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ASPECTS OF FREEDOM AND CULTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Notions of culture, arts, music, drama, are to some extent under-researched in Africa, even while they play a crucial role in the social life of communities. This paper seeks to analyse some creative arts and their diverse nature in South Africa, in contributing to notions of freedom that emerge from them, whether in the form of Hugh Masekela's songs of the migrant workers on trains (Coal Train), of the mythical image trains, or of the syncopation style of Jonas Gwangwa ('Shebeen') that is like a jazz throwback to the era of the Drum magazine with its intellectual forte in writing, journalism and the elan vital of African communities' cultural contribution of the time. Freedom was alive even within the bounds of apartheid, as in the all-night locked halls to evade apartheid night curfews for blacks. Some biographies as literature, relate some of the highest forms of achievements in the country. More recent articulations of freedom in the area of culture are emerging from Kgafela Moagagodi and the Marabela (rebels) in his drama and music compositions, that still retain their sense of humour and critical stance to the present socio-political contexts of

South Africa. This is akin to one short story by Ndebele ending with a person laughing in the grave. Yet at the same time South Africa South Africa has one of the highest Gini coefficient gaps, but despite such levels, there are also significant cultural achievements that are worth analysing. The paper seeks to engage with such by outlining historical and current notions of different aspects of culture, freedom and community in the country, yet take cognisance of the material limitations of many in South Africa.

Palavras-chave: arts and culture; south africa; music; drama; freedom.