Alteration Call for Papers
South Africa: Re-imagining the Rainbow Nation

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The birth of a democratic South Africa in 1994 gave impetus to the idea of the possibility of crafting a new, and just post-apartheid society, one that was formed on the values of equality for all, human rights and economic prosperity. The idea of the creation of a rainbow nation which would incorporate the diverse communities that resided in the country, was advanced by many in the leadership structures as the perfect ideology underpinning the new South Africa.

However 24 years later South Africa remains very far from the ideal society that had originally been envisioned and while some of the initial objectives may have been achieved, there are many that have been either abandoned or have not materialised due to failures in leadership, institutionalised corruption, maladministration and a lack of implementation of policies.

With the end of the highly controversial Jacob Zuma presidency and the beginning of the Cyril Ramaphosa era, the nation finds itself on somewhat unstable terrain, struggling to let go of its past and battling to carve out a future haunted by the legacy of 2 decades of unfulfilled political promises and dreams.

In his recent inaugural address as President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa quoted the words from a famous song sung by the late Hugh Masakela, titled Thuma Mina, which translates to “send me”. Some have argued that this was an attempt by the newly appointed president to spark the imagination of a nation that has become disappointed and disillusioned with its leadership, and that he was calling on South Africa’s citizens to play a role in doing their bit to fix what was currently wrong with the country. With echoes of the late American president JF Kennedy’s equally evocative call where he cried “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country”, Ramaphosa has through the very powerful imagery of “Thuma Mina”, arguably placed the future of the country in the hands of its citizens. He has strategically called on South Africans and all those who live here to be part of working towards correcting the mistakes of the past and collectively building a new more prosperous future. While there may be those who will say that the responsibility of governing the country and taking care of the needs of the people rests with the government, the concept of a collective civil society approach to re-imagining the future of the rainbow nation is certainly something which has found resonance with many who have expressed hope and a new found sense of optimism.

This issue of Alteration intends to explore this dynamic which has brought about the possibility of reviewing both the gains and failures of the last 24 years and analysing these against the backdrop of the ongoing project of carving out a democratic, socially just dispensation. While the formal structures of democracy have been in place over a long enough period, the practice and pursuit of the principles of democracy and social justice have been found wanting, as has become evident on the commentary and analysis pages of both our media and academic publications.

We invite the submission of critically engaging papers that explore this theme of re-imagining South Africa from discipline-specific, and multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary perspectives. President Ramaphosa’s call of Thuma Mina, opened up the civil society space, as a space for multiple, individual and collective imaginative interventions, creation of opportunities, and projects. It invites greater civil society participation across a wide array of both national, and civil society initiatives. It also challenges individuals and organizations, but also governance and economic structures to not only collectively imagine a new
future, but, especially, to creatively and constructively engage the still untransformed, unreconstructed, and inveterate social systems and structures that stand in the way of a fully free and equal South Africa.

With our first democratic elections in 1994, we realised the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of freedom, justice, and equality, of nearly ten generations of South Africans. With the launching of our Constitution by President Nelson Mandela, on 18 December 1996, and with it coming into effect, on 4 February 1997, we created the instruments to make this dream, a reality. It opened up collective vistas of promise and great expectations. And, to use a conceptual metaphor, much remains to be done, in the building of a rainbow nation.

Suggested Sub-Themes

Accountability
Civil Society
Class
Corruption
De-colonisation
Economic Stability
Education
Entrepreneurship
Equality/ Equity
Freedom
Gender Justice
Health
Housing
Human Dignity
Human Rights
Humanitarian Relief
International Relations
Land
Leadership
Morality
Philanthropy
Political Elites
Political Economy
Political Parties
Power
Race
Radical Economic Transformation
Redistributive Justice
Religion
Social Justice
Social Corporate Responsibility
Transformation
Worker’s Rights

AND

Thuma Mina
Please submit the proposed titles of your articles, as well as a brief abstract of about 250-400 words, to alternation25years@ukzn.ac.za.

Submission dates:

1. Abstract of 250 – 400 words 30 September 2018
2. A short bio of contributors by 30 September 2018
3. Title and Abstract acceptance notification: 31 October 2018
4. Full chapter due: 28 February 2019
5. Projected publication date 2019

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Use footnotes sparingly. In order to enhance the value of the interaction between notes and text, we use footnotes and not endnotes.

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