesselin Popovski (2004) argues, the modern understanding of sovereignty involves a duty to protection of human rights. Hence, for Popovski, the sovereignty of states is no longer a simple right to exercise power on a defined territory. Rather, he argues, it is a complex duty to exercise power in an acceptable manner to the international law which has as one of its core objective, protection of human rights (see http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2004/issue4/0404p16.html). Notwithstanding this modernized conception of national sovereignty, it however continues to be protected by international institutions such as the African Union (AU) which has as one of its key objectives, the need to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States (See http://www.africa\union.org/root/au/AboutAu/au_in_a_nutshell_en.htm).

Sovereignty, as an impediment, has been worsened by the September 11th attack in the USA, New York, with lasting impact on international relations that has seen the USA and other nations around the world tightening their border controls. Intrinsically linked to sovereignty is the notion of citizenship which by its nature is exclusionary of those perceived to be outsiders/non-citizens/non-locals. These impediments, which constitute part of an international regime, prevent countries around the world from providing support to or extending full rights and benefits to those considered to be non-citizens.

SA is therefore not a lone case. It is part of this international regime in which borders matter despite the recognition of the limits of such borders. This reality should serve as part response to questions posed by Mike van Graan, Programme Director for the recent 2009 World Summit on Arts and Culture, in a weekly column, around NAC's non-funding of non-South African artists. Amongst van Graan's questions are: "… is it not ironic that we (referring to the NAC and SA) that we are hosting the World Summit on Arts and Culture on the theme 'Meeting of Cultures: Creating meaning through the arts', and having won the bid to host the Summit, partly because of the esteem in which South Africa is held internationally for peacefully overcoming apartheid, yet we cannot fund African artists living in our country?" This is clearly a relevant but unfortunately poorly thought through question if one is to consider the constraints imposed by practices and notions of sovereignty, citizenship and borders.

Had SA been a unique case, then criticisms leveled at the NAC such as by van Graan would be completely justified.

But what can be done within these constraints? My own view is that a paternalistic charitable, rather ad hoc approach would not work as one of the speakers at the ArtSpeak seemed to suggest i.e. that the NAC should fund a Mozambican arts and cultural festival.

Within the constraints outlined above, it would be feasible to explore formal arrangements within both the continent-wide and regional level frameworks provided respectively by the African Union and regional structures such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Such frameworks should allow for bi-lateral and multi-lateral partnerships between and amongst the governments' Arts and Culture Departments as well as Arts and Culture Funding Agencies. The advantage with formalized partnerships is that they would be founded on principles of equality, mutual respect and the will to lend support without paternalism. Such initiatives would be consistent with the late Julius Nyerere's view on the role of and goals that the African Union's forerunner, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) had to aim at achieving:

> "The OAU exists and assists in the maintenance or restoration of peace and cooperation within Africa, even if it too is severely weakened in action and capacity by its lack of resources. Some sub-regional organisations are making limited but useful contributions to stability, peace and economic progress in their respective areas. The machinery of government and of unofficial institutions within African States can facilitate or hinder movement towards greater intra-African cooperation. And in addition, the all-African institutions, as well as those working on a sub-regional basis, may well be able to benefit by it - provided the actors bear in mind the prospective importance of the role these intra-African institutions can play in strengthening us all. - Third World Network Features" (Nyerere, 1998).

Such approach would help to prevent the tendency of SA becoming what has been dubbed an imperialist of the continent (see Miller, 2006; Tleane, 2006). This, I argue, despite my concerns about how the use of the concept imperialism to describe the nature of the expansion of SA's private companies into the continent. Too often in the debate on this subject, this concept is loosely applied without providing working definition/s informing the analysis and conclusions arrived at. John Middleton, is said to have defined imperialism as "the exercise of power by a state beyond its borders," while for George W. Bock it is "the domination by one country of the political, economic and cultural life of another country or region"(see Fowale, 2009). Imperialism is, however, seen as the basis for colonial control, whereby colonialism is understood to be "the erection by a state of an apparatus of administrative control over people who are defined as distinct" (Middleton, 1997, in Fowale, 2009) and/or a "direct political control resulting from imperialism."(Rodney, 1990, in Fowale, 2009). Hence, for Fowale(2009), these definitions suggest that imperialism and colonialism are twin concepts separated only by time.

If one were to work from this definition, then claims about SA being an imperialist of the continent are immediately brought to question. Further, it is unlikely in the context of the current regional arrangements and the AU as well as against the backdrop of colonialism and subsequent political victory for independence, that SA would establish a form of direct colonial control in other African countries. While SA companies may have influence on the political, economic and cultural aspects of the countries into which they expand, that influence does not or should not amount to domination. If it does, it would be due to deals brokered between these companies and the power elites of those counties i.e. the comprador class or the ruling class. Console Tleane's study of SA's Media, and Information and Communication Technology sector in sub-Saharan Africa, found that the penetration of companies within this sector and their exploitative practices were enabled

by collaborations with the local elites who sought to subvert the already weak regulatory frameworks (see Mapadimeng, 2006: 286-287).

Worth noting is that the expansion of SA companies does not occur in a vacuum but rather in the context of bilateral and multi-lateral agreements reached between governments. It is therefore ultimately, the responsibility of both SA governments and its partner governments within the continent to ensure, through monitoring and evaluation, that the expansion of private companies and their practices does not undermine the spirit partnership founded on equal basis. Findings such as Tleane's suggest weaknesses on the part of both South African government and governments of the affected countries making it difficult for them put in place monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Perhaps and even more serious constraint is the global hegemonic neo-liberal system according to which governments should only provide enabling environment for business with limited intervention in the actual running of businesses. Within this neo-liberal macro-economic environment, has occurred an intense competition for market share and exploitation of resources between SA's private corporations and private corporations from elsewhere in the world, notably from the USA, UK, and Europe (see Tleane, 2006). This alone challenges the notion that SA is an imperialist within the continent, as clearly, its corporations are not the only ones exploiting resources of the affected counties. Imperialism and colonialism of Africa in the past was marked by division of the continent into colonial clusters, which has today left behind a sad legacy defined by so-called Luso-phone, Franco-phone and Anglo-phone Africa. Contrary to this, it is today common to find private corporations from different parts of the world competing for market share and resources in one country.

Concluding remarks

The NAC's initiative in the form of the ArtSpeak seminars is without doubt a great one for the purpose of stimulation of debate around the arts and culture sector. This is the sector riddled with contradictions and plagued by a myriad of problems. A hint to this was in the criticisms recently of the theater world by one of top SA artists, Lebo Morake, popularly known as Lebo M, at the Naledi theater awards. His criticism was aimed at what he sees as the un-transformed nature of the theatre sector that continues to be dominated by whites. Similarly, yet another prominent SA artist, Sello Maake ka Ncube has embarked on a hunger strike in protest against what he sees as suppression and further marginalization of black African arts and culture. As reported in the Sowetan newspaper, 18th October 2009, Maake ka Ncube is quoted as saying, explaining his action: "Even with black rule, the colonizer' and oppressors' cultures continue to dominate" and "I'm tired of sitting on the sidelines. I just don't understand why a black government would allow my culture to play second fiddle." While the ArtSpeak was conceptualized as part of the build-up towards the World Summit, it is clear in the light of these rather hard questions, that it needs to be sustained post-Summit in order to afford a space for artists, arts and culture researchers, arts and culture activists as well as commentators and government to engage in open debate around some of these pressing and challenging questions affecting the arts and culture sector.

From the review above, it was noted that both Tadjo and Magengelele, who addressed the first ArtSpeak meeting, are of the view that cultural diversity has been the source of conflict as opposed to peace. I argued that Tadjo's point that for culture and the arts to have desirable influence on society, would require a conducive and supportive socio-political and economic environment (within which other factors reinforce as opposed to undermine culture and arts' role), is strengthened by its consistency with the dialectical non-materialist theory of social change and history. The cases cited by both Tadjo (e.g. of xenophobic violence and attitudes in a context of material deprivation) and Magengelele (e.g. of the impact of the legacy of historical racially and religiously based separations on attitudes amongst black people in Soweto towards Islamic religion, hence their protest against plans to erect another mosque ion Soweto) are evidence of the absence of such supportive environment.

Notwithstanding this, however, both speakers' weak point has been their over-emphasis of divisions and conflicts promoted by cultural diversity, almost at the expense of a balanced analysis that appreciates the unifying and cohesive role that cultural diversity can play, especially as evidence shows in the post-1994 SA. This is due to their failure to make reference to or take into account the discourse on culture and diversity according to which cultural diversity could be a source of strength and competitive advantage in the current globalised environment. Furthermore, reference to theoretical definition of culture as a concept would also have enabled them to best explain just how and what role can the arts play in a context of cultural diversity. I argued that the definition of culture implies that arts products and artists from diverse cultural backgrounds, as respectively social practices and active agents, are ideal vehicles through which cultural diversity could be harnessed for positive influence and outcomes on society. A case in point which I cite to demonstrate this is that of the SA's national anthem, meant to promote a new, common non-racial identity, is a outcome of the fusion of historically, racially divisive songs. I nevertheless argued that the persistence of apartheid racial legacy tends to undermine this desired future for SA as evidenced by cases cited such as continued racial inequalities and divisions within the arts sector in SA. This, I argued, supports the point by Magengelele that SA remains as divided and unequal society which undermines the positives expected of cultural diversity (**NB.** See the first paragraph in this section in which I cited prominent SA artists and their lament of this state of affairs within the arts and culture sector).

It was also noted from both speakers that in their view, it is pointless and/or premature to be talking of pan-Africanism in the light of xenophobic attitudes amongst South Africans towards Africans from within the continent. While indeed this is the case, both presenters, in advancing such argument, failed however to consider some of the harsh realities of the world order as defined by geographical and political borders as well as practices of national sovereignty and citizenship. These are realities that cannot be ignored nor wished way. This is so despite the globalization phenomenon which has seen challenges being mounted against borders. The borders, as I have already pointed out, constitute part of the global regime recognized and legitimized by nation states through international bodies such as the United Nations and the African Union through promotion and protection of national sovereignty. This international regime promotes territorialism

that makes it difficult for national governments to give support to and extend citizenship rights to those categorized as non-locals/non-citizens/foreigners. Failure to recognize these realities and constraints, has seen both presenters leveling what I consider an unjustified criticism that posits SA as an isolated case as opposed to being seen as part of an international regime.

Within the constraints mentioned above, there are however options that exist for organizations such as the NAC to provide funding support to non-South African artists from within the continent. This can be done in a way that would avoid the danger of being perceived as playing a role of neo-imperial power in the continent. Note however that I argued that if one considers the definition of imperialism and colonialism, it is hard to consider SA as an imperial power as many tend to suggest. This is particularly so if one were to also consider that the exploitation of African resources and people north of Limpopo is done not only by SA companies but also companies from Europe and USA as well as from Asian powers such as China. This exploitation is often achieved through collaboration with the local power elites that has been dubbed *the comprador class*. Other options available would also help to avoid what I see as more of charitable type of interventions informed by pitiful concerns and guilt mentality or attitude which would only serve to perpetuate dependency syndrome inherited from colonialism as well as inferiority and superiority complexes both on the sides of the supported (recipients) and the supporter, respectively. One such option which I propose is that of exploring formalised partnerships guided by principles of equality and mutual respect within the framework of the existing bi-lateral and multi-lateral relationships such as represented by SADC and AU.

The alternative to this proposed approach is what many have no guts to advocate and pursue i.e. a revolutionary approach that would aim to topple the current order paving way for a new regime in which borders are no longer relevant nor any longer recognized.

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