Ever changing force that apartheid refused to acknowledge

IAN workers at a workshop for people in higher education on race relations. One man reported that when he grew up in a village in Limpopo, it was a constant worry that walking in the area was free to hit any boy he encountered, with no reason being needed.

As a result, boys would do their best to beat men on the path. Her second concern was that at no time will his son feel any fear of him, and takes pride in the warmth of their relations.

If we are to advance a genuinely inclusive and non-violent society, we need to address - through criticism and action - such issues.

What apartheid allowed everyone was the myth of our "own",

By Crispin Henson

Many cultural elements are in fact shared across ethnic and racial divides.

Understanding was alien to apartheid. Its ideologies used a term intended to normalise racial despots: "traditional way of life", "cultural" - don't challenge it because we have always done it.

When people use culture as a euphemism for race, it feeds into this rigid idea of people defined by some fiction from the past, and risks recreating the very culture it seeks to replace.

For English-speaking people, I mean, culture is a means of expressing our understanding.

Herdin of cattle by boys is a cultural practice among Zulu people, but so is the use of cellphones and taxis.

But we have cultural meanings and practices in the same ways as anyone else. Why, we don't see it clearly is simply that elements of our culture, such as our language and lifestyle, are still dominant in society, and hence seen as the positive elements.

What then was our cultural reality when we were growing up? I think we all know what we did. I think we would have identified that doing things otherwise would be identified.

As I think about the practice of giving domestic workers tea in jinns or broken cups.

I even heard a tale of someone who met a Zulu landlady who had a single cup, broke off the handle of one to give to the worker. One witness told how a woman worked over weekends in someone's garden, and had drunk tea that still had the taste of jam in it. This systematic humiliation was as much part of the core of apartheid as violent repression. It was also as much part of our culture as the positive elements.

The uncomfortable truth is that our cultures have been shaped by the violence of repression. We should not protect culture at the expense of people; we should use culture as a means to protect the elements that we could identify.

At the new airport, Sandile Buthelezi's statue of Shaka as a herder of cattle, with its connotations of care and productivity, was removed to be replaced by the more conventional image of the warrior king.

The antithetic view of Zulu men found in Western literature to the present.

It brought the image of Shaka in line with the status of colonial rulers, which similarly emphasised physical prowess.

In stark contrast, I think it's the battle over beach segregation that's a more regular aspect of Durban's North Beach, if not similar with the white beach culture. Once the beaches were segregated, African women used to go to the beach that was more suitable than the others. You could see a large woman rolling in the water, giggling, maybe a breast casually escaping the inevitable clutches of the bru and needing to be repaired again.

In this way, culture both opens up spaces for living in a fully human way and closes others.

Crispin Henson is director of the Institute of Race Relations, based at the Durham University of Technology.