



All Mixed Up: Music and Inter-Generational Experiences of Social Change in South Africa

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Cover Image: Party Goer Dancing at House Party Brixton, Johannesburg, 2005 (Author's own)

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Abstract

In this thesis I use music as a starting point to animate the wider social experience of individuals and groups responding to rapid social change in South Africa. Social change in South Africa is linked in to discourses about identity that have been rigidly racialised over time. The cohorts and individuals who I engaged with cross, or are crossed by, the boundaries of racial categories in South Africa, either through family background or by the composition of cohort membership. The affective quality of music in people's experience allows a more nuanced view of the changing dynamics of identity that is not accessed through other research methods. Music is used as a device to track biographies and stories about lived experiences of social change from the 1940's to the first decade of the 21st Century in South Africa. Popular music cultures, including multi-racial church dances of the 1940's, the 1970's Johannesburg jazz and theatre scene and Kwaito, the electronic music that emerged in the 1990's, provide a canvas to explore personal memories in very close connection to historical developments and groups of people ageing and working alongside each other in the inner western areas of Johannesburg, extending into other areas of the metropolis and the coastal city of Durban. The ethnography includes the life story of a member of a multi-racial family, the dynamic and biographies of a post-apartheid friendship cohort in Western Johannesburg, and an exploration of racial tension in a lap dancing club with a mixed clientele and staff base.

The thesis draws on a period of 18 months of dedicated fieldwork in Johannesburg, where I was employed as a DJ in a number of night clubs, as well as many years living in the city as a South African national both as a child and an adult. The methodological implications of a close personal connection to the field site are thus also explored as a determinant of data gathering.

It looks so simple from a distance...

The way lives touch,
touch and spring apart,
the pulse synaptic,
local, but its stretch
electric – as when cities
lose themselves in velvet
under winking planes,
binding black hostilities
with gold chains¹

¹ Anne Stevenson, Poems on the Underground, 2010

Chapter 1

Introduction

Focus of Research & Intellectual Problem

What can we know about the shifting interpretations of identity amongst some mixed urban communities in South African through people's experience and use of music? Music in this thesis is a device to track personal biographies alongside the experience of social change in South Africa amongst cohorts and across generations. The research presented is focused on the intersection of music and social change in South Africa from the 1940's to the first decade of the 21st Century. This is explored by looking at the experiences and uses of popular music by individuals and cohorts who occupy ambiguous identities in relation to mainstream understandings of race and belonging in South Africa, both pre and post-liberation, using a varied methodological approach. Thus the material draws on extended oral history interviews around a single life story, participant observation in the Western Suburbs of Johannesburg amongst a cohort of friends aged between 17 and 29 between 1999 and 2007 and my time performing as a DJ in a number of Johannesburg nightclubs between 2005 and 2006, as well as structured and semi-structured interviews. The common thread linking these ethnographic data sources is that all can be defined as 'mixed' according to the normative categories inherited from apartheid and still operating in South African discourses on identity that emphasise the boundaries of race and ethnicity as absolute and unchanging (Crapanzano 1985; Posel 2001).

The western suburbs have a particular resonance in Johannesburg's history because they are amongst the city's oldest and were, to differing degrees, sites of communities which were mixed according to categories of race, nationality and class right from their inception (Bonner & Segal 1998; Ansell 2004; Van Onselen 1982; Rorich 1989; Itzkin 2001), along with the suburbs east of the city centre (Ballantine 1993). They represent the kind of organic community building that accompanied the rapid expansion of Johannesburg after the discovery of gold in 1886. For this reason, they were sites of great anxiety to white city officials who targeted them for slum removals and social engineering along racialised lines (Van Tonder 1993; Trump 1979; Parnell 1988, 1992) from the beginning of the 20th century. This included the clearances of the 'Brickfields' site, which would be renamed New Town, to what is probably one of the most well-documented and notorious examples of forced removals, the Sophiatown clearances. Sophiatown exerts a powerful influence on black youth and music culture in early 21st Century Johannesburg , no doubt accentuated by the literary and cultural products of its prolific artistic community (Alfred 2003; Motjuwadi 1987), leaving a canon which present day kwaito stars and fashion designers draw on for inspiration. For example, in 2000, the kwaito supergroup Mafikizola recreated typical 1950's Sophiatown scenes for the music video and cover art for their album 'Kwela'. As well as using samples of well-known penny whistle music from the era Hugh Masekela, who began his career in the heyday of Sophiatown's cultural influence, plays a guest trumpet solo on Track 1 of the album.

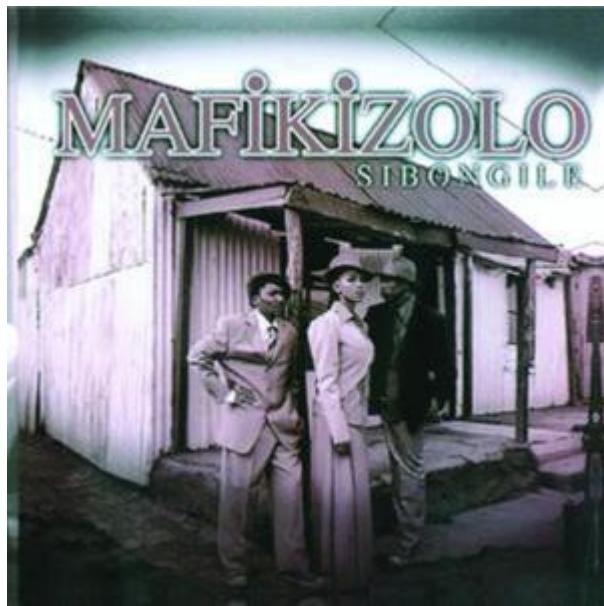


Figure 1: Cover of Mafikizola album 'Sibongile'. Evokes the early days of Johannesburg. Note typical tin house and late 19th/early 20th century dress.



Figure 2: Cover of Mafikizola album 'Kwela'. Note 1950's Sophiatown-era dress style.

The myth of Sophiatown is that it was unique. The suburb of Brixton where I was located for most of the fieldwork period, and surrounding neighbourhoods of

Fietas, Mayfair, Fordburg, Crosby, New Town, have a history of being mixed spaces where all manner of people lived side by side (Posel 2001, plus other Johannesburg references e.g the pictorial histories in Goldsmiths Library.). Brixton cemetery is one of the oldest in Johannesburg, and is the home to the city's first Hindu crematorium, built with the support of Gandhi who was living in Johannesburg and practising as a lawyer at the time (Itzkin 2001). Apartheid temporarily halted these processes, zoning Brixton, New Town, Fietas and Crosby as white, renaming Sophiatown 'Triomf' after the forced removals of the 1960s, Fordsburg and Mayfair as Indian. Since 1994 and the repeal of the Group Areas act, the Western suburbs have swiftly reverted back to being significantly 'mixed' to varying degrees, along racial lines, but also class and nationality. It was as if apartheid just pressed 'pause' (McGregor 2007).

However, the perspective on past generations gained from using the oral testimony of Brenda Osman shows that this process of 'mixing' is less recent than would be suggested by the removal of barriers to residence presented by apartheid legislation, and was ongoing throughout the apartheid era. Aside from the academic literature on well-known spaces of pre-apartheid multi-racial and cultural communities (McEachern 2001), the popular press also provides a record of the existence of mixed leisure spaces that are less famous, like Ernest Cole's photograph's of the multi-racial customer's of a shebeen in Riverside, Pretoria, featured as a photo story in the May 1962 edition of Drum Magazine, where white

people were noted to, ‘...get on well with their coloured and black neighbours.’²

These photographs were a rare example of relaxed black and white relations in Cole’s work, which tended to highlight the oppressive quality of separate development policies. Though these mixed spaces existed throughout the apartheid era in various forms, the post-1994 period has seen rapid shifts in the demographics of the formerly homogenous suburbs, and existence of mixed leisure spaces, that outstrips anything that occurred in the previous separate development legislated decades. What is interesting from the point of view of this thesis, is how the material, located over several generations, and in a number of contemporary contexts, elaborates the ways in which identifications and alliances in mixed cohorts are responsive to context, and are in a process of ongoing negotiation, and the part music plays in mapping these negotiations.

I do not wish to extol the virtues of spaces that are mixed in South Africa, as opposed to those that are not. Nor do I want to view the tensions and conflicts that can define much of the interaction within these spaces as evidence of their failure. Conflict and tension within cultures are as ordinary as culture itself, to borrow from Raymond Williams. My purpose is descriptive, to demonstrate that these kinds of spaces have been and are a fundamental part of the fabric of the emergence of South African social life. Two articles on District Six in Cape Town, one of the more well-known mixed communities targeted by apartheid planners, articulate very different accounts. Where McEachern (2001) describes a largely harmonious

²Taken from, ‘Everything Was Moving: Photography from the 60’s and 70’s’, 2012:66, (ed) Kate Bush. Barbican Art Gallery

dynamic cosmopolitan community, Ahluwahlia & Zegeye (2003) locate it as a site of racism. Lived experiences move along a spectrum between these poles. The social lives and life described in this thesis do not sit easily with discourses of the Rainbow Nation, that static metaphor of clearly defined stripes working in harmony (but still separately) to produce a coherent whole. This is more a kaleidoscope, constantly shifting the configuration of meanings and alliances.

Music is a useful methodological tool, and an exemplary device for mapping the experience and outcomes of social change, because memories of a life, and current experience, have emotions and affect through music, and are thus very intense. Talking through, and around, musical experience with those who participated in this research permits an excavation of deep responses in an analysis of the dynamics of social systems. Although it has been argued that music acts in specific ways on the brain, in particular those areas associated with emotion, memory and movement (Bailey 1985; Brown & Wiggins 2009), these responses can be understood more fully only in the relevant social context. This is powerfully demonstrated by Christopher Small's work on the relationship between music and the emergence of new cultural forms in the encounter between African and European traditions in the New World. Small describes music as, '...an activity in which we engage' (1987:50), coining the verb 'musicking' to describe the act of taking part in a musical performance, which Small defines as anything from a formal concert hall experience to singing in the shower. This locates music firmly in the realm of social life, essential for communication and an inherent part of human

activity, on a par with speech as an innate communicative structure which must be learnt in social context (Blacking 1973).

In this thesis I do not consider music in and of itself to express or mean anything at all. What music offers is an opportunity to locate what Raymond Williams has described as the ‘structure of feeling’ across several generations of mixed South African urban experience. As Williams describes it, “...a lived hegemony is always a process” (1977:112). In South Africa there is an intense experience of race as an absolute signifier. And there is an historical background of musically marked leisure spaces (both private and public) being an important part of everyday life. Looked at in historical context, these leisure and performance spaces have produced contradictory structures of feeling that reflect the tension between fixing and justifying rigidly racialised identity, and attempts to circumnavigate the social structures that emerge out of these hegemonic understandings of identity. Coplan, writing on the musical experience of Basotho migrants in South Africa, emphasizes the contradictions that emerge out of experiences of larger social flows and expressions of ideology, emotions, perceptions and the structure of reality ‘...like social reality itself, the structure of feeling is often multi-faceted, a matter of mixed emotion.’(1994:29) As Best put it, “The concept of a structure of feeling therefore, for Williams, is an effort to capture the complex mediations between the particular and the general that animate any specific historical conjuncture.” (Best 2012:194) What then are the structures of feeling, or, “...complex systems of mediations” (194), that, through thick ethnographic description, bring to life the experience of social life in the mixed communities that I describe here? In this thesis I use music

as a starting point to animate wider social experience of individuals and groups responding to rapid social change. Reflections on public spaces are interspersed with accounts of musical experience in domestic and private space.

Music, History and Race in South Africa

Race has been essentialised in discourses of self in South Africa as an absolute signifier, and music has played a critical role both in affirming these distinctions and mustering resistance to them. This is epitomized in the example of the contrast between the apartheid state's use of music to sonically define the ethnic parameters of black identity through Bantu radio on the one hand (Hamm 1999), and the counter-hegemonic, anti-tribal explorations of black urban identity in Marabi and jazz (Ballantine 1985; Coplan 1985; Ansell 2004). Whether agreed with or resisted against, race is at the heart of conceptions of South African selves. In his ethnography of a white community in the Cape during the period of political upheaval in the 1980's, that would culminate in the unraveling of the apartheid state in the early 1990's, Vincent Crapanzano provided an evocative summary of the South African experience of race:

“ ‘Race’ and ‘Ethnicity’ are not negotiable categories....One is white, coloured or black. One is Afrikaner, English, German, Jewish, Dutch or Portuguese. One is Malay, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, a Zulu, a MoSotho or a Xhosa..... Such classifications describe one’s essential being. They permit exquisitely mechanical stereotyping and promiscuous generalisation; they

prescribe social behaviour and determine an often terrifying social distance” (1985:18).

The emphasis on the naturalness and necessity of absolute categories was the logic that underpinned apartheid, but was not something that was uniquely South African. Crapanzano locates it as an extreme manifestation of a more general Western enlightenment tendency to categorise. After all, scientific racism was not an invention of the apartheid state, even as its logic underpinned its justifications:

“South Africa’s apartheid... in its broadest sense, is an extreme case of the western predisposition to classify and categorise just about everything in essentialist terms. In this view, once an object or being is classified, it is forever that object or being. It has an identity. It partakes of a particular essence.”(1985:19)

The terminology used throughout this thesis reflects the continued salience of these racial categories in South Africa, whilst acknowledging at a most basic level that these are constructed historically. As Deborah Posel puts it:

“After decades of apartheid’s racial reasoning, the idea that South African society comprises four distinct races – ‘Whites’, ‘Coloureds’, ‘Indians’ and ‘Africans’ – has become habit of thought and experience, a facet of popular ‘common sense’ still widely in evidence. So it remains the norm for the narratives we hear in public media or in conversation to designate unnamed social actors in terms of their race – as though this reduces their anonymity and renders their actions more intelligible” (2001:56)

The evidence in much South African literature (Posel 2001; Ansell 2004; De Haas & Zulu 1994; Dlamini 2001; Boonazier & Sharp 1988; Kiernan 1997; Skalnik 1988, Sharp 1988; Boonazier 1988; Thornton & Ramphele 1989; Spiegel 1989) demonstrates how these categories, presented as timeless, emerged and continue to emerge out of social negotiations, as they did elsewhere in the world (Hobsbawm 1983). As Friedman (2004) has argued, even the acknowledgement of the fluidity of boundaries must be viewed with caution as they in turn are solidified into discourses supporting the rise of cosmopolitan elites (and a proliferation of new or revived cultural identities).

Apartheid negated the existence of these negotiations, supported by scientific reasoning in the form of an anthropology called ‘etnologie’ and ‘volkekunde’ (Dubow 1995), which emphasised the timeless character of culture, and its separation into discrete and clearly identifiable entities. It also responded with violence, both subtle and unsubtle, to those who embodied the borderlands of racial categorisation (Bowker and Star 1999). As Posel has demonstrated however, more effective than scientific racism in justifying the logic of apartheid was the flexible and elastic approach to the definition of racial categories “...that gave official standing to long-established social readings of racial difference, which tied these judgments closely to hierarchies of social class” (2001:61). Thus, “...the fact that race ‘could not be established with any precision’... was no barrier to the elimination of ambiguity and mobility in the practice of racial classification” (61). Thus, for example, questions about eating habits could be included in hearings

to establish racial classification, as they provided evidence of ‘cultural’ affiliation to particular groupings.

South African social and cultural anthropology responded in the 1980s with a revisionist strategy which sought to highlight the ‘imagined’ nature of these communities (Anderson 1990) and the way in which ethnicity and race were constructions rather than inalienable facts rooted in biology and a view of culture as eternal and fixed. Thornton and Ramphele (1989) highlighted the equation of ‘community’ (a contested and highly political term) with race in South Africa, demonstrating how concepts of community predicated along these lines were used to destroy neighborhoods that did not fit with the construction. (In) famous examples include the destruction of District 6 in Cape Town and Sophiatown in Johannesburg, “...in the name of ‘community’, a recognizable community was destroyed in order to accommodate the ideology of ‘community’ held by government administrators” (1989:80). They also interrogate the use of ‘community’ as an ideological construct utilised by national and regional leaders of mass action movements aimed at shifting the balance of power in South Africa in the 1980s. Whilst acknowledging that, “organising political action in a repressive political environment where the flow of information, consultation and free expression of ideas are severely limited undermines the foundations of the democratic process” (1989:83), they point out that these circumstances can still produce ways of organising with qualitatively different outcomes. It is the difference between impositions of mass action on residents without adequate consultation, and political action arising from issues that residents feel strongly

about. Holding liberation movements to account in the face of monolithic evil-like apartheid is difficult terrain. There remains a tension between criticising apartheid, and questioning liberation movements, one which is utilised now by those politicians who equate critique of the liberation government with critique of liberation itself (Chipkin 2007).

The construction of race in South Africa is a powerful discourse built over centuries, but counter-discourses and examples of social formations that are contrary to its hegemony are as old. The African National Congress (ANC) was established in 1923, four years before the 1927 Administration Act which declared all black people ‘tribesmen’ under the authority of a government-designated chief (Ansell 2004: 22). Masilela (1996: 92-93), in her critique of the absence of Southern Africa as a locus for flows in the Black Atlantic as described by Paul Gilroy (1994), has pointed out that the term, ‘The New South Africa’ was originally coined in the 1920s by Selope Thelma, whose concept of the ‘New African’ underpinned the New African Movement in South Africa. For him, this movement was intimately tied in with the New Negro Experience in the US, predicated on a model of progress and achievement that New South Africans could emulate.

The revised accounts of the Southern African region emphasise the permeability of cultural borders, in stark opposition to the idea of bounded ‘tribes’ and ‘groups’ which characterised colonial and apartheid categorisation (Parsons 1993). As Ansell points out:

“This reflected the racial ideologies prevalent in those eras, but it also served the colonial project well. It provided an ostensible basis for divide

and rule policies and served as an effective mask for the reality that many divisions reflected politics, not ethnicity.”(2004:4)

Parsons' work describes the way in which colonial (and later apartheid) rule was maintained through the construction of tribal identity. This was particularly linked to the need for a regular labour supply to white farms and mines. Accounts of 17th Century Cape Town's development show how residents of the city mixed across barriers of race and language. In 1668 the Dutch East India Company imposed the same restrictions on the slaves, sailors, labourers, servants, soldiers and non-elite citizens involved in the building and maintenance of the Cape Castle, indicating a burgeoning class solidarity born out of common circumstance, superseding racial differences. After emancipation in 1834 these groups, including impoverished European labourers, continued living side by side for a long period (Dooling 1994). Johannesburg's early history also provides examples of communities composed of groups who would later be subjected to regimes of separation. Zulu migrant workers, known as the Ama Washa, working alongside Indian labourers, are a case in point. Operating open-air laundries on the banks of the Braamfontein River (the site of present day Braamfontein in the inner city of Johannesburg) to service the immigrant miner's domestic needs, the AmaWasha modeled themselves on the Hindu Dhobi washermen's caste they had seen working on the East Coast of Natal. Both groups had migrated from Natal to the rapidly expanding mining settlement, and now worked alongside each other in the burgeoning city. The Zulu migrants not only mimicked the Dhobi washing technique, but also appropriated their style of dress, “These hundred or two hundred turbaned men... soon dominated

Johannesburg's hand laundry business....this association of AmaWasha quickly won formal recognition from the Sanitary Board" (Van Onselen 1982:8). Municipal social control policies, aimed at separating races, relocated the Ama Washa to Klipspruit in 1906, dividing them from the Asian Dhobis they had been aligned with. As well as concerns about miscegenation, such policies aim was to strategically emphasise separate racial identities, motivated by the benefit of discouraging inter-racial solidarity in times of discontent against working and living conditions. Additionally, examples of the tension between the emergence of mixed communities orientated around the commercial sex trade, and municipal attempts to maintain distinct racial boundaries can be found in Van Onselen's study of the red light districts of Braamfontein and Fordsburg, further elaborating the role of the state in legislating to maintain racial distinction.

In his article on the aesthetics of Johannesburg, Achille Mbembe critiques Van Onselen for focusing only on a landscape of Johannesburg that emphasizes its lack of beauty (2004:354), which Mbembe equates with a, 'loathing of Johannesburg in the social sciences'. Sarah Nuttall and Mbembe's editorial stewardship of a collection of essays, "Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis" (2008) seeks to address the absence of Johannesburg from contemporary models of urbanism, and in doing so foregrounds the role of circulating identities in the making of the city. Mbembe's dismissal of Van Onselen's work seems at odds with this intention, cutting off the potential to explore his vivid reconstruction of the early days of Johannesburg's formation as an historical record of the circulating identities at play here, and the tension between the making of syncretic urban groups and state

attempts to discourage them. Van Onselen's scholarship resonates with the critical aims of the work in 'The Elusive Metropolis', the careful archival retrieval and sensitive interpretation allows for the resurrection of such early Johannesburg characters as the Ama Washa, the globalised trans-national network of prostitutes and pimps of Frenchfontein and the multi-ethnic & linguistic criminal gangs of Nongolozo who occupied the hills in what is now the Eastern Johannesburg suburbs(Van Onselen 1984). Bonner and Segal (1998) give an account of Soweto's development as an outcome of the Johannesburg municipal desire to relocate the non-white population outside of the city limits, thus discouraging the formation of an urban black working class. However, as Bonner and Segal's descriptions of the social life of Johannesburg's racially mixed slums demonstrate, not only was a black urban consciousness firmly established prior to the removals, but equally, the blueprint for the existence of multi-cultural and racial populations, united by a common urban experience and developing a common urban identity, was also established,

"...Africans, Indians, Coloureds, Chinese and whites of many diverse origins lived side by side and borrowed many elements from one another's social lives... the slum yard dialect of flaaitaal (clever speech) combined elements of English, Afrikaans and African languages" (1998:14)

Drawing on these writings, Ansell (2004) describes how Johannesburg's particular mixed communities came about:

"Later, after the Anglo-Boer War, indentured Chinese mine labourers were imported under conditions of near slavery. From its earliest days, then,

Johannesburg was a place full of Africans speaking many languages and carrying with them many cultural traditions - and working with and for an equally mixed bunch of European migrants: Portuguese, English, Italian, Irish and East Europeans, many of them Jews fleeing czarist pogroms." (2004:18)

Thus, mixed communities, stripped of the romantic connotations of post-apartheid utopia, can be seen to have been a part of the fabric of South African urban life from its very beginnings, that indeed, the very idea that these communities were 'mixed' was frequently an imposition of externally imposed categories that may or may not have resembled the actual, almost certainly more fluid, social relations and senses of self 'on the ground'.

Music & the Meaning of South African Identity

Music has had a contradictory place in the making and manipulation of South African identity. Jaques Attali (1985) saw music as a cultural form tied up in the mode of production in any society. His 'reciprocal interaction' model argues for the possibility of music as a superstructure which can anticipate historical developments, an augural device with a two-fold signification- foreshadowing new social formations which contain the possibility for being both utopian and dystopian. Using Attali's theory as a baseline, why is music so important in narratives of liberation in South Africa? And in terms of the question of the contradictory qualities of music's relationship with social formation and change, and the fundamental instability of these formations, how has music also been so important to narratives of separation in South Africa? Attali's definition of music as a, 'prophetic tool with a dual meaning' (1985) is pertinent here in order to think

through how music in South Africa has operated both to emphasise and corroborate separation, and be a rallying point for performances of unity . Music has long been a prophetic tool in the emergence of a South Africa, in which multiple possibilities for the imagining of the nation have co-existed, consistently providing a good way to think through and elucidate change in South Africa. Music has operated with a dual meaning in the creation of multiple ‘imagined South Africas’, to borrow from Benedict Anderson’s evocative phrase (1990). It was a key component of the apartheid regime’s strategy to emphasise the natural division of people into discrete ethnic groups, legitimising the ethnic and racial categorisation that underpinned the apartheid state. Separate broadcasting services established in the 1970’s emphasised linguistic and ethnic separateness with an emphasis on music that was strictly controlled by the government to ensure that cultural enjoyment was not tainted by politics (Hamm 1995:145). On the other hand, musical culture was a key part of locating black struggle for self-determination and urban presence (Ballantine 1981; Anderson 1984). Highlighting the multiple ways that music worked in the struggle to define what South African identity could mean avoids equating music uncritically with discourses of liberation and anti-apartheid struggle. Music was, and can be, mobilized as efficiently as an instrument of division.

Ansell (2004:5) elaborates the link between the apartheid state’s emphasis on separated, differentiated ‘tribes’ to colonial and apartheid musicologists who defined musical styles according to tribal categories that had been largely invented by the state, or emerged in response to colonial pressures. Ethnomusicologists

working at the time of apartheid's solidification in the 1960's in the decade following the declaration of the Republic of South Africa provided musical evidence to support the ideology of separate development. Kirby (1968) published a detailed taxonomy of South Africa's African musical instruments, using tribal categories to organize a musical classificatory system to mirror that of the state. Binary oppositions of traditional/modern; rural/urban; African/European were elaborated upon and naturalized through the prism of musicological respectability. An evolutionary hierarchy of development in these classifications consistent with Apartheid ideology was presented as natural and timeless "...the musical practices of three different epochs in human history can be observed, as represented by our Bushmen, Hottentots and Bantu in the evolution of musical instruments" (Kirby 1968:xii)

Ethnomusicological accounts of the dances associated with Witwatersrand mines (Tracey 1952) were part of the ethnological record that contributed to the making of South African racial and ethnic boundaries as set out by Thornton (1989). Competitive tribal dancing was encouraged to 'retribalise' increasingly urbanised black male miners, and proclaim miners' health and happiness to white audiences. This went against the reality of labour strikes against appalling working conditions (Ansell 2004:39). Coplan (1994) emphasises how social anthropology was complicit in creating the basis for understandings of popular music forms as examples of 'deracialisation':

"By representing African politics as rigidly banded, stationary socio-cultural units, social anthropology created an artificial universe of tribes that would

later serve as an ethnographic basis for apartheid. Later cultural inventions, mothered but not determined by harsh historical necessity, were deplored as expressions of deracination and analysed as symptoms of social disintegration rather than as new vehicles of self-construction." (1994:26)

In contrast to the 'rigidly banded' socio-cultural units employed by the academy and the state, music culture was a point of articulation for urban identities which were counter-hegemonic to the state ideal of racially distinct populations, pacified rural Africans, and an obedient migrant labour force which remained rooted in the countryside (Ballantine 1989). The intersection of music, leisure and alcohol was a distinct arena for the elaboration of alternative identities, as well as perpetuating the control of working populations. The tension between agency and social control is again elaborated through leisure spaces marked by the making and consumption of music. La Hausse (1988) provides an excellent account of the development and impact of Johannesburg's beer halls in the battle to both express black urban identity; and control and regulate it. The complex relationship between alcohol, leisure, resistance and control in Southern Africa is explored potently by Crush and Ambler (1992). Emerging urban music cultures were also very much about locating selves in a wider global community. The identification with, and interpretation of, music and popular culture from abroad, in particular that associated with the African diaspora, was a critical part of the formation of new black and multi-racial urban identities which were inconsistent with the apartheid line that Africans were essentially tribal and rural beings (Ballantine 1989, 1993; Nixon 1994; Coplan 1985).

Music and leisure culture associated with urbanisation also provided a locus for the recomposition of gender roles for African (and other) women. Brewing beer and running shebeens in the slum yards, inner city melting pots and townships of Johannesburg to support the need for social space and musical venues provided an independent income and a new character in the popular culture landscape of South Africa – the ‘Shebeen Queen’ (Rorich 1989, Ansell 2004). Challenges to gender hegemony were the subject of much debate by both the State, where concern was focused on the ‘moral and social disintegration’ of rural Africans, and the popular black press who oscillated between celebrating the emancipatory figure of the ‘Modern Miss’ and locating urban women as victims of moral degeneration and exploitation (Johnson 2009). Women played a pivotal role in the development of city music and popular culture, and anxiety about shifting gender roles and wider change were articulated through a concern with the social life that surrounded musical styles. As interview testimony from Dolly Rathebe and Abigail Khubeka (two African female singing stars of the time) show, these opportunities in business and performance were as dangerous as they were liberating for women who faced the additional burdens of gender-based threats of violence (Ansell 2004:82-83).

Alex Van Heerden³, a South African jazz musician, provocatively draws parallels between the khoi-san trance dance beat that underpins Cape coloured ‘goema’ music and ‘vastrap’, the rural boer musical style. He argues that there is a common

³Van Heerden, Alex <http://www.pogledaj.name/the-khoi-roots-of-vastrap-music-alex-van-heerden/video/MYxH9NjFQVI> retrieved March 2009

history between the working class coloured descendants of the Khoi-San inhabitants of the Cape and white boer farmers that can be articulated through an analysis of these musical styles, as well as the contemporary ballroom-derived dance style of 'langarm' (literally 'long arm' dancing) which is popular amongst the coloured and Afrikaans communities. His analysis of music and history deconstructs the historical boundaries between groups articulated by state discourse. Here music provides a form of historical data, demonstrating the dynamics of syncretic forms of South African culture that are masked by hegemonic racial discourses. As Christopher Ballantine's (1993) historical ethnography of the slumyards of early 20th century Johannesburg demonstrates, sound and music were vital components in the emergence of a common urban South African experience which cut across other divisions. The Marabi and Vaudeville musical crazes of the early 20th Century epitomized the sociality of the slumyards, and were a point of articulation for class conflicts, moral panics, resistance against dehumanising forms of labour, as well as a means to generate domestic income and locate new urban selves in a wider global cultural economy. Ballantine's inclusion of a cassette with the text, containing some of the only surviving recordings of early South African Marabi and Vaudeville, makes a powerful statement about the limits of textual analysis of social worlds that obtained much of their meaning and significance through sound. This work is also interesting for its interviews, which highlight the divide between urban popular music culture and the aspirant black middle class, indicating class anxieties that cut across racial solidarity.

The first neighborhood to house a significant African population in Johannesburg was, 'The Malay Location', near Vrededorp (known also as Fietas, and post-removals in 1977, Pageview), now part of the wider western suburbs of Johannesburg. In the 1890's this was a multi-cultural site, where music was a key focus of community cohesion and dissent, as well as anxiety for the ruling classes (Ansell 2004:53). Ansell locates this mixed community, and the communities in the Western areas that followed it, notably Sophiatown, in the flow of musical ideas and sociality criss-crossing the Atlantic.

Jazz musicians who cut their teeth as artists in the 1940's and 1950's, the early decades of apartheid, like Banzi Bangani and Hugh Masekela, talk about the influence of American jazz and big band in terms of a dynamic exchange. Though they imitated these styles, they were constantly adding their own inspiration, transforming the sound in the process (2004:53-54). As Ansell points out, the illusions of equality elsewhere that South African popular culture gloried in, were not really the case in the USA (2004:48).

Music as Biographical Sound: An Intimate Approach to Mapping the Emergence of Identities in South Africa

Drawing on the background of music, history and race in South Africa briefly described in the preceding section, I look at music in this thesis as a biographical and historical device (Hoskins 1998). Music provided a canvas for me to explore personal memories in very close connection to historical developments and groups of people ageing alongside each other. I came to focus on the role of music in biography and history by spending time with my mother-in-law, Brenda Osman,

whose oral testimony forms the basis of the material presented in Chapter's 3 and 4. Music was critical in our conversations to the recollection of particular events, their contextualization and the shifting interpretations and meanings that emerged out of these memories.

Janet Hoskin's concept of 'biographical objects' (1998), suggests that people's biographies are entangled with the objects they have a connection to. I suggest that music's emotional 'thickness' makes it a biographical object par excellence; a unique point of access to people's stories, and subsequent cultural analysis, that other more literary models do not offer. Hoskins makes the point that in 'telling their lives', people not only provide information about themselves, "...but also fashion their identities in a particular way, constructing a 'self' for public consumption" (1998:1). She considers how anthropologists have had to revise notions that life histories are already formed and must simply be recorded.

Narratives and selves are not so easily discovered, and ethnographic interviews are a complex dialogue, "...a co-creation of a narrative", that manifests a shadow biography which is the hidden relationship between storyteller and listener (Frank 1979, 1985). Experiments in ethnographic writing since the literary and reflexive turn have played with the genre of life history in new ways (Abu-Lughod 1993, Behar 1993, Visweswaran 1994). Hoskins found that she could not collect life histories without collecting the histories of objects, "People and the things they valued were so complexly intertwined they could not be disentangled" (1998:2). In the Kodi society she studied, named 'history' objects demarcated and preserved a sense of time and collective memory. Hoskins took this formalized understanding

and applied it to the more intimate level of individual actors and domestic objects. Thus, ordinary possessions gain extraordinary significance by becoming, “...entangled in the events of a person’s life and used as a vehicle for a sense of self hood” (1998:2). Objects become biography, a way of telling stories about the self and society. Music can similarly be ‘entangled’ in the events of a person’s life. Though I went looking for ‘music culture’ as a bounded entity for this research, what I found was that I could not untangle the experience of popular music and culture from the larger biographies of those I encountered. This is why music has provided such a good way to look at personal experiences of processes of social change in South Africa.

Popular music, in all parts of the research presented here, provides access to the affective experience of profound social change, shifting racial attitudes, conflict, peer friendship and inter-generational relationships. In attempting this research, I have benefitted from the vast literature on South African identity (Comaroff & Comaroff 1997; Zegeye 2001; Tomlinson et al 2003, amongst many others) and the equally vast literature on music in South Africa, and its connections with social change (Coplan 1985, 1994, 2005; Ballantine 1993, 2002, 2003; Anderson 1981; Erlman 1991; James 1999; Ansell 2004 amongst many others). Deborah James (1999) and David Coplan’s (1994) work has examined how music mediates responses to changing sociality in South African cohorts, rural Venda women and Basotho men respectively, but these have focused on rural- urban migrations by largely homogenous population groups (though homogeneity of ethnic identification does not correspond with homogeneity of experience or

interpretation). Coplan (1994) focuses on the issue of the tension between researchers attempting categorisation for the purposes of communicating ethnographic findings and the evasion of categorisation by performers:

“The ethnographer, like the critic, seeks to categorise and comprehend; the performer to evade categorisation and comprehension.... No longer able, for any justifiable heuristic purpose, to exclude the essential dynamism and contingency of culture from its ethnographic representation, cultural anthropologists have had to abandon both the ethnographic tense and the collective informant. Local norms and knowledge are too differentially shared, personal responses to common situations too varied, to allow for broad characterizations.” (1994:xvii)

This study follows James and Coplan in locating complex identity issues that evade easy categorisation within the production of authenticity in Southern African music culture. Using Christopher Small’s (1987) concept of ‘musicking’, this research applies an analysis of music’s relationship with shifting sociality to the more intimate realms of cohorts and personal biography. Research participants are, however, located within a variety of externally categorized identifications, where syncretic identities that do not correspond with mainstream ideas about race are being negotiated within selves and in the context of engagement with wider sociality and historical processes. The tension between ideas of the traditional and authentic, versus experiences of self which do not fit within existing definitions, is ever-present.

This work is then a critique of the tendency of recent writing on urban youth culture and new musical forms like kwaito in South Africa to focus on discrete groups, marked by persistent colonial and apartheid definitions of race. Commentary on contemporary urban music forms like kwaito and ‘Y-Culture’ (Stephens 2000, Coplan 2005, Steingo 2005, Livermon 2006, Nuttal 2007) have replicated discourses of race and music in South Africa uncritically, with an unexamined equivalency made between new urban music and black urban youth.

This is not to deny that many kwaito listeners would self-identify as black most of the time, or that new urban dance music is not a significant site of black culture making. However, uncritically equating genre with race misses an opportunity to unpack the processes that simultaneously make these discourses about race and boundary persist in South Africa, examine how syncretic identities that are counter-hegemonic are negotiated, or address the fluidity of self-identification. As Frith has pointed out:

“The issue is not how a particular piece of music or a performance reflects the people, but how it produces them, how it creates and constructs an experience.... Our experience of music – of music making and music listening- is best understood as an experience of this self-in-process” (1996: 109).

Where the literature on kwaito and Y-culture has yet to adequately address the complexity of selves-in-process, other musicological work on South Africa paint a more nuanced picture, using musical experience to reveal the complex dynamics of

race, class, gender, ethnicity and transitional politics at work in the making of South African identities.

Louise Meintjes' studio set ethnography of the production of an mbaquanga album in early 1990's Johannesburg (2003) explores the dynamics at work in the replication of common sense categories of race alongside other kinds of social relations and identities. She reveals the complexity of what lies behind the making of the deceptively straightforward ethnic markers of an 'authentically' Zulu Mbaquanga album. Mbaquanga, the hugely popular sound of 1970's and 1980's South Africa (and a key influence on the development of kwaito later on in the 1990's), played a big part in the popularization of Zuluness as an identifier of self. The interplay of music and self, identified by Firth (1996), in which music is not the maker of identity or a mirror onto an already existing schema, but an experience in and of itself which is shaping the emergence of an always mobile identity, is key here.

As Meintje's so articulately demonstrates, what was at stake in the making of an ideal of 'Deep Zulu' as the authentic Zulu self, was the mobilization of traditional values and beliefs as a means to engage with the contemporary world, "Deep Zulu values informed a popular image while being moulded by it" (2003:8). Meintje's use of thickly descriptive ethnography to describe the multiplicity of gender and racial identities at work in the studio, where white Afrikaans soundmen bantered with rural Zulu guitarists, permits her to integrate two domains of social theory. Firstly, that of power relations, and secondly the symbolic aesthetic realm. She does this to:

“...think through how the same expressive and technological resources are manipulated towards various specific ends by individuals occupying different socio-political positioning and holding different value systems” (2003:9).

Nadine Dolby's (1999, 2001) ethnography explored the inter-racial dynamics of a recently desegregated South African high school during the period immediately after the 1994 elections. Her analysis of musical taste as a marker of distinction and way to make alliances, is another significant ethnographic exploration of the interplay of the global and national with local and individual struggles in the shaping of social life and the reworking of expressive forms. Exploring how ideas about race and belonging are both reproduced and challenged through the modality of dance music amongst racialised factions within the high school pupil population , illuminates the dynamic character of identity and its relationship to wider social processes in South Africa. What is striking about Dolby's ethnography is the speed at which racial factions and alliances form and dissolve as the post-apartheid landscape takes shape, altering the demographics of the school correspondingly.

Christopher Small's concept of 'musicking' (1987; 1998) is pertinent here. Small grounds musical meaning not only in sound, but in the performance and act of doing or experiencing a piece of music. Music's meaning is contextual as much as it is about sound itself. To understand the affective qualities of music, analysis of the structure of the sound must be supplemented with analysis of the context of its production and reception. Simon Reynold's account of the moment when he finally

'got' the meaning of hardcore rave perfectly illustrates this relationship between context and sound:

"...fully E'd up, I finally grasped how in a visceral sense why the music was made the way it was.... And it became even more crystal clear that the audience was the star: that bloke over there doing fishy-finger dancing was as much a part of the entertainment, the tableau, as the DJ's or bands. Dance moves spread through the crowd like superfast viruses.... The agitation of bodies broken down into separate components, then re-integrated at the level of the dance floor as a whole."(1998:xvi)

Reynold's vivid description emphasizes the dialectic between the individual and the whole, and breaks down the Cartesian divisions of individual and society, body and mind or performer and audience. In doing so, he also demonstrates how Geertzian 'thick description' (1975) is a helpful tool in addressing the issue of how to represent the experience of music and the social in textual form. Performance, both private and public, is a fundamental component of making sense of music, and the definition of what performance is must be flexible enough to accommodate the multiple ways in which musical meaning is made. Indeed, coming back to Small, 'Musicking' is a verb which encompasses all kinds of musical activity, from being at a concert to singing while doing housework, and it is this understanding of music not as a thing but as an activity, that informs how music is used in this thesis to communicate experiences of social change in South Africa. For this reason, I have included a CD of the key songs that run through the narrative of the various stories and spaces presented in the thesis, to allow for an experience of the music itself to

run alongside the text. I have marked the chapters of the thesis with the track listings relevant to what is being written about.

Location of Research & Chapter Breakdown

The main unit of study is located in the western suburbs of inner Johannesburg where fieldwork took place, though the material extends out into other areas of Johannesburg and the coastal city of Durban. Insertion in the field site came about through my existing connections with Johannesburg as a South African national who had grown up there, and my parallel career as a DJ. Words like 'insertion' and 'field site' sound oddly clinical when I think about the intimacy of my connection with many of the people I write about here, through bonds of kinship and friendship, and with the city itself.

Experiences and manifestations of social change in South Africa, elucidated through the medium of musical experience, are explored using a varied methodological approach. This includes extended oral history interviews around a single life story; participant observation in the Western Suburbs of Johannesburg amongst a cohort of friends aged between 17 and 29 between 1999 and 2007; and data gathered during my time performing as a DJ in a number of Johannesburg nightclubs between 2005 and 2006. The thesis highlights the diverse and contradictory ways in which music as social practice is woven into the production and expression of individual identities, cohort identities and national identities, illustrating the tension between competing experiences of self and discourses of race in South Africa. I reflect critically on the impact my familiarity with the field site has on my

methodological approach in Chapter 2 which considers the strengths and weaknesses of the unorthodox combination of methodologies in the creation of this research.

Chapters 3 and 4 set out the oral history obtained from Brenda Osman, nee Momple. This elucidates several generations of a mixed race family story, moving from Durban to Johannesburg, and woven into a more general historical narrative of South Africa between the 1940's and 1990's. Within the family story, music enabled the dissolution of boundaries and their solidification-an agent for both autonomy and repression. The material drawn from Brenda's life history is crucial for illuminating the lives of earlier cohorts. Indeed, the historical perspective brought by looking at the lives of earlier cohorts implicitly critiques the idea that social change, and multi-racial cohorts, are a new phenomenon in South Africa that can be located post-1994. The intersection of musical culture and the transformation of South African society and urban space is told through the prism of Brenda's migration to Johannesburg as a young woman in the mid 1970's. The trajectory of her journey, from the arrival point of the non-white location of Kliptown, through the unofficially de-segregating inner city to the Western Suburbs, intersects with, and is guided by, her immersion in the black performing arts scene. The dialectic between this experience of a social world bound by shared musical taste, and counter to dominant discourses of race is seen through Brenda's shifting understanding of her identity, and the ways in which parts of the city of Johannesburg were themselves shifting at this time. The chapter considers the limits, as well as the power, of musical experience as a key node for the

transformation of society and individuals. What is foregrounded is the way in which music can act as a powerful, yet ambiguous, focus for articulating dissent, power struggles, imagining new social formations and consolidating old ones.

Chapters 5 explore the subsequent process of nation building that followed in the late 1990's and 2000's after the elections of 1994 that saw the end of the apartheid era. The data moves out into the extended multi-racial friendship group that surrounds some of the younger generation of Brenda's family living in the western suburbs of Johannesburg. The focus here is on the role of new forms of popular music in South Africa, notably kwaito, in creating post-apartheid cohorts that cross previously institutionalised racial boundaries. Though the previous chapters demonstrated these processes are nothing new, the political context, freed of the constraints of apartheid legislation and enforcement, is without precedent in South Africa's history. I consider how music operates to frame a sense of time passing, and time shared with others. This intersection of music and sociality demonstrates how music can bring people together and hold them together, as well as mark distinction and boundary. Again, this illustrates the tension and the dynamic of the play between experience and mainstream discourse. Within the context of the extended social network into which these individual lives are embedded, the data shows how music operates as a time keeper: marking shared experiences and particular memories. Cohorts and peers travel together through ruptures as well as good times, and music is a powerful carrier of these events, facilitating an embodied space of remembrance of the good and bad. In these contexts it can also mark distinction and taste and I consider how fluid conceptions of identity are

negotiated amidst calls to racial exclusivity. The intersection of music and cohorts in the Western Suburbs of Johannesburg is examined in order to look at the making of social lives that are both counter-hegemonic to mainstream understandings of race in South Africa, and confirmatory of them.

Chapter 6 draws on participant observation experience during the time I was employed as a DJ in Johannesburg between 2005 and 2006. I focus on one club in particular, a lap dancing venue aiming to expand its traditional affluent white male clientele to include the emerging black power elite. Music here also operates symbolically to both break down and affirm racial boundaries. The interplay between music, movement and race is explored as dancers manipulate their identities and come into conflict with each other over access to customers and resources. Music is a way to articulate the tensions and resolutions that are brought on by post-apartheid transitional politics amongst floor staff, dancers and clients. The ethnography explores the consequences of the club's management consciously shifting their focus to the newly affluent black elite, whilst still accommodating the traditional white male market. Musical taste is a way to articulate a sense of cohort unity, mark distinction and frame conflicts as they emerge.

A Note on Ethical Concerns, Confidentiality and Terminology

When I obtained my employment at the lap dancing club described in Chapter 7 I made it clear to the management that I had research interests in the social dynamics at work in the club. This was also made clear to those dancers, staff and clients with whom I had discussions. I have used pseudonyms for both the club and

staff to preserve anonymity. As the area of Sandton that the club is located in is home to several lap dancing venues with similar set ups, I did not feel it was necessary to disguise the geographical location. Indeed, its position in the most affluent part of the city was part of why it seemed to present an opportunity to reflect on the shifting dynamics and perceptions of the location of power in South Africa. Elsewhere, names that might identify a participant or location have only been used when permission has been given. Pseudonyms have been used in other cases. Brenda's story has been the most problematic to address in terms of confidentiality and anonymity. Our relationship is built on a kinship connection (I am her daughter-in-law) that extends beyond the parameters of this research. We talked frequently about whether or not she wished to remain anonymous, and she repeatedly stated that she did not wish to. Drafts of the chapters featuring her story have been read by her for approval. Her close family – brothers, sisters and children - have all given their permission to be referred to by name in the text. With more distant family I have disguised the relationships so as to preserve anonymity. In cases where the text might offend those who read it, I have endeavored to maintain a respectful attitude and to clarify from whose perspective I am writing. Some of the sites featured in her story, particularly Dorkay House and the Market Theatre, have historical significance and could not be disguised. This is also true of her employers at Dorkay House, Linda and Ian Bernhardt, who were well known figures in the South African arts world.

In this thesis, the term 'black' is used along with the official category of 'African' in order to reflect the common usage of these monikers interchangeably in everyday

language. Where ‘black’ or ‘African’ refers to a political identification as part of a non-white majority, including both coloureds and Indians as commonly oppressed, this is indicated.

Conclusion

To paraphrase Levi-Strauss’s famous maxim, why is music good to think with? And why is it particularly useful for making sense of social change and identity making in South Africa? As Leach described it, the equilibrium of social systems is an illusion, subject to a constant process of moving across individual life courses and through space and time (1954 xi-xiii). Music is experienced and made on a number of registers that resonate with this paradox of equilibrium married to fluidity and flux. Ways of experiencing music are not fixed; they are historically determined, utterly contextual and subject to change. Thus this research is not a study in tonality or notation, but an exercise in examining the affective context of how music is experienced within a wider social framework. Music in this thesis is a starting point for analysis, around which social processes are traced. You could call it music’s social life.

As numerous commentators have noted (Comaroff & Comaroff 1985, 1997; De Haas 1994), change and accompanying social responses have been a feature of many parts of South African society from its inception, and were also a feature of pre-colonial societies in the region (Ansell 2005). That these processes produce different responses and understandings across generations and between individual and cohorts, is indicative of the influence that temporal conditions and historical

positionality have on the kinds of outcomes that emerge from the intersections of cohorts and individuals with dynamic social processes. By including the story of the previous generation, the historicity of the role music has played in the formation of contradictory South African selves and conceptions of society can be elaborated on, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of processes of identity making in the present. The stories presented here, told through the prism of popular musical experience and taste, demonstrate the fundamental instability and contestation at work in the making of social identities and culture. In the case of South Africa it remains an imperative to tell these stories in order to destabilize the rigid borders of race, gender and class inherited from colonial and apartheid paradigms, and reproduced in the liberation landscape, despite articulate voices of dissent. As Vasavi (2011) has noted in a critical response to Hart's (2010) call for a renewal of social anthropology:

“The past decades of research have competently challenged and rejected earlier postulates of civilizational, modular and composite definitions of culture. And the current focus on culture as processual, negotiated, and strategised forms of meaning represent trends in much of the world. Yet, how can Anthropology understand and represent the contemporary forms of erosion? How can researchers locate ‘culture’ on a template in which the particular and the universal coincide and co-exist in tension and not necessarily in the celebrated forms of hybridity, which overlook the integral shifts in cultures, or in the altruistically anticipated forms of recognizing others as cosmopolitan citizens?”

Thus this work attempts to, 'represent the contemporary forms of erosion', through tales of how music weaves into narratives of identity making in South Africa, acknowledging in the process that the erosion of culture is not the disappearance of form, but the re-fashioning of it in dynamic ways. Addressing social contexts around music in relation to developments of the period enables reflection on how categories of race are powerfully embedded in everyday lived experience, so that even as understandings of their symbolic meaning are challenged, they are also replicated. I re-iterate the well-worn anthropological point that culture is never bounded or solid. Cultural translation occurs not only 'between cultures' (Rabinow 1977), but between generations, genders, imagined boundaries of race and class, and within the self. The process of translation can, however, lead paradoxically to an affirmation of cultural exclusivity as the increasing appeals by South African politicians to idioms of cultural authenticity (Chipkin 2007) demonstrate. If the nature of culture, and the symbolic value of race, is to adapt, adjust, integrate and interpret, then we need not simply extol the virtues of hybridity. Indeed, this can lead to dangerous blind sighting of the realities of social inequality and the continuing resonance of race and culture as markers and makers of inequality and oppression (Hutnyk and Sharma 2000; Hutnyk 2000). This thesis attempts to elucidate the co-existence of histories-from-below challenging racial categories with histories-from-above affirming exclusive boundaries. The data here shows that processes of cultural negotiation are critical both in forming new understandings of society and corroborating old ones within social settings that accommodate a variety of population groups, different

perspectives and contests over basic categories. The intersection of these processes produces dynamic readings of self and society that are in constant flux.

At the beginning of this introduction I referred to music as a lens through which to view the shifting parameters and interpretations of social life and history, but perhaps this is misleading. Music is not so much a lens, which implies a narrowing of the view, but something which can offer distinct moments in the ebb and flow of life that have the potential to break down boundaries and challenge identifications, as well as solidify them. It is this paradoxical quality that makes music such a rich field for highlighting the complexities of social life more generally.

All mixed-up indeed.

Chapter 2

A Mixed Up Methodology: Fieldwork and Process

"I had the impression that I had just begun to learn how to feel this life from within.

What follows is an attempt to capture that fleeting vision"

(Paul Riesman 1977:4)

The research presented in this thesis was taken from data gathered using a mix of methodological approaches. These include thick participant observation in the social schema of an extended friendship group of young people in Western Johannesburg and as an employee at a number of nightclubs in the city, and an extended oral collection of testimony by Brenda Osman that explores the experiences of previous generations. As well as describing the main field site, this chapter addresses the advantages and limitations of a mixed and unorthodox methodological approach. Reflections on key debates in the literature on multi-sited fieldwork, the biographical method and the reflexive turn in anthropology all contribute to the assessment of methodological approaches undertaken here. I look at how the unfolding of the research process in the field contributed to the rationale for the mix of methodologies used.

The data presented here are about people who have grown up in, and continue to be influenced by, an essentialist and static classification system where "change must be accounted for in terms of 'transformations', 'evolution', 'growth' or 'conversion' (Crapanzano 1985: 19). Nadine Gordimer wrote in 1977 that, 'to be born a South African is to be presented with given facts of race on the same level of

reality as the absolute facts of birth and death”⁴. My position as a researcher of South African origin means that I am embedded in the web of these ‘absolute facts’, and much of my experience with music and youth culture, and making a pathway through this research, has been about unraveling those certainties. I was born in 1978 to a white British-born mother and a Portuguese Mozambican father in Cape Town. Despite being classified as white at birth, I was not aware of race until an incident in a Cape Town park when I was 4 years old. The older children I was playing with shouted that we must hide because a coloured man was coming. I hid with them, but peered out, eager to see the rainbow striped person I was expecting. Instead, I saw an ordinary looking man with a brown complexion, who looked a bit like my father, no rainbow stripes. It was the ambiguity of my father’s whiteness that began the unraveling of the certainties of race presented by the apartheid state for me. He was once refused service in a bar at the height of the period of segregated amenities in the late 1970’s due to the confusion his brown skin and curly hair created. In response, he pulled his pants down and told the bartender, ‘This is a white ass!’ His tan lines were evidence of the whiteness that existed at a deeper level than the superficial response of his skin to melatonin levels. This is a common theme in representations of the self and race in Brazil, where tan lines are displayed ostentatiously to make public displays of the whiteness beneath the tan.

If there was any ambiguity about the status of his racial identity for my father, he did not display it. His sense of public self was utterly white. The ambiguity was on

⁴ In ‘Telling Times: Writing and Living 1950-2008’ Bloomsbury:2010

the outside, and in me, who inherited his complexion and felt somewhat out of place. We moved to Johannesburg when I was 4 years old, to a conservative working-class/ lower middle class white area in the Southern suburbs of the city. Anxiety about the status of my whiteness was fed by classmates at the all-white primary school I attended. A common refrain used to insult and mark distinction was, 'Does your mother know you go to a white school?' It was the ultimate insult, as it located the recipient outside the boundaries of whiteness and all the allusions to a higher, civilized state that this meant, and generated great anxiety about my status as a 'real' white person. I was not outside of the discourse that placed whiteness at the top of the hierarchy. I longed for unambiguous whiteness, and tried to use the insult myself to affirm my white identity. When my target replied with the retort, 'Yes, she also knows I'm white', it shattered my fragile confidence about comfortably inhabiting white space. I wished I'd thought of it.

These experiences, though unpleasant, do not in any way locate my identity amongst those whose classification exposed them to economic and social deprivation. My dad might've shown a bartender his rear end to get a drink, but we never suffered the indignity of pencil tests or hearings to confirm our access to the privileges of whiteness. We had, in a tough arena, attained 'the substance of whiteness', without significant challenge, and enjoyed the benefits of superior education, housing and health services that followed. Jacobson, writing on European immigrants to North America, talks about the process of the racial transformation of immigrants as a 'rewarding one for those who obtain the substance of whiteness... always at a cost to their humanity' (1998:23). Bowker &

Star's work on classification systems (1999) emphasises how the researchers' experiences of liminality generate an interest in the borderlands of classifications, and their consequences. I am interested in the dynamics of the making of racialised selves in South Africa, the ambiguity of their borders and the relationship of the making and unmaking of these borders with musical experience because I am a product of these processes.

If Albie Sachs' description of non-racialism as, "...not so much an absence of racism as a new and infinitely richer cultural phenomenon" (quoted in Ware & Back 2002:9) was something I aspired to, then South Africa continued to test my limits in the way it consistently required identification along those familiar apartheid fault lines once I began returning from 1999 onwards. The Muslim aunty coming over to my friends in the Milky Way ice cream parlour in Fordsburg while I used the toilet to ask "Is your friend white or Indian?", or the group of drunk coloured businessmen rolling over to the DJ booth at a gig I was playing to settle a bet as to whether I was a white or a lighter shade of coloured. Then there was the Indian guy on the same night who declared 'You play well, for a white girl', as well as the black guy at the Horror Café in New Town who patted my hair saying he'd always wanted a white girlfriend. See. I'm doing it too. Colour coding.

Haraway (1991) notes that we bring situated knowledge to our ethnographic practice. I brought to the field a 'view from somewhere' that was located in, and informed by, not only my identity as a South African who had been classified as white, and experienced that classification in an ambiguous way, but also by my experiences within London youth culture that had permitted alternative readings of

my body as more comfortably ambiguous in a social context in which most of my cohort occupied multiple registers of ethnic, national and racial identity. Though not without racialised tensions (Back 1996), this cohort experience was markedly different to the rigidly defined parameters of race that I had grown up with. It also did not privilege whiteness as the peak of a racial hierarchy, rather whiteness was a space for critique as a site of power, and the subject of joking relationships aimed at white members of the cohort. That I was not immediately identified as white in the context of these critiques and jokes meant a reconfiguration of the internal hierarchy of race I had brought with me from South Africa. Now, instead of longing for a better quality of whiteness, I longed for the opposite – to not be identified as completely white. Additionally, I came of age in a climate of the expansion of Higher Education in the United Kingdom, and benefitted from access to funding for lower-income UK citizens to attend University. Exposure to a liberal university education in the social sciences provided me with theoretical tools to deconstruct much of the certainties about race, hierarchy and history that had underpinned my South African education and experience. The combination of these factors permitted me to inhabit my body when returning to South African space in a radically different way to how I had occupied my body growing up in South Africa.

Merleau Ponty (1962), writing on the phenomenology of perception, has emphasized the importance of the view from the body; that social life is experienced through a sensual inhabitation of the body. That I had experienced a radical transformation in reading my own and other's bodies had an impact on the ways in which my situated knowledge acted to shape the South African society I participated in. That my body in South Africa, read mostly as 'white', and

sometimes as ‘coloured’ or ‘Indian’, did not always match the kinds of cultural capital I had, was itself part of the dynamic of re-fashioning of culture at work in the post-apartheid landscape I am describing. Situated knowledge meant an active and assertive participation that was useful for the purposes of an engaged ethnography. Following from Bourdieu (1977), and using the definition provided by Mauss (1973), where habitus is the technique and work of collective and individual practical reason, the habitus that I brought to the field created particular conditions for the kind of data collected that would not exist otherwise. The forms of capital I was invested with, both mainstream and sub-cultural (Bourdieu 1984; Thornton 1997), situated me in relation to other social actors in particular ways. This was especially relevant for the musical field that I participated in as part of a cohort group, and as a DJ. This situatedness itself raised questions about the categories of race and belonging that were being employed in the social scene, thus my positionality in the field was critical for revealing the dynamics of responses to interpretations of social change. I was embedded in, and a part of, the social change that was being experienced and responded to in the field in which I was located. Disclosure of my biography as it relates to the collection of this data is congruent with Haraway’s call to, ‘see without claiming to be another’ (1991:193). My position is a view from somewhere in the field. I conceptualise it as helpful for revealing some of the dynamic boundary-setting practices at play in the ethnography presented here.

Being an active ‘player’ in the scenes I describe, as a young person in a friendship group, an employee in a club or a member of a family, means I participate as a researcher with a particular level of situated knowledge already in operation. I am able to dance, play music, and discuss shared memories.

Much of my understanding of the social world of the field, my location in it and the influence of music on the direction this research took was determined by existing connections to Johannesburg. I had grown up in the city and spent much of my childhood and early teen years as a resident of the Southern suburbs.

Johannesburg was alive with my memories, every journey revealing hidden corners and half-forgotten snippets from the past. I have pursued this research for reasons entirely congruent with my identification as a South African wishing to explore a revisionist version of the meaningfulness of that identification.

Music was a critical part of how I began pushing on the boundaries from above imposed by the regime I had grown up in. As a 14 year old living in the East Rand on the edge of Johannesburg in 1992 I made frequent, illicit night time forays into the city. My parents didn't know about these night time explorations. I became adept at constructing excuses to justify staying out all night, saying I was sleeping over at a friend's house, or going away for the weekend with their family. The real motivation for these excursions was to hang out on the streets around the Carlton Centre in the heart of Johannesburg, and when possible get into clubs like Razzmatazz, Q's and Masquerades. It is suggested that it was during this time, in some of these clubs, that kwaito was being invented. An urban legend suggests it was first created in Razzmatazz when a DJ accidentally played a house record on a slower setting, surprisingly greeted by the crowd's approval. But I wasn't aware of this sound-making, I simply wanted to be part of the action of the big city.



Figure 3: Razzmatazz in Central Johannesburg, 2001. (Author's Image)

The efforts I made to access this exciting and dynamic world of music and youth sub culture were part of how the spatial parameters of apartheid began to be broken down for me. The street I lived on growing up in a white Southern suburb of Johannesburg was only a veld and a highway away from the township of Katlehong, yet, as the following account reveals, I was completely unaware of its proximity. It may as well have been on another planet. After school, when I walked down Hennie Alberts Street to buy sweets from the shopping centre in Brackendowns, which marked the start of the veld, it felt like walking to the edge of the world, which in a way it was. When I started making these night trips to get into clubs or just wander round the inner city drifting in and out of the action, one of the ways to solve the transport issue posed by no car and a small amount of money was to take the mini bus taxis that ran up and down Hennie Alberts Street, transporting black commuters to and from their homes in Katlehong to the city and suburbs. It was

sort of an unthinkable thing to do, in terms of the kinds of talk that went on in my school and the image portrayed of the townships in the South African media- you would think stepping into a ‘black’ taxi would be akin to confronting the apocalypse - certain death. The reality was more mundane. Kindly aunties helping me to pay the fare, dampening down rebellious attitudes and making me feel like the kid I was. The spatial parameters of the city shifted, mirage-like, as one day I unknowingly took a taxi on a circular route. Instead of heading straight to the rank in town, we went the other way, and I realised that if you followed Hennie Alberts Street past the shopping centre at the edge-of-the world, you got to Katlehong, a place familiar to me through images of violence and burning cars on the TV news at 6pm. I couldn’t believe it was so close. Everything in my world said that it had to be located miles away, possibly in another dimension. It has been suggested that the effectiveness of apartheid city planning lay in maintaining a sense of separateness amongst classificatory groups (Mabin & Smit 1997; Turok 1993; Robinson 2004) and, for me, teen rebellion, focused around the desire to be part of something bigger, shifted those spatial dimensions a little. As Jennifer Robinson (1998 quoted in Mbembe & Nuttal 2008:33) has ventured, “Can we begin to shift our experiences and our visions to capture and understand the world of always-moving spaces? In what sense was even the apartheid city – a city of division- a place of movement, of change, of crossings?”

My own biography and the memories of this time also formed the basis of many of the conversations I held with respondents in the multi-racial friendship group in which I would later be embedded in Johannesburg during the making of this thesis,

and who in turn provided data for the work. That these conversations frequently occurred in the context of socializing around music venues, and listening to music, is indicative of the ways in which music triggers memory and marks shared experience. The social life around music then was a major motivating factor in why I was initially drawn to these research questions, the subsequent dynamics of the relationships formed in the field and also a component of data gathering and can therefore not be separated from the methodologies employed.

Many social certainties were breaking down during this time in the early 1990's, and there was a palpable sense of things changing. Regular protests in the centre of Johannesburg would at times stop the bus I was travelling home from school on, CODESA negotiations were ongoing and, on one occasion, the right wing white supremacist AWB drove an armoured truck through the walls of the convention centre where negotiations were taking place. In the nightclubs of central Johannesburg (where I would only sometimes gain access, depending on the laxness of the door staff to admitting obviously under age customers), white working class youth from the Southern Suburbs mingled with Indian, Black and coloured youths who were beginning to explore the centre of the white city as their own spaceIn the CBD alliances were being formed around shared musical taste. A gang called the 'Home Boys', comprised of white and coloured members, favouring American hip hop clothing purchased at the LA Clothing outlet in the Small St Mall and sporting ostentatious 'hi-top' hair styles and CD's worn as necklaces, congregated in the Carlton Centre prior to entering Le Club, Masquerades or Q's, clubs that played a commercial house and hip hop soundtrack. Le Club particularly

became a meeting point for coloured, white and black youth into hip hop. Music was also used to mark distinction and elaborate the tensions of de-segregating urban spaces. For example, as all-night raves, held in disused factories in the back streets around the Carlton Centre, became popular, some of a white working class cohort I knew distinguished between 'good' techno enjoyed by a mainly white crowd, and 'bad' house attracting a more diverse audience drawn from all the population groups. The sight of young Indian men in souped up cars at these raves was commented on by these members as evidence of the 'commercialisation' of a venue away from the 'harder' beats of techno to the 'softer' mainstream sound of house (During the official fieldwork period, I remember being surprised that so many of the younger non-white generation were into electronic dance music like techno and trance, that during the nineties had been rejected on the basis of being too white). Equally, other members of the cohort actively sought out clubs like Q's which favoured the funkier house beat, and attracted more black and coloured youth. Some of these friends formed the first inter-racial relationships as a result of socializing not only in these clubs, but other public spaces like theme parks, municipal lakes, shopping malls, flea markets and community festivals. All spaces where young people could publically perform their mastery and identification with various youth sub-cultural forms, thus establishing alliances based on taste. In 1992, a year before most white schools would de-segregate; these relationships were the subject of much controversy and gossip in the high school I attended. Thus, though alliances across racial boundaries as elaborated by the state were being formed, they remained subject to scrutiny, comment and ongoing negotiation.

As Grossberg (1989) has argued, popular culture is where identities and experiences are produced. As Willis (1990) and Back (1993) have shown, racial identities are not simply passed down from one generation to the next, but are remade in changing circumstances; responsive to context. Thus, the use of the extended case study of Brenda Osman nee Momple, emerged as part of the intersection between my personal involvement with the field site, and the methodological approaches that emerged responsively to that involvement. When I met Brenda through my relationship with her son, her stories about the past unsettled some of my own assumptions about the novelty of the multi-racial post-apartheid friendship cohorts that I had come of age with, and was embedded in, locating them in a lineage of such spaces that had existed in various forms over previous generations. These demonstrated, through the prism of the narrative of her life story, the dynamic ways in which racial identities intersected with social context, remade in the shifting circumstances of the political context of the time. It also highlighted the role of music in the making of our relationship, the spaces in which memories could arise and stories be told, and as a technology that intersected significantly with key points in the life course, and the historical narrative of the nation.

Responsive Methodology and Multi-Sited Fieldwork

Experiences in the field as a member of a cohort and as an employee generated conditions that required on-the-spot reworking of research methods. The key arguments for using an unconventional mix of methodologies, and permitting methodological processes to be responsive, are located firmly in the issue of

representation. A varied methodology is an attempt to gather and present data that amplifies the strong voice of the subjects (Bourgois 2002), placing the researcher firmly within and part of these flows, and allowing for a dynamic picture of a society in flux to emerge. During periods of rapid change and social upheaval, as has been and continues to be the case in South Africa, the challenges of researching and representing the nuances of sociality amidst significant events are great. South African artist Zen Marie has argued that a responsive methodology is vital for generating data that represents the nuances of sociality that underpin sites of ethnography.⁵ What he calls ‘practice-led research’ emphasizes a methodology that is vital and spontaneous, permitting changes in research direction based on what occurs in the dialogical relationship between subject and researcher. In the case of this thesis, the employment of multiple methodological approaches was not pre-meditated, but occurred in response to developments during and after the fieldwork period. Thus, the relationship between experience and the emergence of methodology in longitudinal research must be accounted for when considering the research design of projects based on long term fieldwork. As Leach (1991) has argued, in situations of long-term engagement with a research locale, methodological approaches must be responsive to the intersection of the research process with local interactions. For her, knowing participants well resulted in close and intimate conversations that revealed a great deal about local views and perceptions of change. Surveys were designed, ‘...on the spot’ (1991:44), to check the generality of issues which arose during participant

⁵<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-VLgBEvbVw> retrieved 20th March 2011

observation. A responsive methodology is part of the intimacy generated by prolonged engagement in the field, and would not be able to emerge in the context of more quantitative based research approaches. Pine (2007) discusses how in the course of very long term fieldwork, she became incorporated as kin in the Polish family she was based with, and how this had repercussions for her data gathering. Bourgois discusses this in the context of the data generated by his prolonged and intimate engagement with the East Harlem crack dealers at the heart of his ethnography of the inner-city drug economy:

“...quantitative-orientated researchers who collect data via surveys or by consulting published censuses do not understand the intensity of the relationship one must develop with each individual in one’s sample in order to obtain information that addresses the cultural contexts and processual dynamics of social networks in holistic contexts. Anthropologists do not correlate discrete statistical variables; rather they explain (or evoke) the reasons (or accidents) for why and how social relations unfold within their indigenous (and global) contexts.”(Bourgois 2002:18).

Bourgois's statement resonates with the 'radical empiricism' set out by Michael Jackson (1989), which proposed an extreme dissolution of the boundary between researcher and researched, and the presentation of data in a textual form that did not mask the social relationships that generated the information. Though located within the broader flows of the 'writing culture' or the reflexive turn in anthropology (Clifford and Marcus 1986), Jackson and Bourgois' approach echoes the much earlier critique of the bias to quantitative objectivity offered by C.Wright

Mills (1959), who saw in detached claims of neutral objectivity a research process that was technically proficient but lacking in the creativity and imagination needed to speak about the dynamics of social worlds. This is not to set up a rivalry between qualitative and quantitative methods. The successful combination of research approaches is exemplified by the longitudinal research of anthropologists such as Shirley Brice (1983; 2012), whose combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative engagement over three decades of ethnographic engagement demonstrated how black and white working class families constantly re-arranged the ways they organized the everyday practices of work, learning and language in response to changes in the socio-economic climate.

In his assessment of the ‘unobtrusive method’ of social research put forward by Webb et all (1966), Lee (2000) emphasizes the benefits of unobtrusive methods in eliciting data that cannot be obtained through direct solicitation as complementary to other methods, what he describes as an eclectic stance towards the methods used in data capture. I found this to be true of the data presented here. The intimacy generated by my long term engagement with a home location, and the way in which music acted to draw out and magnify relationships, gave me access to insights from research participants that could not have been elicited through other methods. However, there were significant drawbacks. Over-familiarity with the research terrain shaped my ability to have command over the data I was gathering as I struggled at times to come to terms with the impact my personal journey as a returning South African was having on the unfolding of the research process. This is perhaps best illustrated by an extract from my field diary:

10th March 2006

And so I'm in this crap position, where I don't know quite what I'm collecting information on, or what I'm writing about, and I got here on this kwaito platform, getting the funding and all that, but who have I spoken to? Who have I hung with? And the truth is I don't know what I want, and for that reason I am not getting anywhere, because when you don't know what you want, you don't get anything. Do I need to interview all the big shots to write about Jozi youth culture? Damn, I am confused by myself. Everything speaks to me, and in a way I delayed this thing too long, the piece I was going to do was something to write when I was 5 years younger and 5 years ago, which is what I did, 2001 was when I wrote my kwaito dissertation. Now I feel like my concerns have shifted, I'm inside now and I'm different, and the scene is different, older, more self-aware. Like everyone. Liz McGregor writes about how it felt like watching a miracle seeing all those middle class black kids at the Y-studio in Rosebank, sounding like white kids. And I know, because me being a Rip Van Winkel, I am constantly assaulted with these miracles, like Faith being rude to the Afrikaans woman in the trendy cake shop today and getting totally away with it. Faith was the madam, and there is no way that would have been possible before 1994. Never. But I'm the odd one here, because I have to absorb the miracle and get on with it, because it is no longer a miracle, certainly not here in Jozi. It's not a big deal, it is normality. At the risk of sounding dramatic, I feel like my life has been all about a journey to get away from the way we grew up here in South Africa, all

isolated and fed lies and deceptions about each other and ourselves and the nature of the world. And we are beyond the initial getting to know you stage, now we are in full blown contact, interaction, without the freshness of a first date or the early years of marriage. I notice how white people who have close friendships or relations with black people deal with their whiteness, and their past position of powerfulness, by being self-deprecating about their whiteness, while often retaining positions of powerfulness (like Grant the CEO of that media company the other night). Or Clint when he talks about playing basketball or liking hip hop. But then that's not what I see with the kids in Brixton, who are not self-deprecating in any way. Then it's more like being in a mixed London neighbourhood, with all the tensions and alliances and different from the encounters at the upper end of the class or the age scale. But then Rafiq says that Brixton is unique, this area is special and different. But then I think about McGregor again, describing Sophiatown as a normal community, the kind that would have sprung up all over SA if it hadn't been for apartheid. And I see in Brixton the same normality, it's just that it doesn't fit in with discourses of race and understandings of class and power that we currently have in South Africa.

Am I writing about Brixton? Yes, in a way I partly am. Am I writing about my journey back here through music? Yes, in a way I partly am. Am I writing about the different spaces I have found myself in, and the kinds of class and race interactions which take place within them? Yes, in a way I partly am. Anyway, I love this song by Thebe about dancing. It's been a long time since

a song grabbed me like this, and it feels nice to have that passion, to want to play it to death.

That I was struggling to configure the changes in my relationship with South Africa and what I was encountering in the field with the demands of delivering a conventional social science research project is obvious. A thorough reading of the reflexive literature prior to departure might have assisted in the resolution of these tensions. As it was, I became somewhat lost in the terrain; losing sight of my research aims and adopting a rebellious attitude towards the structures of academia, seeking release in the comforts of music and friendship. Reflections on the impact of this over-involvement with the terrain, once I did commit to the project as conventional training in academic practice, were gained in hindsight. Writing about the gendered experiences represented in the surge of German autobiographical film and literature in the 1970's, Kosta (1994) reflects on how the works elucidate processes of rethinking and reconceptualizing the self that are attempts to plot new conceptual spaces that evoke alternatives to dominant narratives of memory.

It was further rupture to this identity that led to the emergence of another methodological technique used in this thesis. I focused on a single life story, related in the development of my relationship with my mother-in-law Brenda and show how this came to form a large part of my data set.

It was during the time living in Brixton at the start of the fieldwork period that I met Brenda, whose life history forms the basis for the material presented in Chapters 3 and 4. We met in 2005 when she was 55 years old, soon after I had

moved into the house on Fulham Road. I was busily pursuing my career as a DJ and collecting data as a trainee-anthropologist (albeit one uncertain of her commitment to the practice). I had started dating one of her sons, David, whom I met through the extended network of the friendship group I was already integrated into when I returned to Johannesburg in 2005 to do fieldwork. After a short period of 'seeing each other', he took me to meet his mother who was then living in Southdale, a suburb in the south of Johannesburg, with her younger daughter, infant grandson and son-in-law. She greeted me warmly, easing my nerves and set about making coffee. I felt a deep familiarity with the surroundings because I had grown up nearby. My mother had worked in the library at the local shopping centre, and I had started my first job at the age of 14 shelving books there. Brenda was an avid user of the library, her pile of borrowed Catherine Cookson novels reminding me of my own grandmother's taste. We had a lot to talk about, and quickly established a warm and intimate relationship. They had moved to Southdale due to the affordability of flats there, but the family were all from the Western suburbs, having lived in various houses in the Mayfair, Brixton and Crosby locale. David still lived in Crosby in the Western Suburbs with his sister Diane, Brenda's oldest daughter, in the house that Brenda had lived in when she was still together with her husband Charlie, the father of all her children, from whom she was now separated. Charlie continued to live in this house in Crosby which had now been purchased by Diane, who lived there along with her two children and David.

I became a regular at family Sunday lunches, and due to her continuing links with the Western Suburbs, Brenda visited me at home in Brixton which was round the

corner from the house in Crosby. As a DJ, gigs were usually at night, and thus most of my days were at home, where I would practice mixing with Davina who also had a flexible schedule due to her studies, and was a budding DJ herself. As Brenda was the full-time carer for her grandson, whom she looked after while his parents worked, it was enjoyable for her to break up the routine of her day with visits to our house. We drank endless rounds of Ricoffy and talked, while Mathew her grandson would play in the back yard. Often, my house mates would be around, and we all enjoyed hearing Brenda's stories of growing up in Durban, moving to Johannesburg, and telling our own stories, exchanging advice and insights. Brenda had close relationships with most of the younger female friends of her four children, and she often told us how proud she was of 'us girls' for living the independent lives we did. At times her stories were shocking, and it was difficult to process some of the events she described. However, I did not connect the stories she shared with the work I was doing on music, youth culture and identity in post-apartheid South Africa. This connection came later, during the post-fieldwork period when I returned to live in Johannesburg.

Thus the fieldwork site was not bounded by its 'official' entry and exit points between May 2005 and September 2006. I returned to live in Johannesburg in May 2007, during an extended period of maternity leave, living with Brenda's son David in Crosby for a year after the birth of our daughter. I was not working as a DJ, nor was I engaged in anthropological fieldwork. Without these social roles to anchor my presence in the city as they had done previously, I experienced the familiar city through the destabilizing effect of my new role as a mother, the impact of which I

had not anticipated. Thrust into a conventional domestic role where I was at home with our baby and my partner went out to work, I was isolated by the fact that none of my friends had children. They too inhabited non-domestic space in the day in the form of jobs and studies, and due to the constraints of caring for a baby, and lack of transportation I was no longer able to associate freely in these spaces as I had done before. My relationship with Brenda had always been close, but it took on a new dimension of importance now. As she was also located in the domestic space as the full-time carer of her 2 year old grandson, I spent increasing amounts of time with her in order to relieve the sense of isolation I felt. I lived in a house with David, Brenda's eldest daughter and her two school-age children. Once they had left for school and work in the morning, I would walk with my baby the short distance to the house Brenda shared with her younger daughter and son-in-law, and spend the day with her engaged in domestic labours, talking in between songs on the radio and then a break for Oprah in the afternoon.

It was during this period that I began to see how the stories of Brenda's life could be part of the work I was doing. Spending so much more time together, I noticed how the themes of mixed cohorts, musical experience and social change that I was interested in ran through her stories, illuminating how these processes were experienced by previous generations, and were not the 'new' post-apartheid phenomenon that I had originally thought. That I was now connected to her through kinship ties as well as friendship meant that I started to think more deeply about how participation in youth and music culture forms the framework for much social reproduction, and changes in how that reproduction occurs. It was in 2008

that we began to record our discussions in formal interview sessions, fitted into the gaps of the rhythm of our everyday domestic lives, condensing into a few interviews the talking and sharing of the past three years.

The combination of methodological approaches as they intersect and respond to my biography produces the space of this ethnography, multi-sited both spatially and temporally, permitting targeted explorations of a variety of identities that are mixed in awkward relationship to South African concepts of race and belonging, inherited from apartheid and colonial categorization, and continuing to influence the social landscape now, and connected through movements of sound and people.

Thus, though the primary field site was in the Western Areas, soundscapes are traced out to the UK, to other parts of Johannesburg and to Durban across a period of several decades. Locating mixed communities and individuals in a number of locations across time and space is an attempt to demonstrate their ordinariness and to avoid the tendency, which can result from single community studies, to see a particular story or group as unique and distinctive. Bloch (1998) wrote about the importance of participant observation as the means to reach cognitive ethnographic understandings that are about repetition and imitation, rather than the more contrived means of direct questioning. Falzon (2009) makes the point that for him achieving this depth of understanding meant moving around, mirroring the experience of his informants. It is the desirability of getting to a point of intimate relationship with the locale that makes Marcus (2009) see the ‘anthropologist at home’ as the ideal candidate for beginning anthropological research. In classic conceptions of fieldwork, this kind of familiarity was seen as a

drawback as there is none of the dislocation that makes a mind receptive to the gathering of data because it is somewhere unfamiliar (Clifford 1997). Privileging the advantage of the unfamiliar as good ground for making an objective scientific mind was challenged by Edward Said's theory of 'Orientalism' (1978), which questioned the use of the 'unfamiliar and exotic' as a blank space against which western notions of self could be constructed, and later by the collection of essays in 'Writing Culture' (Clifford & Marcus 1986). The subsequent 'reflexive' turn in anthropology has been well-documented, and indeed critiqued for the gender and class biases of the authors (Behar & Gordon 1995). However, intimacy with research participants and locale is not the sole preserve of the 'anthropologist at home'. Pat Caplan (1993) has reflected on the problem of writing about people you are very intimate with, as anthropologists who are engaged in fields which are not home can, and do, still become deeply embedded in the relationships that long term engagement with any social world necessarily create. She observed that what one studies intellectually is motivated by personal concerns, which change, therefore changing the nature of intellectuality.

Self-disclosure (Jourard 1964, Hittman 1996) as a tool of ethnographic enquiry shifts roles of interrogation and questioning, acknowledging the part that the researcher plays in the making of social life, and in the pathways the research follows. The researcher's body is in the field too; that social space in which agents are related but positioned differently according to internal hierarchy (Bourdieu 1977; 1993). 'Thick Participation' (Geertz 1977) is a feature of the methodology of this thesis. Jaida Kim Samudra (2005) has noted in using the term that

‘anthropology at home’ can be seen as auto-ethnographic observation from the perspective of the embodied subjectivity of the researcher. In using music as a starting point for analysis of the shifting racialised identity-scapes of South Africans in the midst of major social change, I locate my subjectivity as very much part of these dynamics.

The Biographical Method

How can the social and spatial depth of a multi-sited ethnography, where a complex and intimate relationships between the researcher and participants makes the intellectual terrain changeable, be represented? Falzon (2009) has pointed out that being conscious ethnographically is useless unless it can find expression in an ethnographic voice. Ethnographers have to take responsibility for the production of their field, rather than assume it. Gille and O’Riain (2002:289), discussing the expansion of the multi-sited ethnographic site, see an awareness of the political consequences of defining a site/s as critical. So too with the political consequences of defending a methodological approach, as Niehaus (2006) points out in his defense of the use of the biographical method to reveal social attitudes to sex and sexuality in the midst of the threat of the HIV epidemic in South Africa. In using a single life story to examine how music enables certain kinds of (incomplete) transformations, and in the context of the often violent circumstances that are described in doing so, issues of interpretation must be addressed. As Das and Kleinman have pointed out, “There is clearly a tension between interpreting a violent event in the form of a text and trying to find ways in which violence is implicated in the formation of the subject foregrounding the category of

experience" (2001:5). Brown (1999) sees the making of oral forms of testimony as more visible in historical accounts critical to the recuperation of a cultural history suppressed by colonialism and apartheid. By deploying Brenda's oral testimony in this thesis as historical material, a cultural history is told which examines the formation of group and individual identity in relationship with the imposition of ethnicity and race from above, the gendered experience of social injustice and trauma, and the ways in which music is implicated in the process of navigating social terrain. Brenda's talks with me were a way to make an historical record that articulated her experience of these social processes as they intersected with the emergence of her subjectivity. Music acted to mark shared experience and the accessing of memory in our conversations, and in her narrative, as a critical node around which her subjectivity could be explored both privately and publically, and around which the family life she describes clusters . Breckenridge (1999), considering Van Onselen's (1993) construction of South African sharecropper Kas Maine's life through his meticulous keeping of official documents, reflects that accessing the marginal and silenced voices is an important part of determining the historical narrative. By sitting with me and telling her story, Brenda made with me a record, an archive of the key events that had shaped her life.

Description of Main Field Site – Western Suburbs of Johannesburg

I conducted fieldwork officially as part of an ESRC funded studentship in the city of Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa between May 2005 and September 2006.



Figure 4: Map of South Africa



Figure 5: Map of Johannesburg and surrounding metropolitan areas

This occurred primarily in the inner western areas of Johannesburg, extending from New Town on the edge of the CBD, through Fordsburg, Mayfair, Vrededorp (Also known as Fietas or Pageview), Brixton and Crosby. Immediately to the north are the suburbs of Sophiatown (formerly Triomf), Westdene, Melville and Auckland Park. To the west are the former 'coloured' locations of Westbury, Newclare and Bosmont (see Figure 6). I collected additional data in Sandton, a wealthy separate municipality immediately north of Johannesburg (see Figure 5).

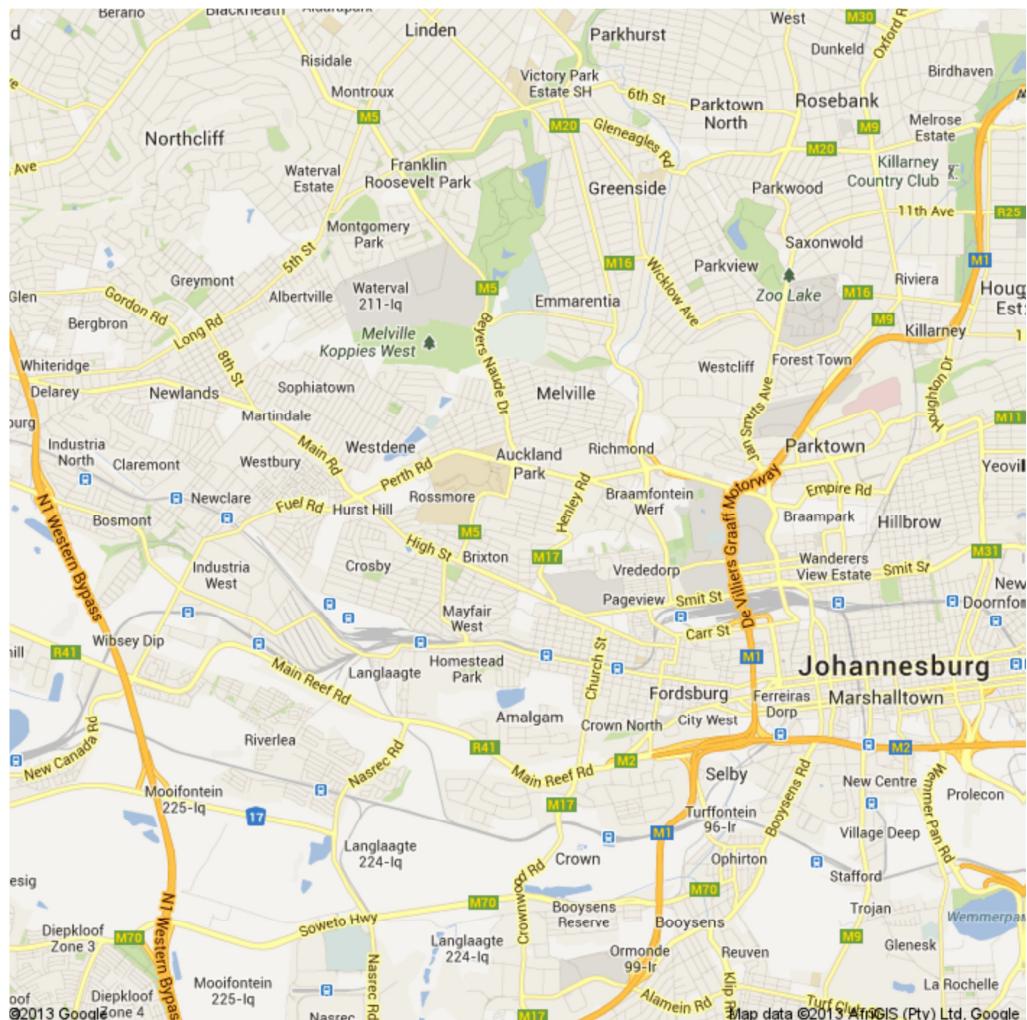


Figure 6: Western Areas Showing Brixton, Crosby, Mayfair and Fordsburg

I began my fieldwork living on Fulham Rd in the suburb of Brixton, a suburb that is mixed on a number of levels according to normative understandings of race, class and nationality in South African mainstream discourse. Fulham Rd seemed to mark a dynamic boundary between two contrasting neighborhoods, one which is poorer and where life is conducted more publicly, and one which is wealthier and more private. On the one hand, there was Putney Rd, the street running perpendicular to the north of Fulham Rd. Here the population comprised mostly owner-occupiers from all the main racial groups in South Africa, though whites were in the majority. The streets were quieter and houses sleeker, accommodating the overspill of wealthier neighbouring Auckland Park and Melville, where gentrification was long established. On the other hand, Caroline Rd, the street immediately south of Fulham Rd, was noticeably more run down. Here the houses were visibly overcrowded with tenants, a mixture of African migrants from neighbouring countries and the rural areas of South Africa, coloureds, Muslims and poorer whites, usually Afrikaans speaking. There was more street life, hawkers selling fruit and vegetables laid out on blankets on the pavement wearing traditional Venda dress, and taverns where drinking started at 10am and music, ranging from the latest kwaito hit to Westlife, blared out.

During the time I was a resident the houses on Fulham Rd, mostly semi-detached and built in the 1930's, were inhabited by a mixed demographic of owner-occupiers, single family renters, houses shared by young professionals and students and houses of multiple occupancy rented by poorer families. Many of the houses had back yard dwellings which were rented out separately. Some of the tenants I

identified during a brief survey included migrant families from Limpopo Province and North-West province, foreign students who had come to study for a year at a Johannesburg university, or take up internships at NGO's based in the city, members of the extended families of owner-occupiers or renters and groups of young black men who were engaged in temporary employment and /or the culture industries in Johannesburg.

The small semi-detached house I shared with two of my friends was a classic example of 1930's Johannesburg domestic architecture, with its pressed ceilings and tin roof. There was space for one car in the front of the house and a small paved yard at the back with a two roomed outbuilding. The household consisted of myself, Davina Moonsammy and Samantha Marie or 'Mandy'. At the time we were all twenty-something South African nationals. Myself of Portuguese and British descent, recently returned from several years living in the UK, supported by a research grant from a European research council and an income from employment as a DJ. Davina, of Tamil and coloured descent, supported by her parents while completing her MA in Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand, and Mandy, of Tamil descent, who had recently moved from Durban to take up her first post-graduation job as a sports journalist at the South African Broadcasting Corporation. I had known Davina since we were in our late teens, and it was because of our friendship that I came to live in this house which she had rented through a letting agency. Mandy was the cousin of another of mine and Davina's close friends. The house was owned by a white Afrikaans landlord whom we never

met throughout our tenancy. All transactions related to the house were organised through a letting agency.



Figure 7: Socialising in the back yard at Fulham Rd



Figure 8: Fulham Road, Brixton at sunset. Showing Anglican church and typical tin roof semi-detached houses.

The back-yard dwellings of our semi-detached house were rented separately to Lorraine Khunou and her household, comprising Lorraine's teenage daughter Obakeng, and her elderly mother and step-father. They were of Tswana origin and spoke Tswana as their home language, with an ancestral home located near Rustenberg in a rural location. Lorraine, her mother and daughter regularly returned to the North West province to renew ties with their home village. They were devout members of the Zionist church (Comaroff 1985) and attended meetings every Sunday. Lorraine worked as a cleaner in a nearby private school in the affluent area of Auckland Park. Obakeng attended Park Town Girls High, a prestigious private school which Lorraine made considerable sacrifices for her to

attend. Lorraine's household shared the back yard with the main house where we lived, and there was an atmosphere of neighbourliness and exchange.



Figure 9: Typical backyard dwelling Brixton

The house next door was home to a mix of young white professionals, including Morgan, an estate agent who moonlighted as a bartender in Melville, and his flatmates, who were in similar employment. Next door to them was Apinda, an Ndebele woman who had arrived from Venda a few years before with her husband. They rented a room in a multi-occupancy house with their two year old son. Apinda sold fruit and vegetables informally at the bottom of the road, pushing a supermarket trolley packed with goods every morning to her usual spot. Across the road, next to the Anglican Church, whose mixed congregation spilt out every Sunday, lived an Indian Muslim family who owned their property; this was next door to the coloured family who rented theirs. Multi-racial groups of children

would play out in the street, variously squabbling or colluding in games and mischief - one moment exchanging racialised insults, the next engaging in a unified game of 'ring and run'. Thus the picture that emerges is of a suburb where in a very small area a wide variety of demographic groups are accommodated, where although there is an awareness of difference, relations between neighbours are of relative acceptance and harmony. This is not to say that conflict does not present itself. Crime is an issue that is a node around which racialised discourses of conflict can play out. During my time living on Fulham Rd, three cars belonging to visiting friends were stolen from outside our house and my flatmates were held up at knife point and gun point 5 times in the course of 6 months and robbed of their mobile phones and lap tops en-route to work. When visiting a non-white friend who was a home owner, he mentioned that some white neighbours, also home owners, had suggested pooling resources to employ a nightguard. Though he was participating in the scheme, he disparagingly referred to the idea as 'white people's'. At the same time, he warned me and my female friends to be careful of who we answered the door to, as a group of female students had been held up and raped in their home across the road a few months before. Thus, there is a contrast between the fear and reality of violence, and the mixed and harmonious street life and convivial relations between neighbours.

This tension is also present in Crosby, the neighborhood adjacent to Brixton, where I moved during the last 6 months of fieldwork. Bordering the railway line, Crosby was built to accommodate white railway workers. Some of these original houses, comprising single dwellings surrounded by small parcels of land, still exist and are

undeveloped. These are clustered around the railway track, and are now inhabited by poorer white, coloured and black families. Others have been renovated to reflect a white South African suburban aesthetic of low walls, neatly tended gardens and patio areas where braais⁶ can take place. Though many white families, mostly Afrikaans speaking, are still owner-occupiers, the lifting of the Group Areas Act has meant the area has also become popular with Indian families from neighboring Fordsburg and Mayfair. Attracted by the larger stands in Crosby, and proximity to existing networks of business contacts and kin in the wider area, houses purchased by these largely Muslim incomers have been renovated to accommodate the requirements of extended family and the aesthetic reflects a turn amongst South African Muslims to an international Islamic identity (Vally 2001), their homes known locally as 'Saudi Arabian Palaces'. The railway houses are renovated in such a way as to be unrecognizable; transformed into multi-storey mansions with sharp geometrical lines, palm trees in the yard and the high security trappings of electric fences and armed response units on call. The demographic shift is reflected in the change of use of religious buildings in the area, with both the Methodist and Dutch Reformed church buildings now used as mosques.

⁶A 'braai' is a South African term for a barbecue, where meat is cooked on a fire, accompanied by drinking and socialising. 'Braaing' is a key aspect of social life in South Africa across various groups.



Figure 10: Crosby Street. Note contrast between undeveloped house on right and renovated house on left.

There are also a number of middle class black families, of mixed ethnic origin, who have bought houses in the area after moving from townships in the south, as well as coloured families who have bought or rent their homes. As in Brixton, many of the back yard dwellings are sub-let to lower-income families and individuals of a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. The house I lived in with my boyfriend David Osman was owned by his sister Diane Daniels, who also lived there with her two children. The family identified as coloured, though there was contact with white and Indian relatives. The outbuilding housed Evelyn Ndaba who was employed by Diane as a residential domestic worker. There was a small informal settlement across the road from the house, comprising a number of buildings in

disrepair that had housed a plant nursery, and now been taken over by residents who had moved there from the crowded informal settlement of Joe Slovo, which was immediately west of Crosby. Again, like Brixton, this was an area in which the mixed demographic lived in relative harmony with each other, despite an awareness of difference and the continued use of race as a way to articulate difference. During my time living there, the violence I did witness was in the form of domestic arguments that spilled onto the street, or robberies and car thefts which were attributed to perpetrators who were not local.

Data Gathering

Aside from friendship and kinship, employment as a DJ was the main framework that supported my presence in Johannesburg. It was this employment that provided structure and routine to my days, as well as being a source of participant observation insights and informal interviews with colleagues and employers. During my time living in the Western suburbs, I was employed as DJ on a residency basis at the following nightclubs: Roka, in Melville and Moody Blues, on the Main Reef Road. Towards the end of the fieldwork period I started DJ-ing at Paradise, a lap dancing club in the Northern suburbs. I played at a number of one-off events and parties where participant-observation data was also gathered. Formally, I was employed to provide entertainment at a Women's Day festival held in the Africa Museum in New Town; a launch party for Women's Day event at Xara Bookshop in New Town; a closing event for a conference at Women's Gaol, Braamfontein; and at

‘New Sounds’ club night at Gem Cinema in Troyville. I also played informally at parties held in private homes. These included gatherings at our home in Brixton; a ‘stokvel’ fundraiser in Crosby and numerous other private gatherings at homes in the western suburbs belonging to friends.

I conducted interviews with approximately 50 people within the extended friendship and kinship groups that I was embedded in and my places of employment. These were done over an 18 month period. I additionally drew on interview data and participant observation notes collected during a previous research period in Johannesburg in 1999 and 2000 when I had gathered material on kwaito youth culture for my undergraduate dissertation. I employed Mosetsana Senokoyane as a field assistant to transcribe and translate kwaito lyrics. She was the best friend of my boyfriend’s 18 year old niece, had recently matriculated and was frequently at our house. ‘Ah! The advantages of being black!’ she quipped when I asked if she would be interested in earning a bit of money for doing this task, an example of the joking relationships that characterized relations within the mixed cohorts in the area, cutting through the potential for tension caused by the continuing imposition of racial and ethnic identities ‘from above’. I also used interview and participant observation data gathered in the UK between 2000 and 2004, in London and Ipswich, amongst the Southern African diaspora who drew on the cultural capital of the kwaito scene ‘back home’ to make careers for themselves as promoters and DJ’s in the UK. I kept a journal named ‘Process’ during the formal fieldwork period between May 2005 and September 2006, in which I wrote observations and developments almost daily. It became a valuable resource for

charting the network of connections and experiences which eventually formed into ethnography.

The use of my own networks gave access to a rich depth of data, and insights that could not be obtained through less intimate means. I was fortunate to have unusually intimate access to lived social worlds, but this did limit the attention I paid to outside things. There are many benefits to in-depth participant observation research in familiar settings, but these must be balanced against the limits of a small sample and the draw backs of over familiarity. For example, this research does not take up the opportunity to map statistically the changing demographics of the western suburbs over the past two decades using more conventional archival and historical methods. In retrospect, data of this type would have enhanced the qualitative insights provided by interview and participant observation insights in this thesis. There are additional drawbacks to over-familiarity with the research locale. By allowing the research to be led by my existing connections, I did not take up the opportunity to examine other aspects of social life in the western areas, which as I have shown had a great range of demographic diversity.

The data obtained from research participants lacked the formal dimensions of an informant/ ‘researcher’ relationship, where information is obtained for the purposes of gaining ethnographic insight, and may involve a formal contract.

Rabinow (1977) has discussed this in relation to the different kinds of data that emerged out of the variety of relationships he had with informants during the fieldwork period. Towards the end of his time in Morocco, he formed a friendship with a man that had refused other more formalized ‘informant’ relations with him.

The development of this friendship over time facilitated conversations that provided a new level of ethnographic understanding to Rabinow. Friendship or kinship as the basis for informant relations sets up the possibility for other kinds of communication and insights that are not obtainable from more formal arrangements. As Rabinow notes however, this relationship was only possible because of the more formal arrangements with others that had preceded it:

...Ben Mohammed's initial refusal of informant status set up the possibility of another type of communication. But clearly our communication would not have been possible without those more regularized and disciplined relationships I had with others. (1977:143)

This is a potential disadvantage for the anthropologist who is over-familiar with the fieldwork terrain. The more formal arrangements that facilitate particular kinds of insight can be neglected in favour of the ease with which the researcher slots in to an existing social world. Tightly defined research parameters can help avoid the pitfalls of over familiarity so that the fieldwork site can be identified, even as the arbitrariness of its boundaries are acknowledged (Candea 2007). Most of the data here is drawn from relationships I was already embedded in, or formed through my existing network. There were times when these relationships became formalized, when I would request that friends confirm details or elaborate on stories that had come up in passing, as well as recording some interviews and discussions. This was also the case where I employed Mosetsana Senokoyane as a field assistant to transcribe and translate kwaito lyrics. She was the best friend of my boyfriend's 18 year old niece, had recently matriculated and was frequently at our house. Thus a

relationship embedded in an extended friendship and kinship network was briefly formalized. The data I obtained in the lap dancing club came through participant observation as a DJ, and informal discussions with staff and clientele. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 6 dancers of various nationalities. I found that having a role was an important part of orientation. Aside from friendship and kinship, employment as a DJ was the main framework that supported my presence in Johannesburg. It was this employment that provided structure and routine to my days, as well as being a source of participant observation insights and informal interviews with colleagues, revellers and employers. Personal relationships to research participants, within friendship and co-worker contexts, were the only way in which I could have access to the social worlds I did in the way I did. Abu Lughod (2000) has discussed how she could only do the work she did in her ethnography of Bedouin moral codes because of who her father was, and his relationship to the head man in the village she was located in. As Marcus (2007) has also argued , the benefits of personal fieldwork, particularly at the beginning, is sometimes the only route possible.

Audio Material

I have included an audio CD with the thesis to permit another kind of sensory engagement. The play list comprises key songs mentioned in the narrative of thesis, thus elaborating the passage of time and permitting the reader to experience some of the music that features in the work first hand. A full track listing is located in the Appendix.

Conclusion

Marcus (2009) has described ethnography as a report to the discipline whose parameters are currently in the process of being re-thought as the prevalence of multi-sited ethnography increases, "...what these purposes might be is perhaps the most pressing task for rethinking ethnography as a study of contemporary change" (2009:195). Whilst acknowledging the multi-sited nature of the field site, I do not wish to privilege it. A multi-sited ethnography is not in and of itself important. Gallo (2009) highlights a distracting tendency to set up a single/multi-sited dichotomy which presumes pre-existing conditions. He sees nothing special about a multi-sited approach – it is what 'happens when you follow your nose'. Fortun (2009) argues that multi-sited ethnography is not, nor should it attempt to be, comprehensive. Its value lies in setting up self –critical perspectives. Different spaces, locations and subjects relative to each other illuminate the wider social dynamics the ethnographer wishes to explore. This chapter has attempted to demonstrate the cumulative processes that constitute the field, and the emergence of methodological approaches responsive to the changes that occur during long-term and intimate engagements with the research site. For this reason, I have included my biography in order to illustrate how it intersected with the research process to produce particular conditions. This had a dual effect of both generating the thick intimacy with locale and respondents, and providing qualitative data that cannot be gained through other methods Equally, however, my over-involvement with the site prevented a more critical appraisal of where the field was situated and

what I was extracting from it for the purposes of making a ‘report to the discipline’, as per Marcus’ definition. Practically, this over-involvement slowed down the processing of data, and made it difficult to define the parameters of the field site. The pitfall of anthropology at home is that the data never sees the light of day. It becomes lost in the flows of everyday life, and the opportunity for critical analysis is lost. In order to salvage the data I did collect from the dangers of my over-involvement, I have employed the pragmatic approach suggested by Candeia (2007) and Falzon (2009). Candeia describes this as the ‘arbitrary location’, Falzon calls it ‘good enough ethnography’, and compares it to the practice in economics of ‘satisficing’. This is where business does not seek to maximize its potential, but instead settles for what will be just enough. As Falzon puts it:

“...satisficing cannot be disembedded from historical and cultural economic notions of what is satisfactory and sufficient, ethnographic partiality (the ‘cut’) is not established.... In an autocratic or arbitrary way... one is guided by the scholarly literature... current state of methodology and one’s unfolding ethnographic insights on the ground. It is not the individual ethnographer in isolation who decides what is good enough/satisficing, but the whole methodological and epistemological complex which they are part of.”(2009:12).

The mixture of methodological approaches used in this research emerged in response to process. It was not a pre-meditated strategy as I have demonstrated through descriptions of the ways in which the process of data gathering responded to developments in the field, and were influenced by the embodied subjectivity I

brought to the scene, intersecting with the embodied subjectivity of others in the greater context of change in South Africa and the particular demands and conventions of presenting a thesis for a research degree. In order to make sense of the data, and attempt to undertake the rigors of a research degree, I have employed a large measure of ‘satisficing’ and post-research reflection on the emergence of responsive methodology.

Chapter 3

Music, Classification & Consequence

"Fragments of an apartheid past might flutter into consciousness"

(Muff Anderson 1993:152)

What is the knocking?

What is the knocking at the door in the night?

It is somebody wants to do us harm.

No, no, it is three strange angels.

Admit them, admit them⁷.

I was walking in Brixton with a friend, soon after moving into the house on Fulham Rd in 2005, heading to Peters Corner Shop to get some chips and cold drink. We took a detour into a charity shop that had opened across the street from Peter's. An Afrikaans man, conservatively dressed and in his late 50's, was sitting behind the counter. He had lived in Brixton for many years, been here since it was a neat working-class suburb for whites-only, famous as the base for the crack police team

⁷ D.H. Lawrence "Song of a Man Who Has Come Through"

called the ‘Flying Squad’. Now, little more than a decade after the end of apartheid in 1994, Brixton had reverted back to being the kind of community that had existed in the Western areas of Johannesburg prior to the enforcement of the Group Areas Act, where people drawn from all sorts of population groups, religions, colours, linguistic groupings and places co-existed, if not always harmoniously. This man and his shop were not incongruous. The Afrikaans presence had not left Brixton, it had become, whether willing or not, part of a more diverse community. Girls wearing ‘100% Boer’ T-shirts would walk down Caroline St hand in hand, past the halal butcher and the pool hall blaring out kwaito. These snap shots of an urban South African multi-cultural scene do not convey the tension and complexity that exists under the surface. But they give a sense of what a formerly all-white neighborhood had transformed into post-1994.

Now in 2005, I bought a T-shirt from the Afrikaans man, who was soon going to shut the shop down and put a hand written sign in the window, “Relocated to the Free State”. When he handed me the change, there was an old five rand note amongst the coins. It was strange to see it, this object from the past, Jan Van Riebeck’s face peering out from the blue paper, the man who symbolically marked the beginning of a permanent white population in South Africa (Witz 2000). Muff Anderson, writing about the memory making processes of South African soap opera Isidingo, asks how the land of apartheid past co-exists with post-apartheid present (2003:154). Old apartheid evergreens, as he puts it, keep re-appearing. I held one in my hand, apartheid money in a Brixton charity shop. My first conversations with Brenda, took place in that house on Fulham Rd, Brixton, part of the Western

Suburbs. In the context of my original research remit to look at contemporary music culture in South Africa and the formation of cohorts across old apartheid boundaries, the conversations with Brenda were like the fluttering of apartheid past into the present. They illuminated the background that informed the creation of present-day cohorts, revealing that the tensions and boundary crossing that I was identifying as ‘new’ were woven into the fabric of apartheid past, and could be illustrated in her narrative, as could the ways in which music framed spaces of leisure and recovery, marked the passing of time and opened up conversations between us.

Music, Social Change &The Making and Masking of Boundaries

This chapter, and the one that follows, consider the role of music in social change and the making of mixed cohorts in South Africa by examining the intersection of music, memory and experiences of social change from the beginning of apartheid in the 1940’s till its end in the 1990’s. I present the oral testimony of one member of a multi-racial family, Brenda Momple, later Brenda Osman, as a case study to consider the role of music in creating a framework for social reproduction and constructing a narrative account of experiences of social change. The material presented in this chapter occurs in the historical context of the years immediately preceding the National Party coming to power in 1948, and the two decades that followed. As apartheid legislation was passed and enforced, massive social change

throughout South Africa occurred, with disruptive consequences for the Momple family.

Music is analysed here not as an object in and of itself, but as a vital part of social life, using Christopher Small's concept of 'musicking' (1998) to foreground how music manifests in Brenda's recalling of her memories, and how music was a vital component of the social life of the family. Memory comes from an active process of reconstruction that is ongoing; it is not a passive receptacle for the deposit of the past. Memory has a functional and social nature (Fentress & Wickham 1992). For this reason, it can be communicated in a range of ways, music, songs and sound being some of them. The memories attached to musical sociality can provide a valuable insight into the subjective experience of society, as evocatively explored around experiences of the music of the South African jazz musician Abdullah Ibrahim (formerly Dollar Brand) by Christine Lucia (2005). Lucia describes the sense of time and memory evoked by the music of Ibrahim as a, 'space of memory' (2005: 125) which sonically articulates the emotional experience of a particular time in South African history.

In the context of our interviews, Brenda's narrative emerged partly in response to the dialectic between us, what Frank (1979, 1985, 1995) has described as the biography in the shadow; the hidden relationship between storyteller and listener. Music became during our conversations a way to remember people past and times past; a trigger for memory and a form of methodological practice that generated an intimate and evocative space for discussion between us. In the first part of the chapter, detailing the courtship between her father Michael Momple and mother

Daphne Harding, swing and big band sounds(both international and interpreted by local musicians) marks the space of the social dances held for young members of the Catholic Church in 1940's Durban. Here, young people are brought together by a common religious affiliation, class experience and taste in popular music and dance that permits a joyous celebration of the effervescence of youth, and release from the tedium of the factory work they engaged in during the week. In the context of the church dance, these modes of identification become more important than the affiliations of race that are soon to be emphasized as the supreme sign of identity by the incoming National Party at the end of the decade. Their marriage, solemnized in 1948, the year before it would be made illegal to conduct such marriages, resulted in the birth of six children in quick succession. Brenda was the third of these.

When Brenda recalls her early childhood growing up in this racially mixed (according to normative apartheid definitions) family living in a white working class suburb in Durban in the 1950's , music can be read as a technology that transmits values and types of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. This is as much about transmitting ideas of hierarchy as it is about learning styles of dancing langarm or jazzing⁸. It is also a social glue, the pleasure it gives and the

⁸Langarm (Afrikaans word meaning 'long arm') is a popular form of semi-formal dance amongst both the Afrikaans and coloured communities in South Africa. Jazzing is a popular dance originating in the coloured community that sits somewhere between a salsa and a quickstep, and is easily adapted to whatever the popular dance music of the time is. I have seen it matched very well with certain up-tempo American R&B songs. R. Kelley's 'Step in the Name of Love' springs immediately to mind.

participation it encourages, are what brings the ‘white’ and ‘brown’ families (to use the terms employed in the context of our talking) together, though other aspects of their social interactions are marked by the enactment of internalized structures of racial hierarchy. When the family are forced by the circumstances of their racially aggravated poverty to move to cheaper accommodation in the neighboring coloured area, music is a way for Brenda and her siblings to construct an individual subjectivity, and participate in social life outside of the family, as they become young adults. Finally, as Brenda recovers from the trauma of rape, pregnancy and a forced adoption, music is critical to the making of private rituals to assert a subjectivity that counters the de-individuation of her experience. Music is a vital part of strategies to invest the events of lives marked by trauma with meaning and significance (Baddeley 1993; Tosselson & Lieblich 1993; Argenti 1998, 2001; Magowan 2007). In communicating her narrative account of personal experience and participation in social life, and focusing on the role of music in it, the intimate relationship between music and memory, music and history and the central role of ‘musicking’ (Small 1998) in the making of social life, is made clear.

Music, Memory and History

The intimacy of the relationship between music, memory and history was part of my rational as a musician for choosing Brenda’s testimony as the basis for an in-depth case study of the intersection of music, classificatory legislation and its consequences. As a DJ, I am aware of how songs and genre can weave into the

personal narratives of the dancing crowd, collectively and individually, resulting in emotive responses to the playing of particular songs or styles of music in a set. I have had numerous experiences at gigs where the playing of a particular song created a link between me as a music selector and members of the audience, permitting the boundary between DJ booth and dance floor to be crossed. It is those moments where individuals in the crowd feel compelled to communicate directly with the DJ, signaling appreciation from the dance floor with direct eye contact, thumbs up, nodding of the head, deepening their dancing or coming to speak to me as the emotive rush of whatever memory or feeling triggered by the songs or genre is acted upon.

In my relationship with Brenda, we shared a love of music (bossa nova, jazz, rare groove) and our conversations were often framed by listening to music that she would play for me, and I would play for her. I would make her compilations, she would play me records. When the radio was on, there were shared moments when songs came on that one or both of us loved. Music transmitted in various media would trigger memories and open up avenues of conversation. In this way, what was an everyday relationship between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, became more relevant to this research as the deeper conversations about her family history facilitated by the shared love of music deepened my understanding of South African history. I found that her experience as an older person illuminated the connection between music and the life course across generations, providing a longer scale and perspective on the passing of time and unfolding of key personal and national events alongside experiences of music.

Music and the Making of Meaningful Narratives

There is a case to answer about how sequence comes about in the gathering of life narratives for the purposes of social science research, as discussed by Frank (1979, 1985) who highlighted how the relationship between interviewer and interviewee determines much of what emerges as data, as well as those who have utilized the genre of life history to experiment with forms of ethnographic writing (Abu-Lughod 1993, Behar 1993, Viswewaran 1994).

Brenda's narrative account, and willingness to tell it to me and others, can be seen as an attempt to impose order and coherence on her experience of life. Rapport has argued that expressing experiences in the form of narrative is an, "instrument for making meaning which dominates much of life" (2000:76). Music for Rapport, is a key way in which respondents can gather their memories, and communicate their narrative to interviewers. He sees narrative as inherently sequential, but my interviews with Brenda were rarely sequential, emerging over several years of informal familial conversation, eventually coalescing into structure and recorded interview sessions. Based on knowledge I had already obtained, I imposed a sequence by asking questions that would guide her back into a narrative that suited my purposes; or move her along to the next part of the story. What I offered her in our relationship, and perhaps why it was so fruitful, was the opportunity to make a narrative, albeit one mediated through my own agenda, counter-acting a sense of fragmentation and dislocation. In one interview, I remember her pausing, shaking her head and saying, "*Telling you all this now Dom..... It's quite a story hey!*" I must

say that I valued our time speaking together. It was, and is, quite a story. And the place of music in its telling, both as a sonic object that framed the passing of time in her narrative and evocation of memory, and as a space of relief and enjoyment in our time together.

Music and the Interview Process

Music played a critical role in the construction of a meaningful narrative out of our conversations, raising interesting questions about the role of sound in the making of material and knowledge gathered from interviews, both formal and informal.

Prior to the time when we sat down to formally record the interviews, it was often songs on the radio or an album playing while the housework got done, that would trigger memories and discussions. When we did formally record the interviews, we played music during breaks in the recording, permitting the breathing space to speak about traumatic events, and digest the impact of telling and hearing these parts of her story. Sometimes simply tuning into the sound of the radio that had been left on as we made a drink or a snack would trigger an off-record insight into what we had just covered; unpeeling another layer of detail.

In making the link between music, history and memory, Rapport saw in music a way for people to gain a sense of 'groundedness'; an anchor for agents caught in tumultuous historical moments as the Jewish immigrants whom he interviewed were. He described music as, '...a node of communication for us' (2000:76). Around these nodes, conversations are built up and narratives constructed which provide intimate glimpses of the experience of key historical moments. The

following is an extract from my notes, an observation of this process of music acting as a, '...node of communication'. Brenda had been recalling some very painful memories from her years with her husband, Charlie. She had become visibly upset and angry, and we took a break to get some air:

As we make tea and coffee, she puts a CD that her sister has made her on the stereo. It's Nancy Wilson⁹ singing 'I Wanna be Loved'. She turns to me and says, "Music got me through". She adds milk to her coffee and continues, "As he was talking at me, I'd be looking at him, but inside I was turned to the music". The use of music as a redemptive soundtrack is not restricted to coping with her relationship with Charlie. She recalls how her sister would play her songs as they were growing up that would capture the moods and times they were going through. Light relief and articulation of a range of deep and often difficult emotions. As she puts on Jimmy Messina¹⁰, 'Free to be Me', she starts talking about the time just before she left Charlie,, living at Old Castle Ave in Crosby, when she was managing her brother's band, dreaming dreams of success and independence, coming up for the night when she left Charlie after Jessica's 15th Birthday Party, a decision she made as she went through the motions of jazzing with him. She tells me, "I'm very much a romantic Dom. I love romance". She smiles with a happy look in her eye. The things

⁹Popular African-American jazz and R&B performer, known for her romantic ballads and witty performances. Her style and confidence were much admired by Brenda and the other girls in the neighbourhood during the mid-1960s. Her hairstyle and dress sense were studied and replicated religiously.

¹⁰American jazz and disco musician

that get you through the dark times. We dance a little in the kitchen and talk Stan Getz¹¹ and Bossa Nova classics before getting back to the interview, where she tells me the story of how she and Charlie, her husband, met. She begins by talking about what life was about for them, the webs of obligation she was woven into, and how these formed part of the reason why she stayed in the relationship.

Music provides a way to gather her thoughts, and mine. As different songs come on, different memories and emotions associated with them come up. The CD has been sent by her sister in Australia, and in this way maintained a link expressed in shared musical taste which allowed for journeys across time and space to be made, fostering and strengthening a cohort bond even across great distance.

Brenda's narrative emerged out of a multiplicity of these nodes, interviews, phone calls, chats, family discussions and confessional moments, defined by social science research, but also in the context of the dynamics of our family relationship, and during times when she was imparting advice and warnings to me as an elder does to younger people. But it was music that was critical to opening up the initial spaces of intimacy, and music the key to understanding how it was that she had survived great hardships and made a triumphant narrative out of them. In acknowledging the politics of attempting to represent this narrative in an academic context, I am deeply aware of the short comings of how I have put it together. For the sake of my own agenda to think through the emergence of South African society alongside experiences of music, I have organized Brenda's narrative around

¹¹Prolific Brazilian jazz musician who was one of the pioneers of the 'bossa nova' sound of the 1960s, which fused soft jazz with samba rhythms.

key points in South African history as they intersected with her family life and personal story, and corresponded these with the musicking (Small 1998) that occurs around them. I have included the full transcripts of our recorded interviews as an appendix in order to permit the reader access to an unmediated version of the recorded part of our many conversations. These are only the formal interviews; representing a small and particular proportion of how her narrative emerged, and indeed, continues to emerge as our familial relationship continues.

1945 – 1950: A Musical Courtship &The Beginning of Apartheid

The relationship between Brenda's parents, Michael Momple and Daphne Harding, demonstrates the paradox at the heart of the intersection between music and lived experiences of classification systems. Music brings people together, yet it is a tool to mark distinction. Music is critical to the making of social environments that encourage the dissolving of barriers, which may exist in other parts of social life, yet this solvent is often temporary and unable to sustain its transformative powers outside of the contexts it operates in. This is a deeply subjective construction, and cannot claim to be an accurate portrayal of their lives. However, through speculation about some of the concrete evidence that exists about their courting life, in particular the church dances and dancehalls of 1940's urban South Africa, the intersection of music and experiences of apartheid legislation and its consequences can be considered.

Daphne Theresa Helen Forbes Harding was of paternal Scottish and maternal French Mauritian descent. Her parents, who Brenda knew as 'Granny and Grandpa

Harding', had met and married in Natal in the 1920s. Daphne was born in 1929, one of 5 children. Brenda recalls that it was her white grandparents who taught her and her brothers and sister, 'Our Etiquette'. Their house was prim and proper, with very English mannerisms and habits. High tea was served at 4pm. They had close relationships with their brown and white grandchildren, but also adhered to the understandings of hierarchy based on colour that existed at the time. Brenda remembers, on the frequent visits to their grandparents' house, that if there was company, the darker grandchildren would have to enter the house via the back door. Then they would wait in the kitchen until the visitors had left. She never associated this with her race, rather as something that 'just was'. There was no apparent contradiction in the acts of socialising with one's family, and inscribing the hierarchy of the state at the same time.

Yet, behind this façade of white respectability there is another story of blurred boundaries. Terence, Brenda's older brother, told me a story about a pencil test, applied long before it became a legitimate tool used by representatives of the apartheid state to determine whether a person should be classified as white or coloured under the terms of the Population Registration Act.¹² When Granny and Grandpa Harding went to the magistrates court to be married, Granny Harding's naturally tanned skin and curly hair, bequeathed by her French Mauritian heritage,

¹² The pencil test was a crude and widely used method post-1948 to determine how an individual should be classified if there was a question over their whiteness. It involved sticking a pencil into the person's hair. If the curls were tight enough to hold the pencil, the person would be classified as coloured. If the pencil fell out, the hair was sufficiently straight to be white.

attracted the attention of the authorities at the court, who were concerned to maintain the boundaries of white racial purity, even though the apartheid laws which would explicitly forbid it in law were more than 20 years away. The story became part of family folklore:

Terrence: People were watching and discussing, pointing at her. Eventually an official came over and demanded that she allow him to stick a pencil in her hair to determine whether she was white or not before he would permit this marriage to take place. The pencil fell out so it was allowed. I guess it was about how lucky you were on the day with who was in court whether you got challenged or not at that time.

Daphne's concern with respectability and maintaining her whiteness, and desire for her children to attain the substance of whiteness, can be understood within a context in which humiliation and the requirement to 'prove' one's race had been a family experience. It is an assertion of racial identity built on shame.

Michael Peter Momple, Brenda's father, was a South Africa-born Creole Mauritian.¹³ They were creoles, his father had migrated to South Africa from Mauritius seeking work, and had gone back to find a wife, bringing his bride back to Durban where their 13 children were all born, Michael in 1926. Under the convoluted system of sub-classification honed by the apartheid state, he was initially classified as Mauritian Coloured, which later became 'Other Coloured'.

¹³ When Terry shared the family tree he had constructed on the 'Genes Reunited' website, I did notice that one of Granny Harding's ancestors in Mauritius had also been a Momple, the surname her white daughter would take on when she married the coloured Michael Momple.

Michael and Daphne's marriage was made legal one year before it would effectively be outlawed by the Mixed Marriages Act of 1949, and so their entire marriage and family life was characterised by their relationship to the key apartheid legislation that followed National Party victory in 1948. The Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 forbade marriages between people deemed to be of different races. Though it was not possible for the state to annul all those marriages that had occurred prior to the passing of the Act, it did make life difficult for those who were in such unions, though the existence of legal marriages between members of different race groups already in existence was not accounted for in the legislation. Indeed, the attitude of the State towards existing 'mixed' marriages was to effectively ignore that they existed at all. No provision was made in the legislation to accommodate, or give exception to, those who were in marriages which would now be considered illegal. In the context of the 'common sense' notions of race which underpinned the logic of racial classification under apartheid (Posel 2001), this makes sense. To acknowledge the existence of such unions and make accommodation to them would be to acknowledge the common sense fact that these unions could occur at all. Even though they existed as legal marriages, it was not deemed necessary to include any reference to them in the legislation which forbade any more such marriages to occur. Furthermore, apartheid legislation was not the beginning of legally sanctioned inequality based on racial classification. Previous legislation passed by the Union Party government, such as The Natives' Land Act 1913 & Urban Areas Act 1923, as well as policies of the British and Dutch colonial administrations in the 300 or so years prior to the establishment of the Union Of South Africa in 1910 had entrenched inequality and begun the long process of

division and racial classification that would culminate in Apartheid. Racism, inequality and divisions between groups were firmly in place. So how did a marriage such as the one that took place between Brenda's mother and father happen under such conditions? What role did music culture play in making spaces that in their composition confounded the ideas of absolute difference that were becoming the legislative currency of state discourse?

The Match Factory and the Church Dance: Class, Taste & Race

Michael and Daphnemet at the Lion Match factory in Durban, where they both worked in the mid 1940's. As practicing Catholics, they conducted much of their courtship at the various socials and dances held by the church, whose mixed congregation found common ground in their faith and socializing around the latest dance and music crazes of swing and big band. The circumstances of their meeting and courtship show how social formations based on class and religion, cutting across the racial classificatory borders that would be used to underpin apartheid legislation, existed prior to 1948. These social formations were solidified through participation in the popular music and dance cultures of the time.

The church hall used by the congregation would be converted into a dance hall for the night; a social space where young people could gather together for the purpose of listening to music and dancing. The music of choice was the big band, bebop and swing sound imported from America that was having a major influence on South

African urban popular culture (Ballantine 1988, 1999). Michael's brother, Cyril, was the trumpet player in a band called the 'Swing Maestros', who were a popular local attraction throughout the 1940's. Cyril too dated a white girl: Daphne's sister Bobby, who he would later marry. Thus Michael and Daphne's relationship was not particularly unique. Dance halls are spaces that have historically been associated with the blurring of racial distinction. One of the most famous dance halls was The Savoy in Harlem in the 1930's, arguably one of America's first integrated social spaces, where dance skill supposedly trumped race as the key identifier of status, though the spectacle of harmony in the dancehall masked the continuing racial tensions that sat beneath the surface (Hennessey 1994).

Dancing, connected intimately to music, is a space where the old ways of marking social distinction can be superseded through skill and knowing how to move. Michael and Daphne both knew how to move. Working together at the Lion Match factory, the church dances must've offered a glamorous relief from the tedium of factory work. A chance to dress up and perform one's mastery of the latest steps. One can imagine the excitement of the upcoming dance, the scrapping and scrimping of limited funds to put together a sharp outfit, some glamour and shine. United by class and taste, it is not hard to see how Michael and Daphne would've had sufficient common ground to forge a connection that was a radical alternative to the legislation that was soon to be passed, and the hegemony of racial identity as necessarily separate already in existence. The social experience around the factory and the dance hall provided conceptual tools that allowed this to happen. These common experiences were more important than race. Maybe, lost in those sounds,

doing those steps, practiced for weeks till they flowed out of their bodies, the colour hierarchy could be put to the side, and Hollywood clichés like ‘tall, dark and handsome’ indulged instead. The racially diverse cohort of Catholic youth were still living in a racially hierarchical society. The dance hall seems to have offered a space that would’ve eased the tensions of these two positions, and perhaps permitted some level of articulating the tension through performance, though this is speculative. In the performance of the dance hall, it might appear as if racial boundaries are being crossed in the example of Michael and Daphne’s courtship, however, I would argue that crossing is the wrong term to use. In the dance hall space, the boundaries of race are no longer dominant. Following from Bourdieu (1984), other kinds of distinction based on mastery of dance and dress become more relevant, though one can imagine that tropes of race based on ideas of attractiveness and rhythm might have played out, but these would’ve been of secondary importance to the cultural context of the dance hall, where the pleasure of music and dance ruled. Thus, ‘boundary crossing’ across racial lines is nothing of the sort, as race is not the primary identifier of self in this social context. This is why the apparent sub-version of the dominant order of racially inscribed hierarchy is short lived. Once the dance hall is left behind, it can only be reconstituted as a temporary alternative. The categories of race assert themselves again. The sub-version of the status quo in the dance hall is short lived because it was never really subverting the status quo; just constructing a temporary space where alternative modes of identification and taste were dominant. Once Michael and Daphne got down to being married and raising a family, pitted against all the obstacles the state could put in front of them, the strain would play out in arguments based on

tensions around the racial hierarchy, and Daphne's internalization of the code that placed her whiteness at the top.

1950-1961: Music, Hierarchy, Morality & Multi-Racial Life in a White Neighborhood

After their marriage, Michael and Daphne rented a house in a white neighborhood, where their 6 children were born between 1948 and 1963.

Brenda: Union Crescent was the white side of where we grew up. We were all born there. We born in Atterbury Rd and Union Crescent, and somehow, through mummy being the dominant person in the relationship, she always got the accommodation, the places were always where she chose to live and all of that, so that's how come I think why we always stayed on the white side of the railway line so to speak. And strangely enough there is a railway line that separates it all! So growing up there, we didn't know that we were any different. We knew that there was something different but we didn't know what.

When Brenda talks about when she was a child growing up in one of a handful of coloured and mixed marriage families living in a white neighbourhood, she speaks about the shame she felt but never in terms of being aware of her colour marking her out as different. Though they were treated differently, and not permitted to enter the houses of some of their playmates, this wasn't felt by Brenda and her siblings to be due to their colour, but their poverty and the reputation her parents

had, in particular her mother. They played in the street with white children, and the kids of the few other non-white families in the area. These were all either middle class coloured or mixed coloured and white. These mixed playgroups were permitted their freedom until parents came home from work, as Brenda recalls,

Brenda: As long as parents weren't home all us kids would be in the street till 4 pm, when the parents came back, then whoosh! We'd all have to disappear. I don't know if it was the culture of the time. The culture of the neighbourhood. Or if it was because of our colour. And like I say, we didn't know we were different because of colour then, we thought we were different because we were so poor and stuff like that. We didn't dress the way the others dressed, we always wore hand me downs and sometimes the hand me downs were from the kids our own age and so on, so I've never been able to distinguish between the two, why it was like that.



Figure 11: The Momple children outside Union St house. Mid 1950's. Brenda is on the far left.

Describing the area as 'multi-racial' must be qualified. Perhaps, in terms of the group categories being used by the state, the area was 'dual-racial'. There were no Indian or black families in the area, though there was social contact with Indians through shared employment in factories, and attendance at social dances. However, in this neighborhood, contact with these groups came through relationships with black domestic workers and an Indian trading couple, who passed through the neighborhood weekly with their carts selling spices, incense and fresh fruit and vegetables. They were known as Sammy and Mary, which were nicknames for all Indian people at that time. Domestic workers were known simply by the moniker 'The girl' or 'The boy'.

Race was something that came in from outside, in the forms of these traders and servants. Rather than having an awareness of race within neighborhood community, Brenda felt her family were different because of the fights and arguments that were constantly going on between her mother and father, coupled with accusations of adultery, and regular parties in which the grocery money for the week would be spent on entertaining friends to the strains of loud music that would swiftly descend into drunken fights.

Brenda: There were things that wasn't right. That caused turmoil throughout the family. And we thought we were different simply because mummy and daddy used to drink and fight, and we used to hear the fights, we used to see the drunkenness at the parties

The parties were spaces where the adults in the community who Brenda saw as also having ‘imperfect’ backgrounds, would play out their personal dramas at the end of the week.

Brenda: So every family had that embarrassing things and the normal stuff. Mrs Nelson was a very good school teacher, her family was huge, like the Momple Family (Brenda's paternal family) who had 13 children. All the young ones were our ages, the others were all older. One had become a priest. One had married and gone to England. One had an illegitimate child, that's the one that my mother and father used to socialize with, and a lot of the fights were including her, of mummy accusing daddy of having affairs with her and you know, silly things like that. Well, I say silly things but I don't know how much truth was in it and that. So regular fights in the house, or at the end of these parties, always included somebody from the

outside, either mummy was being accused of having an affair or daddy was being accused of having affairs and so our lives went. Up the road from us were the Evertons, who were also coloured, but kept very much to themselves. We were allowed to play with their kids, but we weren't allowed into their house. Everyone was allowed into our house. The Nelsons as well, we were allowed in the house, but all the other houses we weren't allowed in. You went and stood in the yard, and when it was meal times you got sent home.

The playing of music loudly on a gramophone would mark the boundary of a party, in which displays of social aspiration would be made. The gramophone itself was an object of great veneration; the children were not allowed to touch it, and its copper needle would be meticulously unscrewed and sharpened on the frosted glass of the front door by Brenda's father in preparation for its use,

Brenda: Every house in the area had at least one frosted glass window or a frosted glass door, and these were used to sharpen the gramophone needle, because they had to be sharpened on glass.

The experience of the parties held at home was relative to social position within the family. They meant one thing to the adults, and another thing to the children:

Brenda: Anyway, when we got old enough to be aware of things, the thing we were most aware of was how these parties that we would have at our house were always mummy showing off or making all the Hors d'oevres and the liquor, and everything being made pretty, all the best crockery and cutlery out. The music playing, and the dancing. And these parties would last until it ended up in a fight with either one of

the couples that were there or with my parents. And then the rest of the week we were hungry, and then we started becoming aware of the fact of these parties are our week's food. So that thing of children should be seen and not heard and being sent to the room, and if anybody brought their kids with then we could socialize with them, and then we'd be offered a few things to eat because of visiting kids.

But if there were no visiting kids we didn't get anything of this party food. We soon learnt how to start stealing it! Someone goes through like they're passing to another room or something, you know steal a plate of something, a handful of nuts and come and share.

The cultural values being transmitted in the arena of the party are reflective of the wider structure of a society based on hierarchy. Adults are included in the party as a space of pleasure, and later, as a space for airing grievances and expressing conflict. Children are excluded from the party, though they participate in it anyway through the stealing of food and the listening in to music and arguments. The post-war music that had been the soundtrack to her parent's courtship was now part of their record collection. Vera Lynn, Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra and the big band sound of Benny Goodman were sounds that could be appreciated, and declared the making of a space in which enjoyment would be paramount. Though the children were excluded from the primary party space, they participated from the sidelines by listening to the music that could be heard throughout the house. They practiced dancing in some of the lighter moments, copying the Langarm and swing moves they saw. Music here, as a marker of the boundary of a party, constructs distinction between generations, and inscribes a family hierarchy. It also marks the

boundary of the party as a space that signals difference within the wider community: loud music is a sign of being out of control and anti-social. It serves, amongst other signifiers, to augment the sense Brenda has of the family being different from the wider community. The social forces that are beyond her understanding as a young child are mediated through the prism of the party; permitting a way to articulate and find explanations for a sense of difference and exclusion from more respectable parts of the society. Remembering the parties, the behavior of adults and the connections she made to wider social practice, permits Brenda to articulate a critique of the moral framework of the social world she grows up in.

And yes, they used to drink, but I can't say that I saw him and daddy falling around drunk at any stage. Mummy used to get falling around drunk but daddy used to get happy and silly and all that, mummy would get aggressive. Aunty Bobby was always aggressive. Uncle Cyril till this day thinks that he can laugh his way through life. He tells you silly jokes that we've been hearing since we were two bricks and a jam tin high, you know he'll give a tin of fish and a half a loaf of bread to feed 6 kids for the week type of thing. The rest of the time as he's riding around with us he'll stop at this place and buy us popcorn, this candy coated popcorn or buy us ticky¹⁴

¹⁴ A 'ticky' is an old South African word meaning a penny. Prior to the declaration of the republic, the South African currency followed the pre-decimal British system of pounds, shillings, pennies etc. Post-1961 the South African Rand was introduced as the national currency, with 100 cents to every rand. The word 'ticky' persisted though, and still refers to anything that comes in small packages. It is also used to refer to public phone boxes, which, when first introduced, operated by inserting a penny and so were called Ticky Boxes.

packets of nuts. I don't think it was ticky then? I think it had changed to Rands and cents by then? But anyway, that's how we remember the fathers giving us these treats. But they weren't doing the necessary things, buying enough food. Bread or peanut butter to really feed us type of thing. So of course there would always be the fights with the mothers and that type of thing.

Langarm and the Constitution of Multiracial Family Life

It was shared music culture that brought the various racialised factions of Michael and Daphne's extended families together. These family gatherings, unlike the parties for friends held by her parents, were remembered with great pleasure by Brenda. Children were allowed to join in when large family gatherings of both the Creole-Mauritian Momple and French Mauritian/ Scottish Harding clans were held for the purpose of playing music and dancing. Both Michael and Daphne were part of large families – Michael one of 9 and Daphne one of 5. Brenda recalled the excitement of watching the social dancing that accompanied the playing of international swing records, and other big band records by South African orchestras emulating the swing and jazz sounds from abroad, while innovating with their own interpretations. If the gathering was large enough, the instrument playing members of the family would form an informal band to provide the soundtrack, interspersed with playing records:

Brenda: We loved it when we were allowed to watch! Everybody danced absolutely thoroughly. The waltz, the quick step, the fox trot and langarm. And then with the Momples visiting who were musicians, there would be the saxophone and the trumpet, the whole lovely story! This would all happen at home. Granny Harding

played the ukulele. Granny and Grandpa Momple on the violin and the piano. They did a dance called ‘The Square’. The music was in a style of the minstrel bands and langarm. You needed a group to do it, who would have a leader who would make hand signs for what people should do. Men on one side, women on the other side. At the signal, take each other by the arm and do 4 x 4 movement. Like a waltz in a square shape. Each movement of the music would get a call from the leader to change hands, or spin, or place hands on hips and swerve in and out with each other. It would get quite hectic! Can you imagine how exciting it was for a little kid to watch this!

Documenting the performance of Langarm amongst the coloured community of Grahamstown, Boudina Coetzer (2005) locates both the music and dance forms of Langarm as hugely popular amongst a variety of cultural backgrounds in South Africa. A synthesis of past knowledge drawn from European and African traditions, it is a form that is as popular today as it was when Brenda’s family held their performances. As a South African popular dance and music form, it is a potentially rich site for examining the refigurations of pre-colonial culture with European, elaborating the tensions between dance as civilizing process and the control and regulation of local dance forms that would’ve produced moral anxiety amongst (some) colonists and desire amongst others (Dirks 1992; Reed 1998). However, as Desmond (1993) cautions, an over-emphasis on relations of appropriation and imperialism as they appear in changes to the formal properties of dance and sound ignore meanings, and processes of culture building, that arise dynamically in context (1993:46). Coetzer points out, the Langarm genre is dynamic and in a

constant process of appropriating new sounds and style, and adapting them to changing social norms (2005: 73). Thus, as Desmond (1993) convincingly argues, the music and dance are social texts that can be, and are, transmitted across class, ethnic and racial lines; signaling group affiliations and difference. In the example described above, described from the perspective of a childhood memory, it can be seen as an integrative practice that draws two extended families together, and where a performance of community, and joy, is undertaken. This is once again a fragile and incomplete space of ‘togetherness’, which does not yet merge with the ‘lived in’ order of the world of racial stratification that exists as a dominant discourse, and which gathers in power as the legislation of separate development is rolled out over the course of the 1950’s.

Mediated through Brenda’s childhood memories of listening, both to these gatherings and the parties at home, listening itself can be seen as a performance. For Simon Frith, listening to music offers a way of being; the experience of ‘inner time’ that makes musical communication possible (1998:145). What is meant by inner time? Schutz (1964: 170 in Frith 1998:146) differentiated it from ‘real time’, expressing the way in which listening to different kinds of music provoked qualitatively different temporal experiences. In the examples of Brenda’s memories, the context in which music is heard is equally vital to the experience. Listening together is a performance that can signify unity; and separation.

1961 - The Declaration of the Republic of South Africa

On the morning of the 31st May 1961, Brenda set off for school with her younger brother. Once there, they discovered a scene of great excitement. The children were called to an unexpected school assembly where the principal announced that they were all privileged to be present at a most momentous day in South Africa's history, the declaration of the Republic. The ruling Nationalist Party, headed by Prime Minister Verwoerd, had finally achieved the goal of 'independence', severing its links with Britain and the Commonwealth in the process. Brenda and her brother, along with all the other schoolchildren, were swept up in the giddy euphoria of the day:

Brenda: We were just so excited, you know? It all seemed so amazing. We had no idea what it all meant, of course, or even what a republic was. But it had to be something good because we all got given these gold medals on long ribbons to celebrate it. We rushed home after school to show our mother, you could hardly contain us! But when we got home, she was so angry with us, told us to take them off immediately; she didn't want to see that kak¹⁵ in her house. She threw them so deep into the bushes but we still hunted for them."

The decision to break from the Commonwealth and become a Republic was based on the outcome of a whites-only referendum. The ruling National Party had used

¹⁵ 'Kak' is a South African slang word which means 'shit'.

the Referendum campaign to win support for Republic status from a wider white constituency. Their campaign had appealed to non-Afrikaans whites' fears of losing their status and position in South Africa should pressure to rescind apartheid legislation be bowed to. As Ballantine (1989) describes it, leading up to the declaration of the Republic in 1961, 1960 had been a watershed year. The repressive machinery of the state had been unleashed on protesters at Sharpeville, all major popular democratic parties had been permanently banned and police arrests on a mass scale had been made of activists. It was also the year in which the SABC established seven ethnic radio services with an emphasis on neo-traditional and religious music (Tomaselli et al 1987; Hamm 1995). The enforcement of the Group Areas act leading up to 1961 saw all remaining multi-racial communities targeted for the forced removal of non-white residents to newly established townships and locations on the outskirts of town, destroying the venues and scattering the audiences which had sustained the South African swing and jazz scene. This had devastating consequences for the urban dance music which had flourished in the 1940's and 1950's, being a major factor in bringing the era of large dance orchestras to an end. Smaller groups had survived, influenced by the bebop style of jazz coming out of the US, and drawing on the indigenous *marabi* style. It was in this post-big band era that musicians like Hugh Masekela and Abdullah Ibrahim cut their musical teeth (1989:308). As Ballantine also notes, it was in 1960 that the major exodus of many of these jazz musicians into exile occurred, ironically, laying the ground for bringing South African jazz to a global audience and gaining support for the struggle against Apartheid. However, at the time, the future

for South African urban music, with its aspirations for musical and social equality, seemed very bleak indeed:

Those that remained had to find some way of adapting to the new situation.

But those that could not adapt simply packed away their instruments for ever. As if to symbolize the new musical order, Mahlatini, one of its stars, appeared wearing animal skins and espousing the joys of rural life. (1989:12)

In this climate, appealing to bounded idioms of discrete and timeless identity, there was little space for community groupings that did not fit within these definitions. Unlike her children, Brenda's mother Daphne was aware of the implications of the declaration of the Republic and the strengthening of the National Party's grip on South African politics. As a white woman married to a coloured man, this could only spell trouble for her family. Beyond the shock and awe terror of the state exemplified by the events at Sharpeville, there were other forms of intimidation and harassment which eroded everyday lives. This raises questions about the nature of violence, and the way in which, in its less 'traditional' form, it infiltrates people's lives in transformative ways. It is what Tolstoy saw as the tension between free will and fate, as the wheels of history grind forward. Post-1961, with the declaration of the Republic, and the mandate this gave the National Party to enforce their policies, the trouble really started for the Momplés. Frequent visits by state representatives to establish if coloured people were living in an area zoned for white:

Brenda: Brenda: Ja. And when it came down to people Unc's age (her youngest brother, born in the early 1960's), and I'm talking about the Union Crescent time

here (the white neighbourhood), that's when they started classifying as just Coloured or Other Coloured. And this was when the police would start coming, I don't remember what they were called exactly? But they would come and do the pen in the hair test and stuff like that.¹⁶ But they never dressed as policemen, you just knew that they were police. And this was when we used to hide under the house, we darker ones, me, Mace, we'd hide under the house. Peter and Pam could be in the house. Lesley wouldn't hide under the house but she'd go climb a tree or something where she could watch everything. She was the defiant one, she was having no part of this, she could've stood there in front of them with her hands on her hips and told them what for.

Yet this was not a couple united in struggle against the racist state machine, conscious of the link between racism and poverty which was making their lives so difficult. When the referendum was held in 1961, to decide whether or not South Africa would become a Republic, Daphne exercised her right to franchise as a white citizen. Michael, as a coloured, did not have the right to vote. Brenda recalled there were massive fights in the house over this issue, with Daphne insisting that she would vote (against the Republic), "Because it's my right". Daphne had insisted that her family live in a mostly white area, and that her children attended Mount Edgecombe and Epsom school, government funded schools specially for Mauritian

¹⁶The officials were probably citizen volunteers used by the state to assist in classifying under the terms of the Population Act (Bowker and Star 1999). As well as visiting homes and businesses, they held hearings to determine race, particularly individuals who were on the borders of being coloured/white or coloured/black.

children, deemed to be better than the purely coloured schools which Daphne felt were below her family, "She was the biggest snob under the sun!", says Brenda. However, this desire to live a certain lifestyle did not match their economic circumstances, compounded by the fact that Michael Momple's work prospects were restricted by his racial categorisation. Higher end, better paid skilled jobs were reserved for white workers, making it difficult, if not impossible, for non-white workers to advance to the best paid positions in their professions. As a clerk, Michael made just enough to scrape by, their income supplemented by Daphne's dress making skills. When he lost his job, the tension between Daphne's aspirations and economic reality were brought to a head:

Brenda: Mummy wanted to believe we were white. So we lived in an area we couldn't afford. Went to schools we couldn't afford. Dad was excluded from most skilled jobs because of being coloured so his earnings were capped. Ma worked as a seamstress, but that's only the occasional wedding dress. We were evicted after he lost his job and couldn't find work for 11 months.

When Brenda was 13 the family moved into an outbuilding in the backyard of a house on the coloured side of the railway line. Brenda's family were never forcibly removed from the white area they lived in, but the example demonstrates how the violence of the apartheid state manifested in racially aggravated poverty, and racism within the family.

Brenda: I think daddy started getting sick (with lung cancer) when we moved (from Union Crescent) into the garage and room because of daddy being out of work for so long. And then we had this infestation of bed bugs, they'd be creeping up or

down the wall like a black curtain, and you had that smell, there was always a smell, no matter how we cleaned our beds or did our washing, or used Jeyes Fluid, nothing worked. So daddy got hold of this poison, and he sprayed the place. You know the corrugated iron roof? We all spent time shoving newspaper into the gaps there and he sealed up the windows. And we were all going to go for a picnic while this stuff worked, but daddy stayed inside with a hanky over his nose spraying this stuff. It was just a garage and a room, but he seemed to stay forever in there, the stuff was filtering out through the gaps, you could see it. And we were saying, daddy come out now, daddy come out, you're going to die in there! And by the time he eventually did come out he just spent the rest of the day coughing and coughing and coughing. It wasn't long after that that he started coughing blood, and he thought he had TB, and he put all his crockery and things aside. He had a dish that all his stuff must go into, none of us were allowed to take it. And in previous times, if one hadn't finished their food, the other would take it and eat it, and daddy would often share because mummy gave him much more, so he'd often share, like say, 'Oh, this is a water potato' and put it on our plate, or, "I don't feel like meat today" and put the 6 pieces on his plate and put a little piece on each of our plates. And only when we grew and I became a parent myself did we realise that he was actually sharing with us, not because he didn't feel like it. And on Saturdays mummy would come home from work and make a mixed grill, liver and bacon and sausages, and it would just be for her and him. Because it was truly like we didn't matter to her, we more a nuisance in her life than what she wanted to have. And this we couldn't understand. Why have 6 children and marry this Mauritian man, and stay with him, if this is going to make you that miserable that you're calling us names all the time,

bloody little bastards, black shits, get out of my sight? You couldn't go up to her and ask for some peanut butter and bread if you were hungry, you got your breakfast, you got your lunch, you got your supper, and that was beginning and end of story. And if there was nothing you'd get told, yes, go and help yourself, eat the whole bloody loaf. And this she'd say to us as little kids. So it was tough.

Brenda's story is evocative of the interwoven relationship between state policy and personal lives: and how even seemingly subversive acts like a mixed marriage, can reveal an acceptance of the ideology of racism and racial hierarchy as much as a refutation of it. Daphne, her white mother, is both the principal carrier of, and subvertor, of the apartheid state. She subverts in her choice of partner, but collaborates in the way that ultimately her battle is to be allowed to continue being white, for her family to enjoy the privileges and status of that classification. The repercussions of the internalising of state logic are themselves violent. Her bitterness deepens at the loss of whiteness, as classification demands clarification, and this process of clarification results in the loss of the privileges of whiteness she wanted for her children, though she continues to play out her position as a white woman in relation to her children. The family become accomplices to, and victims of, the state. It is a symptom of the danger that Mary Douglas saw in the borderlands of invented classification systems (1966, 1975). The danger here comes not from any inherent quality of being 'in between' categories, but in the marriage of classification to hierarchies of domination, and the danger this carries for those who through a particular societal architecture happen to fall in the cracks.

Coming of Age, Popular Music and Social Dance

Due to the increasing financial pressures on the family after their move away from the white area, Brenda was required to leave high school at the age of 15 and begin work. This was something she expressed a sense of frustration and regret about, as she had enjoyed school and been a bright pupil who enjoyed learning. Rather than being a space of independence, the world of work re-enacted the structures of hierarchy present in the state and in family life:

Brenda: My very first job was with Oshri Stores. Mr Oshri was Jew, he had what they referred to as a gammy leg, he used to limp. A miserable person! He had a tea room, supermarket kind of thing. Now the white girl that worked there, she used to steal. We weren't allowed to use the till, me and the black assistant. We served the customers, got all their groceries and that and handed it over to her, and then she would ring up the amount and give the change and so on, and if the person's things came to say R15, she would ring up R10, and write the R5 on her arm, and write all the way down till the bottom of her jersey. And then at the end of the day she would take that amount. And me and Victor, the black guy who worked there we knew she was doing this, but what could we do about it? And eventually when the shortfall was found at stock take time, we got blamed for it. So the two of us got fired, Victor, who was a big man, and me who was this first time worker person.

A tedious job in a factory followed, which Brenda left without her mother's permission:

Brenda: It was unbearable! Just sitting there threading things all day long and listening to older women scandalising¹⁷. And our family were some of those being scandalised about. And then they'd try and talk in cryptic, you know. Oh but my mother was outrageous in so many of the things she did! She was always the talk of the town.

Employment was a tightly controlled part of younger family member's life. Wages would be handed over at the end of the week. Leaving a job you didn't like, or being fired, as in the examples before, would result in being expelled from the family home:

Brenda: Anything that didn't go according to her rule, or if you lost your job, or spent a bit of your wages on something for yourself, she (her mother) would throw you out. So we spent a lot of time living with different members of the family or a friend for little bits of time, and soon as you worked again, she'd come and whip you out from whichever Aunty's house you were at and come home.

At this time, another family event augmented a sense that music was a powerful way to create a sense of joy, cohesion and positive identification, particularly in the face of times of hardship and upheaval. Granny and Grandpa Momple, her paternal grandparents, were forcibly removed from their home (in which all 13 of their children had been raised) as it was in a white area. Re-located in the coloured area, their new house was swiftly established as a location for the continuation of the

¹⁷ 'Scandalising' is a South African slang word that means to gossip. Literally to pass on the scandal about someone or something.

musical gatherings that had characterized the old house, thus re-constituting community and family post-removals. Brenda recalled these with great fondness. The house is still in the family, and continues to host musical gatherings to this day. Once again, Brenda's explanation uses examples of particular practices, in the music culture, in this case the absence of drunken behavior, as a framework to articulate a moral code:

Brenda: The family tradition still lives on through the younger cousins in Durban, nearly every weekend they get together to play music & dance & sing at "Scotia Terrace", that means the family home since Momple grandparents days. Amazingly, and very proudly I say this, no drunks!

Brenda and her cohort began venturing out too, to dances held at hotels in the centre of town, or church. The social life around dances and family functions provides a way to articulate ideas about race, distinction, morality, as well as mark spaces of pleasure and independence:

Brenda: As we got older and we met more friends and got to go out more frequently 'cos we were working by then, we ventured out of the area, went to dances at the Himalaya Hotel in the city on Grey Str. They had regular dances & often the workers from shipbuilding company James, Brown & Hamer, mostly coloured & Indian men. The dance styles rock & jive were very popular. An invite to a dinner dance was very exciting, you got a new outfit and accessories and hairdo. Most of us had dressmakers of our local aunts and neighbours. The local high school, Parkhill, held a Debutante Ball every year and my sister Lesley qualified, so that was big for us, and our families always held parties, then there was Christmas,

birthdays of the older folk or simply get togethers, these were the best places to learn to dance, hear the most popular dance tunes and pick up tips on how to behave, be a lady or gentleman.

The dance that she had grown up watching, The Square, had evolved slightly, and dances would frequently feature the making of a large circle, where a couple would dance in the middle, responding to calls from a conductor.

In the circle, the dances were copied and tried to be done better, more polished, than whomever you mimicked, the Indian people were our laugh for the night, they never had rhythm. Only as I grew older and learnt more, I've come to know they dance to a very different beat in their music. I think our children have missed out on a lot of good stuff to pass on, by having so many informal clubs and disco's that are just walk in venues. They don't have to work toward an event, save up, dress up, brush up on etiquette, have expectations from guys attitudes on meeting etc, we had to be introduced to some-one keen on you. No walk up and start talking. Then you could slap him there and then in the face and be backed up by all and sundry - I'm sorry to say, I never got that chance in a dance, though I did in a bus though-slapped him with my handbag I did and was properly indignant too!

Thus, the dance provided a space to demonstrate cultural capital, and discuss morality. Speaking about the dance, Brenda recalled that eventually it fell away as those who could conduct became fewer. However, as the data in the previous chapter demonstrated, it seems that it has survived, and become the less formalized circle that I became familiar with amongst the friendship cohort that I was embedded in, and which included some of Brenda's descendants. Here, a

circle would be formed spontaneously during the course of the night, and individuals, and sometimes couples, would enter the centre to ‘burn’ – make a display of dancing. Wendy James (2000:141) locates this dance pattern of a circle enclosing dancers and/or musicians as widely found throughout Africa and the diaspora, and one which has proved to be both resilient and highly adaptable to contextual changes; existing, ‘in tension with other forms and transformations’(143).

The circle, as described by Brenda, and dances more generally, were spaces in which largely gendered standards of morality were scrutinized by participants and measured against prevailing standards of respectability that articulated tensions around race and shame:

Brenda: You were watched as a man snatcher or a lady of the night. Dare one of the girls go over to your man to dance or talk, you'd, "See the Bushie come out". SHE would get taken to the toilet & beaten up & put out of the jol!!! Not HIM get worked on?? How weird was that. But, I believe they knew the rules & asked for it, most times they were known as Liquor Lips, drinkers who'd do anything to get a drink.

The term ‘bushie’ is a derogatory one used to describe coloured people. It is a reference to the association of coloured people’s origins amongst the indigenous khoi-san or ‘bushmen’. In its use within largely coloured social contexts, it implies ‘raw’ behavior: that which is inappropriately unrestrained, though it can also be mobilized as a defiant source of pride and independence from the restraint of mainstream discourses of respectability, reminiscent of the ‘crab antics’ described by Wilson (1973) in the context of the tension between reputation and

respectability in the Caribbean. Brenda's account of the dance indicates an identification with a 'ladylike' demeanour, in which pleasure is associated with the cultivation of a public identity based on decorum and good manners. The dance was an opportunity to perform mastery of the cultural capital associated with a respectable and respectful persona that seemed almost romantic in how she described it to me. It was also an opportunity to judge the performance of others: and through drawing lines of distinction, articulate the parameters of appropriate behavior which, in the context of a racialised hierarchy, reflected the association of more 'base' forms of behavior with being further away from 'civilization'. Brenda had also found a new job, as a waitress at the Three Monkeys Coffee Bar, a popular café in an upmarket white suburb. Here too, the performance of various selves (Goffman 1990) permitted distinction and social judgments to be made. It was a space of great pleasure for her, frequented by local celebrities, opening up an exciting novel world that also provided a framework for identification and the modeling of behavior:

Brenda: We served people like Penny Coelen¹⁸ and so on. She was lovely, she had the perfect body, the perfect face, but it wasn't just outer beauty, it was inner beauty. A thorough, thorough lady. She acknowledged everybody and never had any airs and graces. She almost gave us the impression of being royalty. Even when she didn't have a smile on her face she still had warmth and brought gifts for everybody, at Christmas or if she knew it was someone's birthday. You see these customers became regulars, they were friends.

¹⁸ A former Miss South Africa and winner of Miss World in 1958

Dom: So you really loved your job?

Brenda: I loved it. Really, really loved it. I worked there for nearly two years.

An atmosphere of camaraderie and co-operation prevailed amongst the kitchen and floor staff composed of black, coloured and white staff members. Though the white manageress strategically placed lighter skinned and attractive girls ‘front of house’, where only white people were customers, the working culture meant that tips were shared out equally:

Brenda: And we had such camaraderie amongst us! Because this money didn't just get shared with the seven girls, it also got shared with the chefs, the dishwasher and the cleaner. That's how we worked. So we never had a colour thing or issues or anything like that. The manageress had issues, because of how she would choose one of us to work in the front of the shop and so on, based on colour and attractiveness.

In the worlds of the dance and her job, it became possible to experience alternative ways of being which must have been important for developing a sense of self which was not subject to the culture of domination that existed outside. If the job provided a sense of pleasure and participation in genteel and fair world, then there remained the tension of her place in the family, and in the wider society. Wages were still handed over to her mother at the end of the week. Daphne additionally took advantage of her position as a white woman to enjoy the advantages of her daughter working in a popular café. Foregrounding the paradigm of racialised hierarchy, this was a source of resentment for Brenda:

Brenda: Mummy would come every Saturday to the Three Monkeys, sit down and eat the meal that I'm supposed to be having. Sitting in the prize spot! Just inside the door, directly opposite the manager and owner. Why they even allowed this to happen I don't know. I would collect my wages and hand them straight over to her. I'd leave then, and she would carry on sitting there socialising with them. She'd catch the Corporation bus home, which was the white bus. I'd have to walk all the way up the hill to catch the Indian bus. What is that Dom?

In an assertion of independence, Brenda spent some of her wages on things for herself while out with the girls she worked with. When her mother found out, she made Brenda return the items, something Brenda found deeply humiliating, to the extent that in order to wrest some control back over her life, she quite the job she loved:

Brenda: That's what happened then, after this incident where she made me return the things I'd bought with the girls, and I was so humiliated. She had the audacity to come into the shop same as always on a Saturday, and the girls had to greet her as if nothing had changed. And that was just it for me, I'm not going to do this again. I quit the job that day. Never went back. So yes, I had a stubborn streak somewhere in me, but not a good one, comes up at the wrong time. Not to my benefit.

Daphne appears here both as a parental authority and embodiment of the racialised hierarchy of the state. The incident of humiliation described above sets Brenda up for what follows in many ways. Though she takes some of the blame on her herself for being 'stubborn', in a sense she was acting under the terms of the

circumstances and models of behaviour she had. Though perhaps destructive, quitting her job gave her some measure of control back. In distorted power structures, life can sometimes only be imagined through seemingly self-sabotaging acts. The fragility of the semi-egalitarian and self-affirming world of the coffee shop is dismantled at dizzying speed:

Brenda: That week I didn't go to work, and I was in turmoil for should I tell my mother? She was going to go there Saturday and find I'm not there, and I thought to hell with it, I don't care. Let her go and get embarrassed for a change. So of course there was hell to pay that Saturday, I got thrown out, went to first go live with Jean and Pat (cousins on her father's side).

So too, the pleasure and cultivation of a lady-like persona in the dances, and the camaraderie of participation in this music and dance culture, is also swiftly dismantled when Brenda is the victim of a sexual attack by a member of the friendship group on the way home from a party:

Brenda: So we went to this party, this big group of us friends, and coming home the whole crowd left at the same time. And we would sing as we walked and as we got to each one's house they would go off to their homes. But now I was furthest away and (name removed)'s boyfriend was taking me home. So there was nothing, there was nothing of why should this be so, or aren't you scared, nothing like that, because it was always like one big happy family type of thing. We all knew each other, had grown up together. So anyway, we get down to near the Indian section of Wentworth, going down through all these trees, we're now off the road, going down through this grove of trees. Just me and (name removed). And you know this

thing of walking with arms around the neck and still singing all of this. Once everyone had drifted off it wasn't even this thing of well now it's time to separate. But it was time to separate because we had to walk in single file down this foot path through the trees. Now when I'm taking his arm off my neck, that's when he pulled towards me and started kissing me. Dom, I tell you the truth when I say to you that I kissed him back. Because I wanted to see what it's like.

Dom: You'd never kissed anyone before?

Brenda: No. So, then it starts getting frantic, touching my body, touching my breasts. Now I'm trying to stop him from this. I've broken away from the kissing, but he won't stop. And he had me in this grip, but still fiddling with the other hand, until we start struggling. And in the struggling we fell. And he got on top of me and started pulling my clothes off and all of this. I fought... I did fight. One time I thought, I'm not going to fight anymore, I'm going to see what he's going to do. And that was my mistake. Because then he ripped my panty off, till this day I don't know if it ever got found, and here was he now starting to have sex with me. So with this feeling I'm onto the ground, with all these stones behind me, I felt for a stone. Whether it was a half a brick, whether it was a big stone, I don't know. But I started hitting him on his back with it, and he was just going crazy on top of me, and um, then I eventually got him some place on his head, and that's when he rolled off of me, and that's when I got up and ran. And ran all the way to Jean and Pat's place which is a good 10 minutes from where we were. And got there and Jean and Pat were still up. Pat got such a shock when she saw me, my clothes all torn and muddy. Jean got out of bed to come see me, and she just said to me, 'Go get in the

bath, go have a bath, have a nice hot bath'. I was a shivering, crying wreck, out of breath. They asked what had happened and I told them as best I could, but they just said to me, 'Don't worry about anything, just get in the bath, have a nice hot bath'

When confronted with the accusation, Brenda's attacker denied it completely, and no further investigation was undertaken:

Brenda: And he comes and he sits there in the window, on the window sill, with the light behind him, so no one can see his expressions, no one can see anything of what he's thinking or feeling. We can only hear what he's saying and he's also denying point blank that this was never him. He was never there. So the fact that you left taking Brenda home, where did you leave her? No, when so and so went one way, he went the other way. So this was like, how could he have done anything if he wasn't even with me? Anyway, that's how it ended. That was the last that discussion was ever had.

Required to leave the house she was staying in, Brenda moved in with another aunt, who noticed that she was putting on weight. Suspecting pregnancy, she contacted Brenda's parents:

Brenda: Then Aunty Veny starts asking me what's wrong with me, you're getting fat, you know how older people notice when someone is pregnant. She sits me down and starts questioning me and questioning me. Next thing, here's mummy and daddy arriving. We're sitting down for supper of mince stew and rice, and the car pulls up, Mummy and daddy walk in. Whether they even greeted I don't know, but

pack your bags, and get out of here. I wasn't given the opportunity to say goodbye, thank you, voetsek¹⁹. It was just point the finger and you follow the direction of the finger. So, get home, no talk, no questions, no nothing. There was this tension in the house

As her pregnancy progressed, the eradication of any kind of independence and agency that Brenda had developed through participation in the worlds of work and music/dance culture was eroded. Sent away to a mission station to see out her pregnancy, one of the most evocative of her descriptions highlights the absence of sound. Severed from her social world; silence becomes a powerful way to express the separation of self from society.

Brenda: Now Peter Shackleton was my father's friend, a white guy who had a garage. He was a motor mechanic and he likes fishing and the outdoor life. So he used to take my father and the boys out often to deep sea fish, or the entire family to lagoons. But I couldn't ever go to these things because of the hours that I worked. So this morning I get into the car with him, which is a Studebaker Lark, the prizest car at the time. And you felt like royalty riding in this car, it had a V6 engine, and a deep growling sound, everybody would stop and look. Anyway, this wasn't one of those happy drives. Here we are driving and driving, with this cardboard suitcase next to me. No one saying anything to me. We get to Graytown (some distance outside of Durban, near the Valley of a Thousand Hills), going into the valleys, and after what seems like forever we eventually reach this mission station. I

¹⁹ 'Voetsek' is an Afrikaans word meaning 'Go Away'

get left to sit in the foyer, eventually the priest came out, with three nuns behind him. One picked up the case, and one just came on either side of me and guided me out of the seat. We went back outside, through trees and gardens. There was this rondavel²⁰ standing alone on the hill. Further along, at the edge of a sheer cliff was another building which was the toilet.

So I got put into this rondavel, the nuns backed out. And a little while later Daddy and Peter arrived in the car. Daddy just came in and said to me, 'OK, you settle in here, you'll be allright, just keep on praying and hope everything turns out OK'. And they left. I sat there on the bed the rest of the day. Somebody came and brought me lunch. Didn't speak. Just put this lunch and a pitcher of water on a stool in front of the bed, which had a tomato box for a bedside table. The night came and another plate of food arrives. Boiled vegetables and some chunky slices of bread that looked like it had been baked there. Put it down, backed out of the room, and never saw anybody again. So I think, OK, obviously I'm supposed to sleep here. I listened to the sounds of the night. The absolute silence of this place. I never understood the meaning of deep silence or loud silence until I went there. Next thing it was morning and I hear the sounds of birds and other animals. I got up, and the nun who brought me breakfast of two fried eggs and bread pointed to the building by the cliff and down to my toiletries bag to indicate that that was where I must go wash.

Dom: So no one ever spoke to you?

²⁰ A Rondavel is a round hut with a conical roof.

Brenda: No. So she made these movements to indicate that's where the toilet was. And that's how the days went. Someone would bring breakfast. Someone would bring lunch. Someone would bring supper. I never even got to see their faces because at that time they still wore these habits with the long piece over hanging at the front. So I can't even say that I ever identified a face. They were different heights and sizes and stuff, but I didn't take particular notice of them as I'm sure they didn't take particular notice of me.

Dom; And there were no other young girls there?

Brenda: Nobody else was there. Now and then I'd see the priest while I was sitting out on the grass watching the day go by, or the nuns working in the garden. The only noise was the delivery truck coming to the trading store which was about another kilometer away. You'd hear the sound of the vehicle in the distance, then the sound of kids getting excited, then it would fade. Kids would follow the vehicle all the way to the shop. When they saw me they would wave shyly before wandering off. They never came close to me, and I never called to them.

Dom: So what did you do every day?

Brenda: Nothing. Just sat there. Whether I was thinking or not thinking I can't say. And I don't know how long I was there. I know that I did feel like the Cinderella of the family then. Pam (her older sister) had been pregnant and had Michelle (her baby daughter who was living in the two rooms with the family when Brenda was sent away to the Mission station) and she didn't get sent away. Nothing changed, life went on though there were fights about it, and her sneaking off to see the father

of her baby and so on. But besides that, nothing was different. Even her running off to see him and that, it was what she did normally from the time she started seeing boys. She never got thrashed in public for it, like me and Lesley (Brenda's younger sister) did. And a lot of the time it was her who did the thrashing. She'd see us talking to someone, and with Lesley a lot of the time it was boys from school walking her home who lived in the street.

Dom: Why was it so different for you?

Brenda: I don't know. It was never discussed. Until they died, Mummy never apologized. Daddy did apologise, when I was in hospital having had the baby.

A Miracle&A Dream

The following extract describes an event that Brenda referred to frequently as a turning point in her narrative. It was something that we talked about many times, and in doing so she revealed how over the years she had re-visited that night at the Mission Station frequently, constantly reformulating the significance of what had happened in relation to changes in her sense of self and the unfolding of events in her life subsequently.

Brenda: But back in the Mission Station, this night that I want to tell you about. There was no thought in my mind that I wanted to die, it was just nothing. There was no feeling that I've been crying and crying for days and I need a way out of it, if I was crying it was so deep inside myself. I just know that I was extremely sad. I went down the bank, across the road that takes you back to the Mission Station. I

don't even know if it was a conscious thought but my intention was to just keep walking over the cliff. It was a steady pace, like I'd walk if I was just going to use the toilet. It wasn't quite dark yet, but the sun had gone. And as I got to the toilet and was ready to carry on walking, these three figures appeared, turned me around and walked me back up to the room. The one was like a step or two behind me, the other two were either side of me. They weren't even holding me. You know, it's just, they were there. I could feel the swish of their habits near my legs, but there was no physical touching to turn me round, but there I was, facing the opposite direction walking back up the hill with them. We got into the room. The one sat on the tomato box crate, the other two sat on the bed. And they got out their pockets those rings of embroidery and sat doing this. And I sat watching them, and no one spoke, they just did their embroidery.

I woke up the next morning. They had gone. The door had been pulled closed and I could hear the sound of a car engine there in the distance, and you knew that Studebaker Lark. Heard the sound of the kids' voices as it got closer. Shouting their greetings. When the car came up to where you could hear it, I was already packed, bed smoothed over and I was standing outside waiting for them. They didn't stop, Daddy made a sign to me, they just paused, went over to the Mission house, and they came back. The priest stood outside, waved from the door, and I got inside and off we went. The kids picked up from where they had left off, chasing the car and all this. I don't remember smiling at them. I don't remember thinking, what fun. You know? It was nothing. It was something that was happening and you're looking at it from another place. No talk to me all the way home back to Durban. By the time

we got back to Peter's workshop, Daddy told me to get out and if I needed to freshen up. And Peter says go ahead, there's a clean towel and soap. Get yourself as comfortable as you can. I went in there and stood around like what do you do with running water? What do you do with a face cloth? I'd been washing in a bowl all this time. Anyway, got cleaned up and changed. Sat on the couch. Peter Shackleton brought some pies from the shop. I ate it and it was like eating saw dust, I hadn't eaten anything with meat in it for so long, and there was the fear of what am I coming back to?

Peter and Daddy worked on one of the cars that was there for a little bit, then Daddy said to me, 'I don't know what we're going into. Expect the worst. Your mother doesn't know we went to fetch you. There's probably going to be hell to pay.' And Peter says, 'I took your father up and I'm probably going to pay the consequences with him, because he phoned me at half past two this morning telling me of a dream he had. And we decided we're not leaving you there another day.'

Dom: He had a dream?

Brenda: They never told me the dream. They never said anything more than that. They finished their pottering with the car and we got back into it.

Dom: So you're not sure if the nuns and the Mission station had contacted him?

Brenda: No. In time over the years, at first I just said that I hated God. But in time, reliving this thing, of were these real nuns? Or were they angels? And was Daddy's dream from the angels, was it directed from God, who had made this whole thing come together? I decided I hated God for stopping me from going over the

mountain. Later on I decided I didn't hate him for stopping me going over the mountain, I hated him because God didn't let me keep my child but he let Pam keep her child. Then I decided after a time, no, I don't hate him for that either. I hate him because why did he let me be born to these parents, and why did he let Daddy die at that time, that Mummy could use that as an excuse of we couldn't afford to have another mouth to feed, your father was dying of cancer and bang. Beginning and end of story. I found reasons for so many years to hate God. Meantime, I wasn't hating God, and then it took me so many years to realise how much I love Him and how much I thank Him and am so grateful to Him for saving me from that, for letting me live the life that I've lived, for going through all the different experiences I've gone through, and most especially for my kids.

Birth and Death

Back from the isolation of the Mission Station, another kind of isolation was imposed on Brenda at home. Her mother was furious that she had been brought back. She was forbidden to talk to her brothers and sisters or leave the house, though the freedom provided by the absence of her parents during the working day meant there was some relief. Now heavily pregnant, it was not long before she went into labour.

I went into labour in the early hours of the morning. Not long after getting home. It was about a month. And I wasn't allowed to talk to any of the brothers and sisters. They'd talk to me in the day, but as soon as Mummy and daddy were due to come in from work, I'd go into the back section where we all slept. Mummy and daddy on a

double bed behind a curtain, then three more beds pushed into a row in front, with Pam on the end sleeping with Mark (the youngest) who was 5 at the time and baby Michelle. The older boys slept on chairs in the front section. So I went into labour, probably moaning and groaning, and Daddy asked me, 'What's the matter Brenda? Are you in labour?' And you know, we weren't even used to hearing those words, even though our Aunties were having babies every year. But now me! Having labour! You know, it's like this only happens to big people. So he said, 'Do you have a stomach ache?' and I said, 'Yes', so he went to go call the ambulance. And I washed my teeth and got dressed, and he went with me to the hospital. Mummy never showed her face. I never heard her voice. And I'd never seen anyone in labour, aunties just went off to the hospital and came back with a baby. So I had this baby, with no supreme effort. I can't tell you that I suffered any great labour pains or anything. The child was taken straight away and put into an incubator. They said that it was underweight and jaundiced and premature. So I didn't get to see her. I lay there. More or less fine. I didn't have stitches. The other mothers in the ward who did have stitches would have their babies brought to them on these trolleys that were wheeled in, four babies stacked in a row, and their names would get called out. So I used to be there waiting to pass the babies to the mothers because I was fine and they weren't. And again, laying there looking at the sea through the salted up windows. I can't remember striking up a friendship or conversation with anyone in there. Until the one day this person was walking down the long passage between the wards. This person coming down saying my name, 'Brenda Momple. I'm looking for Brenda Momple', and I came out smiling saying, 'I'm Brenda Momple' and she says, 'You're the one giving your baby up for

adoption' and I said, 'No'. And she says, 'Yes you are', and she takes me to the sister's office, they tell me to sit down and I say it must be someone else. And they say, 'Are you Brenda Momple? Your mother Daphne Momple has told us that this is what has to be done, and all you have to do my dear is sign these forms'. And they rattle off this list of instructions. So I say again it must be a mistake and they say no, your mother was here. And yes, my mother had been there every night, walked past where my bed is, straight on to the sister's office. She didn't speak to me. I thought she'd come to see the baby. Anyway, by the third day I asked about the baby and why am I not allowed to see her? And they say, no you can't see your baby because she's underweight and in an incubator, and you're not allowed to go in there. But the one nurse, her name was Lyn, she said come with me, and she put the gown on me back to front, with the green shoes and the paper cap and she let me look. And um, that was the first and last I saw this baby. I never touched her, I never held her... (Brenda starts to break down here) And it was the next day, I'm lying there with my back to everyone else. And they are not asking any questions or putting any pressure on me. Maybe they knew because they were all big women and I was the only young girl. That was the day this woman came to find me. So they say to me that the next day I've got to be up and bathed and dressed and ready to go to court. And this is what I've got to say in court. From Addington Hospital, down to Albany Grove, all along the beach front. And all the way this woman. She was a coloured woman, with a page boy hair cut. I suppose she was attractive, and telling me the whole time, 'You must be careful. You've got to be sure you're saying the right thing. Otherwise you'll be in big trouble. And when the magistrate says this, this is what you've got to say.' And she had it like rote, just repeating it back to

me every now and then along the way. I don't remember walking into the court house. I don't remember going into the building. I don't remember coming out. But I do remember this person sitting there in a black cloak and holding the hammer, just tapping it with his finger. I was focused on that tapping finger, like I say one thing wrong he's waiting. Almost like my mother when she questions us kids with, what the bloody hell have you been doing today again. That kind of thing. And this person standing stiff waiting for me to say the wrong word or something. So anyway, I must've said all the right things and signed all the right papers. Only when we get back to the hospital I remember the wind blowing extremely hard and cold, and she was rushing to get back to the hospital because the weather is turning bad. And for me the wind is almost a relief that nobody can see what I'm thinking and feeling and all that. And apparently they kept me in an extra 7 days, and sedated me with whatever tablets they sedated me with. Just this nurse Lyn, and whichever sister was on ward duty that day would come and pat me and say, 'Don't worry girl, you're still young, there'll be lots more babies.' You know. All of that. And what does that mean to me then? So I went home, and I got picked up by Aunty Yvonne's (Brenda's paternal great aunt) husband. Mummy and daddy are in the car, and no one says a word the whole journey. Get home, get out the car, and all of Aunty Yvonne's nine children are waiting for me, saying 'There's Brenda! But where's the baby Brenda? Where's the baby?' There was no baby. But that's it. Life was supposed to go on. I was supposed to find a job. We were all supposed to live happily ever after.

Music and the Making of Personal Rituals of Recovery

What happens when there is an absence of ritual or acknowledgement of a major event in one's life? Here, the ways in which popular music and intimate friendship provide a space to process traumatic events is looked at, considering the importance of ritual in the grieving process and the re-constitution of self. Where formalized processes for processing trauma are absent, personal rituals are shown to emerge almost spontaneously as a means to integrate experience, and allow life to go on, renewed. Tambiah's general definition is helpful here, to locate ritual as a practice of integration that does not necessarily have to be formalized or public, "...all ritual, whatever the idiom, is addressed to the human participants and uses a technique which attempts to re-structure and integrate the mind and emotions."

(Tambiah 1985:202). Argenti (1998, 2001) explored young people's use of dance and performance in Cameroon as a means to confront state violence. He located in these youth cultural dance groups tools which enabled a limited form of agency in the face of socially subordinate positions. Though the Air Youth dance group he refers to are engaged in public performances shared by a fairly large group of young people, it seems that the analysis offered is one which can be extended to understand the significance of intimate friendships, augmented by shared popular culture tastes, in the processing of trauma, particularly in the absence of any other space in which grief and shock can be dealt with. The space created by the dance offers the participants a new experience in which memories of terror and loss can be re-formulated as a kind of pleasure which "...transforms the unspeakably

terrorizing power of the exemplar into an object of beauty and laughter” (2001:775). A month after the baby was born and adopted, Brenda found another job and walking home one day, met Beulah. Beulah was 8 years older than her, and also lived in the neighbourhood with her Aunt and Uncle. She had already been married twice and had six children, all of whom had been taken from her for various reasons. Friendship provided both of them with a space to process the difficult emotions surrounding their experiences, which could not be spoken about elsewhere. It also provided a space where pleasure could be felt, allowing them to enjoy their bodies and beauty as sites of confidence, in contrast to the other spaces in which their lives were conducted that made their bodies passive and subject to various kinds of authority. The good girl-bad girl dichotomy forces an unnatural choice between sensuality and denial; close friendships can be places where the division is softened. To enjoy being in one’s own skin is no longer sinful, albeit temporarily.

Brenda: We boosted each other. You think mine is bad, I feel so sorry for you. So me and Beulah would walk to work because it gave us time to talk. Walking to work we got the sea view and the air, and very often we wouldn't even talk, we'd be silent, or sing softly, or sometimes get enraged. But, for the most part we just took total comfort from each other. And she was beautiful. And she thought I was beautiful. But I thought she was more beautiful! And maybe in itself that was giving us something, it can't be all that bad if we're beautiful! By the same token, we hated it if any male tried to tell us that.

The friendship Brenda formed with Beulah provided a space in which she could work through some of her emotions regarding the experiences she had had. They made an independent world, carved in the gap between work and home. Music here is, following Cohen (2007), a way to orientate oneself in space and time. Songs sung on walks home resolve, or at least express, tensions between the social and the individual, augmenting other processing tools of silence, talking, laughter and back chat to those men who would attempt to breach the boundary of the space with cat calls. The link between popular music and the articulation of emotions has been explored by Harris (1982) and Stobart²¹ in relation to certain indigenous Bolivian funeral rites, where the mournful tones of pipe music are explicitly used to enable the living to express in a way which words cannot, the grief and loss of death. It is in the remembering of music, repeatedly played over endless social scenarios, the perfect lyric which comes miraculously on the radio during a particular time in one's life, creating powerful associations between songs and emotions. It is important not to romanticise the use of popular music to manage emotions, seeing it as a way to transcend pain and re-create the universe. It is an ambiguous tool, as much about escapism as it is about transformation. However, perhaps the use of this material lies not in making a judgment of value or effect, but of observing how popular music is used in particular contexts, as glue to form friendships and relationships and as a vehicle for working out emotions, regardless of the moral value inherent in such uses of the popular. In the case of popular

²¹Henry Stobart, Royal Holloway, "The Wayñu and Olivia Harris' Contribution to Bolivian Music Research", Anthropology in London Day, June 15th 2009

music in the Bolivian Andes, Stobart makes the observation that there is in fact no actual Quechua word for ‘music’. Music is not a singular entity but a process of animation, something which has the ability to make things alive. It is also consolation, part of the process that allows the living to connect with the dead on All Saints Day. Music can be seen as a magician who brings alive and calls up particular emotions, evoking a ‘complex of sensory and emotional experience’ (Stobart 2009). Within this model of Andean music as a tool of emotional articulation, the most lamenting music is also the most joyful. This exemplifies the contradictory powers of particular music’s meaning to particular people, its ability to channel both sadness and joy. Fikentscher (2000), writing on the uses of house music in the New York gay scene of the 1990s, explores how emotional, diva sung lyrics are used alongside the beat to literally work things out – a common theme running through lyrical house music. The lyrics and beat act as a guide to anchor and move the body, navigating through precarious and difficult emotional states and status in society. Thinking about what music means to Brenda as she navigates her way through the aftermath of the traumas she has experienced, what it brings is an embeddedness of emotions that feeds into the wider embodied experience of the walk in the open air between work and home. It is simultaneously a grieving for what is lost and a grasping for what is still present; what is still alive. Having these different spaces makes Brenda feel good, she feels part of something, relieved. Music is a respite from the stifling and subordinate roles she was expected to play within the structures of family and state. This relationship with music as a space of private respite, and a marker of social spaces that simultaneously challenge and affirm the status quo is explored more fully in the next chapter, which

contextualizes Brenda's narrative within the dynamics of the Johannesburg jazz scene that she gets involved with.

Brenda's narrative powerfully conveys the sense of a person whose choices are limited by her position as a young woman in her family- the way in which that role is defined by violence and the way in which she is silenced. It also demonstrates how the events which take place within youth cultural contexts of dances, hanging out and work spaces act as formative experiences which can determine the directions the life course takes, as well as the contradictory nature of family life. The family is a site of control and limitation but also has nurturing spaces. The story she tells is one which painfully reveals the limits of youth cultural agency (Amit-Talai 1999) and music as a force of potential redemption, whilst also demonstrating how sometimes, it is one of the few ways to maintain some sense of a space which is outside of the stultifying roles one is expected to play. Music can be used to navigate emotional states and augment autonomous spaces (however fragile) in the face of violent and challenging circumstances. There are the redemptive scenes in this story. Acts of consumption and enjoyment associated with friendship, clothing, music and dancing. Her friendship with Beulah, which lasts a lifetime. Yet, they end up interpreting their hardships and narratives in very different ways. Why is this? "*All the knocks Beulah took in her life put her in a depression she can't shake off*", Brenda explains to me. I ask her why it is that she is not similarly affected, "*You can be miserable all your days, but what good does it do? There's too much life to live.*"

Conclusion

The material presented here elaborates the intersection between race, poverty and how the extended family plays a vital role in strategies for survival (Stack 1974).

Das & Kleinman (2001) have pointed out how the state and family are intertwined.

The fortunes of this mixed family, and the personal narrative of Brenda that runs through the wider family story, are inextricably connected with the social change brought about by apartheid, demonstrating the impact of separate development legislation and an understanding of society based on hierarchical ordering not only of race, but gender, age and class. These spaces, fragments of South Africa's past, operate across time to be reconstituted in acts of remembering in the conversations Brenda and I have. Music weaves in and out of the story, and in and out of the process of making a narrative as we sit with each other.

This material shows how music as a social practice creates the spaces that form the family, and hold the family together. Her parent's courtship blossomed not in conscious political objection to the racist state, but amidst the pleasures of the church dance, united by the popular music of the 1940's. Musically marked social spaces did not challenge the racist society so much as generate temporary conditions of pleasure in which other forms of identity and connection, such as shared working class experience, membership of the same Church congregation and an interest in the latest music and dance crazes, could be explored alongside, or as an alternative to, race as a marker of self. Music as social practice in Brenda's early memories is both a space of pleasure, and a way of ranking the internal age

hierarchies of the family. Musical gatherings permit the unity of family life across boundaries defined by racial discourse, and also inscribe structures of hierarchy within the family. After Michael and Daphne's marriage, music continues to define spaces where their extended families, composed of a mixture of races according to apartheid taxonomy, come together to dance, relax and in the process elaborate a common musical culture. However, this is not a challenge to the common sense understandings of hierarchy and race that prevail, as Daphne's racism towards her own children, and the internal selective segregation practiced by the white side of the family, testify to. Her darker children, and later grandchildren, were subjected to insults about their colour, lighter-skinned ones singled out for favours.

Brenda's childhood and adolescence unfolds against this backdrop of a lived reality where people of different races are mixing in intimate relationships, but in tension with a framework of separate, and over-determined, racial identity imposed from above, and internalized by the actors in the social world she inhabits. Brenda's subjective position is framed by experiences of injustice, music is an important constituent of her fashioning of personal rituals of recovery following the experience of rape, pregnancy, confinement and forced adoption of her infant. Writing on social trauma and the remaking of everyday life, Das & Kleinman note that, '...even in the midst of the worst horrors, people continue to survive and to cope' (2001:1). As Small (1998) demonstrated with regards to the creation of African-American cultural forms, and Argenti (1998) in the context of Cameroonian youth's recovery from the violence of civil war, music is a critical component of

strategies of survival that emerge out of trauma. This material demonstrates how the use of music as a marker of ‘inner time’ is part of the making of private rituals of recovery on an individual level.

Though there are limitations, Brenda’s narrative located in historical context provides a vivid and intense evocation of place and time. The musical life of her mixed family shows how bonds were made, and tension relieved and elaborated through dance and music culture, but in the context of wider social processes, these times of unity were ephemeral. It is what Pine has described as ‘the mood of memories’ (2007:111), where everyday, personal memories become entangled with bigger memories of politics and history, ‘...it is extremely difficult if not impossible to untangle them completely’(105). The affective qualities of music make listening to it and sharing it an important part of facilitating our interviews and conversations. Brenda’s memories, following Lambek (1996), are a form of moral practice, where the movement between private experiences and public narratives mutually inform each other (Lambek 1996: 241). This is realised in Brenda’s discussion of family musical performances, and the parties her parent’s held. As Pine puts it, ‘Memories simultaneously create kinship and the person, describe the hierarchical and egalitarian relations between kin, and provide a commentary on proper and appropriate (as well as improper and inappropriate) behavior and relations between people’(2007:110). In connection to remembering the practices around music in her family life, Brenda articulates a moral framework in which music can signify the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ aspects of family life.

The following chapter continues to explore Brenda's memories, moving into marriage, motherhood and subsequent flight to Johannesburg in the late 1970's and immersion in the jazz scene there, focusing on the role of music in marking spaces of sociality and symbolically articulating identity. In this city a new life unfolds for her, created if not entirely on her own terms, then certainly reframing those imposed by the state and expectations of the family, providing Brenda with a conceptual framework which changes the way she frames her own narrative. In telling this part of her story, I make it clear that there is no easy utopianism associated with resistance to structures of domination. Even as alternative modalities are created, old ones resurface.

Chapter 4

Transformation & Its Limits: Music & The Road to Johannesburg

"I don't know, there was something in me that gravitated to what made me feel good. So music, or gardening, or baking, or taking in friends who were destitute. I did it because it kept me going." Brenda

"Come with me, down Paradise Road

This way please

*I'll carry your load"*²² Joy

In the previous chapter I outlined the circumstances surrounding Brenda Osman's childhood in the 1950s and 1960s. Her identity as a coloured woman was created through the structural violence of the apartheid state, though the way in which the structure of society forms her gender and class position as subordinate is as critical to creating her identity as her racialised self. Music is critical to marking the spaces of family life, framing spaces that enable social reproduction and in the making of private rituals. This chapter continues her story as a case study to illustrate the

²² Lyric taken from 'Paradise Road' 1980 Number One in South Africa for female trio 'Joy' Publisher: Gallo Music

ways in which music cultures intersect with turning points in history and the making of the lifescape. Young people's efflorescence might be seen as key in creating relationships between people of different places and generations over time and across regimes. In many ways it is within the fertile fields of youth cultural activity that the seeds of future kinship relations, births, deaths, marriages, work alliances and households are sown. To paraphrase Paul Willis (1990), we must take the worlds of youth seriously; their movements map the terrain of the future. The relationships and tastes formed within one's youth cultural experience are frequently carried through life, and so, though the participant may no longer be 'youthful', they still engage with the emotional and personal tools, and relationships, formed during this period.

Becoming a Wife and a Mother

A few months after her father's death, Brenda met Charlie Osman, a coloured man 9 years her senior. Employed in a steady artisan's job, he was a popular player in the local soccer league. Indeed, had it not been for the colour bar, he might have played for the national team. The circumstances in which they met illustrate the intersections of youth and popular cultural events, music and social reproduction. Music and popular culture provide frameworks to enable the unfolding of the courtships which ultimately lead to the reproduction of families and society in one form or another.

Brenda: And then there was Charlie... I wasn't interested in men at the time; I didn't want to know anything about any male. I hated men, I hated God, I hated the

world. Because I had been raped, I had been sent away to Gray Town to be pregnant by myself. Got brought back in time to have this baby. Baby was adopted without anyone talking to me, anything like that. My father dying. So, who did I want in my life? I enjoyed being miserable. You know? (she starts laughing) I was loving every minute of hating. So now him coming into our lives, meeting my sister Leslie and brother Mace at this matinee. Leslie was in high school, so she was preparing for a debutantes ball, so they went to go see the latest dance steps and so on, and brought these people home, and Charlie is one of these people. So I come in from my work around 11 o'clock at night and I hear these voices in the bedroom section of our rooms, laughing and talking and everything, mmm, another party, what else is new? Go into the kitchen section and as you come in there's a blue flame stove, a paraffin stove, pick up the lids of the pots, there's no food in the pots, I throw my bag on the chair, and I turn to walk out and this person stands up from behind the section and says, "Good evening. Charles is the name." So I'm, "Hello, I'm Brenda", and walk out thinking, whose this now? Another married man, you know? So I go and sit on the front wall and feel sorry for myself. There's no food, the party's going on in the room where I'm supposed to go sleep. So here I sit until this party ends up back in the front room. This was kitchen, lounge, bathroom. We used to carry in a galvanized bath and bath in that, and cook in there and it was the lounge as well. Next door was the bedroom with wardrobes separating the spaces. Mummy's space, the girls' space and then the boys slept in the lounge. But now when these all night parties went on, the boys would take whatever bed was available and so on. So, I went to bed, wake up the next morning to get ready for work, and you had to wash at an outside tap just outside the kitchen/lounge door

thing. And I'm busy washing my face and brushing my teeth and doesn't this swine person just come out the room again and say, "Good morning can I walk you to work?" So there was somebody else for me to love hating. He walked with me every day, he walked with me every night, he was outside the shop when I finished work, he was outside my room every morning when I woke up, and this was Charlie, he was just there 24 hours a day.

Dom: Focused

Brenda: Oh gosh... (starts laughing) He was just there, and you walked and then you get on the bus, and before you can pay the fare he's paid the fare and got on behind you, and you get off the bus and you walk down to the shop and he says, 'OK, I'll check you.' And off he goes. And then this was, this carried on for the rest of 1968, this was round about October/November.

The courtship was short and tumultuous, and they frequently broke up,

Brenda: My sister would play me these songs when me and Charlie broke up practically every two weeks, I'd have a face like you don't know what but I couldn't help but smile as we'd sit in the kitchen and she'd put on Nancy Wilson, 'You Better Face It Girl, It's Over'.

In Brenda's narrative, music can be seen to act as a way to express a sense of inclusion and group solidarity when her brothers and sisters gather with friends in the back room to play music in the 'after party'. However, for Brenda the space marked by the music is emblematic of her sense of separation from the cohort, she processes through adopting a posture of 'hating everyone and everything, including

God'. As I noted in the previous chapter, during both the formal interviews I conducted with Brenda, and in the course of our every day conversations, we often listened to music together. When we taped the interview I draw from here, her brother Terrence was visiting from Australia, and had brought a compilation CD from her sister Leslie as a gift. It featured the best of the music that they had loved at this courtship time, and we listened to it while making coffee during breaks in the recording. The songs would trigger such detailed memories, as if the song had attached itself to the materiality of the world around it, and carried the detail over the decades inside the recording. Music was critical in multiple ways to the narrative Brenda told. Both as a symbol of separation; a marker of private space and a vital component of the expectations of her gendered role that would play out as her relationship with Charlie would deepen.

As Charlie and Brenda grew more serious, he invited her to his house for Christmas dinner and to meet his mother,

Brenda: Christmas day we were invited to his house for lunch, and this wasn't allowed, we had to have our lunch by our house, so we ate our little bit of lunch at our house and off we go to Heather Grove. Now Leslie and Pam go with, and Leslie is playing all these songs during our own lunch for all the relevant songs for this swine that will not leave me alone. And now we're going to meet his mother and there was some song relating to the figure in his life, oh God! Leslie was a terror with this. So anyway, we get there and we're eating this lunch, Dominique, I think

you would've simply peed yourself. It's leg of mutton, and mutton breyani²³, and there's beetroot salad and carrot salad. So you'd think ok, this breyani looks mighty strong, you take extra salad. Put a fork of beetroot in your mouth, the chilli....Everything sat here, you couldn't swallow, you couldn't breathe, the tears were running down my face and we three sisters are looking at each other. Leslie wore this little blue chiffon dress that ended at the thigh, but now this witch is calling her all kinds of names about the Fairy Princess and everything. Leslie by then was seeing Sydney but they weren't courting, they were friends. Sydney is Charlie's nephew, Dolly's grandson, who thought he was her son all the years. So she was being called Princess Elizabeth, and I was being called Princess Margaret. And these comments all the time. Martin was there, him and Pam were seeing each other, and here we now trying to get through this meal. And whatever you put in your meal has so much power, of chillis, curry. Even the leg of mutton... ahhh! So we get through this and thankfully we had all dished up little amounts and this was where she got her royalty names from because we're taking these little amounts and so on. Anyway, we get through the meal, dance a bit and move off. But my God, when we got out of that house, it was like we could breathe again. Anyway, we went on going to wish everybody we had to wish, but we couldn't wait for these boys to leave so we could have our post-mortem about this woman and her house and all the names she was calling us. And ja, that was the beginning of my life with Dolly Osman.

²³ South African spelling of 'Biryani', a layered rice, meat and lentil curry dish associated with Indian cuisine

A few months after this Christmas Day introduction to Charlie's mother, Brenda, her brother Mace and sister Pam were thrown out of the house again for protesting at their mother's behaviour. Mace went to live with Granny and Grandpa Harding (his respectability as a trainee priest perhaps made his presence as a non-white living in a white area easier for them to tolerate), Pam moved into the family home of the father of her baby daughter and Brenda moved in with Charlie and Dolly Osman at their home in Heather Grove. A year later she got pregnant. Charlie came home from work with a marriage licence, and her life as a married woman began. She was 19. A year after the birth of their daughter Diane, their second child was born, a son named Dino. Dolly was not happy about them all living at her house, so they moved to the back room on Derby St round the corner where Charlie had grown up. However, the emotional and financial entanglements between Charlie and his mother meant that they moved back into the house at Heather Grove when Di and Dino were about 2 and 3 years old.

Brenda: You see, because her name was on the title deeds for the house, only because of the apartheid time of a single man couldn't buy even though he was financially OK to buy, he qualified financially, but his age didn't qualify because he was 21 and single. She couldn't buy because she was widow and a nurse aide at Addington Hospital, so her salary didn't qualify and her status. Ethel, Charlie's sister, Sydney's mother, also couldn't buy because she's a single mother and a factory worker. So, because Ethel and Charlie wanted Ma to have this house, take her out of this room in Derby St that she's lived in since Grandfather fell off the boat,

so the only way you could do it was to have her signature on it. And it was like an investment for all of them. She was illiterate, so they showed her how to write her name and let her practice. So she wrote 'D. Osman' like a primary school child, but that's fine, that's how it was done and a cross next to it. They moved into the house, with the thing of Ma, this is your mansion, nobody is going to take this mansion away from you, blah blah blah. So, they lived like that. With Charlie paying for it, and Ma's name on the deeds.

So when I came into their lives in 1968, then she had this fear that now Charlie has this woman, and now this woman is going to come and take away my house. I used to hear it every time she saw me. I'm taking her bread and butter from her and if I can pee a hole through a brick I can have her son, you know, all kinds of stuff. Oh she was really saying it. But at the end of the day, it was Charlie's house too because he's the one paying for it, so when it got too much living in the room at Derby Street for us, he decides we must go back and live with his mother whether she likes it or not.

Escape to Johannesburg

The possibilities for independence offered by entering the adult world of marriage and motherhood evaporated rapidly. Despite her status as wife and mother with all the connotations for being 'big' that this entailed, Brenda found that her position in the new household mirrored the one she had left, and did not provide much opportunity for personal agency. She was still required to hand over the bulk of her shop wages, and was excluded from household decision making. The situation

reached a boiling point on New Year's Eve, about a year after they had moved back.

A huge fight between Brenda and Dolly, where Charlie refused to defend his wife,

resulted in Brenda being thrown out. The violence of the fight frightened Brenda,

"You know when something happens that's really bad, it's like an out of body experience. This is what we're living I thought. Are you really going to live with it? That's when I decided to run away to Joburg".

She retreated back to her mother's house, without her two children whom Charlie refused to allow to leave the house.

Brenda stayed with her mother till Easter, cooking up a plan to get her children back and go to Johannesburg.

Brenda's boss at the time helped her organise a job to go to in Johannesburg. He had become sympathetic to her plight after witnessing the visits Charlie made daily to her place of work, where he would stand over the road and shout threats at her.

Unable to get to her children due to the fear of violence, she forged a letter from the Welfare Department to state that she had a day's visit granted. It is an interesting turn in her story, where she manipulates the power of the institutions, which have previously held her captive, for her own ends, reversing the flow of

influence to benefit herself through a deliberate act of disobedience. If they would not accept her authority as mother, then Charlie and Dolly had to accept the authority of the State. When she went to pick the children up for the 'visit', she

took a dozen or so supermarket carrier bags with her, surreptitiously stuffing as

many of their things into them as she could, "*The kids were so excited to be having a day out they leapt into the waiting taxi just in time for Dolly discovering the supermarket packets I'd thrown out the window. So I had to let that stuff go. But*

we got away." Brenda's narrative now turns from a state of victimhood and enthrallment to one that is almost glamorous. She has escaped, and symbolically let go of her baggage at the same time.

A Brief History of Johannesburg

Joburg seen from the air at night is a swathe of glittering lights, as if the memory of the gold that made it is glinting out from holes in the ground. It might as well be. There are restrictions on building basements in houses here, as the initial extraction of gold at dizzying speed from the earth in its early years has left the ground beneath the city hollowed out. The risk of collapse is too great. Every now and again mild tremors caused by these too-fast excavations shake the city. Dotted in the south and east, amongst the koppies that make up the ridge the city is built around, are the yellow sands of the mine dumps made 100 years ago. When I was small I thought they were mountains and was desperate to climb the one that skirted the edge of the Pick 'n Pay Hypermarket in Steeldale in the Southern Suburbs where we did grocery shopping.

Johannesburg has been a site of ambiguous projections, fantasies and possibilities right from the very start when gold was found on a small farm. The discovery of precious stones and metals in the Boer Republics of the Orange Free State and Transvaal generated discourses of rupture in the Utopian fantasies of the Trek Boers who had left British rule in the Cape and later Natal, epitomised by the nostalgia evoked by Afrikaans writers like Lennox Van Onselen:

At last, they reasoned, they were to be left in peace, farming their land as their fathers had done before them. They sat on their stoeps, marveling at the glossy cattle browsing in the pastures, the golden corn waving in the breeze. They had found their Valhalla, so they thought. Far south, a little boy, playing in the farmyard, picked up a bright stone and gazed at it in wonder before running into the house to show his father (1960:19).

The bright stone was the diamond that triggered the rush on Kimberly and integration of that particular Boer republic into the British Empire. What happened at Kimberly was magnified a few years later when the biggest gold rush the world had ever seen occurred at what would soon come to be known as Johannesburg. Right from the start it was a place associated with 'uitlanders'²⁴ and wild characters, somewhere that was difficult to control. When the extent of the gold bearing reef became clear (the largest deposit of gold ever found), Johannesburg developed rapidly. As another writer, historian Charles Van Onselen put it:

Fathered by Gold and mothered by Money, Johannesburg's impatient and demanding parents scarcely allowed their charge time to pause in infancy or linger in adolescence before pushing it out into the streets of the economic world....Given the company that the parents kept, it is scarcely surprising that the child lost its innocence at a young age(1982:2).

²⁴'Uitlanders' – Afrikaans translation 'Outsiders' or 'Out of the Land'. Term used by the government of the Boer ZAR to describe the many foreigners, who came to the Witwatersrand en masse following the discovery of gold.

Johannesburg grew at break neck speed. The 1886 mining camp had grown to 5 square miles by 1898. It is now one of the largest, and certainly the richest, city in Africa. Musically, Johannesburg has featured as a place to which migrants are drawn seeking wage labour. The city is imagined as an entity that consumes people; a space of ambiguous transformation. Hugh Masekela's 'Stimela' tells of the train that comes to Johannesburg from the rural areas, carrying migrant workers. Oliver Mtukudzi sings of 'The Golden Road', a play on the unfulfilled promise of wealth offered by Johannesburg to migrants. Brenda's migration to Johannesburg is one that raises questions about the gendered aspects of migration, and the ways in which music plays such a vital part of the making of a new life in the city.

Music, Friendship and The City: Brenda's Jazz Years 1976 -1979

Once in Johannesburg, Brenda moved into a room in Kliptown, on the edge of the sprawling township of Soweto. Again, the stringencies of the Group Areas Act were not so strictly enforced for the separation of non-white persons, and as a coloured woman her presence was not unusual in the ostensibly black, but in reality 'mixed' township. Kliptown's origins lie in the relocation of the population of the Johannesburg inner-city slum yard known as the 'Coolie Location'²⁵, near the present day sites of New Town, Fordsburg and Fietas. The Coolie Location, like

²⁵'Coolie' is a slang term for people of sub-continental Asian origin. In the South African context it is derogatory. 'Location' in South African slang refers to those spaces that are identified with non-white inhabitants, or townships.

other inner city slumyards, housed people of a multitude of races and nationalities, and was considered a threat to the orderliness, both spatial and racial, of Johannesburg's administration at the time. After the outbreak of plague in 1904, the majority of the population was relocated to a site on the Klipspruit River, near the sewage works outside the city limits. As Lindsay Bremner (2010:338) describes it, "The former mixed, slum-yard population – destabilising to notions of fixed identity and status, of modernity and civilisation- was rendered, in effect, invisible and inconsequential".

Falling outside of municipal boundaries until 1970, it survived as, "a neglected, hybrid space" (2010:339), without public services, electricity and housing in the form of makeshift shacks and dilapidated houses. This neglect by municipal authorities, and the over-lapping bureaucracies who variously managed it, ironically meant it was, "...one of the few places in the city where non-Europeans could engage in trade or own their own businesses, where couples in racially mixed marriages could live with impunity.... In short, Kliptown was a place where people experimented, through undisciplined, hybridized and frequently illegal encounters." (Bremner 2010:339) The absence of services in Kliptown was partly compensated for with its social spaces and practices, "People live overlapping associational lives between the shebeen²⁶, the church, the stokvel²⁷, the funeral society (mutual aid

²⁶ 'Shebeen' refers to an informal space for drinking and socialising. Usually illegal, and located in people's homes, shebeens were a way to circumvent restrictive laws regulating the sale of alcohol to non-whites. The word has its origins in the Irish term for an informal venue for drinking and dancing.

organisation for the bereaved), the youth club, the street, the home.... Private space is small and cramped; things spill out." (Bremner 2010:339) In 1955, Kliptown was the site of the ANC's historic Congress of the People, where its liberation manifesto, the Freedom Charter, was signed (see Chipkin 2007 for a full discussion of the processes leading up to the signing of the Freedom Charter, and the implications of its construction of a particular discourse of 'the people' in South Africa).

The victory of Brenda's escape from Durban was short lived as the reality of attempting to work and care for her children as a single woman without friend or kinship networks to draw on became clear. It was a near impossible task:

Brenda: The kids were about 4 and 5, little, not ready for school yet. I had to try and find care for them while I worked in the day, which was expensive and also hard because I didn't really know the people I was leaving them with. And I was so tired, exhausted to my bones, with so little money for us to live on.

Charlie too had tracked them down, asking questions of the taxi driver who had picked them up and finally getting an address when the divorce papers came through. He and his mother started coming to Johannesburg, hassling Brenda to return the children to them. She moved around frequently to try and hide. Peace orders she had taken out to restrain Charlie were not enforced, "The police just

²⁷ 'Stokvels' are collective savings societies that enable community groups to save and distribute money. The word has become associated with the fundraisers held by stokvel societies to raise money. These involved providing music for dancing, and selling food and copious amounts of alcohol to revelers. Stokvels could go on for several days.

treated it like another domestic matter, not their business... and what was I doing as a single woman anyway?" Eventually, the sustained pressure of harassment, coping alone, moving around and struggling financially were too much and she let the children go. She was 24 years old.

Johannesburg features strongly in the national psyche as a space to which people can escape, be immersed in urban anonymity and promise. It is symbolic of the ambiguities of transformation offered by leaving the familiar behind. Left in Johannesburg without her children, Brenda experienced an ambivalent kind of freedom. It was 1975 and for the first time in her life she was completely independent, though this had come at tremendous personal cost. Still living in Kliptown, she once more found solace in friendship and music, as she had done back in Durban in the aftermath of her rape, pregnancy and forced adoption.

Drawn to Kliptown's rich musical life, her neighbour Sammy Brown, a coloured musician and actor, introduced her to the band Spirit Rejoice. Innovators in the development of South African jazz, they provided backing to the all-female singing group Joy, whose massive hit 'Paradise Road' stayed at Number 1 in the South African charts for 9 weeks in 1980, as well as nurturing the career of Brenda Fassie who sang with them for a short time. With their stylish clothes and the latest hairstyles, as seen in the pages of imported African-American magazines like Jet and Essence, they embodied a confident modernity linked into global cultural flows; a precursor and inspiration to the female kwaito stars who would follow and grew up with their songs in their ears, the images on their record sleeves providing further tangible evidence of a confident urban black female identity that Brenda loved.

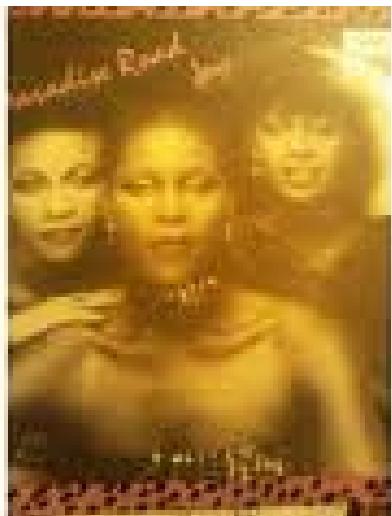


Figure 12: Original Joyline up



Figure 13: New line up, featuring Brenda Fassie (far left)

Brenda found herself socialising with politically conscious musicians and becoming enveloped in a world which stimulated and inspired her:

Brenda: It gave me something to look forward to, be involved with. A purposefulness. And it made the difficulty of living in Kliptown more bearable. It was the thing of being around positive people, who were doing something rather than moping and wallowing in the misery of it all.

Brenda enrolled on a secretarial course in order to improve her job prospects and found work in an electronics company in Braamfontein. Then Sammy Brown introduced her to Ian and Linda Bernhardt, the father and daughter team behind the Phoenix Players, an organisation devoted to the promotion of black performing artists. They offered her a job early in 1976 as secretary for the Phoenix Players who were based at Dorkay House on Eloff Street in downtown Johannesburg.

Dorkay House was the home of the Union of South African Artists, formed in the 1950's to protect the rights of black performers who were subject to deeply exploitative contracts with the white-owned recording industry. It was purchased in a white area of Central Johannesburg during the time of the forced removals from Sophiatown with money raised from a farewell concert organized by the Union for Trevor Huddleston, the activist white Anglican priest whose campaigning with the Western Areas Protest Committee against the forced removals from Sophiatown meant he was forced to leave South Africa to return to his native England in 1954 (Anderson 1981: 31). Thus its origins were significant in the kind of boundary crossing between 'separate' races both in social terms and in space that confounded the logic of apartheid.

This famous venue, rehearsal facility and cultural centre (See Maine 1970, Kerr & Chifunyise 2008 for discussion of the history and productivity of Dorkay House) had provided a nurturing space for much resistance theatre (many of Athol Fugard's plays were rehearsed and performed there) and the careers of famous South African musicians, among them Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, Abdullah Ibrahim, and later innovators of the bubblegum sound like Sipho 'Hotstix' Mabuso, who

would go on to help mould Brenda Fassie's career and influence a generation of kwaito musicians. As well as being a rehearsal space, it provided informal accommodation for many of the artists. When Brenda got her job with the Phoenix Players in the late 1970's, many of the most famous performers were in exile. Dorkay House provided a link for them to communicate with those who were still in the country:

Brenda:I remember Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela would call regularly from overseas on the phone to chat to people, they were still in exile and it gave everyone a real boost to hear from them. People would be there to rehearse and practice but it was also a social place, somewhere to pass the time, catch up with friends, escape from feeling depressed about the way things were politically or the difficulties of everyday life, not having the finances and all of that.

For Brenda, the support offered by these friendships and the dynamism of a creative environment were worth any difficulties, though as Coplan (1979) and Anderson (1981) have pointed out, the relationship between black performers and the white promoters who supported them were often characterized by relations of exploitation that were exacerbated by the wider issues of race privilege:

Brenda:It wasn't even that I was working for the salary, I took a pay cut to work there. I wanted to be around the music and the scene, what I thought was exciting. Ian was great, but his daughter Linda could be difficult, she made the job hard at times, but it was still worth it.

The timing of Brenda's independence came at a point in the 1970s that saw an intensification of worker and trade union struggle and the Soweto student uprising of 1976 which sowed the seeds of the revolution that would, after 14 years, result in the birth of democracy. At the time however, the apartheid state tightened its repressive grip on the country, and the future seemed uncertain. Life in the townships was increasingly defined by ongoing protests against the machinery of the state. Life in Kliptown was hard anyway, with inadequately built houses, few services and located miles from places of work in the city centre. As the violence surrounding the 1976 uprisings intensified, the Bernhardts helped many of the artists using Dorkay House, and Brenda, to get flats in the inner city. As they were white, they could provide the signatures on leases for flats in the officially whites-only area of Joubert Park in the centre of town. So Brenda moved into Huntley Hall, sharing a flat with a female friend along the same corridor as many of her friends from Dorkay House:

Brenda: So even though we were all not in the same flat, we socialised together, I did most of the cooking for the guys, and we really all got on. The atmosphere was co-operative and the music playing all the time.... I did love it.

This was at the beginning of the process of the white inner city becoming so-called 'grey areas' in the late 1970's and early 1980's when although group areas designated it a whites-only zone it had for the most part begun to accommodate a mixed population. This area has since experienced rapid demographic change, accelerated by the relaxing of residential controls between 1988 and 1994, and is now home to an assortment of migrants from all over Africa, as well as a significant

black South African population who relocated from the townships. The dynamics of these intersecting communities is discussed by AbdouMaliq Simone, who locates them in an urban environment that, "...however fleetingly, once hinted at the possibility of a more cosmopolitan urban South Africa" (2004: 423). As Simone, writing at a point 25 years in the future from the time that Brenda moved in, "...the country has long repressed what the image of that cosmopolitanism might look like. Instead, it is re-imagined primarily in politically vacuous, 'rainbow nation' terms" (423). Perhaps the possibility hinted at by Simone can be glimpsed in the fragment presented by Brenda's experience of the inner city at the close of the 1970s.

Living at Huntley House challenged some of Brenda's preconceptions about who were 'good' and 'bad' people. As well as housing the performing arts community from Dorkay House, it was also home to a number of prostitutes, mostly white women, who Brenda discovered to her surprise were not the 'fallen women' she expected them to be, "*The prostitutes were clean, decent and, if I can say it (she laughs), hard working. We all respected each other's space and working hours*". The shared experience of living on the margin of society fostered a sense of solidarity with those who were considered outcasts, and yet, far from falling apart, the community created was one where co-operation and a certain amount of reciprocity thrived. Brenda spoke of how her contribution as a creator of the domestic realm, particularly cooking meals, was appreciated rather than assumed. The fragility of their living arrangements were however ever-present. The flats were frequently raided in the middle of the night by the South African police because of the contraventions of the Group Areas Act:

Brenda: The cops came to raid all the time, and for some reason I never got picked up, but a lot of the guys would. So I would call the Bernhardts, then make my way over to John Vorster Square²⁸ in the morning to pay the bail and get the guys out.

There were never charges brought. I can honestly say that they did it out of vindictiveness, for their own enjoyment, just to cause disruption.

This illicit community reproduced her values of domestic harmony, cleanliness and a cooperative spirit in a way that the mainstream institutions of society in the shape of her own family and the state did not. To these bastions of respectability, the community formed here was an aberration. Yet it provided Brenda with evidence that the truth presented as absolute by the structural units of society were not the only way of living. The role of music here was one of a glue, and purpose, that fostered a sense of unity (and joy) amongst those brought together. It provided a reason to get involved in something new; create something different together. It is interesting that in many ways Brenda reproduced the stereotypical role of a woman in the home –cooking, cleaning and caring – but in the context of a more egalitarian unit of society, it no longer felt oppressive. However, the redemptive power of the way in which music provides a reason to create a different structure of society is limited and partial, as other powerful discourses of self-definition appeal for attention. The normative structure of the family may be a site of control and limitation, but it is also something that is difficult to disentangle from. This is arguably particularly true for women, whose bodies are constituted as sites of the creation of home and kinship.

²⁸John Vorster Square was the notorious central Johannesburg police station.

Much has been written about the importance of music and performance in keeping the struggle and resistance alive during a time of intensified repression (Coplan 1985). Brenda's story offers a personal perspective on the ways in which this operated through the organisations and people that kept the fires burning, albeit in not entirely utopian or with clearly victorious outcomes. Her engagement with music, not as a performer but an eager consumer and supporter, provided a framework which sustained her even as she was drawn back inside the structure of family life she had escaped.

Music: A Second Courtship & Reconstituting Family Life

It was after she had been working at Dorkay House for almost a year that she re-established ties with Charlie. Though she had achieved a modicum of independence, and begun exploring alternative ways of being in regards to her friendships, social and working life, this had partly been foisted upon her through an act of flight which was only ever partially successful as her independence was gained at the expense of the loss of her children. This was something she spoke of at length as deeply painful, difficult to accept and the cause of much guilt as to whether or not she could have done more to keep them with her. As Sophie Day has observed, writing in the context of the movements away from home of female sex workers in the UK, migration is strongly gendered because women do not leave their homes in the same way as men (2007:362). In one respect it can be argued that Brenda lost her children because of the gendered aspects of migration. During

those early days in Kliptown there was no ‘wife’ to care for her children and reproduce the domestic realm, placing her under untenable pressure. As Day puts it in consideration of the assertion by Davidoff and colleagues (1999:54 cited in Day 2007:362) that a woman’s home and body generate kinship, “These bodies buttress men’s and enable them to work and come back home again, but women do not typically have this shadow self” (362). Paraphrasing Day (2007:362-363), did Brenda ever leave home completely? Or did she carry a body/home with her that could be appealed to by a husband eager to reconstitute a domestic life for the benefit of his own migration from Durban to work in the Sasol plant near Johannesburg²⁹? And in what ways were her musical tastes, so critical to her liberation from the constraints of conventional life that she had escaped, also critical to re-inserting her into that life?

Music had framed the original process of getting together between Charlie and Brenda as he wore down her defenses, and it was to these romantic soundscapes that he returned during their second courtship. They listened to the Delfonics, Lou Rawls, Nat King Cole, the Temptations and Harold Melvin records. The following extract from our interviews evocatively demonstrates the weaving together of music and sociality in the determination of the directions of the life course,

Brenda: At first he came back into my life as a friend because he was working at Sasol and couldn’t make it back to Durban, so he stayed at my place. But gradually he wore me down, we would talk long into the night, listening to my records, and he

²⁹I say, ‘for the benefit of his own migration’, but I have no illusions that his own emotional reasons were far more complex than that statement would suggest.

seemed to be more open with me, and had given up drinking, promising that we could be together with the kids. What can I say? I was young and foolish. And it was a case of better the devil you know than the devil you don't. And it was nice to have that friendship, because we became friends before I let him back in my bed again. We would dance in the kitchen while I was cooking, sing songs over the balcony down to the streets below.

Once their friendship had deepened once more into a romantic involvement, Charlie moved into the flat at Huntley Hall and it was not long before she fell pregnant with their third child, giving birth in March 1979. She named him David, after one of the actors she had befriended at Dorkay House, "A very handsome black actor. What a gentleman! He spent everyday at the office". She continued working for the Phoenix Players after the birth, "David would be in his carry cot next to my desk, he was the baby of Dorkay House! Everyone fussed over him and loved him." However, her working relationship with Linda Bernhardt had become strained. Brenda had always found her demands and moodiness challenging, but things reached a breaking point one morning when Linda said a cup of coffee made for her was not right and wanted another one. Brenda decided she'd had enough and quit. Ian Bernhardt begged her to reconsider, but she was adamant that this was the final straw.

Could a cup of coffee be a final straw? Yes, if the camel's back is sufficiently burdened. The cracks in her relationship with Charlie were becoming obvious. He had started drinking again, and Brenda carried most of the domestic work load. When she went into labour with David, she drove herself to the hospital as he could

not be woken up after a heavy drinking session. She returned to work soon after David's birth. Working in the day, and attending to a newborn in the night, even with support, is an exhausting prospect. Whites like the Bernhardts had helped her, and others, enormously, but the kind of help they could offer was also predicated on their superior class and race position in society. Linda pulling rank in this way emphasised the disjuncture in the relations between them, and is revealing of how structural factors of, in this case, race and class, can disrupt the equilibrium of alliances which are counter to the hegemony of dominant discourses. Ortner (1995) discussed the dangers of producing thin ethnographies of activists which obscured the social relations amongst them. In this fragment of the rupture between Brenda and Linda, the complexities of these relations can be glimpsed. Indeed, Ian Bernhardt's ability to begin promoting black musical theatre and performance, along with other white impresarios like Ike Brooks and Alfred Herbert in the 1950's, was precisely because of the lack of restriction their racial classification gave them (Anderson 1981). They were thus implicated in the charged atmosphere of legalised racial inequality, even as their entrepreneurial activities and politics promoted black music and theatre and the formation of protective institutions like the Union of South African Artists (Ian Bernhardt was a founding committee member), and could be the object of feelings of resentment from those whose careers were built on the 1950's musical variety shows they promoted. As Muff Anderson puts it in assessing the cultural impact of these shows:

Everyone, but **everyone**, who was to become famous in the townships as a musician or singer was a part of the '*Township Jazz*' and '*African Jazz and Variety*' troupes – Caiphus Semenya, Miriam Makeba, Letta Mbulu, Hugh Masekela... the list is endless (1981:27).

And in a brutal summation of the exploitation involved, Hugh Masekela says:

African jazz was purely cheap labour. I joined it when I was about 16 and was always made to feel I wasn't worth anything. Ian Bernhardt would tell me: 'You're not worth £10. What do you do? You just sit there and go nyah nyah nyah!'"

(Quoted in Anderson 1981 27-28)

The intersection of Brenda's oral testimony, alongside accounts such as those made by Muff Anderson, indicate how the complexities of social relations can be masked by uncritical discourses of music and theatre as resistance. Again, music and musical cultures do not in themselves provide unproblematic or clear cut salvations, in as much as they have been linked to blossoming urban cultures in opposition to state defined notions of identity (Coplan 1981, Erlman 1984, Ballantine 1986). They are sites, for women in particular, to assert their independence. Though as Ballantine (2002) has eloquently pointed out, this liberation was not without ambiguity, and was interwoven with counter assertions of a masculinity distorted by the migrant labour system and state patriarchy. They have equally incubated a culture of alcohol abuse and uncritical escapism. They are however part of a process of working out and becoming which is critical to understanding the South

African story. For Brenda, drawn back into the domestic sphere as wife and mother, her experience of music culture was vital for renegotiating the terms of her domestic life on terms which if not completely in her favour, were a contextually radical departure from what had come before. It is an incomplete transformation, in which a series of continuities are evoked alongside the changes initiated.

Music and the Making of Domestic Life on Renegotiated Terms
Despite her misgivings, and the growing evidence that things hadn't changed, when David was three months old, she agreed to marry Charlie for the second time:

Brenda:I had this sense that it was wrong for me, but I also, if I can admit it, had the fear of being alone, and then finances. I had a young baby and no job. So I was cowardly I suppose, and hopeful too in a way. He was adamant that we must get married in Durban. So we pile into this jalopy car of his and I had this bad feeling about the whole thing because the last thing I wanted was to go back to Durban. And then the car breaks down half way to and I'm thinking I must turn back, get back to Joburg. But he insists we carry on. In the end we stayed in Durban for three months while the car got fixed, and I got pregnant again."

Back in Johannesburg, they continued living at Huntley House where she gave birth to her youngest child, a daughter named Della. Again she drove herself to the hospital in Charlie's old Fiat. The resilience and acceptance of difficulties that had become characteristic of the narrative she was relating to me was epitomised by her description of the experience of childbirth. She spoke of labour as, "...like having back ache". With two babies, Brenda was fully reintegrated back into her role as wife and mother. However, she clung to the space made during her time in

the music scene, transforming, if not completely, her engagement with the domestic realm.

A House in the Western Areas: Mayfair

Soon after Della's birth, the family moved into a rented house in Mayfair. The suburb had initially been part of the overspill from Fordsburg, a mixed inner city area with a large Muslim population prior to the implementation of the Group Areas Act, when Mayfair was zoned as white. However, this was never fully enforced (though the Asian community in neighboring Fietas was removed in the 1970's to accommodate a largely working class white Afrikaans-speaking population- I could not satisfactorily find out why Mayfair escaped the attentions of city planners to remain a 'mixed' neighborhood). Thus, in the early 1980's, when Brenda and Charlie rented the house on 4th Ave, their neighbours included Chinese, White Jewish, Coloured and Indian families. Brenda's two older children came up to live with them, she had promised in Durban that as soon as they had a house she would send for them. Daphne, her mother, moved to Johannesburg too. Life with Charlie became increasingly unpredictable and abusive, and the relationship with her mother remained fraught with tension:

Brenda:She had such airs and graces. She would ask me to take her to the bead shop in Melville (a white suburb) and even though you could clearly see I was her daughter, she would act like I was just someone taking her around".

Though her brief spell in the world of the 1970's Johannesburg jazz and theatre scene , as well as her private consumption of music as a form of consolation, had fostered some measure of an independent self that could imagine resistance, she was unable, and unwilling, to fully transcend the demands of kinship. As Cloonan and Johnson (2002) have pointed out, popular music studies tend to celebrate the power of music to provide spaces of positive self-realisation without considering the negative uses of music. Indeed, the apartheid regime used popular music to re-inscribe the rigid ethnic identities that supported its ideology (Spiegal 1989, Hamm 1995). Berlant (2008) has discussed in reference to the uses of popular music by women that sentimentality can stand in for real relationships, and stop engagement with troublesome issues. However, though she continued to live within structures of domination in the household and society that undermined her agency, the alternative social framework experienced through participation in popular music culture, and symbolically evoked by the music itself, created a sort of buffer against the potential consequences to the self. Despite reservations about the extent of music's power to transform, and indeed, the way in which it can be utilized to inscribe relations of domination and separation, participation in popular music culture did provide Brenda with some measure of an alternative framework with which to view her circumstances and the kinds of relationships she could have with those around her. In this sense, it was part of an experience of self that, when she returned to the conventional domestic sphere, provided tools that enabled her to imagine alternative ways of engaging with her home life. This initially took the form of maintaining her friendships with the musicians and artists of Dorkay House:

Brenda: I still stayed in touch with all the musicians, we had all just fallen in love with each other. I couldn't go to the gigs anymore because of having small children, but I bought records whenever I could and other people brought me stuff. Then the Sunday afternoon radio shows that I listened to every week, and usually one of the guys I knew would be on. I couldn't go long without music, and back then most of the stations had a slot where I could hear what I loved. There was Highveld, and then Metro came along.³⁰ Dorkay House closed, and people moved down to this learning centre at the Market Theatre complex. Older, established guys would do workshops and teach the young ones. They didn't just sit home and do nothing, they'd come into town and find someone to talk to, keep engaged and I think that's why I didn't slip into depression, because they inspired me. So yes, we'd moan and groan! But we'd meet up for coffee, watch the rehearsals, listen to practice. It was so important for me to have this stuff.

Music and music culture were a source of strength and a way to survive (Small 1984). Brenda's movement across all sorts of boundaries in South African society at that time enabled her to reproduce a conventional home life according to the norms of tradition under which she operated. Her retreats into doing the things that made her 'feel good'- music, pride in her domestic space and helping friends - also made it possible for her to 'put up' with domestic relations which were less than ideal. However, even as she stayed, her 'stubborn streak', supported by this sense of what was good for her, allowed her to take some control over the

³⁰Two commercial popular radio stations. Highveld is aimed at the MOR (middle of the road) white market, and Metro at the Urban black market.

domestic space she shared with her mother and Charlie, including providing shelter to some of her friends from Dorkay House when it was closed down. The city had finally succeeded in shutting it down under the auspices of the Group Areas Act:

Brenda: It was the saddest thing, the front was boarded up. But some of the guys who'd been living there just broke in through the back and carried on. The electricity had been turned off, but they could cook on gas stoves

However, despite the potential destruction of the network she had established, she resisted its dissolution by offering accommodation to her friends, against the wishes of her husband and mother, and in defiance of normative understandings of racial friendship within her kinship grouping. If within her family, a relationship had been negotiated between white and brown, in which tensions and racism were still present but secondary to the more pressing identifiers of kinship, no such negotiation had taken place with people identified as black. Brenda's brief musical career had been sufficient to redefine the kinds of people she could negotiate relationships with:

Brenda: My mother and husband didn't approve, but I didn't even feel defiant by doing it because mummy and Charlie were going to be off whoever I brought home or spent time with so why should I care? They didn't like the 'k's³¹. Manyatso, one of the musicians, ended up living with us. Charlie hated it, but I just told the guys,

³¹A euphemism for 'kaffir', a derogatory and dehumanising term used to describe black people in South Africa. Derived from the Arabic term for 'unbeliever'. See Chapter 5 for discussion of kwaito star Arthur Mofokate's use of the word in his hit 'Kaffir'.

lay low while you're here, and we just got on with it. But in his own way he was OK with it, understood what I was doing even if he couldn't say it. Charlie's main gripe was having guests on the floor, they needed privacy and their own bed. And I think this goes back to his experience growing up in one room with him and his mother and brother all sleeping together on the floor.

However, the control she was exercising does not translate into an easy discourse of triumph over the odds, though she increasingly began to find inspiration and a kind of solace in the world of self-help literature and true life movies which promised complete transformation through the application of personal will. Mingled with her defiance and the taking of action which felt 'right', was a deep-set obedience to the norms of family life, respectability and the expectations for care placed on her. So the years that followed were characterised by a combination of increasing independence, as she did well at work and discovered techniques for self-improvement, and staying with a home life in which her husband sabotaged her efforts.



Figure 14: Brenda, third from left in back row, on holiday with her family in Durban 1983.

When her youngest children started school, Brenda set up a nursery and after-school centre in collaboration with local teachers, providing support and food to poor families in the coloured locations on the edges of the Western areas. After this, she obtained clerical employment at Standard Bank, though not without challenge from her husband:

Brenda: But throughout my life with him he did nothing but stop me from going forward. Even working for a boss, he would be performing at home, smashing my records, burning my clothes, punishing the kids for unnecessary stuff, you know that type of thing, where very often I'd have to come home from work early to sort the thing out. From when they (her two younger children) were in Primary School he

used to do funny things like that. And I always had to work because him being in construction and all that his work was never consistent. And then there was the life he used to live of spending his money in the bar, of tearing up the money, burning up the money, you know, you couldn't rely on him, you couldn't trust that you were going to have x amount of money for the month or something.

Staying with the job despite these efforts to sabotage her, Brenda accessed counseling through her employees medical aid scheme, and began exploring the self-help literature and true life movies that became popular towards the end of the 1980's. She became something of a role model at work, used by superiors to settle internal staff difficulties.

Brenda: I was going for different counseling (provided through the medical aid scheme at work), so I got to talk about a lot of things to do with growing up and how we were treated and what I felt about that. I was a lot wiser by then, I'd been reading a lot of motivational books and family guidance, things like that, and at that point also I used to specially get family related movies, like you know perhaps husband beating his wife up and the kids looking at this and you know seeing all this kind of things. Those kinds of things made me sit up and take notice and start trying to do things differently. And also, working with a lot of people I was working with, because at this point I was at Standard Bank Unit Trusts. And being the eldest in the group, they used to call me to the board room to talk to this one whose been beaten up by her husband or that one whose having girlfriend trouble or that one whose coming in to work smelling of liquor, you know, all the different things. Because I was the eldest, and because I was calm they would ask me to do this. So doing that

it gave me a lot of time to see my own issues, almost like looking in a mirror. So don't tell her to leave him he's a bastard and that kind of thing, because aren't you living the same kind of life? Try and teach her and try and teach him, how to fix, how to mend, how to find ways around it by communication and understanding, and you know? Things like that. So I was learning as I was teaching and as I was going.

She reflects that this was the first time she truly explored her feelings about her mother and discovered that, despite everything, if she could accept her mother as she was, everything became easier. It was never a complete state of reconciliation and redemption. Daphne did not reciprocate with a similar process of self-reflection. As she did with her own children, she favoured on the basis of a lighter skin tone and silkier hair, "*Jessica (Brenda's granddaughter) was her eyes because she had the light complexion and the soft hair, whereas David she couldn't stand because he was so dark. She gave him a really hard time and he hated her.*"

Daphne had remarried, to a white Afrikaans man, in the mid 1990's and had gone to live with him in a formerly white suburb in the east of the city. She continued to participate in family life in her own aloof way, up until her death in 2000. Integrated, yet separate.

As well as reflecting on her relationship with her mother, Brenda's explorations of the worlds of counseling and self-help culture also resulted in shifts in how she engaged with her children:

Brenda: With them reaching certain ages, I used to tell them from about the age of 15 or 16 and so on, that you are reaching the age where you can see right from

wrong, that never mind what mummy and daddy is doing whatever that is, arguing in front of us, you can make a vow that I won't do this in front of my kids. Or, he's drinking and gambling and he's never at home so I'm gonna make sure I never do that to my family. I don't know how wrong or how right our lives were, but I always imagine we were as happy as we could be. And um, we stopped thrashing them when Della (her youngest daughter) was at an age when she was petrified of even being lined up for chastising, so that's more or less the time that we stopped giving them thrashings as we got thrashings, and as we used to give them thrashings and so on. So Diane and Dino (her older children) might even resent the fact that they got all the thrashings and these younger two didn't get.

Counseling played a part in Brenda considering how Charlie's insecurity and alcoholism were responses to a painful and violent early life. She did not do so uncritically, questioning why he stayed with violence, disrupted their home life and undermined her life outside the home:

Brenda: Even the clothes, you've got a wardrobe full of clothes, why choose the stuff I have to wear to go to work, to throw in the backyard and throw paraffin and set light to? What is that about you know? And yes, his stepfather broke the bones in his mother's hands, and beat her up on a regular basis kind of thing, but don't you grow up needing to break away from that? And do everything in your power not to make your family miserable? He loved soccer, and that was his outlet, so when he came home from soccer, he'd get sent to the bathroom in the outside room where they lived, in the yard outside. And when they think that he's all soaped up and everything, because they used to bath in a bucket, you get in the bucket and soap

yourself up like that, they'd (his mother and step father) would wait till a certain point and start thrashing him with a belt, naked and all full of soap, you can't run, you can't anything.

Reflecting critically on how this violence was carried through into their own home together, Brenda recalled how she would buffer herself with the music that she had grown to love during her days at Dorkay House:

Brenda: And he tried to bring the same thing into our household, doing that to Diane and Dino (their older children). Pull them out of their beds in the middle of the night sleeping when he gets home drunk from wherever, and he wants to be thrashing them. So all I would do was be this huge fat lump, because I took so long to lose my weight after having them so close together, and just say to him, you can do what you like, smash every plate, cup and glass, because we also lived in a small place, and all I would do is stand with my cigarette in my hand and my music on loud and you can do what you like. Perhaps that's what used to drive him crazy, the fact that I was totally indifferent.

Music became a key symbolic site of Brenda's independence, and thus a focus for Charlie's efforts to exert control. Brenda's younger brother, Unc, a musician, came to live with them in the Mayfair house. Discussing the support he gave her, it is clear how music has come to symbolize a particular space for Brenda that is her own: a symbolic association that plays out in domestic conflicts. When Charlie targets her record collection, he is targeting the part of Brenda that is beyond the reach of his control:

Brenda: Unc, he was, oh, he was a stalwart. My backbone. My spine. With guiding the children, with knowing I could leave them with Unc and go to work, and if Charlie is going to burn the clothes, I know Unc will say to the children, come, let's go to the park. There's no audience, there's no children getting hysterical because daddy's playing flying saucers with my Miles Davis and my Stan Getz. Whatever music I loved was the ones he'd play flying saucers with. He would seem to show no interest in the music that's playing, but come to smashing time he knows exactly what he's going to destroy.

Brenda assisted Unc in his career as a musician, along with her cousin Jack Momple, driving them to gigs where he played in a jazz quartet at venues like Kippies in New Town and the Radium Beer Hall in Orange Grove, and hosting band rehearsals at home. Family functions continued to be framed by gatherings of musicians interspersed with the playing of records, as they had been in Brenda's childhood. Music again can be seen to function on a dual register to both mark a space of unity, and articulate distinction and disjunction. The way in which Charlie responded to music in the home is an example of this intersection of music with wider social dynamics:

Brenda: Ja, and we would have a lot of drama in that direction also because he would chuck us all out or turn off the electricity or do whatever he was trying to do to try and stop us gathering. And he didn't have a problem with Unc and Jack (Brenda's cousin, a musician), and I think that's because of their grass habit. So when they weren't rehearsing or something, they'd be sitting with him talking and smoking their stuff and all that kind of thing, but when they'd come across and start

playing if he still was OK he'd sit and listen and enjoy it, but as soon as he got too drunk he would switch off the electricity and do all kinds of weird things. But we just went on around him. And perhaps that was cruel in a way, that we disregarded him so often you know.

Music provided the framework for the public performance of family life that was the backdrop to Brenda finally leaving the relationship in 2002, aged 52. Brenda's first grandchild, Jessica, had turned 15, and a party was held for her. As the day progressed, Charlie became increasingly drunk and abusive.

Brenda: So he's insulting. Or picking on the music they're playing. So I say to them, put on some langarm and I'll dance with him. So here, it's all happening outside, and I'm dancing with him, but he's deliberately trying to make me fall, deliberately trying to do things to trip me up or spinning me without any kind of a warning. You know? And that look on his face like all he wants to do is put his fists in my face and that kind of thing. So I just pretended like I wasn't seeing and danced and danced and danced, and eventually I thought, uh uh, this is now at its end. I really don't have to be doing this anymore hey? This is at its end. I've done it through Diane's 21st, through David going away, you name it, I've done it. Every Christmas, every New Year. Practically the meal gets thrown off the table by him, and for what? What baggage has he got that he's carrying through all this number of years? Now here we are. I've reached that age of what, 52 or something? And I'm still having to put this false smile on my face and pretend that all is fine and I thought uh uh, enough.

Though they never divorced, Brenda remained separated from Charlie until his death in 2008. They remained in contact, still sharing in family life, though without Brenda's influence, Charlie was eventually made to go back to live in the house he had bought for his mother (who had died some years previously) in Durban due to his continuing alcohol fueled threats of violence and disruption. He was never completely ostracized. All his children remained in touch with him until his death, and provided financial support.

Music and Staying with Violence

Berlant (2008) has discussed what it means to inhabit a world that has let you down so much; that those spaces where emotions and sentimentality go against rational decision making are in fact cultivated ways of knowing, not in opposition to rationality at all. The years that followed the reconstitution of her family saw Brenda construct an elaborate network of sentimental support through popular music consumption and mass-mediated 'women's culture' in the form of romantic historical novels, the Oprah Winfrey Show, true-life movies and self-help books. Staying with violence can reflect a situation in which personhood is very much constituted through fulfilling your duties towards others to whom you are bound through kinship ties. (Strathern 2004). Brenda's explanations for why she stayed together with Charlie as long as she did were fraught with conflict. At times, she explained it in terms of wanting to maintain the nuclear family unit, or because it was easier to stay than it was to leave:

Brenda: And, you know, a lot of the time we stayed because of the fact that it was a comfortable rut kind of thing. And the thing of family, because no matter what he did and said and acted, I did a lot of things over his head because I felt it was right to do it.

We would talk further and she would then back track, questioning those motivations and the wisdom of the choices she made.

Brenda: They (the kids) don't know from one week to the next how they feel about how they grew up with Charlie and all of that and um, so how right was I to stay with him all that time? And how wrong would I have been if I had just taken them, because I don't think our lives would've been any poorer had I gone out and done it on my own with the four of them, but um, that part I don't know, I have regrets. Many times I've apologized to them for having done it the way I did it but I just did it the best I knew how.

Her narrative frequently switched from a discourse of duty and obedience, to one of doing what she felt to be right regardless of the consequences. As the story unfolded, various memories would trigger different readings of her past and she straddled multiple points of interpretation and reflection according to what was being recalled. This indicates the level of conflict and contradiction inherent in managing the outcomes of the life course where the norms and values of the wider society are in opposition to those which are enabling a sense of inner cohesion and revelation.

We spoke about how peace and conflict played out interchangeably around the sites of social gatherings at the house, to enjoy and dance to music, celebrate events in the children's lives or allow rehearsal spaces for Brenda's brother's band. The insights that Brenda applied through her exploration of the worlds of self-improvement and reflection were implemented in the home at the same time as continuing in a relationship which did not support these transformations, and frequently sabotaged them. Change occurred in the midst of violence in this private domestic space and in the larger context of the change and violence occurring in wider South African society in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Yet, music was also part of what bound them, and their family, together, providing the respite of good times and dancing, as it had done in her childhood. Watching family videos during the time in the house in Mayfair during the 1980's, music was a part of what brought everyone together, at least for part of the time. The 1980s in South Africa generally were a time of intense interactions between modes of resistance and responses of dominance by the state. The State of Emergency declared in 1986 brought a raft of repressive legislation and the daily news was filled with images of burning townships. The country became increasingly isolated as the effect of cultural and sport boycotts, as well as economic sanctions, became felt. Chico Twala, whose early career had been nurtured in the space of Dorkay House, became arguably one of the most influential performers and producers of the 1980s. In particular, his collaborations with Brenda Fassie created the South African genre of Bubblegum. A disposable pop sound located in an international flow of rare groove beats and synth sounds, it provided an ironically celebratory soundtrack to the burning footage. Brenda Fassie's output shifted to respond to

this intersection between pop music and protest with the release of songs like Boipatong (a township in the Vaal triangle that had experienced particularly harsh state responses to protest) and Black President. Weekend Special and Too Late for Mama explored the ambiguous positionality and challenges of both urban and rural black women. They were also monster hits and guaranteed dance floor fillers. The Osman house, filled with visitors and family amidst the difficulty of the relationship between Brenda and Charlie, vibrated to these sounds at weekend gatherings and functions, alongside Brenda's jazz and Charlie's Motown. The children contributed to the sound mix with their mix tapes, featuring African-American R&B singers like Luther Vandross and Teddy Pendergrass. The late 1980s saw hip hop, slow jamz and house entering the fray of the gatherings at the Osman house in Mayfair, continuing into the 1990s alongside the South African interpretation of those sounds, kwaito. In the following chapter I consider how kwaito sonically marked a new era in South Africa as the transition period was negotiated, up to and in the decade that followed the 1994 election.

Musical consumption can simultaneously be a site of 'coming together' and conflict. Inter-generational interpretation is not a clear cut matter of either acceptance or rejection, but a process of negotiation between these positions at various points. This is where the concept of liminal spaces (Van Gennep 1960) is again useful to theorise how the music played out in homes and between generations, as a site for both private use and group experience- a space where cohesion, continuity, rupture and conflict are expressed in the making of society. The entry of different musical styles into private spaces, as well as public arenas, delineates changes in the

societal landscape which must be negotiated by those who inhabit the spaces in order to recreate the world. Gatherings around music articulate points of rupture as well as fostering a sense of unity.

Conclusion

Following from Rapport, in the context of Brenda's story, music is one way to construct a narrative of autonomy and self-discovery that countered her experiences of domination by state and family, and the imperative of a cultural belief that personhood is very much constituted through fulfilling your duties towards others to whom you are bound through kinship ties. (Strathern 2004). This reflects in the wider South African narrative, where music is a means to construct an alternative modality. There are early 20th century marabi and vaudeville sounds assisting urban black selves to constitute a sense of self and identity that the state does not recognize as authentic (Ballantine 1985). There is the use of music by NoSotho women to negotiate the paradoxes of rural/traditional identities mediated through the prism of urban work and migration (James 2000). The Lefele songs that permit a transcendence of the urban-rural tension for BaSotho migrant workers (Coplan 1994). It is the emergence of a canon of struggle songs, sung by black bodies in the burning townships of the 1970's and 1980's, which co-opt the language and symbols of the ruling power to subvert their imposed order. These are in turn re-invented in post-liberation discourses, where the dreamed of order merges with the past. 'Passop Verwoerd' (translation: Watch Out Verwoerd) becomes a hit for kwaito super group Malaika. Imshimi Wam

is re-born as the anthem for Jacob Zuma's supporters during his rape trial and the events of the ANC congress in Polokwane in 2007 that sees his ascendency to the leadership of the ANC, and eventually the presidency of the country in 2009. This too then becomes a kwaito hit, able to be interpreted on the dancefloor according to the positionality of the actor.

The case study of Brenda shows how the cultures of youth and music are the sites of events which form entire life times and shape cultural changeand continuity. An example is the dances put on by the local Catholic Church, where young people meet their future mates. Brenda's own parents met at a church dance – their shared Catholic faith and desire to be in fashion with the latest styles and dance steps overriding the racial politics which placed them into separate categories politically. The 'hanging out' at home after dances or school, and later work, constitutes informal time where social bonds can be formed and solidified. The societal category of 'Age Mates', found in many Sub-Saharan African societies, are social groupings based on people not related by blood but born around the same time. Going to dance with one's age mates, sharing music, or consulting with them at times of difficulty or joy, provides frameworks outside of kin relations in which to, 'work things out'. Brenda met her future husband when he came with her brothers and sisters home from a late finishing dance to continue talking and socialising. Her rape at the hands of an acquaintance within her social circle, which results in the birth, and forced adoption, of her first child, happened walking home from a party. Her immersion in the Johannesburg jazz and theater scene provides an alternative framework for imagining self and relationships with others that is a

radical departure from the racialised hierarchy, with its emphasis on obedience that she has grown up in. She uses music to manage the complexity of her emotions and bond with her confidantes, which continues until the present.

Watson & Watson Franke (1985:2) called for a greater appreciation of the importance of personal narratives to restore a measure of lost integrity, dignity and significance. The experience of subjugation may itself, when owned and worked upon, become the source for claiming a subject position (Das & Kleinman 2001:6).

The various ways that Brenda works through and integrates the trauma she experiences assist her cumulatively to claim a subject position for herself that emphasizes her ability to survive, and transform, the conditions of her life. A narrative account can articulate the phenomenal consciousness through which individuals constitute the world. Music plays an important part in this process of articulating consciousness on an individual and social level; a vital part of the re-constituting of society and self (Turner 1965; McGowan 2000). Yet, in doing so it also becomes a way to frame and articulate conflict. Music is both unity and rupture.

The retrospective reading of life can change constantly. In telling Brenda's story, mostly through her narrative voice, I narrow the scope of possible interpretation in what I choose to pull out, to show how popular music and friendship can provide alternative spaces of pleasure and agency in a life characterised by subjection to various forms of structural and gender violence. Not always positive, I show that music and friendship can be sites of violence and conflict too. Brenda's telling of her story is one that is firmly anchored in past events that look forward to a

different future as a result of the turning points in her life that have caused her to reinterpret the suffering she has experienced. As Brenda's story demonstrates, music can support people's determination to negotiate conditions of turbulence.

Chapter 5

Brave New Kwaito World

In another time Sophiatown will be reborn. Not the Sophiatown of the slum, but the Sophiatown of the idea, the ethic.” Don Mattera

Returning to South Africa in 1998, after leaving aged 15 in 1993, Kwaito was everywhere. I kept hearing these wicked house beats coming out of shops, taxis, on the radio. I understood the beat: it was house, the soulful kind that appealed to the tastes I'd developed in the house and garage clubs of mid 1990's London. It was the most natural thing in the world for me to get into kwaito, because it sounded like what I liked already. It gave me a reason to enjoy South Africa again, something to share with the new friends I made through meeting my then-boyfriend's cousins. My boyfriend and I had met in London. His ancestry was Indian South African and white English. His father was a well-connected lawyer with links to the ANC, and it was due to his family paying for me to come out regularly for family holidays in South Africa over the next four years that I was really able to reconnect with the place I'd left 6 years earlier, becoming close friends with his cousins and getting integrated into their extended multi-racial friendship group in the Western Areas. In the process, I experienced a South Africa very different from the one I'd known growing up there enabling a new kind of engagement with being South African which was much more accommodating to the sense of self I'd developed and negotiated as part of a multi-racial friendship group in North-West London.

I kept up to date with new kwaito releases whenever I came back on these family holidays, driving through Johannesburg with the windows down blasting out the latest beats, moving from spaces in the townships through the suburbs and inner city to chase the party. I was doing my undergraduate studies in anthropology at the same time, and wrote my dissertation on kwaito, using it as a springboard to explore South Africa more generally, instigating a revisionist understanding of the place I'd grown up in, but didn't really know that much about. A year after graduating, I got funding to take the kwaito project further, co-inciding with me and my boyfriend breaking up. The friendships I'd made with and through his cousins outlasted the relationship with him, and formed the entry point for when I came back to live in Johannesburg in 2005, this time single.

The idea of 'anthropology at home' suggests a familiarity with the terrain that can mask what is not known to the researcher. As Peirano (1998) has pointed out in his critical assessment of the idea of an 'anthropology at home' as opposed to an anthropology in an exotic 'other' locale, home will always incorporate many meanings. As I discovered, describing the research I ended up undertaking as 'anthropology at home' ran a risk of masking what was new about my experience in South Africa as someone returning from elsewhere. The changes that had occurred in South Africa in my absence had made home a place that was unfamiliar. Thus, the meanings incorporated by the idea of South Africa being my 'home' had shifted, and continued to shift, as I reconstituted a sense of home through engaging with the place again on these new terms and through the prism of the other 'home' I had made in London.

Music was a critical node around which the re-making of home was negotiated. Discovering kwaito, and being able to relate to the beat and the dress style, because it spoke to the global youth cultural flow I was embedded in at the time via the negotiations of multi-cultural London jungle, house and garage clubs, recalls Dolby's description of why it was that some opposed racial groups in a Durban high school started to band around particular global cultural flows, and how this shifted as class and race dynamics in the school changed post 1994 (1999:303-305). It provided an access point for me back into South African youth culture, sound tracking my re-engagement with a country at once completely transformed and utterly the same. The following chapter explores some of the ways that kwaito sonically embodied, and sound tracked, the social change occurring in South Africa in the decade following the demise of apartheid, paying particular attention to the Western Areas, and the engagement of emergent young multi-racial cohorts with the sound. I examine how the political climate of the transition period in South Africa in the 1990's intersected with the new musical form of kwaito, and consider how memories around the music help elaborate personal experiences of social change. Kwaito's social life elaborates both the re-making of the boundaries of race inherited from apartheid, and the assertion of new identities that are counter-hegemonic. As the examples that follow show, kwaito frames conflict, as well as sonically marking special shifts in the city as old boundaries are eroded, and new configurations of space and people established. A decade after the transitional period, the kwaito hits popular in the mid 1990's become a form of remembrance for times past.

Kwaito is Dead. Long Live Kwaito

I landed at Johannesburg Airport in mid-2005, tired after an overnight flight from London but exhilarated to see the familiar burnt yellow grass tipped with early morning frost stretched out around the runway, emblematic of the city I had grown up in. I had walked on that grass on so many winter morning journeys to school, exhaling puffs of white smoke as the hotness of my breath touched the freezing air. Later in the day, we'd stand lined up in the quad sweating in our uniforms as the sun beat down, having long evaporated the ice of earlier. That's Joburg for you. Sub zero to sweltering all in one day.

My friend Davina came to pick me up. As we cruised down the highway, past The Simba Chips factory, which still had the large smiling Simba Lion on its exterior, with a digital clock that had been telling passing motorists the time since the early 80's, I looked in the glove compartment for some music to put on. Davina had just had the sound done in her Toyota Tazz, and I was eager to get back into the swing of things, tune into the energy of the city with the music cranked right up, watching the familiar sights flash past, reliving memories, as the familiar skyline of downtown Jozi drew nearer and nearer. "Hey, I hope you're not going to do that whole put a kwaito jam on and turn the volume up with the windows down thing", Davina looked sharply at me. That was exactly my plan actually and she must've read my slightly surprised expression, "Eish³² Dom, that shit is over played. Every foreigner

³²'Eish' South African expression of surprise or to emphasise a point.

who comes to Joburg and wants to feel like they're having the authentic experience does that now." I sat back, deflated. When I'd last been here two years previously, that's what we did. Played a back catalogue of kwaito, house, hip-hop and R&B at top volume, windows down, cruising all night chasing parties till the dawn would rise over that famous skyline. Getting chatted up by Kabelo, or a YFM DJ. It had felt like we were part of something new and exciting that was taking over all these public spaces that had previously been off limits, whilst still being in touch with the house parties, shebeens and late night liquor stores that gave it that unique energy. The fact that you could start off in a shady tavern³³ or someone's house in the location, and end up taking over the Park Hyatt in Rosebank with nervous white managers looking on was in itself a revelation. It was something that hadn't happened in South Africa before, not in these kind of places, where space had always been so strictly delineated by race and hierarchy. In the time that I'd been away had things changed so much? Was I now the foreigner chasing an authentic experience, rather than the local girl returning to her home town, to pick up the party where I'd left it? Was kwaito really dead? I put on the new Gwen Stefani record instead, and we turned the volume up to announce our presence and taste to every person within earshot. Davina's new sound WAS amazing. As Featherstone has put it, "the experience of the aural has become the definitive form of car habitation" (2004:9). She stopped off at Akalwayaz³⁴ on the way home

³³ 'Tavern' refers to shops selling alcohol for take away sale (off-licences) that have informally incorporated elements of bar culture (tables and chairs, pool table, music, food) into the premises.

³⁴ Akalwayaz is a popular take away food outlet on Church St in Mayfair.

to welcome me back with a toasted steak special. At least some things were still the same.

The thing is, in Johannesburg of 2005, kwaito wasn't dead at all. In many ways it was thriving. You couldn't go anywhere without hearing it blasting out of taxis or taverns. DJ Cleo had released a hugely successful album, and was enjoying superstar status. His latest hit, a kick drum heavy remix of Andrea Bocelli's 'Time to Say Goodbye', was unavoidable, playing out of every taxi, tavern and urban shopping mall speaker system. Though the pairing of a township kwaito star with an Italian opera singer may seem unlikely, South Africans can be deeply sentimental, and the lyrics, about saying farewell to a loved one, combined with a thumping, danceable beat were a winning combination.

Death as an ever present force in South Africa has become the focus of much academic interest in recent years (Lee 2008) A South African chat room discussion about the merits of Cleo's remix of Bocelli's song saw almost every post commenting on how listening to the original had helped in dealing with the death of a family member/friend, usually road accident or HIV related. The discussion was surprised but positive about the remix, and how it gave the chance to dance the song and work through those emotions again in a different context. The DJ Cleo version samples the emotive chorus saying 'Time to Say Goodbye' in English with the rest of the chorus sung in Italian by Bocelli:

Time to say goodbye,

To countries I never saw and shared with you,

Now, yes, I shall experience them,

I'll go with you

On ships across seas

Which, I know,

No, no, exist no longer;

With you I shall experience them.

Other DJ Cleo projects, including one of the most popular songs of 2005, Sweety Ma Baby, by young kwaito star Brickz, explored concerns like picking up girls, gossip and jealousy. During my sets, I would frequently have girls come up to the DJ box to request it. The original is sung in a mixture of English and isichamtho, sometimes still referred to as Tsotsitaal. The English translation is below, with highlighted words being those that are English in the original:

Sweety, honey, my love. We're meeting at the taxi ranks

When I have you by my side all the guys go crazy 'bout you

All the ladies say that this man is a criminal

You must make all the guys jealous.

My love, you're as beautiful as a 10 cents coin. Wait!

Satan must just stand aside. Through and through we're lovers.

*I can see it in your eyes, can I stare at you **my darling?***

*Then we'll meet at the taxi rank and you'll be wearing those **hot pants***

I'll move you close to me, all the brothers take cover, I'm back in this space

Can I take you out to the movies?

I'm making you feel better my darling...

Kwaito was still South Africa's biggest selling genre after gospel in 2005. Groups such as Mafikizola and Malaika had breathed in new life³⁵ with their referencing of iconic South African style and musical heritage associated with the Sophiatown of the 1950s and reworking of struggle song lyrics like 'Passop Verwoerd'³⁶ with house beats, as had artists like Brickz, Lebo, Thebe and Hip Hop Pantsula, all of whom were enjoying wide spread popularity and air time. Kwaito even had its own Comedy Star, the satirical (and cuttingly critical) Mzekezeke.

Kwaito was everywhere, and yet something HAD changed. It no longer felt new, or daring. As Mhlambi (2004) points out, the very label of 'kwaito' had, and has, lost some of its meaning, mutating into 'house' or the currently fashionable term 'vuil house'.³⁷ The energy and promise it had embodied seemed somewhat jaded, even if the beats were still kicking and filling dancefloors. YFM, the radio station which

³⁵Though not without controversy. When Mafikizola released their mega hit 'Ndihamba Nawe' in 2002, they used *kwela* musician Sophie Mngina's composition 'Mangwane' without permission. Eventually a royalties settlement was reached after much arguing. (Ansell 2005: 283)

³⁶Afrikaans. Literally 'Watch Out Verwoerd', in reference to the Nationalist Party leader and 'architect' of apartheid. From

³⁷Translated from the Afrikaans to mean 'Dirty House'. As in much isichamto use of Afrikaans, the original meaning of the word is inverted so that 'dirty' is not a negative but a positive description.

had been a critical part of kwaito's success, had moved from its original home in the run down inner city area of Bertrams and was now comfortably entrenched in the Zone in Rosebank, a luxuriously trendy shopping mall in the leafy, affluent formerly white suburb. What had felt like an invasion of the Establishment a few years back now seemed to have become the establishment, albeit one which looked and sounded very different.

Its arrival on the academic map has produced a number of reflections and analyses from scholars both in South Africa and abroad (Coplan 2005, Ballantine 2003, Mhlambi 2004, Peterson 2003, Allen 2004, Steingo 2005, Livermone 2006). In a sense, 'kwaito' as a label has solidified for the purposes of discursive analysis, lending itself to all kinds of engagement with academic reflection, political pronouncements and attempts to appropriate/explain, whilst simultaneously ceasing to exist as a label to which the young people purported to be interested in identifying with it would readily adopt as a signifier of self. Mhlambi, writing in response to a blog created by an American music writer on the genealogy of kwaito in 2008,³⁸ says, "It is therefore interesting to note the dramatic increase in critical writings on Kwaito. Scholarly writings speak of the genre and its followers in the present, while in reality, kwaito has almost ceased to exist in South Africa." So the situation in 2005 when this research was conducted, and since, sees a paradoxical

³⁸Micah Salkind (2008) <http://kwaitogeneology.wordpress.com/2008/12/13/kwaito/> retrieved March 2009

landscape where kwaito is both highly visible as a label addressed by academics and used in marketing strategies/genre identification, and yet also not a clearly discernable and bounded youth cultural form.

Kwaito and the End of Apartheid

Kwaito is the name given to the electronic dance music that has flourished in South Africa since the early 1990s, but which came into its own in the period following the 1994 elections. There is speculation that the name came from the Zulu word 'Amakwaitos' or from the Afrikaans word 'kwaai', meaning 'angry'³⁹. However, 'kwaai' is also a slang term meaning something is good and enjoyable. Perhaps the origin lies somewhere between anger and pleasure. Its sound is based on a slowed down house beat (100 -120 beats per minute), incorporating stylistic elements of hip hop, dancehall, R'n B and South African popular music. It was situated within, and influenced by, other electronic dance music movements occurring around the world from the mid 1980's onwards as experiments with electronic forms of making music acted to democratise and lower the cost of music-making. This marked the rise of the so-called 'bedroom producer' in various urban contexts, often located within developments in Afro-diasporic musical forms. Funk in Rio de Janeiro (Yudice 1994), house and techno in Chicago and New York (Rietveld 1998),

³⁹ Source <http://www.southafrica.info/about/arts/kwaito.html#.UP06-h04C8A> retrieved

dancehall in Jamaica (Stolzoff 2000, Cooper 2004), acid house (Collin 1997), drum & bass and UK garage in the UK. I have grossly simplified the labels and their regional associations here, and electronic dance music has morphed into a plethora of styles and sub-genres, even within the context of single cities or countries like the UK (Reynolds 1999). Over the course of the 1990's and into the beginning of the 21st century, kwaito grew into a recognizable genre, attracting attention in various media as the sound of the New South Africa (Pan 2000; Pile 2001; Williamson 1999, 2002)

There is a legend that kwaito emerged at the dawn of the 90s in Johannesburg's CBD club land when a DJ playing a popular Chicago house track mistakenly played it on a slower rotation. Instead of clearing the floor it filled it, the crowd loved the toned down tempo. It was a time in which the country was on the cusp of huge social change. The inevitability of change was obvious, Mandela's release on the 11th February 1990 and the swift movement of the ANC from a banned, underground movement to a powerful player on the negotiating table were ample signals that profound transformation was imminent as the CODESA negotiations, with attendant disruptions from Right Wing groups and rumblings from Zulu nationalists went on in 1992 (Moss & Obery 1992; Sparks 1995). How this transformation would play out was not obvious. Laurie Nathan, concluding a report on South Africa's transition period, notes,

“Revolutions always seem impossible before they happen and inevitable afterwards. The same is true of negotiated settlements to end civil wars. South Africans, now accustomed to constitutional rule, tend to regard their

settlement as pre-ordained but this was certainly not the case. The negotiations were repeatedly wracked by crises of various kinds. Shortly before the first democratic election in 1994, the level of violence was so high and conservative parties were so opposed to the settlement that free and fair elections seemed improbable. At that time the country appeared to be at the edge of an abyss. (2004:6)

Clubs like Masquerades, Le Club, Razzmatazz and Q were all within a few streets of each other in the grid surrounding the 50 floor Carlton Centre, the tallest building in Africa and emblem of the might of Johannesburg's financial prowess. The signs of change were everywhere as this bastion of whiteness saw black, Indian and coloured youth venturing into the CBD from the townships of the south alongside their white counterparts from the white working class southern suburbs to dance to R&B, hip hop, and imported house and techno music. The decline of the inner city post-1994 put an end to this particular space of integration, shifting the action into the suburbs (though in the last 5 years, the CBD has been enjoying something of a revival with multi-racial clubbers with warehouse spaces being occupied for parties, and clubs like Mind Your Head opening).⁴⁰

If the clublands of Johannesburg's CBD of the early 1990s gave birth to kwaito, then the townships surrounding the city, and in particular Soweto, incubated it. The beat was picked up by township producers who formed the first black-owned

⁴⁰ The CBD of course continued its vitality in other ways post-1994 as the demographic shifted to include large numbers of migrants from other parts of Africa who created new networks and leisure spaces. See Abdou Maliq-Simone (2005).

record companies (Triple 9, Kalawa Jazmee, Ghetto Ruff, M'Du Music) when the white owned record companies were not interested in picking up the new sound, claiming that there was no market for it.

The production of new music was supported by the youth radio station YFM, whose explosion in listenership following their launch in 1997 gave a public platform to the sound that up until then had been studiously ignored by mainstream broadcasters. The resulting explosion of partying post-1994 is described by Liz McGregor in her account of the life of Khabzela, one of YFM's most famous DJs whose career piggy-backed the success of kwaito,

"Years of youth lost to struggle were now reclaimed on the streets of Soweto in giant bashes that, in true democratic spirit, were open to all.... These bashes played a cathartic role. Young people who, only a few years earlier, had been confined to their houses by police curfew between 10pm and 6am now partied the night away. Streets, once colonised by Casspirs and police vans became giant dance floors." (2005:95)

The underestimation of the black youth cultural hunger for local interpretations of global electronic music, meant that the growth of YFM, launched in 1997, took the culture industries by surprise. "We made kwaito and kwaito made us" said Greg Moloka, the station manager, in an interview in 2005 (McGregor 2005:108). When YFM was launched in 1997, kwaito had become a sub-cultural industry with a plethora of small record labels, producers and a well-organised network of informal promoters exploiting the thirst for bashes in townships. What YFM provided, that was lacking, was a broadcast presence that increased kwaito's mainstream visibility

and brought it to the attention of the major record labels, broadcasters and advertisers who had not anticipated its significance until YFM's stratospheric rise. Within 6 months the station had 600,000 listeners. This figure doubled in 6 months (2005: 108), and doubled again 6 months after that. The YFM project was politically motivated – to provide some kind of mainstream media representation to young black people, and this had initially been directed by. Dirk Hartford, one of the founders of YFM, had himself been drawn into the anti-apartheid movement though his youthful rebellion against a wealthy white background in Cape Town. (McGregor 2006:100-102) An active member of the ANC, he was asked to work for the SABC, in a strategic planning unit tasked with advising the new leadership of the former apartheid broadcaster on how to position itself in the new democratic landscape. The primary recommendation of the unit was to set up a new radio station aimed at youth who were under represented in the mainstream media. When this was not taken up by the SABC, a frustrated Dirk along with other members of the strategic unit applied for a commercial licence for a youth radio station in response to a call for applications from the new regulatory body the Independent Broadcasting Association. The result was YFM, which set up shop in a building owned by Radio Freedom, the voice of the ANC in exile in the run-down inner city suburb of Bertrams.

The Politics of Kwaito

In view of the political climate that surrounded its creation, it is interesting that Kwaito has been both criticised and praised for being non-political, marking a break

with a rich tradition of struggle songs in South Africa. Steingo (2007) has argued that kwaito was a kind of ‘party politic’, whose celebration of pleasure and emphasis on the freeing of bodies on the dancefloor was explicitly outside of party politics, up until the 2004 elections when political parties like the ANC and DA utilised its beats to mobilise the electorate. However, his analysis does not take into account the historical relationship between popular music and assertions of confidence and self in the context of a violently racialised and hierarchical society like South Africa, nor the emergence of YFM, the primary mainstream promoter of kwaito in its early days, out of the political aims of the struggle. If kwaito’s beat, infinitely danceable, is read as apolitical because it mobilises bodies in the service of the pleasures of dance and partying, this ignores the historical connection in South Africa between performance and pleasure as a response to dominant discourses which do not recognise the agency of these bodies (Coplan 1984, 1990). Steingo’s analysis does not consider the significance of the sound and idea of kwaito as a powerful signifier of change in the transitional South Africa of the 1990s, locating this as somehow separate from the real politics of the state. YFM’s early drive to attract advertiser is a tongue in cheek example of the symbolic transition occurring between the politics of the struggle to the politics of a New South Africa in which the imperatives of the free market economy dominated despite the promise of a socialist revolution. Sending a fake Molotov cocktail⁴¹ to potential advertisers with a flyer that read, “This is what we used to do. Now we do radio.” (McGregor 2005:109)

⁴¹The Molotov cocktail is a nickname for Soviet-era grenades.

When the contextual circumstances of its production, reception and content are taken into account, it is less easy to dichotomise South African music into either political or apolitical categories . Meintjies (2003) demonstrated how the politics of race and transition were deeply embedded in the production of Mbaquanga music, and associated Zulu cultural identity, in a Johannesburg recording studio in the transition period, thus demonstrating how ‘music for pleasure’ was infused with the dynamics of South African identity politics. Kwaito too is music for pleasure that holds a multiplicity of meanings. Mhlambi (2004) has emphasised that in the party context of kwaito’s consumption, fans aren’t particularly interested in lyrics, but this limits analysis of the ways in which lyrics, beat and politics can meet in the performance context. I remember watching a performance in 1998 of Arthur’s mega-hit ‘Kaffir’, the first big hit for the artist who would go on to be known as the ‘King of Kwaito’. Here lyrics, read in the context of the transitional period, mark an unprecedented shift in who could speak publically, and what could be said. ‘Kaffir’, released in 1995, one year after the first democratic elections, was a controversial 3 minute slice of pared-down bass-heavy house beat perfection overlaid with Arthur’s voice chanting lyrics which earned the song an SABC ban:

Ek se baas... nee... (English Translation: ‘Hey Boss....No’)

Ek se baas... don’t call me a kaffir man

The song explicitly addresses racist white South Africans through the use of the term ‘baas’, translated from Afrikaans as ‘boss’, and symbolic of the hierarchical historical relationship between black and white people in South Africa. ‘Baas’ was a term of deference that alongside the insulting, de-humanising word ‘kaffir’,

constituted the linguistic basis for social relations. As Mhlambi describes it, “The song is treated in a burlesque manner, but this only heightens the discontent against the past” (2004: 120). In October 2000, I watched Arthur perform the song at a Botswanan independence day bash in Tottenham, North London. The performance was symbolic of the sense of freedom of expression released by the ending of apartheid, as well as the ways in which leisure spaces had opened up internationally for young South Africans freed from the constraints of the apartheid era. As the vibrations of the bass filled the mock-Aztec space of The Temple⁴² there was a surge to get to the stage and a roar of approval from the crowd, dressed in the bling ghetto-fabulous style of global hip-hop culture at that time. Arthur strode on stage in military fatigues, flanked by two female dancers in skin tight camouflage print hotpant jumpsuits. Police sirens and flashing blue and red lights filled the cavernous space. Thus a sensory performance of the symbols of the apartheid state’s military policing of townships during the uprisings of the late 1970’s, 1980’s and early 1990’s was powerfully evoked. The atmosphere generated by the communication between performer and audience was confrontational, assertive and scathingly sarcastic in its patisch of a deferential and subordinated black African self. As Arthur sang the first lines of the song, he was greeted with an amplification of the initial roar of approval.

⁴² The Temple was a popular venue in Tottenham, North London. Built in 1910 it went through various incarnations as a jazz venue, big band concert hall and locus for youth sub-cultural activity in North London. As the black population of Tottenham expanded in the 1970’s, the venue hosted ska and reggae nights which morphed into the jungle, garage and house raves it would host in the 1990’s under the name Club UN, then The Temple and finally The Zone. It was demolished in 2004.

Ek se Baas

Nee

Ek se Baas

Don't call me a Kaffir man

Re-inscribing and inverting the meaningfulness of the word 'kaffir, powerfully symbolic of the subordination of black people in South Africa, and juxtaposing it with an appropriation of the sounds and styling of the military and police power used to discipline the population, turned symbols of defeat into, "symbols of grandeur" (Hebdige 1977:124) in theatrical style. The bass of the beat when it kicked in literally made the room and bodies in it vibrate.

The promoter of the concerts, a Zimbabwean Dume Moyo, had built a successful business putting on parties for expatriate Southern Africans. Big bashes were centred around National Independence Day celebrations for Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Freedom Day for South Africa (kwaito cannot be read as a uniquely South African phenomenon, as its popularity across Southern Africa testifies). Moyo had brought over artists like Zimbabwe's Oliver Mtukudzi, South Africa's Brenda Fassie and kwaito artists Arthur and TK Zee, playing alongside big name South African kwaito/house DJ's like Glen Lewis and DJ Fresh to a young, cross-national and mostly black Southern African audience. This audience was in London, not as refugees or exiles, but as students or young professionals on visas organised by global financial services corporations. Young South Africans were also using the arrangement for two year 'working holiday' visas which allowed South Africans

under the age of 30 to enter the UK for a period of up to two years to work part time and travel. It was a popular ‘gap year’ experience for many young white South Africans, and in the last decade had increasingly become utilised by non-white youth.⁴³ Kwaito here elaborates the movement of African bodies across international space, a buoyant occupation of new possibilities. In the next section, I wish to consider some of the ways kwaito, particularly the classic kwaito anthem ‘Fester’ by Jackknife, elaborates experiences of social change in the Western Areas in the mid-1990’s.

Songs, Memory and Social Change: Fester 1995 – 2005

‘Fester’ by Jackknife was one of the first kwaito songs I heard when I returned to South Africa in 1998, the sparse bass line and haunting vocal made an immediate impact. Released in 1994, the song evokes a particular historical moment in South Africa: the transition between apartheid and democracy, whilst retaining a timeless quality. It sounds as fresh now as it did then. In the following section, Fester can be read as a bridge between Brenda’s story told in the previous two chapters, and the generation that follows her. The material presented here is based on a home video I watched at a family braai in Crosby, 2006. It is an example of the way kwaito as an aural dimension of the change in South Africa penetrated into the

⁴³ The Working Holiday Maker visa was discontinued in 2008, when more stringent visa rules were introduced for South Africans generally wishing to enter the UK.

everyday fabric of life, and into the rituals of family life in the 1990's. Me and Brenda's son David (my boyfriend) were relaxing in the lounge after eating, when Jessica, Brenda's 17 year old grand daughter, decided to put on some old family videos.

In the video it was Christmas Day in 1995 in Brenda's old house on 11th Ave in Mayfair. It was a year and a half since the first multi-racial democratic elections had ushered in an era of unprecedented transformation for South Africa without the predicted collapse into civil war or bloodshed. Brenda, who shared the house with Charlie her husband and their four children, was busying herself in the kitchen while the rest of the large gathering of her family and friends sat in the small living room, drinking and joking. The camera moved around the room, with people toasting the viewfinder and sending 'compliments of the season' to the family abroad who would be sent a copy. Music played loudly in the background, and two couples were jazzing to the sound of Lou Rawls 'You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine'.

To contextualize the material, the Osman's were one of a few coloured families who lived on the street in what had been a white area, but was in 1995 becoming a predominantly Indian area, though their neighbours were Chinese and two doors down were a white Jewish family. Most had lived in Mayfair since the mid 1980s or earlier. For Brenda, as described in the previous chapter, getting the house in Mayfair followed a series of moves through a variety of spaces zoned for different racial groups. As I have mentioned earlier, I could not find a satisfactory explanation for why Mayfair, officially a white area, had such a mixed population

during the peak of the apartheid years. Prior to Apartheid legislation, Mayfair had been part of a swathe of inner Johannesburg suburbs where the ethnic and racial boundaries of the inhabitants were not clearly demarcated spatially - though this did not mean they were without racism (Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003:260). Now in 1995, the first black families were moving in too, as well as the first wave of African immigrants, adding Somalian, Kenyan, Nigerian and Congolese communities to the mix of the area. In many ways, an area that had remained to some extent 'mixed' according to the normative values of separation applied by apartheid planners was becoming even more so, recalling the early days of the Western Areas as sites where a wide variety of ethnicities and racial groups lived in close and overlapping proximity.

As the festivities shown on the video continued, the soundtrack abruptly changed from the rare groove and soul of the late 1970's and early 1980's to the unmistakable opening bars of Jackknife's 'Fester'. Brenda's 16 year old son David started dancing, eyes closed and lost to the laughter and shouts of encouragement around him.

The duo who made it, Jackknife, were of the anonymous dance music producer school of making music, where the faces behind the name are rarely seen in marketing or promotional material. The woman who sang the lyrics for Fester was a guest vocalist, Thandiswa Mzwai, who would go on to join the kwaito group Bongo Maffin and become a star in her own right. At the time of Fester's release in 1994, on the E.P Continua, she was an unknown, providing a haunting vocal about lost love sung in Zulu (though Mzwai is of Xhosa origin):

Ye u ya hambha, ngabu'zo buya nini na?

Oh baby baby baby u ya hambla, ngabu'zo buya nini na?

Ye u ya hambha ngabu'zo buya nini na?

Oh baby baby baby u ya hambla, ngabu'zo buya nini na?

Ngenzeni na? Senzeni na?

Ngabu'zo buya buya nini na?

Ngenzeni? Ngenzeni? Ngenzeni? Ngabu'zo buya nini na?

English Translation:

He's leaving, wonder when he's coming back?

Oh baby baby baby, he is leaving

Wonder when he's coming back?

Yeah, he is leaving, wonder when he is coming back?

Oh baby baby baby he is leaving, wonder when he is coming back

What did I do?

What did we do?

Wonder when he is coming back.

The pair who made up Jackknife were a coloured and a white guy, neither of whom spoke Zulu. They were conscious of the surprise that their appearance received

when placed in relation to the music they were making, as the following comments made in an interview with Maria McCloy in 1997 indicate,

“We just play music, we don’t dwell on things like that (race)”, says Simon Webster, the white half of Jackknife. Themba Smuts, the coloured half, describes the responses they received when playing at bashes, where the mostly young black punters would say, “Oh you’re Jackknife. We thought you were two black guys.”⁴⁴

So on the one hand there is a dismissal of race in the assessment of its significance by Jackknife’s members. On the other hand, race is foregrounded again as a point of orientation for their predominantly black audience. Their appearance generates surprise because people who look like them are not supposed to be able to make music like this. Thus, from its inception, kwaito’s production and consumption was a space that articulated the shifts in identity politics as the post-1994 landscape emerged. One in which inherited ideas about racial boundary and racialised cultural knowledge were in tension with lived experiences which did not corroborate with the discourse of race as an absolute signifier of self with expected associated tropes of behaviour. It is this tension between unity and separation which is at the heart of the argument put forward by this thesis: that music is an effective way to communicate and articulate the tension between these positions in the making of social life and selves.

⁴⁴From an interview with Maria McCloy for the article ‘A Dance Floor Divided’ in The Mail & Guardian 6th June 1997

In 1995, this sound was powerful, and new, because it confidently married a recognizably black South African accent with an international house beat, and it sounded as good as the records that came from abroad, communicating an sonic and visual aesthetic in which local black identity was the primary signifier, confidently connected to global urban music flows. This was a bold articulation of the emerging political order, which would see a paradigm shift from a Euro-centric and Calvinist-oriented hierarchy, to one in which black African identity would assume primacy. Yet, as the production of Fester, amongst many examples, demonstrates, there was substantial ‘cross-over’ occurring in the production of the music that was not marketed or made obvious in its reception. This is in contrast to the other South African popular music of the late 1980’s and 1990’s known as ‘Cross-Over’- which self-consciously projected an image of inter-racial solidarity in production, performance and consumption (Allen 2004). As we reflected on the impact Fester had made on us as we watched the family video, Dave’s account of the way kwaito intersected with the making of the multi-racial cohort he was a part of during the transitional years of the mid 1990’s demonstrated how kwaito’s consumption, as well as production, was not a mode of expression that was restricted to an exclusively black-identified youth group, but also one that was mobilized by minority youth to define a space of shared cultural capital in opposition to the dominant paradigm of white supremacy that was being challenged in the post-1994 landscape.

David had grown up in Mayfair, attending Fordsburg Primary in the late 1980’s as one of a few coloured and black students in a mainly Indian school. He experienced

some racism during his time there, in the form of playground taunts about ‘steel wool’ hair in reference to his Afro, reflecting the dominant paradigm of racial hierarchy which placed African people, characteristics and features at the bottom of the ladder. As David was the ‘darkest’ of Brenda’s children, he was also subject to the same racism from his grandmother Daphne that she had subjected her own children to – favouring lighter skin and more phenotypically ‘white’ features – and directing racially inscribed insults at him.

However, as he put it, this rolled off his back, and as well as his playground adversaries, he made many friends amongst the Indian student body, as well as with black and coloured students which were still in existence during the time I got to know him. In fact, we had been introduced by a mutual friend who Dave had gone to school with. Rather, it was during his high school years in the mid 1990’s that racial tension reached a violent point, mirroring the tensions in the country at large. Now, the alliances built with Indian and black friends over rode whatever animosities existed as the non-white student body united against the violence directed against it by white teachers and students at what had been an all-white Technical High School in Langlaagte, the neighborhood adjoining Mayfair. When the school desegregated in 1994, Students like Dave and other non-white residents of the western areas were enrolled, but as David remembered it, they encountered strong resistance from both white teachers and students. His response, along with other members of his cohort, was a resolute rejection of white culture and any attempt to gain favour and acceptance with what was seen as outrightly racist rejection of non-white students to integrate into the student body on anything but

white-mediated terms. Kwaito was a music to identify with that was confidently black-identified, and with its bass-heavy sound, it was a powerful sonic presence to assert differentiation through blasting out of cars and ghetto blaster stereos carried around by students. The crunch came when a group of white students beat up a black student so badly that he had to be hospitalized. The simmering tension of the school was immediately fired up, and Dave recalled how all non-white students banded together to protest outside the school the following day. When confrontation with white students resulted, a riot broke out, that was only quelled by the deployment of police. Watching his younger self dancing to Fester at the Christmas Day celebration of 1995 seemed to generate conditions of rememberance of personal experience of a time of social change.

In the context of the Western areas in the mid 1990's, this was an identity that was fragmented across racial lines between black and the minority Indian and coloured groups, but united against white youth. Kwaito was a powerful builder of shared cultural capital between non-white groups as they mobilized against white aggression, as schools and housing de-segregated.

Model C, Kwaito and Distinction

If David's experience of desegregated schooling in a multi-racial working class context saw the mobilization of kwaito as a signifier of an assertive non-white identity, then similar processes were occurring in more middle class contexts. In 1992 white government schools across South Africa were offered the opportunity to hold ballots to allow parents to vote on whether the school should begin admitting non-white pupils. The high school David had attended had not opted for

this option, but many schools did, admitting non-white pupils in the two years prior to the first democratic elections. ‘Model C’ was the option that allowed this, and the subsequent cultural shift that the opening of formerly whites-only schools created has made the term become part of popular culture as a marker of upward mobility by non-white people and a particular kind of privileged education, in contrast with that offered in township schools.

Brothers of Peace, the kwaito act signed to the Masters at Work label, made a song called ‘Model C’ on their 2003 album ‘Zabalaza’. It used a sample of a young black girl speaking with a white South African accent, and evoked the sense that non-white young South Africans with new access to educational opportunities were in the process acquiring the substance of whiteness. My housemates Davina and Maia had met as teenagers in 1995 when they both attended a highly regarded Government school previously reserved for white students in a leafy and affluent white suburb in the north of Johannesburg. Davina and Maia were among the first non-white students, though as Maia points out, when they started out it was a couple of years after the Model C⁴⁵ system was introduced so there was a sizable minority of non-white students established at the school already, “*So we didn’t go through that thing of being the ‘only black’ in the place. You know when you’re outnumbered. We had numbers so we were able to have that confidence to form a group that could identify against the idea that white culture was somehow*

⁴⁵ Model C was the name given to white government schools who decided to take the option to desegregate in the early 1990’s. ‘Model C’ has since become a slang term for upward mobility amongst non-whites.

better."Davina was bussed in from Lenasia with a group of other students drawn from the townships of Eldorado Park, Lenasia and Soweto, a journey that could take up to 2 hours in the early morning Johannesburg rush hour. Friendships were formed with white students, but Maia's comments indicate that there was a shift in the cultural power dynamics at this time as larger numbers of non-white students entered previously all-white spaces. . Black youth cultural spaces defined by the likes of the musical genre of kwaito and radio station YFM were on the ascendency, which acted to create a sense of a shared community and youth cultural cohort that was not defined in relation to notions of white cultural supremacy. The sound of Kwaito and Y-Culture were also a crucial component in the rebranding of the national broadcaster, the SABC. Formerly the mouthpiece of apartheid, it was now employing young, confident non-white presenters, using kwaito basslines for links and commissioning shows like Yizo Yizo that combined gritty storylines about life in a township school with a kwaito soundtrack (Gevisser 1999). This contributed to the sense of a vibrant, shared youth culture with access to mainstream forms of dissemination.

The popularity of cultural forms identified with blackness as a mark of value, rather than a sign of inferiority, were not limited to South Africa or Johannesburg but were located in global cultural flows that were seeing similar shifts in the value ascribed by the 'mainstream' to black popular cultural, with genres like hip hop gaining an (Fricke & Ahearn 2002; George 1998). Both Davina and Maia located themselves within black South African youth cultural forms and wider global flows of black popular culture. They spoke of how this identification generated a sense of pride

and entitlement, rather than gratefulness, amongst non-white students entering formerly all-white spaces. This was something which frequently took white students by surprise. Their lack of the newly valuable cultural capital of global black popular culture and accompanying politics of identity was highlighted by new friendships with non-white students. Davina made a cutting comment in reference to some of the expectations that came from white friends about the kinds of questions and issues they could discuss with her, *"I got tired, and still do, of being expected to fill them in on the historical construction of race, and make them feel better about their guilty feelings. They need to do the work themselves and work out what it's about."*

She was referring to a fight she had had with a white school friend, Bianca, the daughter of an Afrikaans lawyer and English South African mother, who had been upset when Davina had cut her short as she expressed remorse and guilt at being born white. Maia's friendship with Bianca was less fraught with conflict, but she too had got into arguments with white friends who she felt were defensive about their position of privilege in society and unwilling to examine what this meant without descending into what she described as, *'indulgent guilt... it's all about them, how they feel, how bad it is. It gets tiring to reassure them that they are OK, especially since they actually do need to confront what their whiteness means and work out how to live with that.'* Yet these conflicts did not mean the end of friendships with whites. These were instead negotiated within the contexts in which non-white friends were unwilling to acquiesce to white guilt, but in which race could become something was acceptable to discuss in the context of joking

relationships. In turn, white friends developed the art of self-deprecation to express their sense of exclusion from the experiences of their non-white friends and lack of cultural capital, often focused on making jokes about ‘lacking rhythm’ which enabled them to participate in the friendship group without coming into conflict over what was viewed as inappropriate reflections on their position in society.

Yet, the identification with a black political identity was also not uncontested within other spaces that were not defined by interactions with white people. Davina described an experience of having her identification with a black popular cultural and political identity questioned on the basis of phenotype when she went to a kwaito bash in a township on the East Rand with friends. While standing chatting, someone she described as a, ‘light skinned black guy’ who was local to the area came up to her demanding to know what a ‘mulungu’⁴⁶ was doing in his ‘hood’⁴⁷. Davina went on the offensive, retaliating by telling him he was a ‘poes’⁴⁸ and who did he think he was calling her mulungu when he had lighter skin than her. When she started dancing, the same guy approached her again to tell her that she ‘moves

⁴⁶ Derived from Zulu, ‘Mulungu’ is a term for white people. It is sometimes used to reference anyone who is not immediately identifiable as African/black according to current understandings of the term.

⁴⁷ From Afro-American slang for a working class neighbourhood that experiences certain levels of deprivation . It has become popular in South Africa to refer to townships and inner city working class areas.

⁴⁸ Derived from Afrikaans word for vagina or ‘pussy’ and is a commonly used term of derision.

like a black woman' and inappropriately touching her. She pushed him away, telling him to 'voetsek'⁴⁹. Reflecting on the incident, she ventured that the guy, "*probably had issues because he's so light and gets kak⁵⁰ for that, so he thought he could consolidate his sense of himself by playing out the same shit on me*". Maia and Davina's responses both reflect an attempt to reintegrate their sense of personhood as Africans after confrontations with a discourse of 'Africanness' which is variously marked by phenotype, responses to music and rhythmic ability, and the historical construction of, and response to, racial hierarchy.

'Africanness' as an essentialised construction of the Western imagination has been thoroughly critiqued by, amongst others, Mudimbe (1994) and Appiah (1992), and examined as an 'other' to a particular construction of the rational, Western self in the post-colonial theorizing of Edward Said (1978, 1990). But, as Meintje's points out in her analysis of the ways in which tropes of Africanness are mobilized in the making of Mbaqanga music to articulate racial difference and encourage disciplined performance by musicians (2003:116-122, constructions of Africanness have been far reaching in their effect. Thus, race, both as an external identifier and an internal marker of self, adjusts responsively to social context. In each context, its meaning appears as fixed and eternal – this is the power of racial identification, the timeless quality it musters. Plural, syncretic identities negotiated within small groups of friends, and as part of self-reflection, come into contact with still-dominant modes of defining identity according to particular tropes of appearance and stereotype,

⁴⁹Afrikaans word for 'go away' in common usage in South Africa.

⁵⁰'Kak' is an Afrikaans word for 'shit'

both in the case of contacts with ‘outsiders’, in and in individual behaviour and expression of sometimes contradictory views regarding understandings of the meanings of race and culture. These clashes bring racialised ontologies to the foreground, and are a reminder of the continued imposition of ‘ethnicity from above’ (Zegeye 2001: 1) even as other markers of identity such as taste, class, gender, age, religion, spirituality and sexuality have a more prominent role in the defining of selves in most areas of life. It is these other identifiers of self that provide spaces for relationships across racialised ontologies, though it is worth noting that joking about race is a prominent feature of interactions. It is also the social spaces of these relationships that provide the down-time where experiences of the imposition of ethnicity from above can be discussed and made sense of.

Most South Africans still use racial and ethnic terms to describe themselves (Gibson & Gouws 1996; Roefs & Liebenberg 1999). Commenting on these studies, Zegeye (2001) points out a strong sense of group identification with great political significance attached to the primary group, warning against underestimating these commitments, “...ontological consciousness is not a shadowy feature of consciousness juxtaposed with the ‘real’ world. In contrast, ontological commitments inform day-to-day norms and perceptions of what it is to belong to a community, nation or racialised group (2001:14)”

The power and rigidity of apartheid categories, recreated by the liberation state (Posel 2001), continue to influence how young people identify themselves and relate to others. It is a paradoxical situation of simultaneously breaking down barriers within the self and with others, and maintaining and affirming them at the

same time. As Hewitt's study of inter-racial friendship and communication amongst adolescents demonstrated, there is a common misconception that assumes that simply increasing contacts between groups (the 'contact hypothesis') equates to decreased racism (1986:2). Studying friendships across the 'racial divide' and those instances where racism was absent allowed for seeing, paradoxically, how racism is reproduced (1986:6). Comaroff & Comaroff (1997) have emphasised the nature of dialectics in the formation of the present, displacing the dichotomy of coloniser and colonised by tracing the complexity of their interactions in the South African frontier zone. By emphasizing their lack of 'rhythm', white friends reinscribed ideas about the racialised destiny of particular kinds of bodies. In refuting these notions in their possession of rhythmic ability identified as 'black', the incorporation of Selena and Khiyara's bodies into an idea of 'African' womanhood that again possesses a 'natural' rhythm also replicates existing ideas of race. However, I suggest in looking at the tensions that surrounded the muddying of boundaries of phenotype, rhythm and musical taste in the examples of dance floor and social conflict demonstrate, another angle of analysis can be found that finds in the 'unfinished' business of classification under these conditions the possibility of identifications which are neither rigid nor able to be pinned down satisfactorily under existing classificatory conditions, thus representing a challenge to ideas about South African identity that are not accommodated by the status quo.

Chasing the Party

After the braai was done, David and I headed out with friends to dance and release the tensions of the week. We are a mixed bag of recently acquainted and long term friends, all connected to each other in some way through threads of friendship, schooling and kinship, though occupying a variety of race and class positions. . Zen is Indian, from a middle class family with struggle credentials, while Zyn is Muslim Coloured and working class. Eckart, David's brother-in-law, whose pale complexion, blue eyes and Caucasian features inherited from his German ancestry mean he is often mistaken for being Afrikaans (though as Zen jokes, his curly hair would never pass the pencil test). Rohit who is Indian and Hindu. David's work partner in the dent repair business he is starting up, Ishmael, who is Tswana. There is Maia, Zens' sister and my friend and house mate, whose experience at high School I have just described . Her boyfriend Stephen and his friend from University days, Andile, who constantly banter in an exchange of jokes centred on Stephen being a Tamil coloured town planner and Andile's Zulu background and childhood growing up the son of a taxi driver in the East Rand township of Vosloorus, now currently employed as a government bureaucrat in Pretoria. Finally, there is my other flat mate Sam, Maia and Zen's cousin, and her current girlfriend Lavernne, whose Tswana, White and Griqua background has required what she describes as, 'years of explanation' of who she is and who her family are, sometimes Afrikaans speakers, sometimes Tswana speakers, sometimes black, sometimes coloured.

Over the course of the night we had moved from Zen and Maia's parent's backyard in Mayfair, to an informal drinking spot on Station Rd in Fordsburg, where the moustached white owner asks if I am Portuguese from behind the bars of the booth festooned with the memorabilia of the Sporting Lisbon football club as he serves out bottles of liquor to young folk like us chasing the party, quarts of beer to groups of black men playing pool and shots of dop⁵¹ to the long term impoverished alcoholics who congregate outside as a pumping kwaito soundtrack plays. A very intoxicated thin Portuguese man with a greasy pony tail defiantly shouts out 'I am Tony Montana'⁵² to anyone passing by. Then a Malaika concert at the Horror Café in New Town where a largely black, young and trendy crowd had moved amongst the promotional material for a new product launch by a well-known deodorant manufacturer, to a club on Main Reef Rd on the edge of the South called Moody Blues (where I would later get a gig supporting the resident DJ Norman), where a coloured crowd of a wider age range were gathering for a night of drinking and dancing to a mix of R&B, Rare Groove, House and kwaito, under a large mural of the Johannesburg skyline, finally ending up in Samba, a small bar just off the main strip of Melville, which as always, was packed with a line of mostly young coloured, but also a significant smattering of black, white and Indian youth, going around the corner waiting to get in. The DJ begins with R&B and hip hop, mostly international, then, as the party deepens, moves into house, where kwaito is seamlessly interspersed with house records from abroad. This is the mix that has sound

⁵¹South African slang for alcoholic beverage of any kind

⁵²Tony Montana is the fictional Cuban-American criminal played by Al Pacino in the film Scarface.

tracked our night, playing out on the car stereos that have kept up the music in between our visits to venues. Watching people dancing, it was all how low can you go? Demonstrating strength in the upper thighs by bending knees and rotating the waist in such a way as to move the torso up and down in a smooth undulation, to as ‘low’ a point as possible, while alternately rocking the shoulders back and forth. The slow motion movements and superb control recalled Chernoff⁵³’s description of what a drummer in Ghana had said about what makes a good dancer alongside a drummer: when the movements are so slight, everything is centered in the body, it is the ultimate control of matching the body’s movement with the beat. This is not wild abandon, it is absolute control. Movement of diasporic forms across the Atlantic and back again, intersecting at new points, as Niaah (2008) has pointed out in her work on the trans-atlantic links between kwaito and Jamaican musical forms like dancehall. Though Laverne had dismissed the club as ‘too coloured’ as soon as we walked in, she got over her distaste to move into the circle and become the star of the night. The circle dancing, known as ‘Burning’, is a competition that spontaneously erupts in response to the raising of energy between DJ and crowd over the course of the night. As a circle of dancers forms, a girl or guy will go in the circle and do their thing, ranging from displays of pantsula-style moves – all raised on the toes in a series of tightly controlled yet stylistically floppy movements, to dancehall-style winding down to the floor. If another person thinks they can do it better, more sexy, more skillful, whatever, then they’ll get in and challenge them.

⁵³ Chernoff, John (1979) *African Rhythm & African Sensibility*. Chicago: Chicago University Press

The response of the circle determines the ‘winner’, though this is ephemeral and as quickly as circles form, they dissolve.

If, as Sophie Day has put it, “...orientation to the present constitutes a politics just as much as planned programmes for change” (Day 2007:336), then at Samba on the weekends, it was like time could stand still. The way the guys consumed alcohol and danced over the course of the night, buying rounds of drinks, spending a whole week’s wages on acts of generosity and excess. There was no sense of planning for the future. In the club, as the music poured out and bodies moved back and with it, there was no future to plan for, look forward to or be afraid of. Everything was now, right here, in this time. There was nowhere else to be but in the music, on the dancefloor, dopping⁵⁴ as if the purse could endlessly replenish itself. At points I would find myself wondering if the working week existed to facilitate this moment of immediate consumption and pleasure in a ‘motionless present’ (Geertz 1973)?

After Party

After the party, as we chilled in the backyard of the house on Fulham Rd, drinking beer and rum with coke dash around the fire in the early hours of the morning, the conversation moved away from the eternal present of the party to speculation about the future, critical reflection on the present and reconstructions of the past. A lap top had been pulled out on an extension lead from the kitchen, playing out a selection on shuffle. Damian Marley, Common, Kalahari Surfers.

⁵⁴⁵⁴ ‘Dopping’ is South African slang for drinking

Then ‘Fester’ by Jackknife came on. The insistence of its beat paused the flow of conversation for all of us to be absorbed for a moment in the music. Amidst acknowledgements all round that it was a classic of note, and so revolutionary for its time, memories turned back to the years when it was fresh. I remarked on the swiftness with which the western suburbs we had been traversing through the night had reverted back to being mixed after being zoned for whites. But David pointed out that the change itself was not so smooth, relating the story about the riot at his high school, and remembering other events from the transition time: “*White guys from Vrededorp would go driving round looking for people to beat up, ‘Kaffir’ and ‘Bushy’ bashing. These boers in their bakkies checking for any blacks or coloureds to fuck up. And then leading up to ’94, it was like there was equality, and the darkies could finally hit back. And people went around, like older guys I knew, themselves now, looking for those guys who’d caused them grief to fuck them up back.*” The time of the transition, when power was so obviously being channeled away from whiteness (at least its visible face), created a landscape where ‘victims’ could ‘fight back’ on white’s own territory which they themselves were now occupying through attendance at white schools, occupation of white neighborhoods. Reflecting on the events of a decade back, David observed that something about those violent encounters, when non-whites got to fight back as they made inroads into formerly white spaces, made for a sort of peace “*You know, it created respect between the people, as in, he gave as good as he got. And when things could have escalated, gotten really out of hand there kind of wasn’t the stomach for it. Everyone knew where it would end. It was like what we needed was a good punch up. Once that was done, everything died down*

Stephen and Andile were briefly energized by the appearance of Mjukeit, a kwaito hit from the mid 1990's, getting up to dance , Andile pulling exaggerated traditional Zulu moves, pulling back his right arm to shake his hand as his left arm extended straight forward to do the same. Stephen responded with the same, while those seated responded with low whistles and murmured 'whoops', an expression of approval for the song and response to it. Stephen,now a resident of Brixton, had been reflecting on his background as part of our discussion about the ways in which the western Areas had moved from being mixed in the past, to being spaces of racial conflict during the transition, to being the integrated spaces they were today. His family were from the inner Eastern Areas of Johannesburg and the Western Areas. His father grew up in Doornfontein, his mother in Jeppe, which where both 'grey areas' in some respects so their identities were shaped by the multicultural neighborhoods they were born and grew up in (see Trump 1979 for account of clearances in Doornfontein). Various family members had identified with different racial groupings – namely coloured and Indian- and languages spoken within the family included English, Afrikaans and Tamil. Stephen told a story to us about how the passing of the Group Areas Act had reinforced or forced the idea of separateness and exclusive ethnic and racial identities in unexpected ways for some family members:

" the story goes something like this, my grandmother from my mothers side, had a very conservative father who was the famous Rev. Sigamoney who was a Anglican priest in Fietas. She met my grandfather who was from a working class family, mother worked as factory worker and his father as a chef on the boats. Anyway my great grand father did not approve of my grandfather, and so my grand parents

eloped and got married and took my grandfathers surname 'Frank' as their last name. So my aunts and uncles had for Indian people what you would typically consider very coloured names, and they were Christian so they went to a coloured school called City and Suburban. So they thought they were coloured, then Group Areas kicked in, and they were classified as Indian because obviously they looked Indian, and had to move to Lenz (Lenaisa). Other members of the family did get classified as coloured, because of how they looked, and they ended up in Eldos (Eldorado Park)".

After forced removals, the family would still gather, across these newly inscribed racial lines, for Sunday gatherings where jazzing classics would be played loud and dancing practiced. Stephen recalled these family times with great affection. This was where he had learnt how to Jazz. Dancing, he confided, always made him feel like he was 'more than an Indian'. *I guess it's difficult for me to define myself, because I see myself as half and half, I have one foot in the Indian world and another in the coloured world".*

Andile shared with the group that though he had been with his fiancée Rekasha for 6 years, she was still unable to tell her strict Hindu family that she was engaged to someone black, and they did not know about Andile's existence. Maia reflected on this rigidity of Indian identity, and the internal hierarchies that could exist within it. Her own parents had experienced disapproval for their relationship from her mother's Muslim, and lighter skinned, parents, who did not consider her Christain and dark skinned Tamil father a good match. Though as she pointed out, the identification of her grandmother with a strong and politicized Indian identity

denied the fact that her own mother had been a Russian Jew, something Maia found exotic and strange when she considered how her own sense of self was so influenced with other people's identification of her as Indian, "*Especially when I dance. I always get people commenting on how surprising it is to see an Indian girl who can dance. Like I'm a freak of nature.*"

Dolby has emphasised that in order to understand the everyday experiences of young people, global conditions of mobility which are, "both affected by and instrumental in producing and reproducing class formations" (2007:5) need to be considered. In the after-party wind down times described above, marked with music and the sharing of alcohol and situated around the fire, a different kind of burning took place to that which defined the purpose of the circle in the club. To gather around a fire is a distinctly local practice in South Africa, shared by all population groups and social classes. In this context the local practice is a space of remembrance of experiences of social change triggered by particular songs associated with the time. It can also be re-thought as a nexus for the discussion of how youth 'move' within new geographies of modernity (Dolby 2007:5). The way in which those with more privileged class positions report on developments in the global centre, where scholarships have taken them to LA, Amsterdam and London, as Zen and Stephen do. They share descriptions of the inequality and disparity of wealth in the first world, confirming that poverty is not the exclusive domain of the so-called developing world. There are tales of legalized weed cafes and the kinds of partying that go on provide vicarious ways of experiencing liberal European and American celebrity culture. In response, stories from the frontline of working class

young South African lives are shared. The reluctance of white contractors to pay on time is complained about. The revelation of the continuing imposition of separate toilet facilities for black and white staff in some white-owned auto-shops by Ishmael is met with shaking of heads in disbelief. Here the ways in which class acted to divide the experiences of the group could be explored, and friendship reconstituted across class, as well as racial, borders. Music marks the parameters of the space, is the glue that holds it together, triggering memory and movement through the night.

Boom Shaka and the Making of Pride, Possibility and Good Memories

The sonic turn in South Africa's politics was articulated further in video from the 1995 Christmas celebrations in Mayfair. As the party deepened, Brenda's then 9 year old daughter Jessica sang kwaito group Boom Shaka's "It's About Time" for the camera. Hands on hips, and brandishing a fistful of attitude straight out of a hip hop video, she put on a confident performance:

I'm tired of people always asking me

What's happening, what time it is, what's going on

They try to see what's in my head

Why can't they leave me alone?

It's about time you listened to Boom Shaka

It's about time you listened to Boom

The cover of the eponymously titled Boom Shaka album featuring the song, which became a massive hit in South Africa, saw the group's 4 members, all black, paying homage to traditional African dress through the prism of an urban Western aesthetic.

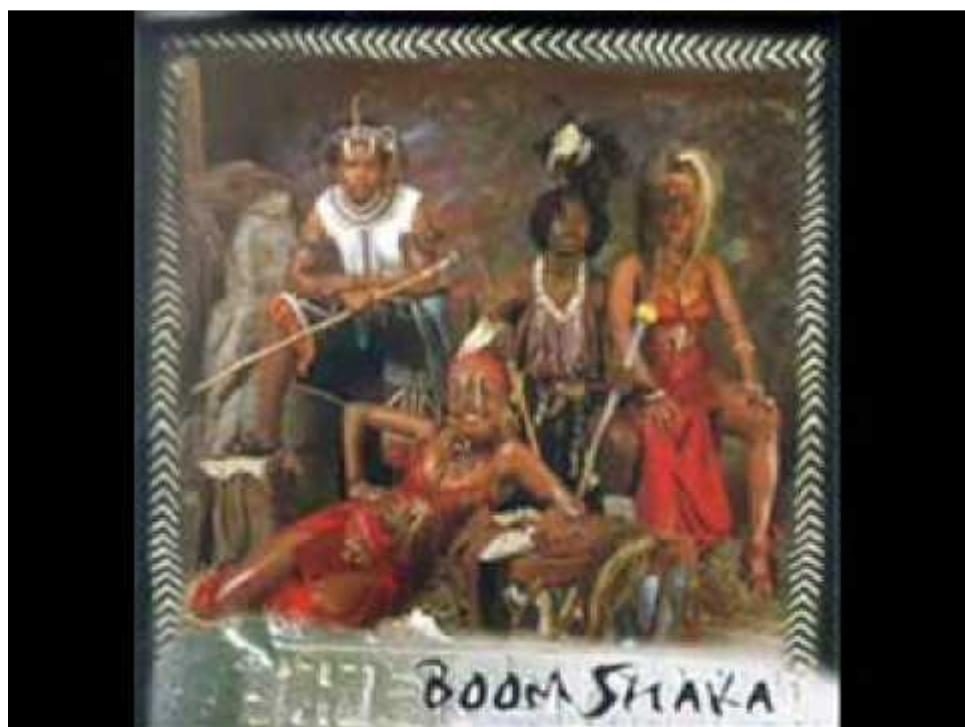


Figure 15: Boom Shaka Eponymous First Album Cover



Figure 16: Cover of 1998 album ‘Words of Wisdom’, Boom Shaka.

The song was sung over the top of a slickly-produced R&B beat, in the style of the American hip-hop and R&B records which were popular at the time. Boom Shaka were kwaito's first super group, and 1995 was the year that kwaito really began to make waves in mainstream South African popular culture as Arthur's controversial 'Kaffir' topped the charts. It reflected the sense of freedom and energy, for some, that accompanied the new political dispensation. There has been some critical writing on Boom Shaka's style, namely Stephens (2000) who suggested that there may be some connection between the explicit dance moves favored by the group and the practice of gang rape known as 'jackrolling' which had risen to some infamy at the time. However, as Angela Impey (2001) has countered in her article on gender and kwaito, though much of the lyrical content of kwaito records indicates a

dangerously high cultural tolerance of misogyny, kwaito is also a genre in which female stars and fans have cultivated assertive styles of dance and dress which are bold claims to occupying public space. This resonates with the argument put forward by Gotfrit (1991) on how by claiming dancing space, women disrupt the policing of their bodies as moral symbols, while Cooper (2004) argues that female stars and fans of dancehall in the Caribbean appropriate the symbols of misogyny to assert a powerful feminine occupation of space. The ambiguity of kwaito, the fact that it can be read from both sides, is part of what makes it a powerful sonic embodiment of social change in South Africa after apartheid, in which the hard fought ethos of a liberal constitution is in tension both with appeals to ‘traditional’ African values, continuing inequality and the persistence of race. The dynamic of contradictory interpretations of what South African society can be imagined as meet increasing exposure by young people to global youth cultural flows and access to cheap recording equipment as sanctions are relaxed.

Boom Shaka’s songs, read in the context of the time, appeal to a desire to move on from the past and enjoy the fruits of freedom. With titles like ‘Don’t Be Ashamed’ and ‘It’s About Time’. The explicit dance moves are part of an appropriation of dancehall and hip hop styles circulating in the videos of music television that many young South Africans were interested. The novel combining of these international styles with forms of dance identifiable as African, and an aesthetic of a nostalgic, tribal past re-interpreted within these flows was, following from Hebdige (1979), a form of bricolage that effectively brought together local and global styles in a way that proved to be extremely popular, and in later years, an evocative way of

remembering a particular time of life for those who were coming of age in the years when apartheid was replaced with the optimism of a new era.

In interviews I conducted between 2005 and 2006 about memories of this time, and the impact this music had on people, Boom Shaka came up again and again as exemplars of the mood in the country during the time of transition: one which emphasized all the new possibilities that had been unimaginable only a few years previously. Ndlamo Anderson, 26 years old in 2006 when interviewed, put it this way, *"I remember seeing this video so clearly and being obsessed by it. I guess I was about 13 or 14. I put on black lipstick just like Lebo and practiced the moves to the chorus for 'It's About Time' over and over. It made me feel proud to be South African."*

Sizwe, a similar age when the video came out, recalled his experience of seeing the video for the first time, *"I was sitting in the lounge at home, and it came on TV, I remember being just blown away by it. Watching it I felt like anything was possible."*

Both Ndlamo and Sizwe were negotiating positions within rapidly reconfiguring social contexts in Johannesburg post-1994. Ndlamo's parents had met through their shared commitment to the struggle against apartheid during the late 1970's in Cape Town. As a white man and coloured woman, their relationship was illegal under the auspices of the Mixed Marriages Act and Immorality Act. This, combined with their activist work within the ANC, meant that Ndlamo was born in exile in the United Kingdom. Growing up in North London, and surrounded by a community of struggle exiles, Ndlamo had a strong sense of occupying a multiple identities, as an

exiled South African, and young Londoner negotiating space within a multi-racial and multi-cultural youth culture influenced by the Caribbean diaspora, within which she was coded as ‘mixed race’. In her early teens, her parents separated. It was in the year immediately following the election, and many exiles were returning to a transforming South Africa. While her father stayed in the UK, Ndalamo’s mother returned to South Africa with her new husband, a Zulu-speaker. Ndalamo joined them. Attending a recently desegregated Model C high school in Johannesburg in the mid 1990’s, she found the normative standards of racial belonging that operated both within the school and in the wider South African society challenging, “*I was constantly having to explain myself, who I was, how that came to happen. And being required to say ‘what I was’. White or coloured. . And I didn’t identify with being either, because I’d grown up with this struggle politics that was about identifying with, I suppose, a politically black identity, while also rejecting the idea that race was so important. It was almost like people got angry about me not being willing to be pigeon holed into their idea about what I could or could not be, racially that is. So getting into Boom Shaka, and all of that music that was coming up and the style, it was really necessary to have that space.*”

Ndalamo returned to London after a year, but returned to Johannesburg as a young adult in 2004 to live again. Music for her was critical to integrating the spaces of London and South Africa; making them make sense together. Kwaito and South African hip hop offered a South African manifestation of a global youth and music culture that she identified with, and which she could link to her life in London.

For Sizwe early experiences with kwaito and the sense of excitement and possibility it offered came at a point when, as a teenager, his family were making the transition from township to suburbs as the opportunities for mobility to middle class black South Africans opened up. Having grown up in Soweto, his family moved to a house in Crosby in the mid 1990's, one of the first black families in the area. Though, as Sizwe pointed out, this construction of a unified blackness was also problematic. His father's family were largely Zulu-speaking, but his paternal grandmother had been a Xhosa. On his mother's side, long term urban residents, there had been coloured and black ancestry, with some family members classified as black, and others as coloured in the 1950's. For him, the excitement offered by kwaito evoked a sense of the breaking down of the rigid ideas about what being young, black and South African could be. Boom Shaka's playful use of symbols of traditional African life, combined with sophisticatedly executed global urban styling, and a mélange of Afro-diasporic sounds from house to hip hop to raga and reggae perfectly backdropped and soundtracked the movement between spaces that was occurring in the country, and for his family. Kwaito songs popular at the time could in the present powerfully evoke that sense of optimism and possibility. Indeed, it was because of the memories evoked by particular songs of the era that we had begun talking in the first place.

I met Sizwe after I'd played a residency gig at Roka, a club in between Brixton and Melville in 2006. My boss Shakes ran the cub with an iron fist, insulting the staff representing all South Africa's population groups and African immigrant communities on the basis of their race and nationality, with no insult off limits.

Referring to himself he would say, ‘People think I’m Indian, but my family have been here for 5 generations. As African as they come baby.’ I was first up on the decks that night, and had to work hard to build the crowd, who were milling around at the sides, drinking beers and smoking in the open courtyard. Sizwe, wearing a pristine white sporty hat and white tracksuit gave me a nod of appreciation as I brought in the opening bars of Jill Scott’s ‘One Time’, beginning to move his body. I identified him immediately as the one to play for right now. If I could get him dancing, then hopefully I would spark a chain reaction when the right song came on, triggering the moment of the tipping point, when suddenly a night starts to happen, dancers and DJ seamlessly generating a flow of energy that reaches a series of peaks over the course of several hours. I was right. He was soon on the dance floor with his friend, opening up the space for me to build the crowd using my play list. I brought in more neo-soul and hip hop classics. Dwele, Common, The Roots. Attempting to read a dance floor that was starting to fill up, I switched to early Janet Jackson, followed by the 1980’s rare groove classic by Imagination ‘Just an Illusion’. This secured me the crowd, but when I beat matched its distinctive opening bars to the opening of the classic kwaito anthem by New School ‘Dla Ka Yona’, the crowd exploded, the floor instantly filling, and sustained by Kamzu’s ‘Mjukeit’. A circle formed and yes, I pumped the room full of dramatic smoke from the button next to the decks that controlled the smoke machine as individuals began to burn in the centre. I played out a roll call of kwaito classics to the crowd’s delight. As I slowed the pace, layering the beginning of Boom Shaka’s ‘Gcwala’ in and out of each tune, until stopping the beat completely to allow Lebo Mathosa’s

searing vocal fill the entire space acapella, Sizwe caught my eye and gave me a massive thumbs up.

Too Late for Mama

I recall an ethnographic example that illustrates this process of emotional channelling through popular music, and the way in which certain kinds of music at certain times can open distinct spaces for articulating a variety of emotional states. It was at a conference to discuss violence against gay women held at the old Women's Gaol in Johannesburg where I had been hired as a DJ to provide the post-conference dancing soundtrack. Once a notorious prison which housed ordinary women, on charges ranging from prostitution to pass evasion, alongside major female figures in the Struggle like Fathima Meer and Winnie Mandela, the Women's Gaol is now a museum, exhibition/events venue and home of the Constitutional Court. Mark Gevisser (2004) has examined how, in the creation of South Africa's highest court as a public space out of a dark space of the past, the city is presenting a model of democratic public space to represent the essence of its achievements and the direction in which it is developing, a process familiar in many modern cities.

The following fragment charts the unfinished business of emotional trauma on a national and personal level, suggesting that the linear model of experience and resolution is insufficient for modelling the ways in which trauma is worked through.

The delegates were mostly young black South African women, representing various LGBTI⁵⁵ organisations, but they included a significant number of overseas visitors from the rest of Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe. South Africa, despite having one of the most progressive constitutions in the world with regards to sexual orientation, has also seen a sharp rise in violent hate crime, particularly against young lesbian women living in townships. Henriette Gunkel (2010) has linked the violence against lesbians into wider instances of gender-based violence in South Africa. The highest profile case in 2008 involved the rape and murder of Eudy Simelane, a popular and openly out former player for Banyana Banyana⁵⁶, who was killed after a night out with friends in her home in Kwa Thema, an East Rand township. The conference was an expression of solidarity against the rise of violence against women generally and young gay women in Africa in particular. As the final speakers took to the stage, a call was made for delegates to take to the mic stand themselves and share their stories. These turned out to be highly emotive tales of personal suffering and violence. The atmosphere became highly charged as an outpouring of grief and anger occurred. It was hard to know what to do with it, how to end the conference and honour these stories, where to put the emotions that had been released. I asked the organiser of the conference if it was OK to play a song. As the opening bars of Brenda Fassie's 'Too Late for Mama' filled the room, some women began to cry either alone or hugging each other while

⁵⁵ Acronym for 'Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex'

⁵⁶ 'Banyana Banyana'- the name for the South African national women's soccer team. Literally translates as 'The Girls, The Girls'. The national men's team is 'Bafana Bafana' – The Boys The Boys

others started to dance to the slowly building rhythm. Some came up to the DJ table to hug me and say thank you. Brenda's distinctive voice building up to the release of the lyrics which tell the story of a poor rural African woman struck by lightning as she goes to fetch water:

It started raining on the way to get some water

Poor woman had a baby on her back

Was struck by lightning on the way to fetch some water

She tried hiding under a tree to save the child

Poor woman had no place to go

Lightning got her with the baby on her back

Friends and relative came

But it was too late

Too late for mama⁵⁷

It would have been a familiar song to most of the South African women in the room. Brenda Fassie was a massively successful artist and 'Too Late For Mama' was a multi-platinum selling album in 1989. It marked a point in Brenda Fassie's career where she moved away from the apolitical lyrical style of her earlier records (though 'Weekend Special'⁵⁸, one of her earliest hits, can be read as a critique of

⁵⁷ 'Too Late for Mama' Composer: S. Twala, Publisher: Gallo Music Publications

⁵⁸ 'Weekend Special' Composer: Melvin Matthews. Publisher: Gallo Music Publications

unequal gender relations in urban contexts) while retaining the bubblegum beat that made her so popular. The critique in the new lyrical style was both overt and oblique. ‘Too Late For Mama’ made the point that rural black women were the most likely to be exploited and victimised through the trope of telling a story. (Songs like ‘Black President’ were more obviously critical in the political climate of the 1980s). So there is an element of familiarity and recognition, and also the way in which the instrumental arrangement, Brenda’s voice and the lyrics combine to make a powerful aural experience even for those who are not familiar with her work. The atmosphere of the song is one of dealing with intense grief, so that even listening to the lyrics is not really necessary to get a sense of the song. It was not only the South African women who were (literally) moved by it. As it faded out, the organiser closed the conference with a short speech praising the bravery and honesty of the participants. As the delegates moved to the refreshments table, I started to play the party music I had been hired to, putting on kwaito group Bongo Maffin’s ‘The Way Kunghakona’. In this song, a traditional story about the dangers of young rural women leaving the safety of the village to seek out forbidden pleasures is re-worked to celebrate defiance of the control of women’s bodies. Loud whoops filled the air, bodies moving with great enthusiasm to a more joyful kind of release, forming a dance floor in the centre of the old prison.

What I’m trying to demonstrate with the ethnographic memory and field note extract is the way in which music can open up a particular space of release and openness. The songs may not trigger exact memories (although sometimes they

do), but there is a sense of a space being opened where various kinds of emotions can be explored, or at least *felt* in relative safety.

Conclusion

Kwaito is embedded in a wider urban music culture that draws on global flows of music. It is not consumed, or made by, a uniform black youth, but reveals cross-cutting cleavages across various ‘groups’ in South Africa. Livermon (2006), writes about how he finds himself looking for kwaito, wanting to go to a township bash, while his young black South African companions are more keen to visit the O Bar in Melville. His descriptions acknowledge the problem of conflating kwaito with a consensus of taste and unity amongst young black South Africans. The assumption of a racialised group solidarity in South Africa when approaching an analysis of new South African electronic music is a product of the historically over-determined category of race as the primary marker of self in South African discourse. An analysis of kwaito potentially offers a far more nuanced understanding of the multiple registers of identity amongst those who make, listen and dance to kwaito.

It is a powerful part of the memories of growing up of particular members of a particular generation, namely those who came of age in the mid to late 1990s and early 2000s and participated in ‘kwaito culture’ by dancing and listening, for whom it was a soundtrack. Kwaito is music for pleasure, but its consumption and production is not limited to the dancefloor, though much of its meaning is

generated there. Dismissing lyrics as secondary also misses the ways in which lyrics themselves can operate to produce pleasurable counter-readings of power relations (Arthur's 'Kaffir') and gender discourses (Bongo Maffin's 'The Way Kungakhona').

Kwaito as a genre accommodates many positions which can be utterly contradictory. Misogyny, feminist response, pleasure, grief, celebration, aural landscapes of post-apartheid cities, nation building, ethnically framed antagonisms, critique of class fragmentation and aspirations to enjoy the trappings of a middle class lifestyle – all find some space. It acted as the sonic embodiment of the time of transition in South Africa in the 1990's and early 2000's. The memories attached to the music of that time build particular cohorts of remembrance, often associated with nostalgia for a more hopeful time, both in terms of the nation (when democracy was still new and the change occurring seemed miraculous and exciting) and the self (a time in life associated with increased independence and entering the adult world). In as much as these cohorts can foster multi-racial unity, they can also mark distinction. It is the tension between fixed and fluid conceptions of identity in South Africa.

The cohort group described here bears some resemblance to those described in previous chapters. Like Michael and Daphne, and Brenda, these young people are inventing and experiencing social formations which blend, melt and cross pre-existing definitions of race as a primary identifier in South Africa, whilst awareness of these categories as unchanging and static continues to erupt. Where they diverge from the former examples is in their positionality at a time in South African

history where the separation of these racial classifications is no longer part of the legislative landscape. Freed from these constraints, and operating in this political paradigm, and in the particular space of the western areas, where there is a significant number of inhabitants from a variety of population groups living, working and schooling together, this cohort's experience of music and music culture allows for some transcendence and re-negotiation of the meaningfulness of these categories and a re-definition of self that was unobtainable for previous generations due to contextual constraints.

The multiple sites of the research participant's interactions, ancestry and the particularities of these western suburbs of Johannesburg, reveal the way in which the categories that structure society, individuals and place shift and reform continuously. Thus, 'mixing it up' refers not only to boundaries of constructed racial categories being crossed, but also boundaries of class, gender and age, as well as trans-national border crossings and the international flow of cultural products and meaning, interpreted through a multiplicity of local lenses. Music is, as Small has demonstrated (1985), the critical anchor that soundtracks these encounters, the mix that plays out in cars, clubs, backyards, kitchens, bedrooms, family functions, celebrations, commiserations. In this way, the material presented in this chapter explores the use of kwaito as an individual and social biographical object which can encompass contradictory expressions of identity and self.

Chapter 6

Rainbow Nation of the Flesh

"Hope you guys are waxed. No hairy legs here".

Clint, resident DJ at Paradise, speaking to the dancers on the microphone, August 2006

"Borders are as many scars, in places still sensitive to the touch, likely to erupt unexpectedly"

Breyten Breytenbach⁵⁹

Music is, as Simmel would put it, a site of *Vergesellschaftung* or 'sociation' (1950: 41). Though sociation can be read as equivalent to sociality, as Anderson (2003: 27) reminds us, it is useful to distinguish between the two terms. 'Sociation' is generally the forms and processes of human interaction, while sociality is the historically constructed understanding of sociation (Anderson 2003:28). So experiences of music are a form of sociation, while how that experience is understood is sociality. People can participate in a musical experience, at a nightclub or a concert or by liking the same song. Though ostensibly having the same experience, they can understand it in very different ways. Simmel's analytical

⁵⁹Breyten Breytenbach 'The Memory of Birds in a Time of Revolution' (1996:12)

concept combined with Small's theory of musicking permits us to see music not only as a cultural form which people may make, listen or move to, but to locate these acts inside the very fabric of the performance of everyday life and the generation of society (Blacking 1973). This occurs in situations where there are agreed definitions of what the experience means, a vital part of maintaining social cohesion according to Goffman (1959), and where there is dissent about the meaning. This dissent can ultimately be ignored as part of a strategy of maintaining social cohesion. The dynamics of dissent can also, unresolved, result in new definitions of meaning related to musical acts.

Dissent can also remain unresolved, or temporarily resolved in the context of the musical act, but unable to sustain its transformative force within the wider field of sociality. In this thesis, the interplay of cohesion and dissent in musicking amongst the actors described, is explored as a vital component in the continual emergence and fashioning of society.

During my fieldwork in Johannesburg, South Africa, I was employed as a DJ at several clubs around the city, as well as playing at parties and events. This chapter explores my experience of working at one of these clubs, Paradise, an upmarket lap dancing venue located in the very wealthy Sandton area of the city. In Paradise, new social formations and conceptions of the location of power in South Africa are the locus for approaches to running the club, attracting a new clientele, and a point around which conflict is articulated. The nodes of music and race are critical in these articulations of cohesion and dissent.

Welcome To Paradise

Jackie and I were in the sushi bar section of Paradise, sat on luxuriously upholstered chairs, eating our dinner before the night kicked off. I'd done my set up, turning on sound equipment and twinkling low lighting. Jackie would soon be in the back dressing room, putting on make up and her outfit before coming out to sit at one of the small tables surrounding the stage. From this base she would move around the club, socializing with customers if she thought there was a chance they might be interested in paying her for a lap dance. Every now and again she would be called up by me to dance on stage for two songs, the first clothed, the second not. Jackie liked dancing to ragga, so I would make sure that I played that kind of music when I called her up. I'd move between the DJ booth and the club floor, playing a continuous soundtrack, armed with a microphone and list of names of all the dancers who were working that night so that every two songs I could call another girl to take to the stage, ensuring a continuous floor show. It's like reading out the descriptions in the top of a chocolate box. Candy, Ginger, Midnight, Velvet, Angel, Destiny, Venus.

As an active participant in the construction of performance and as an actor in the social dramas that were enacted amongst dancers, customers and other staff, I assess how being both an employee and researcher affected and created the fieldwork setting in a unique way. This embodied experience brought particular aspects of my research questions to the fore. Firstly, the relationship between music, rhythm and race in constructing money-generating identities for the

dancers. Secondly, the paradoxes and conflicts inherent in the relationships between people previously segregated by apartheid ideology, and the persistence of these categories as they are re-negotiated, an issue Deborah Posel (2001) has looked at in some depth. As Friedman (2004) points out, all new concepts of society and change are built on existing conceptions and understandings: nothing is integrated which does not somehow correspond or adapt to an existing world view. Apartheid does not disappear at the stroke of democratic midnight. Its legacy of perceived innate racial difference, inherited from colonialism and still embedded in wider global society, continues to mutate and reform. I hope to show the ways in which rhythm, musical taste and individual performance of self in the particular space of nightclubs and parties throws light on these processes in action.

Composition of Staff, Ownership and Clientelle at Paradise

The following section details the composition across class, gender and racial lines of the club's staff, ownership and clientelle. It is not comprehensive, and it was not possible to get exact figures due to the nature of my employment there and the limited amount of time I worked there (approximately over 2 months, three nights a week). However, the following gives an indication of the broad spectrum of class, race, nationality and gender represented in the club, and the complex intersections at work. The club's division of labour and ownership is as follows: The owners are white, men in their late thirties and early forties. They would've been in their mid twenties and early thirties when the transition was negotiated in the early 1990's. All had done compulsory military service as was required of all white males in

apartheid South Africa and were from affluent backgrounds. The majority share owner, Ryan, had grown up in the wealthy Northern Suburbs of Johannesburg. Sean, the co-owner (with a minority share) was born in Scotland, but had emigrated with his family as a child to a coastal resort near Durban. The top management tier consists of one middle aged white woman (originally from Zimbabwe), a middle aged black man (originally from Dobsonville, Soweto) and a middle aged white Portuguese man (originally from Angola). The middle management tier, responsible for running the floor, comprise one black woman in her late twenties (originally from Malawi), a black man in his late twenties (originally from Meadowlands, Soweto), a young white man (Northern suburbs) and a white woman in her early thirties (a former 'exotic performer' and recent arrival in South Africa from Bulgaria). Bar staff and waitrons were a mix of young white, Indian, coloured and black South Africans, as well as one Romanian woman in her early twenties who had accompanied her sister as a dancer, then decided not to dance but work as a waitress. The kitchen staff, including the head chef, were all black and male and varied in age from their early twenties to late forties. There was also a dedicated sushi chef, who was Chinese South African. A Greek South African woman worked in the till office most nights. Bouncers were black and white men in their mid-thirties. The car guards employed casually outside to watch vehicles were all young black men in their teens and early twenties, most of whom are resident in nearby Alexandria township. The majority of dancers were white, though not all South African. A substantial number were recruited through agencies abroad and came from Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and Poland. They were provided with accommodation by Paradise and were taken home after their shifts in a minibus

provided by the club. There was one Chinese dancer, who had been recruited under a similar arrangement. In addition, there were a substantial number of black dancers, all of whom were South African, as well as several coloured and Indian dancers, all South African. The clientele were mostly male and affluent. The majority South African and white, but there were also substantial numbers of black, coloured and Indian men. ‘Mixed’ groups of businessmen entering to celebrate or make deals were common sights. Some customers were regulars who visited frequently and had built client relationships with particular dancers. Male customers came in groups, pairs and alone. Women did come into the club fairly frequently, usually in a couple with a male partner, in mixed gender groups or very occasionally, in single gender groups. I never saw a female customer come in by herself when I was there. There were also customers from abroad, brought in with calling cards left at nearby luxury hotels. During my time there, these came from Europe and other parts of Africa. Additionally, on nights when there were big rugby matches at Ellis Park, dancers would go out dressed in sexy business suits and accompanied by a senior manager to hand out calling cards for the club. They did not do this for Premiership soccer matches. Sean, the co-owner of the club explained this to me as, *‘The rugby supporters have got money to spend. Those township guys don’t’*. Rugby is a sport traditionally associated with the white population in South Africa, while soccer is associated with the black working class.

Turner has emphasized the separation of work and leisure in industrial societies (1982:36), and how this differs from pre-industrial and rural societies where work and play were on more of a continuum. However, the lap dancing space is more

like a continuum of work and leisure in some respects. The way in which dancers are integrated into a 'leisure' space in which they project an illusion of joining customers in their leisure time while very much being at work at the same time.

Getting Inside

I got the job at Paradise by accident. My friend Faith and I had been out on a Monday evening. She in Crosby, driven by another friend who was a rising light in the had picked me up from my house South African film industry. We went to Melville to get something to eat, ordering a glass of red wine to drink with the food. While Faith and I stuck (uncharacteristically) to one glass, the young actor seemed focused on oblivion, suffering as he probably was from the depression that comes when a great success is not followed up by immediate offers of work and further affirmation of one's talent. He drank glass after glass, eventually falling asleep into his half eaten plate of food. Faith made a wise executive decision to take over the keys to his car. The plan was to drop him off at his house in Sandton, the heart of the rich Northern suburbs of Johannesburg, before turning around back to the center west where I lived. Faith would drive herself home after that and get the car back to him in the morning when he had sobered up.

We turned into a standard Sandton street, lined with well established trees and mansions hidden behind high walls and electronic gates. The young actor mumbled thanks, agreeing to his car being delivered to him in the morning, and stumbled inside. As the electric gates glided shut there was a moment's silence. Faith turned to me and stated the obvious. "Dom, we have a car in our possession, when does

that ever happen?" She was right of course. Faith had always borrowed one of her parents' cars to drive us round at night, but since both of them had been stolen from her front yard in the course of one week and the insurance claim was months from being resolved, this source of transport had been abruptly cut off. Though I had passed my test a few months previously, I did not have a car either. This was indeed a special event. "We aren't dressed to go out though", I replied. And we weren't, not beyond grabbing some Monday night dinner. We were both wearing jeans and grubby All Star trainers. I had two sports jumpers on, a woolly scarf and an old, warm jacket. Faith had similar layering to protect against the bitterly cold Highveld winter night. Worse, our hair hadn't been done. Faith had recently taken out her braids and hadn't replaced them with anything. I was growing out a short cut which was in that funny 'in-between' phase, and hidden under a baseball cap. We did not epitomize glamour. Still, it was Monday night, and a free car does not come along every day at your convenience. Sometimes it is necessary to go with the flow.

We sat for a while considering our options. Despite the novelty of available transport, the combination of cold, Monday night, and not being dressed for the occasion made us feel stunted as to the choices available to us. Then I remembered a conversation Faith and I had had a few weeks previously when we had both said we were curious to see what a lap dancing club was like. She had said that we should go to one she knew of in Sandton. As our usual haunts are in the west of the city, and the drive to the North can seem like an effort, nothing had

been made of it. But here we were now, in the heart of Sandton wondering what to do, and though my knowledge of strip bars was limited, I did know that if they're open, there will be the advertised action going on. Faith pointed out the obvious, we were not dressed to gain entry to an up-market establishment. Though I felt the tremors of insecurity that come from needing the armour of looking the part to confidently gain access to places, I argued that we had nothing to lose. I calculated that Monday was a slow night for most clubs and bars, even in the world of venues whose main attraction is girls with their tops off. On that premise I reasoned, we could persuade the door staff to let us in even in our jeans and dirty trainers, if we were going to at least be boosting bar takings and making up numbers on an otherwise dismal night. Plus I figured as 'lady customers' we might have an irresistible novelty value. As years of clubbing had taught me, girls have door clout.

We drove a few streets down to Rivonia Drive, past the glittering skyscrapers that make up the Sandton City shopping, business and hotel centre. Marking the heart of the Northern suburbs, these buildings have risen in the past decade as a rival to the skyline of Johannesburg's CBD. Sandton is in fact a separate municipal area to the city of Johannesburg, and in the years leading up to and just after the election of the first ANC government, it capitalized on its location in a wealthy, protected enclave of the greater Witwatersrand area to draw many businesses and organizations eager to relocate from what was perceived as the lost cause of the CBD. The final cementing of its status as a counter financial super power came with the relocation of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange from its downtown Jozi

headquarters in Diagnal St to new facilities in the heart of Sandton. This is where you can visit Louis Vuitton shops or Gucci outlets and buy any of the luxury international goods you may desire if you can afford it (De Vries 2008). The only indication that this is still South Africa and not Los Angeles is the taxi rank which carries working class black commuters from their homes in the townships, particularly Alexandria, Sandton's shadow twin sister. Also the stalls selling pap and vleis⁶⁰ or chicken stew to affluent black office employees who sometimes like to eschew the offerings of the mall for some home cooking on the pavement outside. It's also a maze of dead ends and strange small roads in the privacy of small developments for high tech businesses and gated luxury communities for their workers off the main highways. Going round in circles we stopped at a petrol station to ask for directions. The attendant smiled widely and told us which way to turn, staring at us like alien visitors. I imagine the girls who asked for directions to the strip club, and what they might be doing there, was the main topic of conversation on the forecourt that night.

Pulling into the entrance to Paradise, you could be forgiven for thinking that you were arriving at a party at someone's house - a very nice house with ample parking. The giveaway is the red neon sign on the side which reads in swirly letters "Paradise". I reminded Faith that we were there for a nightcap and that the worst that could happen is they say we're not suitably dressed and can't come in. Indeed,

⁶⁰Stiff Maize meal and meat.

on asking to come in for a drink, the response of the attractive middle-aged Greek looking woman on the door, sitting behind a glass screen was to look at us incredulously and say, "You do know this is a Gentleman's Club?" It wasn't said in an unkind way, more genuinely puzzled. A narrow turnstile, like a luxury version of the ones you go through at football grounds, would prevent any gentleman from thinking that they could storm through into the club if they couldn't afford the R250 entrance charge and have a quick glimpse of naked flesh before being booted out. It was a Fort Knox arrangement, cleverly designed to heighten the feeling of exclusivity and the excitement of entry.

It certainly spurred us on to get in. Nothing like a challenge. "Er, yes, we know it's a 'gentlemen's' club, we just want a late night drink and this is the only place open". She weighed up the options in her head and said yes, we could come in, entry was R250. That's a large sum of money in any currency, even accounting for the exchange rate. We negotiated, arguing that it was Monday night and close to closing time. She was adamant, though apologetic. She said she'd let us in for free if it was up to her but management wouldn't allow that. A large man dressed in a suit with long white blonde hair, almost as light as his skin, came up to the door. She explained what was going on, he looked us up and down, said "Charge them 100" and walked away. We paid what was still a silly amount of money and made our way through the posh football ground turnstiles into the opulent entrance lobby. Walking past the sign that read, "Strictly no jeans, casual wear or sports shoes" in denim and trainers to make our grand entrance.

As Victor Turner demonstrated (1992) in the context of liminality and rites of passage, the importance of entrance, of creating the conditions for a performance, is vital. It is as though performance can be measured in three stages. The time prior to the performance, where preparation and expectation are the primary features which make it possible for the performance to occur. The performance itself, which transforms all participants, even if only temporarily. Then the time after the performance, when senses and possibilities are heightened. I'll use Turner's own words here to describe the purpose of these rites of passage, "They confer on the actors, by nonverbal as well as verbal means, the experiential understanding that social life is a series of movements in space and time, a series of changes of activity, and a series of transitions in status for individuals. They also inscribe in them the knowledge that such movements, changes and transitions are not merely marked by, but also effected by, ritual." (1982:78)

The entrance to Paradise, the barriers, the sense of forbidden luxury, fulfilled all the requirements of Turner's stage one, preparing the actors. Club entrances can be seen as particular liminal spaces in themselves, portals between outside and inside, where the neophyte is faced with a series of tests and barriers to gain access to an alternative reality. Even when the neophyte has, through experience, become seasoned at gaining access, there is the thrill of knowing the game, of confidence. It's the pleasure of exercising one's skill. I once worked in one of these liminal

spaces, playing the role of ‘door whore’ or ‘door bitch’ (see Fikentsher 2000 for extrapolation of the role and history of the ‘door bitch’ in New York clubland). My job was to look glamorous and intimidating, holding a clipboard with the names of those who had paid for tickets in advance or had guest list access. My work tools were a pen and a cash box for putting the entrance money into. My co-worker was a burly bouncer in a tuxedo called Lee. The club was held on a river boat so had a particularly effective entrance to pass through, a small drawbridge which connected the barge to land. The club’s promoters placed a red carpet down the bridge ending a couple of meters on land and flanked by two trees covered in twinkling fairy lights. I stood like a gatekeeper at the top of the drawbridge, under a canopy decorated with flowers and lights. People would come up to me to gain access. I would play a game of assessment with each group or individual that came up. Though in reality my only grounds for turning someone away would be if they were excessively drunk or the venue had become too crowded, it was important to create an illusion of risk of refusal for some and a smooth entrance for others. The way in which a club is entered becomes part of the narrative for the night. Stolzoff (2000:111) has described how in the 1990s the rise of dancehall events in Jamaica saw grand, status affirming entrances being made at dances on high tech motor bikes or in a Mercedes Benz. At this level, it is almost like mythological stories or fairy tales. Does the dragon guarding the gates to the garden where, say, the fruit of eternal life grows (I may be over-dramatising the importance of going out here for a moment but maybe I’m not), allow the seeker to pass easily or is there a battle? How does the seeker determine the best way to approach the guardian? By what criteria does the dragon judge those who want to pass? Like fairy tales, it

doesn't always turn out as you would expect. Sometimes those who approach over-confidently will be judged as arrogant, and though ultimately granted entrance, will have their ego deflated by unexpected difficulties at the door. Others who come as obvious innocents, expecting a difficult time, will be granted immediate, smiling entry-Mercedes or not.

It is not the spaces themselves, but the intention that goes into them, that make them work. These are the 'intention displays' as described by Goffman in relation to the ways in which the individual makes him or herself into something that others can read and predict from (1972:11). Goffman talks about this in relation to public spaces – streets, subways and the like. The nightclub, with its exaggerated sense of entry and active pursuit of being a site of liminality and transformation, occupies a space somewhere between the public and private. Goffman turns his discussion of these intention displays to this kind of space when he talks about the 'structured scanning' that goes on in some social settings. He uses the example of the 70s phenomenon of singles bars in American cities (1972:21), but it can easily be extended to a variety of other settings which are neither public nor private and need to be negotiated between 'participation units' and individuals. The lap dancing club is an example of this, as the material that follows demonstrates. And perhaps what Turner did not make clear in his descriptions of the liminal 'rite of passage' space, as one in which the transition and movement of social life and its actors is made transparent, is that the social actors who pass through this space do not pass through equally or without the baggage of their social positioning (though

Turner does provide the tools for examining this potential for dissent and conflict in the form of social drama).

Behind the Sequined Curtain

Faith and I are standing behind the sequined curtain, so to speak, about to step inside the heart of Paradise. When we do, it is a bit of an anti-climax, something else that Turner hints at when he emphasizes how good performances are the ones that are most transformative. Perhaps bad ones still have power, just not in the same way. The club was almost empty, Monday night of course. A thin white girl with shortish blonde hair and a sour or haughty expression, depending on interpretation, danced on the main stage in the center of the room, swinging between the three poles which stood at each corner. I would later come to know her as 'Emmanuel', a working class Afrikaans girl from the southern suburbs of Joburg with a reputation as a bitch amongst the other dancers, some of whom would refer to her as 'white trash', maybe motivated by jealousy as Emmanuel was perhaps the most skilled dancer at the club, extremely proficient in the acrobatic feats of turning her body upside down on the pole, supporting her weight with hands gripping the base as her legs slid effortlessly down into a knee bend, before flipping her body back the right way up. She was also one of the most popular girls, often on the lucrative hour long 'exclusives' whereby a girl was paid to spend an entire hour or evening with a client who did not want her to share her company with anyone but his party. On the night that Faith and I visited, she was the only

girl I saw performing a lap dance, the basic unit in which a girl makes her money, being paid to strip and dance on the lap of a customer for the length of two songs. Faith and I took a seat at a table next to the stage and a waitress came and took our drinks order. Something about the club, and the atmosphere of watching and assessing girls our age dancing on stage with the aim of earning money, brought out the critical bitch in us. I'd reflect now that it was a kind of defence mechanism to make us feel more powerful and separated in an environment where we were really not that far removed from the girls we had paid the club to come and see. We commented in whispers to each other that the blonde girl on stage looked very 'Germiston', the name of a town in the south of Joburg with a reputation as the natural home of 'white trash'. It was weird seeing her take her clothes off. I thought how small her breasts were, not the silicone stereotype I'd imagined. The rest sat in a group next to another smaller stage with a single pole, wearing lingerie or short evening gowns, looking bored. Another group sat in another corner, with an older woman dressed in a black suit who we thought looked like the 'mama Queen Bee' of the lap dance harem. They came on stage in succession, dancing to two songs. The first clothed, the second topless. There was a majority of white girls, a few black girls and one girl who looked like a mix of Indian and coloured. We commented, bitchily, on how most of the white girls seemed rhythmless and stiff. I had naively thought that women would only get jobs if they could dance well. Faith said that the performers were better at Malaisha, another club down the road in the wealthy suburb of Rosebank, famous for its 'go go' girls, none of whom was white. It was aimed at the youthful black elite who congregated in the business, leisure and retail center of Rosebank's open air inter linked malls. However, our

nastiness was tempered when a white dancer came and did the splits right in front of our table, isolating the muscles in her bum to move each gluteal independently before flahing us a cheeky grin, “She’s actually got rhythm!” whispered Faith. It was skilful, and done for our benefit. Flattery is a great leveller. We gave her a round of applause. Over these performances you would hear the voice of the male DJ, coming from somewhere we couldn’t see, introducing the next girl and her attributes. His choice of music was not to my taste- dull chart hits of the eighties with the occasional Eminem or rock track. When he did play a song we liked, a track by Sean Paul, the atmosphere in the club lifted as some of the girls in the corner got up and did a group dance. Faith and I did a little seated bop ourselves. At the end of the night he played a remix of a current popular hit by a group called the Pussycat Dolls. They are the obvious choice for a lap dancing club as their members were recruited from a famous pole dancing venue in Los Angeles. The lyrics to the chorus go ‘Don’t you wish your girlfriend was hot like me? Don’t you wish your girlfriend was a freak like me? Dontcha?’ answered by a jaunty horn section. This DJ’s version had changed the lyrics and had a man singing, “Dontcha wish your boyfriend had a dick like me?” All the dancers got on stage in a grand finale for the night. The black girl who had flashed me and Faith a smile earlier grabbed me by the hand and I found myself surrounded on stage, being urged to ‘go on the pole’. I refused, but had a little dance, drink in hand, finding the juxtapositioning of my dirty trainers and jeans with all the lingerie a nice way to end a somewhat uneventful night at a strip club, if a bit embarrassing. We said goodbye to the girls and headed for the exit.

The ‘queen bee’ we had spotted earlier was waiting at the entrance, she asked us if we’d had a good time as we paid our bill. We began to chat. Her name was Sheila, she lived in Germiston, and was a white Zimbabwean who had come to South Africa as a teenager. She was the dance manager at the club, responsible for recruiting and ‘looking after the girls’. She asked if I had considered being a dancer myself and offered me a job at the club, with the promise of making a lot of easy money. I later discovered this was not an uncommon recruitment method when on another night I saw a young woman who had come in with two male companions also get pulled on stage by a dancer. Afterwards Sheila approached her with an application form to fill in, which she did. Lap dancing recruitment relies on a combination of the promise of high earnings and affirmation of appearance- being ‘chosen’ as someone whose looks can make customers pay for the privilege of their company. I thanked Sheila for the offer and said it wasn’t something I was interested in doing, but that I was a DJ and would love the opportunity to work in an environment so different to the one I was used to. The large blonde manager who had let us in earlier walked past and Sheila called him over, telling him that I was a DJ. He looked at me dismissively and said, “*We have enough DJs*” and walked away. I flashed a smile and said to Sheila, “*I bet none of them are girls*”, aware that this was probably true and I would be a novelty. After a swift break down of my performance credentials and style of music, she took my number, though after the main manager’s reaction I wasn’t expecting to hear from her. I was due to go on a trip somewhere for a few weeks the next day. When I got back to Joburg there

were several messages waiting for me from Sheila inviting me to come for a trial gig.

When I arrived for the trial Sheila asked me to play '*music for strippers*'. I was later told that my set, with its emphasis on R&B, hip hop, old skool, kwaito and house was perfect. I dressed down, boots over jeans and a tracksuit top. I didn't want there to be any doubt that I was not a stripper, and I wanted to feel comfortable, not on display. When I arrived, the club was fairly empty, some girls dancing on the stage and sitting on the laps of the few customers who were there. Sheila took me to meet Clint, the resident DJ I'd seen in action on my first night there, who showed me the sound system and explained the set up. When he was done, we went out to speak to Sheila, who explained to Clint that she had asked me to dance there, but was settling for me DJing instead. At that point Clint looked me up and down, in a completely undisguised appraisal way, as though he had noticed my body for the first time and was assessing its suitability to be a lap dancer. Clint said, in an offhand way, "*Yes, I can see you could be a dancer*". I countered by looking him up and down in the same way and saying, "*Have you considered doing it yourself Clint?*" There was no point letting him get away with doing that without letting him know that our power dynamic was not one where he could appraise me so obviously and not expect a come back, even if framed in joking terms.

I was then taken to meet Sean, a partner in the business. We sat down on plush sofas in the VIP section, next to the Supper Club, which was due to open shortly. It was decorated in an opulent Afro-chic style. Lots of leather, deep fabric cushions, earthy colours and reed woven trimmings. It reminded me of the décor at other clubs in the city aimed at the BEE and Y crowd, only even more sumptuous. I was brought a latte to drink by one of the waitresses. Sean was extremely tall and well built, white skin and very white blonde hair. I recognized him as the guy who had let me and Faith in for a reduced fee the night we had come in before. He is of Scottish descent, but described Scotland as a hell hole, “*It’s full of council estate teenage mothers and rough as fuck guys with stunted growth and too much aggression.*” His parents came here to open a hotel in Amanzimtoti, on the KwaZulu Natal coast, so he has been around the hospitality trade all his life. He has no problem with frequently referencing stereotypes of race in his dissections of the world as he sees it. He questioned me in a direct and fairly confrontational way about what I do in the day, where I’ve DJed before, the realities of working in a strip club. I answered him straight forwardly, explaining my anthropology Ph.D. (I had to explain what Anthropology was) and its relationship to my playing records, and how as well as furthering my DJing career, playing here would be an opportunity to see the interface of performer/dancer and music in a unique way. He told me that this club was his Ph.D., and that what he wanted for his club was a female DJ to be playing the kind of urban music that would broaden the appeal of the club to its non-white customers. “*The colour of money is changing in this place*”. He said he could also get me gigs at The Palms, a very exclusive place up the road. He also broke down how I would be protected here, about how by playing here I entered a

family that was extremely well connected. It has to be, he said, to prevent gangsters from muscling in to extort money and sell drugs. "*It takes gangsters to protect from other gangsters. That's how the city works*".

He was suspicious of Melville, saying he doesn't go there as, "*I haven't got my passport yet*". He dismissed Brixton as a slum, offering to buy me a bullet proof vest while I lived there. He repeatedly called Clint 'Kevin', the name of another manager who gave me a lift home at the end of my set. Clint has worked with Sean for 17 years so the dismissive forgetting of his name revealed something of the power dynamic between them. Clint had been portraying a picture to me prior to this of his role in the club as very close to the owners, emphasizing the extra cash he made through girls tipping him to play songs they wanted and bringing in extra customers like the '*group of ou's*' (South African slang for men) he'd convinced to have their bachelor party at Paradise instead of Teasers, a rival club down the road, therefore taking a cut of their entrance fee - "*Bang. 1500 bucks in my pocket*".

Sean asked me about what I thought about the changes in the country since coming back here. I said that I found them amazing and mostly good. He nodded and informed me that the majority of hijackings and crime were committed by '*swarties*' (blacks) from other countries – Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Malawi – and that South African blacks were largely innocent. That if we could solve that problem this country would go far. It seems sometimes that the way people get over their prejudices against one group of people is to transfer their prejudice onto another group. As he broke down what he wanted from a DJ, he emphasised the

importance of reading the floor, how at places in London like Stringfellows and Spearmint Rhino, the DJ controlled the place, working out what ‘flavour’ girl customers wanted, “*So you bring on more black girls or coloureds if that’s what the guy is after*”. I asked him if customers would respect the difference between me and the dancers and he replied, “*Of course. You’re dressed*”. At the end of our chat I got the feeling that Sean was pleased with his potential new employee, introducing me to some regulars as, ‘*Our new DJ from London*’. When I joked that I was from London via Alberton, he turned to me and said, “*Let’s stick with London sweetie*”.

The Colour of Money & Tension Over Resources

Jackie, the dancer I was eating dinner with at the start of this chapter, travels into the rich area of Sandton from Alexandria, its neighbouring black township, where she still lives with her family, in order to work. Sandton is an area associated with opulent mansions, Alexandria with shacks. Jackie however lives in a middle class section of the township, in a suburban-looking house with a small yard.

Demographically, Sandton is now a more mixed area than Alexandria, though during the apartheid years it was reserved for whites. Now, wealthy people of black, Indian and Coloured origin (to use the old apartheid terminology still used in South Africa today) live there alongside wealthy white people. No white, coloured or Indian people live in Alexandria. It remains a black neighbourhood. Jackie is 19 and only just finished school so hasn’t left home yet, but she’s thinking about moving out, probably to a rented flat in one of the suburbs surrounding Sandton.

Formerly all-white areas with tree lined streets, nice housing and glamorous shopping opportunities. As a dancer at Paradise, self-described as South Africa's Premier Lap Dancing Venue, she can afford to do this, though the club does not actually even pay her a wage. Like lap dancing venues in Europe and the US, the dancer is responsible for generating her own income by attracting customers who want to pay her for a private dance or 'special', whereby she is paid by the hour or for the whole night to spend time exclusively with that customer. The club merely facilitates this exchange. When I introduce girls on stage to dance, it is an opportunity for the girl in question to show potential customers what she looks like and can do. Despite the fact that this generates a continuous free floor show which no doubt benefits the club, the dancers actually pay the club to be there in the form of a standard house fee paid nightly out of their earnings.

As I tuck into sushi and Jackie eats her McChicken burger, she starts complaining about the advantages white girls have in the club for generating this income, "*White guys are racist. They don't want black girls to dance for them. If a white guy comes in, I won't even bother going to talk to him because I know he's not going to want to get a dance from me. I'll only go and talk to black guys, but even then, sometimes they don't want to know because they want to have a white girl dance for them too because it's something different for them*". She then complains about Clint, the other resident DJ at the club, a white South African guy in his late 30s. "*He plays for the white girls. He's so rude to us. He knows I like to dance to Sean Paul (a popular mainstream Jamaican dancehall artist) but if he plays it he won't call me up even if I ask. He makes us dance to that 80s shit*".

It's true that Clint plays 80s pop music, mixed in with current hits that you are as likely to hear on the Top 40 in the UK as you are in South Africa. Where more non-mainstream music genres, like dancehall, are played by him it is because those particular songs and artists have had a break through into the mainstream. My style of playing is more orientated towards the sounds that in recent years have been categorized as 'Urban'. This means R'nB, hip hop, vocal house, dancehall and kwaito, with smatterings of reggaeton⁶¹ and 'old school' rare groove tunes from the 80s. Though a specialist DJ in any of these genres would probably regard my set as pretty mainstream too, it's just a different kind of mainstream to the one that Clint's sounds represent. Our style of playing and interacting with the girls is very different too. Clint uses a pre-mixed computer programme, only occasionally using the decks to mix songs together live. He is very authoritative towards the dancers and about the dancefloor as 'his space', preferring to play what he wants to, and calling girls up to dance regardless of whether they like the music or not. He does have special relationships with some dancers though, for whom he will play requested tracks if those girls have developed a routine that goes with them. My method is entirely based on live mixing, and friendlier interactions with the girls, emphasizing a more egalitarian relationship where I let it be known that I will play what a girl wants to hear when she's dancing. I bring my own music in, but there is a largish CD library at Paradise that I can draw on to accommodate requests for

⁶¹Reggaeton is a Spanish-language genre of dancehall that originated in the Latin Caribbean, Central and South America.

stuff I might not have. Of course, though I am willing to accommodate requests, my style of play when I am left to my own devices does favour those girls whose style of moving goes with the rhythms I play.

Once Jackie and I have finished eating, we get to work. The night starts slowly. It's Tuesday, not renowned as a busy night, and there aren't many customers in. The show must go on though. I have to keep playing songs like there is a fantastic party going on, I have to keep girls coming on the stage and dancing like there is a room full of people to watch them. Dancers are not always co-operative on this front. When the club is packed and the money is flowing, they will line up to dance, ask me to call them up next. When it's lacklustre, with dancers outnumbering customers, it's more of an effort to muster up enthusiasm and willingness. I play some of my favourite music and ask girls who I know enjoy dancing just for the sake of it to get up on stage. It's an attempt to get an atmosphere going so that when more customers do arrive, the club doesn't feel dead. Jackie dances for two songs, followed by some other girls with whom I also have a good relationship. I feel like it's going as well as can be, making the best of a bad situation. As I play, a white dancer called Mel comes into the DJ booth to talk to me. I've already called Mel up to dance on stage that night. We have a pretty good relationship, though I don't know her very well. She is always willing to dance during quiet times, or will volunteer to, making my job easier. I am surprised then when she sits down next to me and says, "*Listen. A lot of the girls don't want to say this to your face but I'm going to.*" I ask her what the problem is. "*Basically, a lot of us think that the music you're playing is too black, and it's not fair*". I reply, "What do you mean too

black?" She quickly back tracks, I think my response has made her fear an accusation of being racist, a particularly sore point for many white South Africans, "*No, it's not like that, I just mean that a lot of the girls here think you play too much of that kind of music*". Now my method in the club is to get to know girls and play music that I know they like to dance to when I call them up on stage. It creates a better atmosphere, and allows girls to maximize their earnings. When they look and feel good, they make more money. When the money flows, the atmosphere in the club is electric and creates a reputation that keeps customers coming back. I point this out to Mel, and tell her to let these other girls know that if they want me to play anything in particular for them I'm always happy to accommodate requests. I suspected that the main source of the complaints were two white girls whom I did not get on with very well that had just been sitting with Mel. They did not enjoy dancing on stage, and had a general agreement with DJs that they would only be called to dance if absolutely necessary. Their method of attracting customers was based more on sitting and talking, rather than their rhythmic abilities. As the club was nearly empty and the atmosphere cold as a result, my 'heating it up' with specific music aimed at generating a particular atmosphere which did them no favours had focused their discontent on me.

These two incidents, one in which Jackie complained about white racism, the other where Mel accused me of black favoritism, brings up several issues. Conflicts in the club are invariably around access to the potential money that can be generated from customers. As the primary way in which this is done is through girls' bodies, the complaints expressed by Jackie and Mel were indicative of a perceived bias

which favours one body over another, giving an advantage in access to this money. The unit in which the body is displayed, whether this is on stage dancing or doing a lap dance at a table or private booth, is two songs. A girl dances for two songs at a time, and the musical soundtrack is continuous. Thus, rhythm and the relationship to this soundtrack are critical to the way in which a dancer creates her persona and interacts with the customers who are her exclusive source of income.

When conflict at Paradise over resources became racialised, it was often around access to, and knowledge of, particular music genres. Rhythmic understanding, and relationships to songs, became avenues to express tensions that emphasised racial difference. The DJ, as gatekeeper of the sounds moving through the club, becomes a focal point for articulating discontent, as well as cultivating advantageous sound/body relationships.

Yet in reality the girls did not locate themselves in rigid camps, divided by race and music choice. During the course of my employment there, I observed a great deal of 'boundary crossing' in terms of friendships, alliances, musical preferences and rhythmic ability, as well as in interactions with customers. Jackie was in a tight friendship group with two other dancers in particular, a white South African dancer, Sandy and an Indian South African dancer, Samantha. There seemed to be no contradiction for her in having a white friend who offered jokes and support and making generalized statements about 'whites' being racist. What was significant was how race became a factor when resources were at stake.

Getting Stung by the BEE⁶²

The club's management/owners were not really concerned about any of this if it did not directly affect the running of the club, nor did they have an ideological interest in creating one environment over another. The ruling ideology here was money and ensuring that it flowed into the club. In this respect, the club's decision to employ me was one that reflected the changing perception of who money can flow from in contemporary South Africa, who controls capital. The club bringing me in can be viewed as a deliberate tactic to appeal to an extended clientele beyond the traditional affluent white, male customer, namely the emergent black elite of South Africa. This mirrors the general shift in Johannesburg's social politics and occupation of affluent space. The communitas that my style of play helped to generate allowed for a new power configuration to be imagined. A space in which customers and dancers representing all the hues of South African society engage in exchanges to a black pop cultural soundtrack. However, this is not a utopian vision of the defeat of white supremacy in South Africa, by my playing some kwaito and R'n'B for young women to take their clothes off to while being watched by a new South African rainbow nation audience. What it does, however, highlight is how conflict over access to resources continues to be racialised, and how, fundamentally, the structure of South African society has not changed. The colour bar to affluence and privilege has simply been lowered, and this masquerades as a genuine shift in the type of society South Africa is. Like the ANC government which

⁶²Black Economic Empowerment

preaches social inclusion and nation building while pursuing an agenda of free market economics, here, in the lap dancing club, the image created is one in which racial boundaries have been broken down and re-made and the possibilities for a new society realized. Yet they are being realized in ways which are not particularly revolutionary or different-the politics of Paradise reaffirms the primacy of wealth and those who have access to it, and the continuing use of race, both as a tool of body commodification, and a language of ‘blame’ in times of limited access to resources.

Conclusion

This chapter’s exploration of the workings of Paradise has shown how racial division is reinforced in situations which, on the face of it, appear to be rich grounds for boundary crossing, and how music sometimes plays a part in creating distinction along racial lines. The club can also be read as a spectacle celebrating the sharing of power between the white and black elites. Mapping the intersections of musical taste and experience with friendship, conflict and the making of atmosphere in a Johannesburg lap dancing club clarifies the way in which the conflicted social relations of the wider society are played out in the various musical identities bound up with them. Writing in the context of Ghanaian drumming performances, Chernoff discusses African music as a cultural activity which sees a group of people organizing and involving themselves with their own communal relations. In thinking through the significance of music in this, Chernoff says the point of the coalescing of social life around music, “...is not to reflect a reality which *stands*

behind it but to ritualize a reality that is *within it*" (1979: 36). In this nightclub space, in Africa but not an Africa recognizable as continuous with Ghanaian drumming circles, the micro-politics of hierarchy and distrust are constantly playing out alongside narratives of musical taste. The communal relationships organized by music are not necessarily positive ones. The processes of being together here are fraught with conflicts. Thus, the appearance of a 'mixed' space should not be read as evidence of integration.

Luyt (2007: 529) has argued that fundamental transformation is yet to take place in South Africa. Power largely continues to be concentrated in the hands of white middle-class men who have negotiated power sharing agreements with an emergent black elite, who are also largely male. The negotiation process which resulted in constitutional reform as well as changes to macro-economic policy, was guided by ideologies of gender and 'race' that served the interests of dominant groups in society (See Luyt 2007:508 for statistical analysis on gender, race and distribution of power in South Africa). These interests still exclude large sections of society, undermining the effective delivery of the promises of the Freedom Charter. South Africa's transition has been described as a pact between elites (Sparks 1995; Osaghae 2002). This elite power sharing is celebrated in Paradise at management level as an opportunity to access the capital promises of Black Economic Empowerment, while anxieties about accessing the spoils of this concentration of power play out amongst dancers. Broader intersecting representations of gender and race foster the continued unequal distribution of power in society.

Understandings of race continue to provide a nexus around which expressions of discontent are structured, even as these ontologies have less salience in other interactions.

Inside the lap dancing club the particularities of modern South African cosmopolitanism and its meeting with capital combined in the ways in which girls were selected to represent available ‘flavours’ for customers’ consumption. One night, when the energy of a strong money flow rippled through the club, a hedonistic vision of a New South Africa seemed to materialise. A procession of multi-coloured girls took to the stage, danced on laps and spontaneously in corners, to the delight of the tables of single white and Indian men and mixed parties of coloured, black and white businessmen celebrating sealed deals. I couldn’t help but think of the ghosts of Hendrik Verwoerd and J.G. Strydom as a party of 10 young black men occupied a corner booth to celebrate a stag night. The husband-to-be had the first lap dance of the night performed on him by a white girl from Cape Town called Sandy. She took his tie off and put it on, surely, I thought, the most unimaginable horror to those architects of apartheid. At the same time, I thought about those who had lost their lives in the liberation struggle in order for me to request on the microphone that everyone in the club give a round of applause for Thabo’s girlfriend Pule, who had kindly allowed him to come here tonight and have ladies from the other side of the former colour bar dance naked on his lap. The applause was thunderous.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

'All Mixed Up' refers to the cohorts and individuals whose experiences and biographies are drawn out in the ethnography. It also refers to the mixture of methodologies employed in the gathering of data, and how this method mix emerged out of the process of 'officially' doing anthropological fieldwork. The thesis has explored some of the ways that race was constructed under apartheid, and the intersections of these constructions with music cultures. The thesis also explores the afterlife of apartheid racial categorizations, and the ways in which actors have variously resisted, confounded, accepted or negotiated their way through, out and around these categories which continue to have significant salience both politically and in the experience of 'common sense' notions of race which replicate themselves through lived experience. The way in music is used to both mark these categorizations and de-stabilize them is explored over generations, as well as the way that music can mark spaces that sit outside of the claustrophobia of racial identifications, even as they come up against imperatives to sustain them.

It is established in this thesis that race is an over-determined aspect of identity in South Africa. What is seen in the social life and experiences that arise around and inside the experiences of music described is how ideas about race, and embodied experiences of its meaningfulness, are constantly responding to shifts in social

context. The deployment of discourses about the meaningfulness of race change constantly in response to social conditions and readings of cultural capital. Again, these contradictory processes do not need to be thought through in order to arrive at a point of a re-formulated understanding of South African racial categories. The material shows that contests over basic categories are only ever temporarily resolved , that readings of bodies and the relationship of subjects to existing categories, are reformulated and negotiated in an ongoing process. The deployment of material over generations, though limited by a small sample, permits some speculation about how these processes have long been part of the negotiations that make up the identities of mixed South African communities.

Thus, music is deployed in this thesis as an aspect of social practice that is central to the emergence of society, as demonstrated by Christopher Small (1985). Personal experience of music as part of the ebb and flow of the life course, the national narrative and the course of the night, must be read as a process of sense-making, and a fundamental tool of social analysis (Mowitt 2002). That the sense that is made in the examples presented in this thesis is ongoing and dynamic is testament to the changing nature of musical identification and meaning contextually. Does musical experience liberate the subjects presented here from discourses of the meaning of race and identity imposed form above? Or does it consolidate and affirm them? Attali (1985) might say both: that what is important is what music tells us about the dynamics of society, rather than offering any long lasting idiom of liberation or enslavement. Subjective experience is responsive to the dynamics of

the socially organized production of meaning, and that this is constantly being contested and reformulated.

The material articulates tensions in contemporary South Africa around re-defining racial parameters and the politics of identity. As Erasmus describes it,

“In its terms, blackness is understood in terms of Africanness, and black or African identity is simply associated with authenticity, resistance and subversion, while whiteness is associated with Europe, in-authenticity, domination and collusion. This discourse denies creolization and hybridity as constitutive of African experiences.” (2001:20)

As Posel (2001), Mare (2003) and Chipkin (2007) have elaborated, this paradigm, where democracy is imagined as the victory of a race majority and the coming to power of a racialised bloc, is rooted in the weaknesses of the ANC’s theoretical stance which, as Ballantine (2004:122) puts it, “resulted in a failure to transcend race-thinking, or to give real meaning to non-racialism”. The data here demonstrates that race is neither a non-existent fabrication, nor innate and inevitable. Understandings of its meaningfulness are flexible and adaptable, constantly being reinvented and manipulated.

The examples deployed in this thesis in the form of the extended oral testimony of Brenda Osman, the data gained from participant observation amongst a cohort of young people in the Western Areas of Johannesburg and participant observation in a lap dancing club shows how the processes of negotiation within shifting social contexts is vital for determining how identity is experienced, perceived and

understood in South Africa. It is shown that race continues to be mobilized as a primary form of identification, and that this is resilient to changing contexts of cultural capital and demographic. Its resilience is however tempered by alternative modalities of self which exist in tension with more rigid understandings. Looking at the social life around music as a part of the wider life course, and in specific participant observation contexts, helps map the tensions between rigid and flexible modes of identification.

Music is an excellent way to access respondents memories of times of rapid social change a way to remember and something to which memories can be attached and experienced in a variety of social contexts. As it can function so powerfully in this way, this also means that it is extremely effective as a marker of distinction and a confirmation of immutable difference. The work of Dolby (1999, 2001) both confirms this suggestion and demonstrates that whatever solidity there is in these conceptions of difference, it is subject to change as new formations and alliances emerge and old ones disintegrate or reappear. Put simply, music can bring people together, and keep them apart. Music is also shown to be a powerful means to consolidate and construct personal rituals. Here, ritual is emergent and responsive; created 'on-the-spot' in order to integrate experience and/or foster a sense of solidarity. In its bones, ritual is an adaptable force.

Music is not, "some kind of culture-free, universal language", but a social text (Shepherd 1991: 217). Responses and experiences of music are culturally formed. At the same time, musical experience equips the body with agency that can potentially shape the culture itself. Thus, there is no 'essence' in the music, nor is

there an ‘essence’ in the body. Music and subjectivity exist in dynamic relation with historically inscribed ways of reading, which within the performance of the dynamic between bodies and music in social life, are continually refashioned and/or confirmed.

People in this study inhabited, experienced and co-produced a number of identities simultaneously. To describe people and communities as ‘mixed’ in the South African context requires a careful un-fixing of the term from the categories that emerge in response to the existence of people and communities that do not correspond easily with existing discourses about race and identity. In South Africa, the category ‘coloured’. In the UK, the term ‘mixed –race’. Both become ways to fix and orientate identity according to normative understandings of race that privilege the existence of clearly identifiable categories. This data resists the move to fix. Categories and boundaries are unsettled by the data presented here. They are shown to be in a constant process of being fixed and un-fixed.; tested and re-made. This is done in response to the need to orientate bodies in time and space during periods of change which threaten the meaning and value of existing categories. That musical culture plays a part in observing these processes in action is demonstrated by the close connection between music and biography in this data; and the ways in which musical social life provides spaces that offer symbolic realms for the exploration of alternative modalities and the articulation of conflict. However, my analysis does not take up the opportunity to analyse the social worlds presented through other sensory means.

What is held in common here is that music is a social tool, and as a tool it is used in a plurality of ways with a variety of outcomes and consequences. Different parts of people are accessed through music, so there are ways in which it acts to bond relationships, create private space as well as constitute a society. This thesis explores variously group experiences, solitary experiences and intimate experiences of music in the context of pre and post-apartheid South Africa. Music is explored as a vital part of what builds relationships, sustains families, marks distinction and provides points of catharsis. These outcomes are not uniform. If music accesses a particularly powerful part of us that can bring people together, it can equally separate people.

Foucault's concept of 'Technologies of Self'- the possibility of self-fashioning in view of specific ends, is useful here for thinking through how music culture is a tool of sensory self-fashioning. The 'self' must be read as a complex composite of individual and social practices that result in a dynamic subjectivity, as Foucault puts it:

...the subject constitutes itself in an active fashion through practices of the self, these practices are nonetheless not something invented by the individual. They are models that he finds in his culture, are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, and his social group (1997: 291)

The regimes of truth and experience that circulate around the uses of popular music in social life can be and are contradictory and conflicting. Thus, musical experience can offer a number of discourses for the fashioning of self, which

individuals engage with in a variety of ways. Technologies of self are concerned with a notion of ethics that correspond with the performance of culturally sanctioned actions (Asad 1993, Mahmood 2005, Hirschkind 2006), but music is a technology that is infinitely malleable: both corroborating dominant cultural actions, and countering them. Thus in the data presented here about the social dynamics that play out in a mixed friendship and kinship cohort, music provides a way to work through different models of self and society. What Foucault describes as, ‘..a permanent principle of action’(1997: 99), whereby technologies of self permit discursive truth to become embodied as social fact, is shown here to be in a state of ongoing negotiation. The heterogeneity of self is foregrounded.

The conception of creativity as a kind of magic which appears out of the ether is a seductive one. When looking at the way dancing occurs in the spaces I have described, it seems like it appears out of nowhere, a series of improvisations and responses to the music played by the DJ to the dance floor, pouring out of a parked car onto the street or into a back yard, coming as a song on the radio that makes the kitchen start jumping. It is unrehearsed, and in a sense disposable, short lived embodied responses to pop music. It appears as if from nowhere, though as my examples will demonstrate, the dance is very much produced by the cultural knowledge, memories and social and historical context within which the dancer is operating. Negus and Pickering (2002: 181) discuss the powerfully negative equation of pleasure and novelty, particularly when associated with light entertainment, locating the critical dismissal of popular music within debates about elitism versus populism. Their analysis of the creativity in making music is useful

also in considering the creativity that goes into making dance, even when this dance is not located in the canon of the performing arts but in the domestic and public sphere of recreationally dancing to pop music without necessarily having had any formal dance training. For Negus and Pickering, creativity is associated with a kind of non-rationality, and the creative process often presented in an almost mystical pseudo-religious way (2002:180). This makes describing creativity or theorising it challenging, and reliant on metaphorical forms of expression to communicate the experience of creating,

“...any effort to articulate the experience of the creative process pushes us to the edge of what words can say. It inevitably involves having to bridge the gap between the sensational experience of creating and the necessity of translating an understanding of that experience into language that can be communicated to others.... Yet because creativity is always achieved within quite specific social, historical and political circumstances, we should at least be cautious about accepting any grand generalisations about the creative process” (2002:180)

In other words, creativity and the act of creation does not appear out of nothing. It is very much grounded in the social context in which it occurs, even when it transcends it. This is in essence the way in which creativity can operate to make something new out of what has come before. Acknowledging and examining the contextual conditions in which creativity occurs does not undo its magic. It reveals the layers of meaning, combining, remembering and inventing that go into making.

The point Negus and Pickering make is that creative expression and the communication of experience is not about a fully realised social experience or psychological state then being translated into a creative product like a song, melody or in my examples a dance. The act of making itself mediates experience, “The moment of creativity occurs when we wrestle with existing cultural materials in order to realise what they do not in themselves give to us” (2002:184). The creative act involves recombining existing materials to bring them into new relationships with each other (Hannerz 1996).

The cohort group of the later generation described here bears some resemblance to the earlier ones. Like Michael and Daphne, and Brenda, these young people are inventing and experiencing social formations which blend, melt and cross pre-existing definitions of race as a primary identifier in South Africa, whilst awareness of these categories as unchanging and static continues to erupt. Where they diverge from the former examples is in their positionality at a time in South African history where the separation of these racial classifications is no longer part of the legislative landscape. Freed from these constraints, and operating in this political paradigm, and in the particular space of the western areas, where there is a significant number of inhabitants from a variety of population groups living, working and schooling together, does this cohort’s experience of music and music culture allow for a transcendence of these categories and a re-definition of self that was unobtainable for previous generations due to contextual constraints?

The multiple sites of the research participant's interactions, ancestry and the particularities of these western suburbs of Johannesburg, reveal the way in which the categories that structure society, individuals and place shift and reform continuously. Thus, 'mixing it up' refers not only to boundaries of constructed racial categories being crossed, but also boundaries of class, gender and age, as well as trans-national border crossings and the international flow of cultural products and meaning, interpreted through a multiplicity of local lenses. Music is the critical anchor that soundtracks these encounters, the mix that plays out in cars, clubs, backyards, kitchens, bedrooms, family functions, celebrations, commiserations. In this way, the material presented in this chapter explores the use of music as an individual and social biographical object which can encompass contradictory expressions of identity and self.

Music is 'good to think with' about the making of society and sociality because it marks common experience *and* distinction, thus being a component in both the marking of boundaries, and their unmaking. The paradox of this process elaborates the tension between separation and unity at the heart of South African nation building. In the examples drawn on in the thesis , music's social life generates spaces of social cohesion that temporarily suspend the imperatives of racial hierarchy, as in the case of the courtship of Brenda's parent's Michael and Daphne, and in the musically marked racially mixed, but kinship unified, social gatherings that Brenda remembered from her childhood. In her later recollections, the social life of Johannesburg's jazz and theatre scene provided a framework for counter-hegemonic forms of sociality. By exploring the importance of music in Brenda's

personal rituals of recovery post-trauma, and the way in which music symbolically articulate spaces of independence for her that are appealed to by other members of the family, the especially affective power of music's role in the making of self and memory is emphasized. This assists in locating why music as the glue that held together social spaces such as the church dances, family gatherings and jazz and theatre scene, could challenge the powerful paradigms of race and separation operating in South Africa, albeit it in ways that were sometimes transitory and ephemeral. In the case of the cohort experience of the generation that followed Brenda's, in the context of the Western suburbs, music, in particular new electronic music forms of the 1990's, provided a technology that framed solidarity, and marked distinction. Here the music of kwaito effectively sound tracked a shift in the sense of ownership of space in the city, as barriers to movement presented by race were broken down.

Music acts here on a number of levels. It provides a focus for the development of cohorts around memories of particular genres, songs and dances. Music also provides a space of marking distinction and difference. These cohorts use the spaces opened up by participation in social contexts where music is enjoyed, at clubs and parties, to 'live in the moment'; the winding down time that follows these expressions is mobilised to reflect on issues affecting them and work through experiences defined by differing class positions.

The young people described in Chapter 5, in a variety of ways and through processes of negotiation, are creating cultural and social spaces that are not confined by an aesthetic of racialised, separate identities. In doing so, they still

come up against dominant discourses of self which emphasise signifiers of race as primary identifiers, both from within themselves and from others. They also utilise these same signifiers in their own interactions, in the context of joking relationships that use humour to defuse the potential tensions of racial division, and again in situations of conflict or judgements on taste or rhythmic ability. In cases where there was a desire to move away from the restrictions imposed by stereotypes of racial identity, other tropes of identification, like taste and sexuality were foregrounded as more important. Dancing spaces are used to challenge racialised ideas of ‘who can move’. Performing well on the dancefloor destabilises initial boundaries and inscribed ideas about the meaning of race through an embodied challenge to norms of racial behaviour. By the same token, observations of awkwardness and lack of ‘dancing capital’ were taken as evidence of the continued salience of racial stereotypes. Dancing was also a space of pleasure; an opportunity to be freed from everyday constraints without reference to racial ontologies.

Where these references did occur it was in a light hearted manner which acknowledged their existence as social realities, while neutralising their power as primary identifiers of self. Thus, though the ebb and flow of negotiations of self are not always positive or without conflict, they do permit people some freedom from being forced to rank their identities, allowing them to, “... bring more of themselves and more cross-cutting cleavages into democracy” (Spivak & Lorde 1992 cited in Zegeye 2001: 334). Leach makes clear that, “....solidarity need exist only at the moment at which the ritual takes place. At the back of the ritual there stood not the political structure of a real state, but the ‘as if’ structure of an ideal state” (1981:281) Acts which denote social solidarity, like dancing together at a

nightclub or concert, must be understood as existing only at the moment when the ritual takes place, “We cannot infer a continuing latent solidarity after the ritual celebrations are over” (1981:281). “The ‘as if’ system needs to be distinguished from the categories of political fact which, at first sight, appear to be manifest in overt cultural differences” (281) The long-term sustainability of these spaces which permit a multiplicity of positions and identifications that can fluctuate according to context is yet to be tested. Increasing appeals by the political elite (Chipkin 2007) to idioms of hegemony which force people to rank their identities, partly resembles apartheid requirements to do the same (Zegeye 2001). It is also counter to the anti-apartheid project where those who participated,

“...achieved their identity by varied entry points. They mobilised distinctly as socialists, democrats, women’s rights activists, artists, traditional healers, cultural nationalists, anarchists, farmers or rural dwellers and so on.... the overarching anti-apartheid identity ideology did not eradicate their local identities... they were able to see their local identities as resources that could enhance the anti-apartheid movement” (2001: 334).

In the example presented in Chapter 6 in the lap dancing club, music frames moments of cohesion, and articulates points of conflict amongst dancers. Part of why music is so effective at expressing both unity and separation is down to the way in which it can intersect so intimately with the body, memory and making of different kinds of sociality as a biographical object (Hoskins 1998) or biographical sound, enabling the telling of a story of self and society, or provoking a response, on a visceral level.

I have emphasized throughout this thesis that these negotiated, emergent identities, constantly in tension between fixed and flexible conceptions of race, are not new in South Africa, though the political and social context in which they occur does shift, with particular consequences. De Haas and Epstein (1994) have emphasized the situational nature of ethnicity; the ways in which it is responsive to social context. The Zulu youth in Abede's paper (2001), can be seen to be engaged in similar processes of re-inventing their identity in relation to wider social shifts in 1990's South Africa. Shifting understandings of race and ethnicity in self and others in the data presented here are self-consciously understood as responsive and dynamic to social context. They are also understood as being limited by social context. That these can shift is acknowledged as situational. Music provides a way to mark the spaces which can frame these tensions, again relative to context. It also provides a way to remember the past, and think about how these processes have played out over generations.

As Ginsburg (1987) argues in her work, the generational distinctions that become apparent to her, foregrounding generational shifts, do not imply being able to sort experience neatly into one or another historical cohort. Highlighting inter-generational experiences of social change is a reminder of the importance of temporal factors in the dialectics of social change, and the way in which music can be a way to hold and experience a sense of times past and present. Like the abortion activism that enables the women in Ginsburg's study to make sense of conflicts tied so closely to their sense of self and relation to society, music offers a tool of mediation between the domains of individual experience and social context,

“...a frame for action and interpretation of the self in relation to the world” (1987:625). The sociality and making of self-organized around, and soundtracked by, music provide, “arenas of innovation” (1987:624), where cultural and social definitions of race, gender and class are in the process of reorganization through processes that both mark distinction, and establish cohort solidarity. The dance between senses of separation and unity.

Epilogue

It is the end of 2012, and I am with Brenda in her new house, a little cottage in the grounds of a large house owned by a consortium of churches. Brenda has found a job she loves, managing a home for retired Catholic priests and retreat center in Germiston on the East Rand. It is a funny sort of poetry. I have made a sort of full circle. Back in the East Rand where I grew up, now with a family of my own, editing this manuscript, reflecting on the part music played in the making of my life, and the social life of the country. Brenda puts on some Brazilian jazz. I type and she prepares the evening meal. The children play outside. I am pleased that she is in this place. It is what she has always wanted. A beautiful garden. Space to be. It isn't always smooth sailing. There is some tension with her youngest daughter, who is outside, listening to her own music on her phone. She comes in to make some coffee, and for a time we are all together. Tensions ease. Switching to the radio, a melodic house track comes on Metro that has us all swaying along for a moment, tensions gone. Till we pull apart again. Music marks the unity of the space, and the ruptures within it. And these are constantly moving. That's just how it goes. Sunset comes. I press save and power off for the night.

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Appendix1: Discography

Bongo Maffin 'The Way Kungakhona' on 'Bongolution' (Lightyear Entertainment) (2001)

(Pg 225, 256)

Arthur 'Kaffir' on 'Die Poppe Sal Dans' (999 Records) (1995)

(Pg 188, 220)

Lou Rawls 'You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine' (Philadelphia International Records) (1976)

(Pg 188, 220)

Joy 'Paradise Rd' on 'Paradise Rd' (RPM Zimbabwe) (1980)

(Pg 173)

Jackknife 'Fester' on 'Continua' (Frontline Music) (1994)

(Pg 223, 242)

Boom Shaka 'Gcwala' on 'Words of Wisdom' (Teal Trutone Music) (1998)

(pg246

Boom Shaka 'It's About Time' on 'Boom Shaka' (Kalawa Records) (1993)

(pg246)

Benny Goodman 'Sing Sing Sing' (Contemporary Acapella Publishing) (1936)

(pg 97)

Nancy Wilson 'Face It Girl, It's Over' (Capitol Records)

(Pg 359)

Imagination 'Just An Illusion' (R & B Records) (1982)

(pg 253)

New School 'Dla La Ka Yona' (999 Records) (2004)

(Pg 253)

Kamazu 'Mjukeit' (Universal Music, MD Music) (1998)

(Pg 243)

Brenda Fassie 'Too Late for Mama' (CCP) (1991)

(Pg 256)

Appendix 2: Time Line 1945 -2000

- 1945-1949
 - Daphne and Michael courtship at mixed church dances
 - Big Band and Swing popular.
 - National Party win election 1948
 - Michael & Daphne marry 1948
 - Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act 1949
 - ANC Youth League call for 'Programme of Mass Action'
- 1950-1960
 - Brenda born 1950
 - Group Areas Act 1950
 - Family live in suburb zoned for whites
 - Harassment by officials
 - Musical gatherings at home
 - Jazz and swing popular. Sophiatown era.
 - Sharpeville Massacre 1960
 - ANC begins Armed Struggle 1960
- 1961-1969
 - Declaration of the Republic - South Africa leaves Commonwealth
 - Nelson Mandela Imprisoned 1963
 - Intensification of enforcement of apartheid legislation
 - Momple family move to coloured area
 - Brenda begins work
 - Brenda's first child born following rape. Placed in adoption.

- 1970 – 1975
 - Brenda marries Charlie Osman
 - Birth of their first two children 1972/1973
 - Removal of all non-white political representation 1970
 - Removal of citizenship rights for black people, who become citizens of ethnically designated ‘Bantustans’ 1970
 - Black Consciousness Movement led by Steve Biko

- 1976 -1980
 - Brenda Moves to Kliptown, Soweto
 - Becomes involved in Johannesburg Jazz Scene
 - Soweto Uprising 1976
 - Steve Biko dies in custody 1977
 - Brenda moves to Joubert Park, CBD Johannesburg
 - Reunion with Charlie
 - Birth of second son, David

- 1980-1990
 - P.W Botha President
 - Brenda moves to Mayfair in Western Areas
 - State of Emergency 1985 -1989
 - Tricameral Parliament gives limited representation to Indian and Coloured people but is unpopular.
 - UDF organise mass action campaigns.

- 1990 – 1999
 - F.W De Klerk President. Negotiations begun to end apartheid.
 - Nelson Mandela released 11th February 1990
 - Kwaito emerges as new South African electronic music genre
 - Multi-racial CBD Clubland
 - Nelson Mandela elected President in first democratic election 1994
 - Jacknife release ‘Fester’ on E.P ‘Continua’
 - Arthur release Kaffir. Goes to Number 1 in SA charts.
 - Riots at desegregated high school in Johannesburg.

1999 – 2006

- Thabo Mbeki becomes president 1999
- Implementation of ‘BEE’ (Black Economic Empowerment)
- Treatment Action Campaign challenges multi-national pharmaceutical HIV drug monopoly

Appendix 3: Interview Transcripts

Interview 1: 5th December 2008

Dom: Tell me about the time you were doing the band.

Brenda: To be successful you need to have started it with however you were going to start it and you need to have invited these prospective sponsors to the place to see these kids in action before they'll sponsor. Maybe they think it's gonna be the normal thing of everybody running off with the money and mismanaging... ja... but anyway, so we had lots of fun, we had music every weekend, and everyone would get dressed up on Sunday night and go to this Sheilas in Melville or the Peach Pit down in Langlagte, and spend the night there dancing and enjoying the band and all this. A lot of contacts were made, but nothing profitable.

Dom: And then with Charlie.....

Brenda: They (the kids) don't know from one week to the next how they feel about how they grew up with Charlie and all of that and um, so how right was I to stay with him all that time? And how wrong would I have been if I had just taken them, because I don't think our lives would've been any poorer had I gone out and done it on my own with the four of them, but um, that part I don't know, I have regrets. Many times I've apologized to them for having done it the way I did it but I just did it the best I knew how.

Dom: But you did leave him in the end....

Brenda: In the end. What good did it do me to leave him then? I left him with the thing, none of the kids are babies anymore, they don't need us together anymore, but did they really need us together all that time? You know?

Dom: But for you... why did you leave him then?

Brenda: Um... also, that was Jessica (her grand daughter) turning 15. And we had a surprise party by the pool. And this is exactly what happened but it was worse. The morning went well and then all of a sudden the weather turned, and the trees were bending and the rain was pouring and all this. So the group that had gathered, it was a huge group of all our friends who had come with us from the time of Diane

getting pregnant (Brenda's eldest daughter was 15 when she got pregnant and 16 when she gave birth) and Jessica being born, and the battles we had through the ups and downs and all that, it's people who'd stuck with us, they had their ups and down in their families and that, and we weren't judgemental about each other, we just kind of carried each other through it till the next good time. We'd be together through the good times, the bad times, all of that. And um, so we went into like this building of the swimming pool, sang happy birthday for her and blew out the candles on this cellphone cake because at that time cellphones were just becoming the in thing in Joburg, so she was crazy about anything electronic or technology and so on, so we made this cellphone birthday cake. And wasn't she thrilled with this birthday cake Dom! You would've sworn it was a real live cellphone!

(we both laugh)

Anyway, we sang happy birthday and broke the cake into chunks because we didn't have knives or anything because the basket Charlie was supposed to bring when Neville picked him up he left it behind. So even braaiing, they were using their fingers to turn the meat, we weren't far, we were down at Mayfair swimming pool and we up here at the Crosby house and nobody bothered to just go and fetch the things and that. So we just did cave man style and did everything as best we could. But now this rain, it put out the fires for us so we didn't have to worry about that. We dumped the ash into the bins and that, loaded all the stuff up and so we came to the Crosby house. And here, we no sooner get there and everybody unpacks and dries off, and the rain is over. So, as Osman's do, we start the party all over again, and Charlie that day was being a real, real shit. He was insulting everyone. Like you, you feel good about you now, after having Naliyah, after being as skinny as you were and so and so, you feel good, and when I look at you I see perfect. No, he sees anorexic, or he sees what does he see, I don't know, but he'll keep on at you, keep on saying things to you about the way you look, or the way you standing or the way you... and everybody, those you haven't seen for a while might put on weight or their hair is not quite the way he thinks it should be, he was insulting everybody the whole day long. And thankfully, most of them have come a long way with us, so most of them were just brushing him off, others were feeling embarrassed, 'Uncle Charlie says my hair's krus, and Doozie, Uncle Charlie says I'm fat'. And I keep saying don't worry about him now darling, you look perfect, are you happy with the way you look? Don't worry about him.

(A massive thunderclap fills the house and the rain outside falls down extra hard in sheets of water)

Brenda: So he's insulting. Or picking on the music they're playing. So I say to them, put on some langarm and I'll dance with him. So here, it's all happening outside, and I'm dancing with him, but he's deliberately trying to make me fall, deliberately trying to do things to trip me up or spinning me without any kind of a warning. You know? And that look on his face like all he wants to do is put his fists in my face and that kind of thing. So I just pretended like I wasn't seeing and danced and danced and danced, and eventually I thought, uh uh, this is now at its end. I really don't have to be doing this anymore hey? This is at its end. I've done it through Diane's 21st, through David going away, you name it, I've done it. Every Christmas, every New Year. Practically the meal gets thrown off the table by him, and for what? What baggage has he got that he's carrying through all this number of years? Now here we are, if Jessica was 15, then that was 6 years ago. I've reached that age of what, 52 or something? And I'm still having to put this false smile on my face and pretend that all is fine and I thought uh uh, enough. Anyway, he's now wandered inside and he keeps going to switch the power off. At first we thought the lights were tripping, then I actually saw him on the crate switching the meter off, because you know at the Crosby house it's high up on the wall. I was going into the house for something and I actually saw him doing it. So I went to him, and I turned him round and I said, if you just do this one more time, you will get beaten up today. He says, "You just touch me..." I said to him, "Charlie, so this again. This child has reached 15 years old, we've got everything under the sun to be grateful for. For our lives, for our children, none of them are sick, none of them are crippled, none of them have anything that we need to be crying over. Why do you have to do this at every function we have? That you need to embarrass these kids like this? What is it with you?" he answers "Nah, everybody must f off, and they're cunts and they're this and they're that, and the words he was using". Anyway, I shoved him into the room, and I said to him, 'You come out of here, and do anything and it's going to be me and you'. He does it again. So then I said to everybody, 'Pack up now and go home. Pack up NOW and get out of here'. That was alarm bells for all those children, I'm calling them children, but they were all grown ups then in their 20s. And Unc is telling them, listen to your mother, she knows what she's doing, go home. And, Dom, (she laughs), nobody would budge! They wouldn't move, and I swear to you, I swear to you, alive as I am today, that night I would've killed him. I've come close to it before, with blacking out and beating him up for things he's done to the children, the way I come home and find them schamboked just because he can. Or he's got David and Dino standing against the wall there and playing target practice with them with beer bottles, smashing beer bottles around them. Where June and I have sat at the table and he's at the other end of the kitchen. It hits here and smashes against your legs. And we're sitting there with a magazine or

something just to stop the thing hitting us, dotted with splinters. And sitting there because if we move away then the whole house is getting turned over, and the kids are getting pulled out of their sleeping beds, he would go absolutely stark stirring mad. And um, why did I take it? Why did I sit there and take it? Why didn't I take the bloody whatever, a chair and table, actually I didn't need anything, I could've beaten the shit out of him anyway. So I really don't know. I think I was scared of my own strength. I did it a couple of times and then he's sit there bleeding and dripping into his hands and crying like a bladdy baby. And then he's behave for 3,4, 6 months, depending on how sober he was and how fresh the memory was. And that was our lives, and why did I stay with it? I don't know. I don't know. Um... am I bitter and twisted about it?

Dom: I don't know.

Brenda: I'm angry about it. And I dislike myself intensely for having stayed so long. And the apologies and the trying to make good. But in fact, he never made good. He'll never do it again and all that kind of thing and so on and so on. But I lived with so much contempt for myself for why do you do this?

The interview was paused again here. Dino had come back and needed something or other. As we make tea and coffee, she puts a CD that her sister has made her on the stereo. It's Nancy Wilson. She turns to me and says, "Music got me through", she adds milk to her coffee and continues, "As he was talking at me, I'd be looking at him, but inside I was turned to the music".

(We are interrupted by a call to say that the lift to go to the airport to see off her brother is coming soon)

Dom: Ok, well, just to end off, that night that you did leave him, what happened in the end? The kids didn't leave....

Brenda: I say kids but they were grown ups. Della (her younger daughter) and Eckart were married by this point and staying there, they stayed on, ja, so I just packed, not even a suitcase, just a couple of clothes and left with them.

Dom: Where did you go?

Brenda: To Di's house (her older daughter). And then he (Charlie) would come staggering up to the house every day, from there he started to threaten to stab Jessica. The first incident, two incidents were there in the Vrededorp house, and then the last one at the Crosby house was when we threw him out all together.

(These incidents happened over a period of a few years from when Brenda left Charlie the night of Jessica's 15th birthday, and the final threat to stab incident which happened when Jessica was 20)

Brenda: They (the kids) packed up his things, there'd been talks going on with him for two, three weeks, of it's over, he's done the worst he can possibly do. He must go back to the Durban house, because by then Ma (Charlie's mother) had died and the house could be lived in by him. So we spoke to him about it, checked that he was fine with it, because the kids were like torn apart by this, like hey, we can't do this, and never mind what he's done, we can't throw him to the wolves, and I said to them, no, he's old enough now. He knows how to cook, he knows how to wash his underpants, he must go. Are we waiting for one of these kids (the three grand children) to be killed before we do something? You all have lived through all that you've lived through under him, now he's pulling knives for the children, what next? And Evie (the domestic worker employed by her older daughter) puts her head in her hands and runs screaming down the driveway. What is that? So I said I'm not having it anymore.

Dom: And when he got sent to Durban, that was a good few years after you left him.

Brenda: Yes. Because after I left, him and Dino (her oldest son) carried on living at the Old Castle house, and fought till the neighbours used to want to call the police. The neighbours used to stand in fear at the walls wondering which one are we going to pick up dead? That's the way the two of them used to fight. They didn't physically fight but they would scream at each other, and the things they said made the neighbours live in fear. So now we're not only just living our own lives in this

total mess, we're also interfering in neighbours' lives. So I said to them, uh uh, it has to end.

Dom: So Dino and Charlie were living together after you left, at what point did Di take over the Old Castle House?

Brenda: When she couldn't get a bond for the Vrededorp house. This was 4 years ago. And she agreed that Charlie could live there, on condition that he leaves the children alone, this list of rules and regulations, now he sits there under the garage shelter and Jodeigh (her grandson) is walking up the driveway from school and getting attacked, called all kinds of names like bastard and what a useless he is. Now here's the 6th child in a row growing up with being put down 24/7 and so... and then I don't know how it happened that he did this knife thing with Jessica again and Evie running down the driveway screaming and so on, and when they(the kids) took him back to Durban because they just couldn't live with him anymore, you know what a terrible horror weekend that was, but eventually he went back and stayed there. But the kids still didn't cut ties. David was supporting him financially, Diane was, Della was. All this money going to him, I can't say the amounts of money, but from three different people that you weren't getting it from before, and probably Dino too when he had it.

Dom: I guess they were working through their own process and feelings of guilt...

Brenda: But he did nothing with that. He didn't buy a sheet, a blanket, a pillow. He bought tins of food and huge amounts of liquor that you couldn't even walk into the kitchen door for the liquor bottles. He did nothing to the house. Nothing to make his life better. And just sat there waiting to die. So, I say to the children, you all did more than anybody can expect, more than anybody could imagine, and I don't even know what kind of things you were doing for him, but I know that you were all in touch with him all the way through (till his death), don't have any regrets.

So he's gone now, and I'm very much at peace. Because I knew he wanted to die. When he came up for your farewell and Mathew's birthday, we sat at this very table and spoke about it. So I said to him, if that's the way you feel, then you must die. You think you've got nothing to live for. I can see you have everything to live for.

You've wanted for how many years, from 1963 till 2007, all this time you've wanted nothing but to be in that house, take pleasure from that house, do all the things that you wanted to do, have your little piece of garden and fix and paint, now you've got it! With nobody to tell you you can't do that today because it's Sunday, or you can't plant a garden there because I'm gonna walk there, Charlie you have the absolute of what you want. Why do you feel like this? Get the pleasure from it. Start doing things, watch things grow. Never mind that you don't have the amount of money to renovate. These kids are all helping you out, if you tell them I need to put in new windows and this is what it's gonna cost, I swear to you they'll find the money, but nay, nay. So die then.

Dom: So despite everything that he'd done, everybody still loved him. But he couldn't let that love in.

Brenda: Ja. Ja. That's right. That's right. And you want to just sit here and tell me about how I wouldn't feel like this if the old lady (Charlie's mother) had given us the rights to the house like she said she would. I say forget about her, she's dead in 2000 already! Let her be...

Dom: And growing up? What was the experience with all of this turmoil then?

Brenda: There were things that wasn't right. That caused turmoil through out the family. Because before all of that happened, before being raped and that, we all had to leave work when we moved from Union Crescent to the grandparents garage and that.

Dom: Where was Union Crescent again?

Brenda: Union Crescent was the white side of where we grew up. We were all born there. We born in Atterbury Rd and Union Crescent, and somehow, through mummy being the dominant person in the relationship, she always got the accommodation, the places were always where she chose to live and all of that, so that's how come I think why we always stayed on the white side of the railway line so to speak. And strangely enough there is a railway line that separates it all! So growing up there, we didn't know that we were any different. We knew that there was something different but we didn't know what.

Dom: When you say different you mean the whole colour thing?

Brenda: The colour thing, ja. And we thought we were different simply because mummy and daddy used to drink and fight, and we used to hear the fights, we used to see the drunkenness and also of Mr Nelson up the road who was the other coloured family. And um, Mrs Nelson was a very respectable school teacher, you know, well liked and all that and her daughters, and sons, one became a priest, the others were not so good, had loose morals and were rotten. So every family had that embarrassing things and the normal stuff. Mrs Nelson was a very good school teacher, her family was huge, like the Momple Family (Brenda's paternal family) who had 13 children. All the young ones were our ages, the others were all older. One had become a priest. One had married and gone to England. One had an illegitimate child, that's the one that my mother and father used to socialize with, and a lot of the fights were including her, of mummy accusing daddy of having affairs with her and you know, silly things like that. Well, I say silly things but I don't know how much truth was in it and that. So regular fights in the house always included somebody from the outside, either mummy was being accused of having an affair or daddy was being accused of having affairs and so our lives went. Up the road from us were the Evertons, who were also coloured, but kept very much to themselves. We were allowed to play with their kids, but we weren't allowed into their house. Everyone was allowed into our house.

Dom: Why was that?

Brenda: The Nelsons as well, we were allowed in the house, but all the other houses we weren't allowed in. You went and stood in the yard, and when it was meal times you got sent home.

Dom: And that was because you were coloured?

Brenda: I don't know if it was the culture of the time. The culture of the neighbourhood. Or if it was because of our colour. And like I say, we didn't know we were different because of colour then, we thought we were different because we were so poor and stuff like that. We didn't dress the way the others dressed, we always wore hand me downs and sometimes the hand me downs were from the kids

our own age and so on, so I've never been able to distinguish between the two, why it was like that.

Anyway, when we got old enough to be aware of things, the thing we were most aware of was how these parties that we would have at our house were always mummy showing off or making all the Hors d'oevres and the liquor, and everything being made pretty, all the best crockery and cutlery out. And these parties would last until it ended up in a fight with either one of the couples that were there or with my parents. And then the rest of the week we were hungry, and then we started becoming aware of the fact of these parties are our week's food. So that thing of children should be seen and not heard and being sent to the room, and if anybody brought their kids with them we could socialize with them, and then we'd be offered a few things to eat because of visiting kids. But if there were no visiting kids we didn't get anything of this party food. We soon learnt how to start stealing it! Someone goes through like they're passing to another room or something, you know steal a plate of something, a handful of nuts and come and share.

Dom: And these parties were going on when you lived in Union Crescent (Briardene-White area)?

Brenda: Yes, practically every week. Some of the parties were outside with a braai so then it was easier for us to steal food and eat. I think daddy started getting sick (with lung cancer) from when we were at Union Crescent, but didn't let us know. Or it could have been, as we all suspected, that it was when we moved (from Union Crescent) into the garage and room because of daddy being out of work for so long. And then, in Scotia Terrace we had this infestation of bed bugs, they'd be creeping up or down the wall like a black curtain, and you had that smell, there was always a smell, no matter how we cleaned our beds or did our washing, or used Jeyes Fluid, nothing worked. So daddy got hold of this poison, and he sprayed the place. You know the corrugated iron roof? We all spent time shoving newspaper into the gaps there and he sealed up the windows. And we were all going to go for a picnic while this stuff worked, but daddy stayed inside with a hanky over his nose spraying this stuff. It was just a garage and a room, but he seemed to stay forever in there, the stuff was filtering out through the gaps, you could see it. And we were saying, daddy come out now, daddy come out, you're going to die in there! And by the time he eventually did come out he just spent the rest of the day coughing and coughing and coughing. It wasn't long after that that he started coughing blood, and he

thought he had TB, and he put all his crockery and things aside. He had a dish that all his stuff must go into, none of us were allowed to take it. And in previous times, if one hadn't finished their food, the other would take it and eat it, and daddy would often share because mummy gave him much more, so he'd often share, like say, 'Oh, this is a water potato' and put it on our plate, or, "I don't feel like meat today" and put the 6 pieces on his plate and put a little piece on each of our plates. And only when we grew and I became a parent myself did we realise that he was actually sharing with us, not because he didn't feel like it. And on Saturdays mummy would come home from work and make a mixed grill, liver and bacon and sausages, and it would just be for her and him, and perhaps Mark (the youngest). And I think a lot of this was where Peter started learning to be so resentful, so defiant. Because it was truly like we didn't matter to her, we more a nuisance in her life than what she wanted to have. And this we couldn't understand. Why have 6 children and marry this Mauritian man, and stay with him, if this is going to make you that miserable that you're calling us names all the time, bloody little bastards, black shits, get out of my sight? You couldn't go up to her and ask for some peanut butter and bread if you were hungry, you got your breakfast, you got your lunch, you got your supper, and that was beginning and end of story. And if there was nothing you'd get told, yes, go and help yourself, eat the whole bloody loaf. And this she'd say to us as little kids. So it was tough.

Part 2 Interview December 12th 2008

Brenda: Anyway, when we started working a couple of years after moving to Scotia Terrace we got thrown out the house as regular as clock work. Anything that didn't go according to her rule, or if you lost your job, or spent a bit of your wages on something for yourself, she (her mother) would throw you out. So we spent a lot of time living with different members of the family or a friend for little bits of time, and soon as you worked again, she'd come and whip you out from whichever Aunty's house you were at and come home. And not even a thing of paying that person a token amount for having us for a week or two weeks or a month before you found your next job, but none of that mattered to her.

Dom: How old were you when you started working?

Brenda: 15, or just before 15. If I didn't get a job before school opened, when I was going to go to Standard 7, then I was going to have to get out the house, because she was not paying for me to go to high school. That was all I know, whether it was

because we couldn't afford it, or because she couldn't be bothered with us anymore and needed the money we could bring in from working, I just don't know.

Dom: And yet she sent you to this quite fancy primary school?

Brenda: Yes. My very first job was with Oshri Stores. Mr Oshri was [a]Jjew, he had what they referred to as a gammy leg, he used to limp. A miserable person! He had a tea room, supermarket kind of thing. Now the white girl that worked there, she used to steal. We weren't allowed to use the till, me and the black assistant. We served the customers, got all their groceries and that and handed it over to her, and then she would ring up the amount and give the change and so on, and if the person's things came to say R15, she would ring up R10, and write the R5 on her arm, and write all the way down till the bottom of her jersey. And then at the end of the day she would take that amount. And me and Victor, the black guy who worked there we knew she was doing this, but what could we do about it? And eventually when the shortfall was found at stock take time, we got blamed for it. So the two of us got fired, Victor, who was a big man, and me who was this first time worker person. So I got fired from there and it was a big disgrace to the family because Marlene Cyreno (a family friend) had got me the job and Mr Oshri was what and what. So I got fired from this job and thrown out and I went to go stay with Aunty May, one of daddy's sisters.

Dom; Did you even try to protest about what happened with losing your job?

Brenda: Oh yes! We did. I even went to confession, but nothing we ever said was believed, that's why we got thrashings so regular, never mind what happened in the day, if a neighbour or who ever complained about us, you didn't get a chance to explain what happened, we would just get lined up and thrashed in order of age. Pam (the oldest) didn't get thrashed so much, she was always out, at granny Harding's house reading from the home library. Even when she was with us, she wasn't such a tomboy, she'd be squealing about something. So the thrashings were from Mace (the second oldest) down. And Peter being the youngest by the time it got to him it was not so strong.

Brenda: The next job was at a factory where I only stayed for two days or something. It was threading the tags through clothes, so that's what you did all day long. And all these older women working there who had been there forever, they would sit and scandal and gossip about everything. I worked there for two days and I never went back, and I had to pretend every day that I was still going to work, when actually I was out job hunting, but then I got caught out because at the end of week there was no wages. I quit various jobs like that.

Dom: What made you leave that job?

Brenda: Which? The ticket and thread? It was unbearable! Just sitting there threading things all day long and listening to older women scandalising⁶³. And our family were some of those being scandalised about. And then they'd try and talk in cryptic, you know. Oh but my mother was outrageous in so many of the things she did, she was always the talk of the town.

Dom: What sort of women worked in this place? Was it mostly coloured or a mixture?

Brenda: No, it was the coloured and the Indian women. But, being of the Catholic Church, and they all knew the Momples, and they knew our connections and all that. So everybody knew everybody.

Dom: So if you were in the Church it was all kind of mixed up?

Brenda: Ja. Now this is why I say to you we didn't know we were different in colour. Because we still believed that here on the white side we would call everybody by their names, Mrs Arnot, Mrs Hadley, you know, all of that. But on that side, we would say Aunty to everyone who was our colour, now what was the difference? Was that political? Or was it... we never could work that one out either.

⁶³ ‘Scandalising’ is a South African slang word that means to gossip. Literally to pass on the scandal about someone or something.

(We are interrupted at this point by a phone call from her ex-daughter in law who is involved with her in the Amway business.)

Brenda: Ok. So there were various jobs I did and I ended up getting thrown out again.

Dom: And how old were you? When you got thrown out the first time, and then again this time?

Brenda: Oh Dom, how old was I? I was getting thrown out from the moment we started working, at 14 or 15.

Dom: And how old were you this time?

Brenda: Well, first let me tell you about the Oshri's incident. Before getting fired, that was the longest job that I had, at that shop I told you about. Now daddy came there one day, on pay day, and asked please let him take my wages, that he had something to do, but when I get home to not say anything to mummy, he would explain. And then he never came home at the usual time, and I had to say to mummy that we never got paid. So I had to hide my pay slip in my drawer and tell her we never got paid yet. Doesn't she the very next morning phone Mr Oshri and start telling him his fortune for what bloody hell right has he got not to pay me on pay day. He says he did pay me, and that he's got issues to talk to mummy about, and this is how this whole thing of getting fired came about. Because now he had something to accuse me of, if I can lie about my wages then I've been lying about the takings and all the rest of it, so got fired and got thrown out the house the same night. So I went to Wentworth (a coloured suburb) to Aunty Veny (her father's sister), didn't have a job for a long time, and then had to be her housemaid. I did the washing and the cleaning and everything like that. She wasn't unfair or cruel or anything, it was just like, you're the young one in the house and older than any of her children so this is what you did.

And even before that, every school holiday we would get sent to the Aunty's houses in different parts of the coloured areas.

Dom: So growing up you were always exposed to the coloured areas as well as the white.

Brenda: Ja. And when we were growing up the Grandparents on Daddy's side, Granny and Grandpa Momple, lived in Eastbury Rd, which was the white area, and he (Grandpa Momple) built that house from wheelbarrows of bricks from Coronation, way down the road, he took Granny a couple of times to the hospital to have her babies in that wheelbarrow, you know, that kind of life. But they were happy and content and there was never any arguments or raised voices or any kind of unhappiness at all the grandchildren. And that time it was mainly us, Micky and Taffy's 6 children, then Aunty Bobby and Uncle Cyril's 6 children that used to get dumped there in the holidays. And just simply dumped, there was no 'by permission' or anything like that, it was like the grandparents just expected it. And Aunty Yvonne was the youngest of their children (Granny and Grandpa Momple had 13 children), and she was too old to play with us in the yard and all of that, but spent a lot of time helping us to grow up and so on, and helping Granny and that, until she started working. But I can't tell you what work she did, I can just tell you Aunty Blanche (another of her father's sisters) worked at the Match factory, along with daddy and all of them. And I can tell you that grandpa worked at the match factory till he retired. And his retirement years seemed to be most of our primary school going years, he never aged , Granny never aged, they seemed to stay that same age, placid, calm, embracing people as always, nothing ever changed. At Granny Harding (her maternal grandmother) things changed, she became bitter and twisted, she became... hard. Grandpa Harding we weren't allowed to be as close to as before because he had been accused of sexually abusing neighbour's children. Grandpa's been caught doing things that aren't right, it caused turmoil throughout the family. And there was a court case, we never found out the outcome, he didn't go to jail or anything, maybe he got a suspended sentence, maybe it got chucked out of court because of lack of evidence from these children. Who knows. And never mind that these were white children who lived next door, we never knew what came of it.

Dom: Right. Did he ever do anything to you?

Brenda: No, but Pam, my big sister has come out and said that Grandpa Harding sexually abused her. Now a lot of the family shrugged it off as Pam is a psycho anyway, and she latched on to the Anderson children thing. But Cousin Jean, who is Aunty Bobby and Uncle Cyril's daughter, was saying to Mace (Brenda's brother is currently visiting the family in South Africa from Australia where he emigrated to in the 1980s) this trip, and she hasn't seen him in 20 years, and she's still got this letter that Pam sent her, and in fact it was her who exposed this of what Pam had said and she says that she wants to go for psychology now because she feels that she is burying a lot of stuff. So maybe there's something telling her that somebody did this to her as well. Um, her (Jean) and Pat, she married Pat Johnson, they were the two who supported me in the time of me being raped and the family all saying it didn't happen and that there's no way (name removed) would do this and so on because his girlfriend (name removed) was expecting her second baby by then. Not married yet, but same age as me.

(We pause here and go through the genealogy of how the girlfriend of the man who raped Brenda is related to her. I have removed this to preserve anonymity as the man in question was never charged or found guilty of a crime.)

Brenda: Let me go to now when Uncle Cyril (her father's elder brother) and Aunty Bobby broke up. It was also accusations of she was jolling⁶⁴ and this and that. He and Aunty Bobby got divorced, the children got put out into boarding school quite a distance away. In the holidays they used to come to us and he never supported them properly financially and that. I think he was working for the council, because he used to come with this flatbed truck, and he'd put all us kids on the back of this truck and take us wherever they go riding around and that. And yes, they used to drink, but I can't say that I saw him and daddy falling around drunk at any stage. Mummy used to get falling around drunk but daddy used to get happy and silly and all that, mummy would get aggressive. Aunty Bobby was always aggressive. Uncle Cyril till this day thinks that he can laugh his way through life. He tells you silly jokes that we've been hearing since we were two bricks and a jam tin high, you know he'll give a tin of fish and a half a loaf of bread to feed 6 kids for the week type of thing. The rest of the time as he's riding around with us he'll stop at this place and buy us

⁶⁴ ‘Jolling’ is South African slang which means to go out and party a lot and have a really good time.

A ‘Jol’ is a party.

popcorn, this candy coated popcorn or buy us ticky⁶⁵ packets of nuts. I don't think it was ticky then? I think it had changed to Rands and cents by then? But anyway, that's how we remember the fathers giving us these treats. But they weren't doing the necessary things, buying enough food. Bread or peanut butter to really feed us type of thing. So of course there would always be the fights with the mothers and that type of thing. Anyway, the holidays would be spent at the different Aunties houses and I just found it normal to work. To clean the house, to wash the baby's nappies, to babysit, you know that kind of thing. And I got labelled 'Cinderella', that I was always feeling sorry for myself, that I was always sucking up looking for sympathy by washing these baby's dirty nappies. I loved being in shit, my mother used to say. If I wasn't in shit up to my elbows in kid's nappies I was playing in mud outside or building castles that kind of thing. Very much a loner when I wasn't being a tomboy with the rest of them.

Brenda had been recalling some very painful memories from her years with her husband, Charlie. She had become visibly upset and angry, and we took a break to get some air:

As we make tea and coffee, she puts a CD that her sister has made her on the stereo. It's Nancy Wilson⁶⁶ singing 'I Wanna be Loved'. She turns to me and says, "Music got me through", she adds milk to her coffee and continues, "As he was talking at me, I'd be looking at him, but inside I was turned to the music". The use of music as a redemptive soundtrack is not restricted to coping with her relationship with Charlie. She recalls how her sister would play her songs as they were growing

⁶⁵ A 'ticky' is an old South African word meaning a penny. Prior to the declaration of the republic, the South African currency followed the pre-decimal British system of pounds, shillings, pennies etc. Post-1961 the South African Rand was introduced as the national currency, with 100 cents to every rand. The word 'ticky' persisted though, and still refers to anything that comes in small packages. It is also used to refer to public phone boxes, which, when first introduced, operated by inserting a penny and so were called Ticky Boxes.

⁶⁶ Popular African-American jazz and R&B performer, known for her romantic ballads and witty performances. Her style and confidence were much admired by Brenda and the other girls in the neighbourhood during the mid-1960s. Her hairstyle and dress sense were studied and replicated religiously.

up that would capture the moods and times they were going through. Light relief and articulation of a range of deep and often difficult emotions. As she puts on Jimmy Messina⁶⁷, 'Free to be Me', the soundtrack to the time in the early part of this decade, living at Old Castle Ave, when she was managing her brother's band, dreaming dreams of success and independence, coming up for the night when she left Charlie after Jessica's 15th Birthday Party, she tells me, "I'm very much a romantic Dom. I love romance". She smiles with a happy look in her eye. The things that get you through the dark times. We dance a little in the kitchen and talk Stan Getz⁶⁸ and Bossa Nova classics before getting back to the interview, where she tells me the story of how she and Charlie, her husband, met. She begins by talking about what life was about for them, the webs of obligation she was woven into, and how these formed part of the reason why she stayed in the relationship.

Interview Part 3 December 13th 2008

Dom: So we were talking last about all the times you were getting thrown out of places you were living and the first job you had that you really enjoyed.....

Brenda: Ja. Anyway, this final time when I got thrown out and went to live with Aunty Veny for a while before I found a job at the Three Monkeys Coffee Bar. I had just started working there... um... had I been working there for a year? Oh Dom, I can't remember dates and years. I had been working at Three Monkeys and had this group of friends who I wish up until now that I could make contact with them, because they were so good for me and so good to me.

Dom: Were they your age?

Brenda: Yes, and they were all our kind of coloureds.

Dom: What's your kind of coloured?

Brenda: It's like Mauritian mix, or white and Mauritian, or white and St Helena, or white and Italian. Or coloured and Italian. You know none of them, like in Joburg, they say that the coloured people of Joburg have all got a black line, now we, Durban coloureds, didn't seem to have a black line. It seemed like all of us either had a line of either Mauritian or Indian and something else. So this is probably why

⁶⁷ American jazz and disco musician

⁶⁸Prolific Brazilian jazz musician who was one of the pioneers of the 'bossa nova' sound of the 1960s, which fused soft jazz with samba rhythms.

we all felt the apartheid thing so strongly because of the mix. So we were treated differently, we were given certain rights, like you weren't given manual labour so to speak, you could work behind the counter, you could work in somebody's office, depending on your complexion and your hair, and of course your speech. But Durban people all spoke well, we all spoke well. The farm children spoke differently and looked different. And, even us, we were taught, they are not your kind of people, stay away from them, they're typical bloody coloureds. You know?

Dom: Because they were identified as being more closely related to black people?

Brenda: Yes. Our birth certificates had Mauritian or St Helena written on them.

Dom: So it was clarified administratively as well.

Brenda: Ja. And when it came down to people Unc's age (her youngest brother, born in the early 1960's), and I'm talking about the Union Crescent time here (the white neighbourhood), that's when they started classifying as just Coloured or Other Coloured. And this was when the police would start coming, I don't remember what they were called exactly? But they would come and do the pen in the hair test and stuff like that.⁶⁹ But they never dressed as policemen, you just knew that they were police. And this was when we used to hide under the house, we darker ones, me, Mace, we'd hide under the house. Peter and Pam could be in the house. Lesley wouldn't hide under the house but she'd go climb a tree or something where she could watch everything. She was the defiant one, she was having no part of this, she could've stood there in front of them with her hands on her hips and told them what for.

So anyway, these girls and I at the coffee shop we got these tips, and we'd share our duties, some of us doing the plates with the chefs in the kitchen, some of us by the coffee machine, and the rest of us in front serving tables. There were 7 of us girls, there were tables in the arcade, and then a step up into the rest of the restaurant.

Dom: And I'm presuming this was in a white area?

⁶⁹ These officials were probably not police but the ordinary citizens employed by the apartheid state to help in the process of classifying people under the terms of the Population Act (Bowker and Star 1999). They often visited homes and businesses, as well as holding hearings, where people would have a series of tests performed on them to determine their race, particularly individuals who were on the borders of being coloured/white or coloured/black.

Brenda: Oh yes! Only white people could come in there. We served people like Penny Coelen⁷⁰ and so on.

Dom: So it must have been quite exciting!

Brenda: Yes! Most people would always sit at a particular table nine times out of ten, and she always chose to sit in the arcade. The Italian factory owners sat at the bar, and in that first three tables, the best tables. So that was me or Rita. Because we were the most beautiful, the most shapely, the more...eye appealing?

Dom: Eye Candy!

Brenda: Ja! So we'd pull the customers in kind of thing.

Dom: Did you enjoy that, being singled out that way?

Brenda: I was totally embarrassed, but I liked that the women complimented or said something nice. But if any of the men said it I would immediately feel dirty, I didn't like it. I was never, I think even today I still find it hard to take compliments. So anyway, serving Penny Coelen, for some reason or another, she brought me this outfit that I always used to admire her in. Two piece, short sleeved jacket, fitting skirt with a box pleat. And I can't remember how it happened that she brought me this gift but it was something that she had been wearing. But man! Was this my prized outfit! I just simply remember her saying to me she hopes I'm not going to be offended but she's got something she would love to see me wearing, and it was almost gift wrapped, she'd packaged it up really nicely. And this was the outfit I was wearing the night I got raped and it was ripped and could never be worn again. And um, so that's another thing, why I hated this man for so many years, because that was one outfit that I could feel so special in. I could feel like I was a lady. Because she (Penny Coelen) was lovely, she had the perfect body, the perfect face, but it wasn't just outer beauty, it was inner beauty. A thorough, thorough lady. She acknowledged everybody and never had any airs and graces. She almost gave us the impression of being royalty. Even when she didn't have a smile on her face she still had warmth and brought gifts for everybody, at Christmas or if she knew it was someone's birthday. You see these customers became regulars, they were friends.

Dom: So you really loved your job?

Brenda: I loved it. Really, really loved it. I worked there for nearly two years.

Dom: So what happened that made you leave it if you loved it so much?

⁷⁰ A former Miss South Africa and winner of Miss World in 1958

Brenda: Well, I wasn't allowed to socialise with the girls after work, and very often I would have to take money out of the tips for bus fare to get home or cigarettes or something like that. And it never got deducted when we did the share out or anything. Then, we got our tips shared out this one time, and we girls decided we are going to go and spend this on ourselves. Because all of us were giving our wages to our families. We didn't think it was wrong to be doing that (giving all their wages to family). All I got out of it was my bus fare to and from work, and if you felt like something, a sweet, a chocolate, a cold drink, you couldn't, because then you'd use up your bus fare. So that's how come if during the day you did that, went in your lunch break and bought something for yourself, that's why I'd have to take out of the tip jar and so would some of the other girls. But we didn't abuse the thing, so it wasn't fair to the others if we kept on doing it type of thing. And we had such camaraderie amongst us! Because this money didn't just get shared with the seven girls, it also got shared with the chefs, the dishwasher and the cleaner. That's how we worked. So we never had a colour thing or issues or anything like that. The manageress had issues, because of how she would choose one of us to work in the front of the shop and so on, based on colour and attractiveness. Anyway, when I got sent back on the Monday morning with my bag of goodies from Woolworths to go and get a refund, it was so embarrassing. Two of the girls went with me, they said, 'Don't worry man, Jeanette will take all the stuff back and it won't be an issue'. So I got the money back, had to give it to my mother, but this feeling of total total embarrassment just got so bad that I eventually stopped going to work.

Dom: Even though the girls reassured you?

Brenda: Ja. Because you still felt like they looking at you like you're a fool.

Dom: That must have been awful for you.

Brenda: It was. But it wasn't new. It was a feeling I had grown with practically all my years. Oh, and Mummy used to come in every Saturday. She worked in the dress shop down on Garden St, and Daddy worked further on in Stanger St. Saturday was her only day of freedom, which was probably right up his alley because he would go to the Tudor Rose and go play darts. Mummy would come every Saturday to the Three Monkeys, sit down and eat the meal that I'm supposed to be having. I often brought a little bit extra home for Mark (her youngest brother) because often there wasn't supper and it was easy to hide a hot dog or something. Now on Saturday, everyone would take their lunch upstairs to sit and gossip, catch up on what the plans were for the weekend. Except for me, because my mother would take my lunch. The girls would greet her sitting and eating the cold meats and salad I should've been having, and they would take extra for me so that I could eat off of their plates.

Dom: Where would she sit to have this meal?

Brenda: Oh, in the prize spot! Just inside the door, directly opposite the manager and owner. Why they even allowed this to happen I don't know. I would collect my wages and hand them straight over to her. I'd leave then, and she would carry on sitting there socialising with them. She'd catch the Corporation bus home, which was the white bus. I'd have to walk all the way up the hill to catch the Indian bus. What is that Dom?

That's what happened then, after this incident where she made me return the things I'd bought with the girls, and I was so humiliated. She had the audacity to come into the shop same as always on a Saturday, and the girls had to greet her as if nothing had changed. And that was just it for me, I'm not going to do this again. I quit the job that day. Never went back. So yes, I had a stubborn streak somewhere in me, but not a good one, comes up at the wrong time. Not to my benefit.

Dom: And then what happened?

Brenda: That week I didn't go to work, and I was in turmoil for should I tell my mother? She was going to go there Saturday and find I'm not there, and I thought to hell with it, I don't care. Let her go and get embarrassed for a change. So of course there was hell to pay that Saturday, I got thrown out, went to first go live with Jean and Pat (cousins on her father's side). Pat was nearing the end of her pregnancy, and I thought this is going to be nice, because I can help Jean to look after the baby, and I can find a job. And I stayed there till after Christmas. Now it came to Bev's birthday in February, and they were having a party at this log cabin venue, at the opposite side of Wentworth, near the white side. So we went to this party, this big group of us friends, and coming home the whole crowd left at the same time. And we would sing as we walked and as we got to each one's house they would go off to their homes. But now I was furthest away and (name removed)'s boyfriend was taking me home. So there was nothing, there was nothing of why should this be so, or aren't you scared, nothing like that, because it was always like one big happy family type of thing. We all knew each other, had grown up together. So anyway, we get down to near the Indian section of Wentworth, going down through all these trees, we're now off the road, going down through this grove of trees. Just me and (name removed). And you know this thing of walking with arms around the neck and still singing all of this. Once everyone had drifted off it wasn't even this thing of well now it's time to separate. But it was time to separate because we had to walk in single file down this foot path through the trees. Now when I'm taking his arm off my neck, that's when he pulled towards me and started kissing me. Dom, I tell you the truth when I say to you that I kissed him back. Because I wanted to see what it's like.

Dom: You'd never kissed anyone before?

Brenda: No. So, then it starts getting frantic, touching my body, touching my breasts. Now I'm trying to stop him from this. I've broken away from the kissing, but he won't stop. And he had me in this grip, but still fiddling with the other hand, until we start struggling. And in the struggling we fell. And he got on top of me and started pulling my clothes off and all of this. I fought... I did fight. One time I thought, I'm not going to fight anymore, I'm going to see what he's going to do. And that was my mistake. Because then he ripped my panty off, till this day I don't know if it ever got found, and here was he now starting to have sex with me. So with this feeling I'm onto the ground, with all these stones behind me, I felt for a stone. Whether it was a half a brick, whether it was a big stone, I don't know. But I started hitting him on his back with it, and he was just going crazy on top of me, and um, then I eventually got him some place on his head, and that's when he rolled off of me, and that's when I got up and ran. And ran all the way to Jean and Pat's place which is a good 10 minutes from where we were. And got there and Jean and Pat were still up. Pat got such a shock when she saw me, my clothes all torn and muddy. Jean got out of bed to come see me, and she just said to me, 'Go get in the bath, go have a bath, have a nice hot bath'. I was a shivering, crying wreck, out of breath. They asked what had happened and I told them as best I could, but they just said to me, 'Don't worry about anything, just get in the bath, have a nice hot bath'. And Pat had to go downstairs to the shop across the road and phone from a ticky box, phone to (names removed – the girlfriend of Brenda's accused rapist, a close family member and another close older female family member). They came the next day. By the time they got there, they just shrugged off everything as if I'm telling lies and if this did happen, if he did have sex with me it's because I asked for it. So anyway, we sit there in stony silence while we wait for him to come. And he comes and he sits there in the window, on the window sill, with the light behind him, so no one can see his expressions, no one can see anything of what he's thinking or feeling. We can only hear what he's saying and he's also denying point blank that this was never him. He was never there. So the fact that you left taking Brenda home, where did you leave her? No, when so and so went one way, he went the other way. So this was like, how could he have done anything if he wasn't even with me? Anyway, that's how it ended. That was the last that discussion was ever had and I got put out from Jean and Pat because Aunty (name removed – older female relative who came to hear the story) said it should be so. So I went to go and stay with Aunty Veny, my father's sister, who lived along the route that we had passed. Then Aunty Veny starts asking me what's wrong with me, you're getting fat, you know how older people notice when someone is pregnant. She sits me down and starts questioning me and questioning me. Next thing, here's mummy and daddy arriving. We're sitting down for supper of mince stew and rice, and the car pulls up,

Mummy and daddy walk in. Whether they even greeted I don't know, but pack your bags, and get out of here. I wasn't given the opportunity to say goodbye, thank you, voetsek⁷¹. It was just point the finger and you follow the direction of the finger. So, get home, no talk, no questions, no nothing. There was this tension in the house.

The narrative now is about the envelopment of Brenda into a maze of authority she has no control over as her family and the church respond to her pregnancy.

After a little bit, my parents come home one night, and say come with us. Mace (her older brother) is arriving home from work at the same time and they say you come too. I thought, ok, we're going to church, we're going to get lectured, I'm pregnant. Mace and I are dragging along behind them, Daddy and Mummy and an Aunty. No one is talking to each other. We go into the priest's house, and this is unusual because if you're going to confession or whatever you go into the church. We get taken into the house and into the office, and the priest comes in, he sits down. Aunty Blanche (Brenda's father's older sister), daddy and mummy are sat in a row against the wall, then me, then Mace. Father starts the conversation with, I'm very sorry that we have to gather like this today. But do we realize, and he looks at Mace and I, how serious this is. So I nod my head because I assume he's talking about pregnancy and then I start assuming that Mace is with us because he was going to be a priest, and he had come home from the Seminary to decide whether this was truly the vocation he wanted. So then the Priest says that this is incest! The moment he said that word my father, Mace and Mummy all stood up together. Daddy never said a word, he just pulled me up, turned me round and pushed me out of there. We're walking home now in this angry stride of daddy's and keeping up with him, but we're looking at each other and peering at his face to work out what is this about, what does this mean?

A little while later, Mummy comes storming in, followed by Aunty Blanche. There's a stony silence but Mummy keeps muttering about bloody bitches, you can't really catch what she's saying but everything is aimed at daddy now. Dom, there was no discussion, there was no sitting me down and asking me what the hell was Father talking about, asking Mace... nothing nothing... till this day, they're both dead now... they never spoke to us, what they spoke with each other we don't know.

Anyway, next thing mummy comes home with two gingham maternity dresses, two panties, two bras. All this packed into a school child's cardboard suitcase type of thing. Next morning I get shaken awake, Daddy saying very gently and almost sadly I can say, come now, you've got to get up. Peter is waiting.

⁷¹ 'Voetsek' is an Afrikaans word meaning 'Go Away'

Now Peter Shackleton was my father's friend, a white guy who had a garage. He was a motor mechanic and he likes fishing and the outdoor life. So he used to take my father and the boys out often to deep sea fish, or the entire family to lagoons. But I couldn't ever go to these things because of the hours that I worked. So this morning I get into the car with him, which is a Studebaker Lark, the prizest car at the time. And you felt like royalty riding in this car, it had a V6 engine, and a deep growling sound, everybody would stop and look. Anyway, this wasn't one of those happy drives. Here we are driving and driving, with this cardboard suitcase next to me. No one saying anything to me. We get to Graytown (some distance outside of Durban, near the Valley of a Thousand Hills), going into the valleys, and after what seems like forever we eventually reach this mission station. I get left to sit in the foyer, eventually the priest came out, with three nuns behind him. One picked up the case, and one just came on either side of me and guided me out of the seat. We went back outside, through trees and gardens. There was this rondavel⁷² standing alone on the hill. Further along, at the edge of a sheer cliff was another building which was the toilet.

So I got put into this rondavel, the nuns backed out. And a little while later Daddy and Peter arrived in the car. Daddy just came in and said to me, 'OK, you settle in here, you'll be allright, just keep on praying and hope everything turns out OK'. And they left. I sat there on the bed the rest of the day. Somebody came and brought me lunch. Didn't speak. Just put this lunch and a pitcher of water on a stool in front of the bed, which had a tomato box for a bedside table. The night came and another plate of food arrives. Boiled vegetables and some chunky slices of bread that looked like it had been baked there. Put it down, backed out of the room, and never saw anybody again. So I think, OK, obviously I'm supposed to sleep here. I listened to the sounds of the night. The absolute silence of this place. I never understood the meaning of deep silence or loud silence until I went there. Next thing it was morning and I hear the sounds of birds and other animals. I got up, and the nun who brought me breakfast of two fried eggs and bread pointed to the building by the cliff and down to my toiletries bag to indicate that that was where I must go wash.

Dom: So no one ever spoke to you?

Brenda: No. So she made these movements to indicate that's where the toilet was. And that's how the days went. Someone would bring breakfast. Someone would bring lunch. Someone would bring supper. I never even got to see their faces because at that time they still wore these habits with the long piece over hanging at

⁷² A Rondavel is a round hut with a conical roof.

the front. So I can't even say that I ever identified a face. They were different heights and sizes and stuff, but I didn't take particular notice of them as I'm sure they didn't take particular notice of me.

Dom; And there were no other young girls there?

Brenda: Nobody else was there. Now and then I'd see the priest while I was sitting out on the grass watching the day go by, or the nuns working in the garden. The only noise was the delivery truck coming to the trading store which was about another kilometer away. You'd hear the sound of the vehicle in the distance, then the sound of kids getting excited, then it would fade. Kids would follow the vehicle all the way to the shop. When they saw me they would wave shyly before wandering off. They never came close to me, and I never called to them.

Dom: So what did you do every day?

Brenda: Nothing. Just sat there. Whether I was thinking or not thinking I can't say. And I don't know how long I was there. I know that I did feel like the Cinderella of the family then. Pam (her older sister) had been pregnant and had Michelle (her baby daughter who was living in the two rooms with the family when Brenda was sent away to the Mission station) and she didn't get sent away. Nothing changed, life went on though there were fights about it, and her sneaking off to see the father of her baby and so on. But besides that, nothing was different. Even her running off to see him and that, it was what she did normally from the time she started seeing boys. She never got thrashed in public for it, like me and Lesley (Brenda's younger sister) did. And a lot of the time it was her who did the thrashing. She'd see us talking to someone, and with Lesley a lot of the time it was boys from school walking her home who lived in the street.

Dom: Why was it so different for you?

Brenda: I don't know. It was never discussed. Until they died, Mummy never apologized. Daddy did apologise, when I was in hospital having had the baby. But back in the Mission Station, this night that I want to tell you about. There was no thought in my mind that I wanted to die, it was just nothing. There was no feeling that I've been crying and crying for days and I need a way out of it, if I was crying it was so deep inside myself. I just know that I was extremely sad. I went down the bank, across the road that takes you back to the Mission Station. I don't even know if it was a conscious thought but my intention was to just keep walking over the cliff. It was a steady pace, like I'd walk if I was just going to use the toilet. It wasn't quite dark yet, but the sun had gone. And as I got to the toilet and was ready to carry on walking, these three figures appeared, turned me around and walked me back up to the room. The one was like a step or two behind me, the other two were either side

of me. They weren't even holding me. You know, it's just, they were there. I could feel the swish of their habits near my legs, but there was no physical touching to turn me round, but there I was, facing the opposite direction walking back up the hill with them. We got into the room. The one sat on the tomato box crate, the other two sat on the bed. And they got out their pockets those rings of embroidery and sat doing this. And I sat watching them, and no one spoke, they just did their embroidery.

I woke up the next morning. They had gone. The door had been pulled closed and I could hear the sound of a car engine there in the distance, and you knew that Studebaker Lark. Heard the sound of the kids' voices as it got closer. Shouting their greetings. When the car came up to where you could hear it, I was already packed, bed smoothed over and I was standing outside waiting for them. They didn't stop, Daddy made a sign to me, they just paused, went over to the Mission house, and they came back. The priest stood outside, waved from the door, and I got inside and off we went. The kids picked up from where they had left off, chasing the car and all this. I don't remember smiling at them. I don't remember thinking, what fun. You know? It was nothing. It was something that was happening and you're looking at it from another place. No talk to me all the way home back to Durban. By the time we got back to Peter's workshop, Daddy told me to get out and if I needed to freshen up. And Peter says go ahead, there's a clean towel and soap. Get yourself as comfortable as you can. I went in there and stood around like what do you do with running water? What do you do with a face cloth? I'd been washing in a bowl all this time. Anyway, got cleaned up and changed. Sat on the couch. Peter Shackleton brought some pies from the shop. I ate it and it was like eating saw dust, I hadn't eaten anything with meat in it for so long, and there was the fear of what am I coming back to?

Peter and Daddy worked on one of the cars that was there for a little bit, then Daddy said to me, 'I don't know what we're going into. Expect the worst. Your mother doesn't know we went to fetch you. There's probably going to be hell to pay.' And Peter says, 'I took your father up and I'm probably going to pay the consequences with him, because he phoned me at half past two this morning telling me of a dream he had. And we decided we're not leaving you there another day.'

Dom: He had a dream?

Brenda: They never told me the dream. They never said anything more than that. They finished their pottering with the car and we got back into it.

Dom: So you're not sure if the nuns and the Mission station had contacted him?

Brenda: No. In time over the years, at first I just said that I hated God. But in time, reliving this thing, of were these real nuns? Or were they angels? And was Daddy's dream from the angels, was it directed from God, who had made this whole thing come together? I decided I hated God for stopping me from going over the mountain. Later on I decided I didn't hate him for stopping me going over the mountain, I hated him because God didn't let me keep my child but he let Pam keep her child. Then I decided after a time, no, I don't hate him for that either. I hate him because why did he let me be born to these parents, and why did he let Daddy die at that time, that Mummy could use that as an excuse of we couldn't afford to have another mouth to feed, your father was dying of cancer and bang. Beginning and end of story. I found reasons for so many years to hate God. Meantime, I wasn't hating God, and then it took me so many years to realise how much I love Him and how much I thank Him and am so grateful to Him for saving me from that, for letting me live the life that I've lived, for going through all the different experiences I've gone through, and most especially for my kids.

Dom: When did the baby come?

I went into labour in the early hours of the morning. Not long after getting home. It was about a month. And I wasn't allowed to talk to any of the brothers and sisters. They'd talk to me in the day, but as soon as Mummy and daddy were due to come in from work, I'd go into the back section where we all slept. Mummy and daddy on a double bed behind a curtain, then three more beds pushed into a row in front, with Pam on the end sleeping with Mark (the youngest) who was 5 at the time and baby Michelle. The older boys slept on chairs in the front section. So I went into labour, probably moaning and groaning, and Daddy asked me, 'What's the matter Brenda? Are you in labour?' And you know, we weren't even used to hearing those words, even though our Aunties were having babies every year. But now me! Having labour! You know, it's like this only happens to big people. So he said, 'Do you have a stomach ache?' and I said, 'Yes', so he went to go call the ambulance. And I washed my teeth and got dressed, and he went with me to the hospital. Mummy never showed her face. I never heard her voice. And I'd never seen anyone in labour, aunties just went off to the hospital and came back with a baby. So I had this baby, with no supreme effort. I can't tell you that I suffered any great labour pains or anything. The child was taken straight away and put into an incubator. They said that it was underweight and jaundiced and premature. So I didn't get to see her. I lay there. More or less fine. I didn't have stitches. The other mothers in the ward who did have stitches would have their babies brought to them on these trolleys that were wheeled in, four babies stacked in a row, and their names would get called out. So I used to be there waiting to pass the babies to the mothers because I was fine and they weren't. And again, laying there looking at the sea through the salted up windows. I can't remember striking up a friendship or

conversation with anyone inthere. Until the one day this person was walking down the long passage between the wards. This person coming down saying my name, 'Brenda Momple. I'm looking for Brenda Momple', and I came out smiling saying, 'I'm Brenda Momple' and she says, 'You're the one giving your baby up for adoption' and I said, 'No'. And she says, 'Yes you are', and she takes me to the sister's office, they tell me to sit down and I say it must be someone else. And they say, 'Are you Brenda Momple? Your mother Daphne Momple has told us that this is what has to be done, and all you have to do my dear is sign these forms'. And they rattle off this list of instructions. So I say again it must be a mistake and they say no, your mother was here. And yes, my mother had been there every night, walked past where my bed is, straight on to the sister's office. She didn't speak to me. I thought she'd come to see the baby. Anyway, by the third day I asked about the baby and why am I not allowed to see her? And they say, no you can't see your baby because she's underweight and in an incubator, and you're not allowed to go in there. But the one nurse, her name was Lyn, she said come with me, and she put the gown on me back to front, with the green shoes and the paper cap and she let me look. And um, that was the first and last I saw this baby. I never touched her, I never held her... (Brenda starts to break down here) And it was the next day, I'm lying there with my back to everyone else. And they are not asking any questions or putting any pressure on me. Maybe they knew because they were all big women and I was the only young girl. That was the day this woman came to find me. So they say to me that the next day I've got to be up and bathed and dressed and ready to go to court. And this is what I've got to say in court. From Addington Hospital, down to Albany Grove, all along the beach front. And all the way this woman. She was a coloured woman, with a page boy hair cut. I suppose she was attractive, and telling me the whole time, 'You must be careful. You've got to be sure you're saying the right thing. Otherwise you'll be in big trouble. And when the magistrate says this, this is what you've got to say.' And she had it like rote, just repeating it back to me every now and then along the way. I don't remember walking into the court house. I don't remember going into the building. I don't remember coming out. But I do remember this person sitting there in a black cloak and holding the hammer, just tapping it with his finger. I was focused on that tapping finger, like I say one thing wrong he's waiting. Almost like my mother when she questions us kids with, what the bloody hell have you been doing today again. That kind of thing. And this person standing stiff waiting for me to say the wrong word or something. So anyway, I must've said all the right things and signed all the right papers. Only when we get back to the hospital I remember the wind blowing extremely hard and cold, and she was rushing to get back to the hospital because the weather is turning bad. And for me the wind is almost a relief that nobody can see what I'm thinking and feeling and all that. And apparently they kept me in an extra 7 days, and sedated me with whatever tablets they sedated me with. Just this nurse Lyn, and

whichever sister was on ward duty that day would come and pat me and say, 'Don't worry girl, you're still young, there'll be lots more babies.' You know. All of that. And what does that mean to me then? So I went home, and I got picked up by Aunty Yvonne's (Brenda's father's sister) husband. Mummy and daddy are in the car, and no one says a word the whole journey. Get home, get out the car, and all of Aunty Yvonne's nine children are waiting for me, saying 'There's Brenda! But where's the baby Brenda? Where's the baby?'

There was no baby. But that's it. Life was supposed to go on. I was supposed to find a job. We were all supposed to live happily ever after.

A month after the baby was born and adopted, Brenda found another job and walking home one day, met Beulah, with whom she formed a life long friendship. Beulah was 8 years older than her, and also lived in the neighbourhood with her Aunt and Uncle. She had already been married twice and had six children, all of whom had been taken from her for various reasons. Beulah would go on to marry Brenda's older brother.

Brenda: I had just turned 18 in January, and the baby was born on the 5th of April. I started work on the 5th of May, and then soon after that I met Beulah. She helped me such a lot. Because I thought my world was bad, and when I heard her story, hers couldn't have been more tragic. Because she was married and divorced twice, two of her children had been taken away from her by her second husband. The other three were in boarding school, and the other one had been taken away by her husband to England. So I'd lost only one... it was like we carried each other. We boosted each other. You think mine is bad, I feel so sorry for you So me and Beulah would walk to work because it gave us time to talk. Walking to work we got the sea view and the air, and very often we wouldn't even talk, we'd be silent, or sing softly, or sometimes get enraged. But, for the most part we just took total comfort from each other. And she was beautiful. And she thought I was beautiful. But I thought she was more beautiful! And maybe in itself that was giving us something, it can't be all that bad if we're beautiful! By the same token, we hated it if any male tried to tell us that.

Brenda: Working the night shifts suited me and Beulah down to the ground because the Uncle and Aunt where she was staying didn't want her there, but the uncle was still climbing into her bed whenever he could. And by me, I just didn't want to be home because of Mummy, who wanted to see her? She would come home from work with these little cellophane packets. And you know how noisy they are! And they'd have these slices of cold meats and smoked this and smoked that, and we'd cooked whatever we could put together to cook. And mummy would sit at her bed pretending to read her newspaper, but sneaking her hand into her bag, and you'd hear the crackle of the cellophane newspaper, and she's pulling out a piece of cold

meat with her two fingers and popping it into her mouth, or chocolates or whatever. And daddy is dying of cancer, sitting in the bed. And here you can slap me, we're all sitting in the room smoking and all that. I dunno Dom! Crazy crazy crazy... And we were not told he had cancer, we kind of realised things were bad when he started not being able to speak. First we tried to make a joke of it, then it got worse, that's when it became clear it had moved to his brain. And he had the first operation when I was still pregnant to remove part of his lung at the TB hospital. And he wasn't home for long after that and he tried to pick up a car battery so he got rushed into hospital again and became bed ridden. It doesn't even feel like long... it was 18 months the whole thing. Because when they came to fetch me from the Mission station, he had already been back into hospital twice, so it was far gone by then. And it just went downhill, he was off work getting a lesser salary, that's when things got bad. And after he died there was no pension or anything. And then he got really bad, couldn't speak, lost lots of weight. People would come and visit, Mummy would freak at Aunty Gladys coming to give him a bath. When he died, Peter Shackleton came to my work, and I got into the car, he said, 'Your dad is bad, Father's been there'. And if the priest has been there, that's last rites. When we got there a crowd of people had gathered at the house. And hatred boiled up in me again, not a phone call to my boss to let me know that my dad is bad. Nothing. It took Peter to come and tell me. I got in there to find them all there, mummy, the brothers and sisters, and daddy is dead. The funeral.... I only mourned him 20 years later, because I was angry at him too. And that's it. Just spent my life having huge amounts of anger that I couldn't express.

Dom: So you finally have someone to talk to. Because up until now your story has been so silent.

Brenda: You know the first time I really spoke about everything? I mean I told my children, I always told them that there was a chance there would be this knock on the door and someone coming to look for me. But about everything, the rape, everything, with all my brothers and sisters and Beulah on our first trip to Australia (Beulah went on to marry Brenda's older brother Mace and they emigrated to Australia). And that was 20 years later. We were all sat there talking and it came up that Mace says what was that thing with the priest and the incest accusation? Is there anything I did that I don't remember that I'm begging your forgiveness? What did I do to you that made you tell that story? And I said I never told anybody anything that could even hint at that, nothing even vaguely like that was said. But that was when we all vented and spoke, we really cleared the air with each other. They begged my forgiveness for keeping that distance and putting me in that box and closing that lid. But I must tell you, without Mark and Michelle (her youngest brother and baby niece) I think I would've physically killed myself, with thought and with planning, if it wasn't for having Michelle and Mark, to give me the strength to

go on each day. Because Beulah wasn't even giving me that. I needed that of the little people.

Interview Part 5 December 15th 2008

A few months after her father's death, Brenda met Charlie.

Brenda: And then there was Charlie... I wasn't interested in men at the time, I didn't want to know anything about any male. I hated men, I hated God, I hated the world. Because I had been raped, I had been sent away to Gray Town to be pregnant by myself. Got brought back in time to have this baby. Baby was adopted without anyone talking to me, anything like that. My father dying. So, who did I want in my life? I enjoyed being miserable. You know? (she starts laughing) I was loving every minute of hating. So now him coming into our lives, meeting my sister Leslie and brother Mace at this matinee. Leslie was in high school, so she was preparing for a debutantes ball, so they went to go see the latest dance steps and so on, and brought these people home, and Charlie is one of these people. So I come in from my work around 11 o'clock at night and I hear these voices in the bedroom section of our rooms, laughing and talking and everything, mmm, another party, what else is new? Go into the kitchen section and as you come in there's a blue flame stove, a paraffin stove, pick up the lids of the pots, there's no food in the pots, I throw my bag on the chair, and I turn to walk out and this person stands up from behind the section and says, "Good evening. Charles is the name." So I'm, "Hello, I'm Brenda", and walk out thinking, whose this now? Another married man, you know? So I go and sit on the front wall and feel sorry for myself. There's no food, the party's going on in the room where I'm supposed to go sleep. So here I sit until this party ends up back in the front room. This was kitchen, lounge, bathroom. We used to carry in a galvanized bath and bath in that, and cook in there and it was the lounge as well. Next door was the bedroom with wardrobes separating the spaces. Mummy's space, the girls' space and then the boys slept in the lounge. But now when these all night parties went on, the boys would take whatever bed was available and so on. So, I went to bed, wake up the next morning to get ready for work, and you had to wash at an outside tap just outside the kitchen/lounge door thing. And I'm busy washing my face and brushing my teeth and doesn't this swine person just come out the room again and say, "Good morning can I walk you to work?" So there was somebody else for me to love hating. He walked with me every day, he walked with me every night, he was outside the shop when I finished work, he was outside my room every morning when I woke up, and this was Charlie, he was just there 24 hours a day.

Dom: Focused

Brenda: Oh gosh... (starts laughing) He was just there, and you walked and then you get on the bus, and before you can pay the fare he's paid the fare and got on behind you, and you get off the bus and you walk down to the shop and he says, 'OK, I'll check you.' And off he goes. And then this was, this carried on for the rest of 1968, this was round about October/November.

My sister would play me these songs when me and Charlie broke up practically every two weeks, I'd have a face like you don't know what but I couldn't help but smile as we'd sit in the kitchen and she'd put on Nancy Wilson, 'You Better Face It Girl, It's Over'.

Dom: (laughs) Nothing changes!

Brenda: I know hey! Christmas day we were invited to his house for lunch, and this wasn't allowed, we had to have our lunch by our house, so we ate our little bit of lunch at our house and off we go to Heather Grove. Now Leslie and Pam go with, and Leslie is playing all these songs during our own lunch for all the relevant songs for this swine that will not leave me alone. And now we're going to meet his mother and there was some song relating to the figure in his life, oh God! Leslie was a terror with this. So anyway, we get there and we're eating this lunch, Dominique, I think you would've simply peed yourself. It's leg of mutton, and mutton breyani, and there's beetroot salad and carrot salad. So you'd think ok, this breyani⁷³ looks mighty strong, you take extra salad. Put a fork of beetroot in your mouth, the chilli....Everything sat here, you couldn't swallow, you couldn't breathe, the tears were running down my face and we three sisters are looking at each other. Leslie wore this little blue chiffon dress that ended at the thigh, but now this witch is calling her all kinds of names about the Fairy Princess and everything. Leslie by then was seeing Sydney but they weren't courting, they were friends. Sydney is Charlie's nephew, Dolly's grandson, who thought he was her son all the years. So she was being called Princess Elizabeth, and I was being called Princess Margaret. And these comments all the time. Martin was there, him and Pam were seeing each other, and here we now trying to get through this meal. And whatever you put in your meal has so much power, of chillis, curry. Even the leg of mutton... ahhh! So we get through this and thankfully we had all dished up little amounts and this was where she got her royalty names from because we're taking these little amounts and so on. Anyway, we get through the meal, dance a bit and move off. But my God, when we got out of that house, it was like we could breathe again. Anyway, we went on going to wish everybody we had to wish, but we couldn't wait for these

⁷³ South African spelling of 'Biryani', a layered rice, meat and lentil curry dish associated with Indian cuisine

boys to leave so we could have our post-mortem about this woman and her house and all the names she was calling us. And ja, that was the beginning of my life with Dolly Osman.

Dom: You've said she was very threatened by you being in the house?

Brenda: You see, because her name was on the title deeds for the house, only because of the apartheid time of a single man couldn't buy even though he was financially OK to buy, he qualified financially, but his age didn't qualify because he was 21 and single. She couldn't buy because she was widow and a nurse aide at Addington Hospital, so her salary didn't qualify and her status. Ethel, Charlie's sister, Sydney's mother, also couldn't buy because she's a single mother and a factory worker. So, because Ethel and Charlie wanted Ma to have this house, take her out of this room in Derby St that she's lived in since Grandfather fell off the boat, so the only way you could do it was to have her signature on it. And it was like an investment for all of them. She was illiterate, so they showed her how to write her name and let her practise. So she wrote 'D. Osman' like a primary school child, but that's fine, that's how it was done and a cross next to it. They moved into the house, with the thing of Ma, this is your mansion, nobody is going to take this mansion away from you, blah blah blah. So, they lived like that. With Charlie paying for it, and Ma's name on the deeds.

So when I came into their lives in 1968, then she had this fear that now Charlie has this woman, and now this woman is going to come and take away my house. I used to hear it every time she saw me. I'm taking her bread and butter from her and if I can pee a hole through a brick I can have her son, you know, all kinds of stuff. Oh she was really saying it. But at the end of the day, it was Charlie's house too because he's the one paying for it, so when it got too much living in the room at Derby Street for us, he decides we must go back and live with his mother whether she likes it or not.

We take a break here, and end up talking about the difficulty of life in the house, and the violent events that led up to Brenda running away from the house.

In the absence of a recording of this section, I am summarizing the main events, using some of the phrases Brenda used.

Brenda: You know when something happens that's really bad, it's like an out of body experience. This is what we're living I thought. Are you really going to live with it? That's when I decided to run away to Joburg.

She retreated back to her mother's house, without her two children whom Charlie refused to allow to leave the house. Brenda stayed with her mother till Easter, cooking up a plan to get her children back and go to Johannesburg.

Brenda's boss at the time helped her organise a job to go to. He had become sympathetic to her plight after witnessing the visits Charlie made daily to her place of work, where he would stand over the road and shout threats at her. Unable to get to her children due to the fear of violence, she forged a letter from the Welfare Department to state that she had a day's visit granted. It is an interesting turn in her story, where she manipulates the power of the institutions, which have previously held her captive, for her own ends, reversing the flow of influence to benefit herself through a deliberate act of disobedience. If they would not accept her authority as mother, then Charlie and Dolly had to accept the authority of the State. When she went to pick the children up for the 'visit', she took a dozen or so supermarket carrier bags with her, surreptitiously stuffing as many of their things into them as she could, "*The kids were so excited to be having a day out they leapt into the waiting taxi just in time for Dolly discovering the supermarket packets I'd thrown out the window. So I had to let that stuff go. But we got away.*"

The victory of Brenda's escape from Durban was short lived as the reality of attempting to work and care for her children as a single woman without friend or kinship networks to draw on became clear. It was a near impossible task, "*The kids were about 4 and 5, little, not ready for school yet. I had to try and find care for them while I worked in the day, which was expensive and also hard because I didn't really know the people I was leaving them with. And I was so tired, exhausted to my bones, with so little money for us to live on.*" Charlie too had tracked them down, asking questions of the taxi driver who had picked them up and finally getting an address when the divorce papers came through. He and his mother started coming to Joburg, hassling Brenda to return the children to them. She moved around frequently to try and hide. Peace Orders she had taken out to restrain Charlie were not enforced, "*The police just treated it like another domestic matter, not their business... and what was I doing as a single woman anyway?*" Eventually, the sustained pressure of harassment, coping alone, moving around and struggling financially were too much and she let the children go. She was 24 years old.

Note: The following section is summarized and paraphrased from a series of phone conversations I had with Brenda in 2008 in which she 'filled in the gaps' about her time working at Dorkay house.

Left in Joburg without her children, Brenda experienced an ambivalent kind of freedom. It was 1975 and for the first time in her life she was completely independent, though this had come at tremendous personal cost. Still living in Kliptown, she found solace in the friends she made and finding a place in the rich social life of the area. Brenda found herself socialising with politically conscious musicians and becoming enveloped in a world which stimulated and inspired her, "*It gave me something to look forward to, be involved with. A purposefulness. And*

it made the difficulty of living in Kliptown more bearable. It was the thing of being around positive people, who were doing something rather than moping and wallowing in the misery of it all."

Brenda:I remember Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela would call regularly from overseas on the phone to chat to people, they were still in exile and it gave everyone a real boost to hear from them. People would be there to rehearse and practise but it was also a social place, somewhere to pass the time, catch up with friends, escape from feeling depressed about the way things were politically or the difficulties of everyday life, not having the finances and all of that. It wasn't even that I was working for the salary, I took a pay cut to work there. I wanted to be around the music and the scene, what I thought was exciting. Ian was great, but his daughter Linda could be difficult, she made the job hard at times, but it was still worth it.

As the violence surrounding the 1976 uprisings intensified, the Bernhardts helped many of the artists using Dorkay House, and Brenda, to get flats in the inner city. As they were white, they could provide the signatures on leases for flats in the officially whites-only area of Joubert Park in the centre of town. So Brenda moved into Huntley Hall, sharing a flat with a female friend along the same corridor as many of her friends from Dorkay House.

Brenda:So even though we were all not in the same flat, we socialised together, I did most of the cooking for the guys, and we really all got on. The atmosphere was co-operative and the music playing all the time.... I did love it.

As well as housing the performing arts community from Dorkay House, it was also home to a number of prostitutes, mostly white women, who Brenda discovered to her surprise were not the 'fallen women' she expected them to be.

Brenda:The prostitutes were clean, decent and, if I can say it (she laughs), hard working. We all respected each other's space and working hours.

The flats were frequently raided in the middle of the night by the South African police because of the contraventions of the Group Areas Act

Brenda:The cops came to raid all the time, and for some reason I never got picked up, but a lot of the guys would. So I would call the Bernhardts, then make my way over to John Vorster Square⁷⁴ in the morning to pay the bail and get the guys out. There were never charges brought. I can honestly say that they did it out of vindictiveness, for their own enjoyment, just to cause disruption.

⁷⁴John Vorster Square was the notorious central Johannesburg police station.

At first he came back into my life as a friend because he was working at Sasol and couldn't make it back to Durban, so he stayed at my place. But gradually he wore me down, we would talk long into the night and he seemed to be more open with me, and had given up drinking, promising that we could be together with the kids. What can I say? I was young and foolish. And it was a case of better the devil you know than the devil you don't. And it was nice to have that friendship, because we became friends before I let him back in my bed again. We would dance in the kitchen while I was cooking, sing songs over the balcony down to the streets below".

Once their friendship had deepened once more into a romantic involvement, Charlie moved into the flat at Huntley Hall and it was not long before she fell pregnant with their third child and gave birth in March 1979.

She named him David, after one of the actors she had befriended at Dorkay House, "A very handsome black actor. What a gentleman! He spent everyday at the office". She continued working for the Phoenix Players after the birth, "David would be in his carry cot next to my desk, he was the baby of Dorkay House! Everyone fussed over him and loved him."

Interview Part 6 Januray 10th 2008

We are talking about Brenda's time at Dorkay house whejn I begin the recording.

Brenda: I still stayed in touch with all the musicians after I left the job, we had all just fallen in love with each other. I couldn't go to the gigs anymore because of having small children, but I bought records whenever I could and other people brought me stuff. Then the Sunday afternoon radio shows that I listened to every week, and usually one of the guys I knew would be on. I couldn't go long without music, and back then most of the stations had a slot where I could hear what I loved. There was Highveld, and then Metro came along.⁷⁵Dorkay House closed, and people moved down to this learning centre at the Market Theatre complex. Older, established guys would do workshops and teach the young ones. They didn't just sit home and do nothing, they'd come into town and find someone to talk to, keep engaged and I think that's why I didn't slip into depression, because they inspired me. So yes, we'd moan and groan! But we'd meet up for coffee, watch the rehearsals, listen to practice. It was so important for me to have this stuff."

⁷⁵Two commercial popular radio stations. Highveld is aimed at the MOR white market, and Metro at the Urban black market.

Brenda's movement across all sorts of boundaries in South African society at that time enabled her to reproduce a conventional home life according to the norms of tradition under which she operated. Her retreats into doing the things that made her 'feel good'- music, pride in her domestic space and helping friends - also made it possible for her to 'put up' with domestic relations which were less than ideal. However, even as she stayed, her 'stubborn streak', supported by this sense of what was good for her, allowed her to take some control over the domestic space she shared with her mother and Charlie, including providing shelter to some of her friends from Dorkay House. The city had finally succeeded in shutting it down under the auspices of the Group Areas Act, "*It was the saddest thing, the front was boarded up. But some of the guys who'd been living there just broke in through the back and carried on. The electricity had been turned off, but they could cook on gas stoves*". Brenda also offered a temporary home to some of her friends,

"My mother and husband didn't approve, but I didn't even feel defiant by doing it because mummy and Charlie were going to be off whoever I brought home or spent time with so why should I care? They didn't like the 'k's"⁷⁶. Manyatso, one of the musicians, ended up living with us. Charlie hated it, but I just told the guys, lay low while you're here, and we just got on with it. But in his own way he was OK with it, understood what I was doing even if he couldn't say it. Charlie's main gripe was having guests on the floor, they needed privacy and their own bed. And I think this goes back to his experience growing up in one room with him and his mother and brother all sleeping together on the floor.

Brenda: Life was having to see to his mother, having to see to my mother, Unc (her youngest brother) always needing a home. So there's a lot of reasons why I continued the way I continued. But were they good enough reasons to stay through all of that? You know, when you look at it in retrospect. So perhaps those are regrets I'm expressing when I say things like that hey?

Dom: I guess you're exploring the different possibilities that existed and it's probably important to do that. You can't change anything, but you can explore your feelings about it.

⁷⁶A euphemism for 'kaffir', a derogatory and dehumanising term used to describe black people in South Africa. See Chapter 3 for discussion of kwaito star Arthur Mofokate's use of the word in his hit 'Kaffir'.

Brenda: Unc just quietly supported me. My mother would be judgemental, asking why the hell am I letting this happen, and all of that. But he (Charlie) wouldn't ever leave Dom! He wouldn't ever leave, he would work out of those packed cases, and he wouldn't leave. He'd say he had nowhere to go, and I would think about that, and think you might be right, who'd want you anyway? I had plenty of places to go. But how do you go to friends, family, with four and a half kids, four and then Jessica (her grand daughter) later on, and Unc, what happens to Unc? And, you know, a lot of the time we stayed because of the fact that it was a comfortable rut kind of thing. And the thing of family, because no matter what he did and said and acted, I did a lot of things over his head because I felt it was right to do it. Having Unc live with us throughout his life, all the others had gone to Australia (Brenda's older brother Mace and two sisters Pam and Leslie emigrated to Australia in the mid 1980s). Unc was the baby of the family, mummy never cared, and it was never a duty to have Unc, it was my pleasure to have Unc. He was, oh, he was a stalwart. My backbone. My spine. With guiding the children, with knowing I could leave them with Unc and go to work, and if Charlie is going to burn the clothes, I know Unc will say to the children, come, let's go to the park. There's no audience, there's no children getting hysterical because daddy's playing flying saucers with my Miles Davis and my Stan Getz. Whatever music I loved was the ones he'd play flying saucers with. He would seem to show no interest in the music that's playing, but come to smashing time he knows exactly what he's going to destroy. Even the clothes, you've got a wardrobe full of clothes, why choose the stuff I have to wear to go to work, to throw in the backyard and throw paraffin and set light to? What is that about you know? And yes, his stepfather broke the bones in his mother's hands, and beat her up on a regular basis kind of thing, but don't you grow up needing to break away from that? And do everything in your power not to make your family miserable? He loved soccer, and that was his outlet, so when he came home from soccer, he'd get sent to the bathroom in the outside room where they lived, in the yard outside. And when they think that he's all soaped up and everything, because they used to bath in a bucket, you get in the bucket and soap yourself up like that, they'd (his mother and step father) would wait till a certain point and start thrashing him with a belt, naked and all full of soap, you can't run, you can't anything. And he tried to bring the same thing into our household, doing that to Diane and Dino (their older children). Pull them out of their beds in the middle of the night sleeping when he gets home drunk from wherever, and he wants to be thrashing them. So all I would do was be this huge fat lump, because I took so long to lose my weight after having them so close together, and just say to him, you can do what you like, smash every plate, cup and glass, because we also lived in a small place, and all I would do is stand in front of that cot with my cigarette in my hand and my music on and you can do what you like, just stand there like I'm totally... Perhaps that's what used to drive him crazy, the fact that I was totally indifferent. It was many years before I started hitting him,

and that was when the abuse of the children got bad. The first was the day I came home from work to find him smashing beer bottles at these two children standing against the wall, and he's sitting on a stool at the kitchen door throwing bottles at the kids at the opposite door.

We spoke about how peace and conflict played out interchangeably around the sites of social gatherings at the house, to enjoy and dance to music, celebrate events in the children's lives or allow rehearsal spaces for Brenda's brother's band. The realisations that Brenda was experiencing through her explorations in the worlds of self-improvement and reflection were implemented in the home at the same time as continuing in a relationship which did not support these transformations, and frequently sabotaged them.

Brenda: Ja, and we would have a lot of drama in that direction also because he would chuck us all out or turn off the electricity or do whatever he was trying to do to try and stop us gathering. And he didn't have a problem with Unc and Jack (Brenda's cousin, a musician), and I think that's because of their grass habit. So when they weren't rehearsing or something, they'd be sitting with him talking and smoking their stuff and all that kind of thing, but when they'd come across and start playing if he still was OK he'd sit and listen and enjoy it, but as soon as he got too drunk he would switch off the electricity and do all kinds of weird things. But we just went on around him. And perhaps that was cruel in a way, that we disregarded him so often you know. But throughout my life with him he did nothing but stop me from going forward. Even working for a boss, he would be performing at home, smashing my records, burning my clothes, punishing the kids for unnecessary stuff, you know that type of thing, where very often I'd have to come home from work early to sort the thing out. From when they (her two younger children) were in Primary School he used to do funny things like that. And I always had to work because him being in construction and all that his work was never consistent. And then there was the life he used to live of spending his money in the bar, of tearing up the money, burning up the money, you know, you couldn't rely on him, you couldn't trust that you were going to have x amount of money for the month or something.

Dom: So pretty unpredictable for you.

Brenda: Very unpredictable. Our whole lives were unpredictable with him. And I'd either leave or threaten to throw him out and go and do Peace Orders, that kind of thing. Then he'd behave for a period, and before things, finances and that could get back into routine, he'd start off again, so it was totally, totally unpredictable with him. And ja, he was always there, so the children say, but what kind of there, you know? So for me as the wife it wasn't good, for the kids, I don't know, each one has their own thought sand feelings on that. But I still think that staying there with him till the end like that was probably the best thing for the kids' sakes. But not for me, it didn't do anything for me.

Dom: Why do you say that it was the best thing?

Brenda: Um... simply because so many kids grow up without that two parent figure so they knew him totally, they knew him thoroughly, so whatever things they do in their lives from here on out, they've got the two of us that they can refer to and say, never mind daddy was drunk or daddy performed and he didn't allow this and that and that, you know, morals and principles that kind of thing, maybe that way. But then with them reaching certain ages, I used to tell them from about the age of 15 or 16 and so on, that you are reaching the age where you can see right from wrong, that never mind what mummy and daddy is doing whatever that is, arguing in front of us, you can make a vow that I won't do this in front of my kids. Or, he's drinking and gambling and he's never at home so I'm gonna make sure I never do that to my family. You know things like that. And me always having people there, the house was always full of everybody and their cousins, how much did that take away from the children, or how much did that give to them? Or you know? I don't know how wrong or how right our lives were, but I always imagine we were as happy as we could be. And um, we stopped thrashing them when Della (her youngest daughter) was at an age when she was petrified of even being lined up for chastising, so that's more or less the time that we stopped giving them thrashings as we got thrashings, and as we used to give them thrashings and so on. So Diane and Dino (her older children) might even resent the fact that they got all the thrashings and these younger two didn't get.

Dom: What made you decide to stop?

Brenda: I think by then I was going for different counselling, so I got to talk about a lot of things to do with growing up and how we were treated and what I felt about that. I was a lot wiser by then, I'd been reading a lot of motivational books and family guidance, things like that, and at that point also I used to specially get family related movies, like you know perhaps husband beating his wife up and the kids looking at this and you know seeing all this kind of things.

Dom: You mean the True Life movies?

Brenda: Yes, the true life stories, those kinds of things made me sit up and take notice and start trying to do things differently. And also, working with a lot of people I was working with, because at this point I was at Standard Bank Unit Trusts. And being the eldest in the group, they used to call me to the board room to talk to this one whose been beaten up by her husband or that one whose having girlfriend trouble or that one whose coming in to work smelling of liquor, you know, all the different things. Because I was the eldest, and because I was calm they would ask me to do this. So doing that it gave me a lot of time to see my own issues, almost like looking in a mirror. So don't tell her to leave him he's a bastard and that kind of thing, because aren't you living the same kind of life? Try and teach her and try and teach him, how to fix, how to mend, how to find ways around it by communication and understanding, and you know? Things like that. So I was learning as I was teaching and as I was going.

One of the big things was when Della took an overdose of normal panados or something like that. Wanting to kill herself. She had already run away from home because daddy was always drunk and threatening them and all this kind of thing, and throwing my clothes out to burn them because I'm not home from work yet. And um, she ran away from home telling me where she was going, she didn't tell him where she was going. And I would simply go and speak to the parents of the house, explain the situation, bring her back home. But she was a little scaredy cat, she was sacred of everything. Even against David (her older brother) she never had a voice, but she used to use her own way of threatening him, if you don't do this or that I'm gonna tell on you. But he used to control her, and she had to do all his household duties and cover up for him here there and everywhere. But they had a very good relationship, these two (her two older children) didn't. He (Dino, her older son) was always jealous of the younger two. Um... and then Della took this overdose of tablets, again because of Charlie's drinking. I'm normally a light sleeper as you know, and for some reason that night I was just restless, I was just restless. And I kept walking up and down, and I went and looked at her, and no, she seems to

be sleeping. But her colour wasn't right, as white as she is, she didn't look right. Anyway she went past and went to the bathroom, and I just looked up from my book and didn't comment. She went back to the room, and after a bit I put the book down and went to look at her again, and I shook her and I said, 'What is wrong with you?' Anyway, she said to me that she'd taken these panados, I asked her how many and made her get out of her pyjamas and put on clothes. I went to wake Charlie up and I said to him, come, slapped him up actually. We went to the hospital, JG Strydom, um, no, Helen Joseph they had changed the name to, and they were seeing to her and all that. She hadn't taken a dangerous amount, but they still pumped her stomach up and all that. And then they wouldn't let us go. They said we had to wait for the social worker. And this social worker that came Dom, I'm just so sad that we have so many people doing those kinds of jobs so badly. She comes there and she's full of this attitude, maybe because she's been woken up this time of the night, or maybe we had pulled her from her bed to come and attend to us. And here she was hammering us about this child doing this, and hammering Della for doing this. Yes, attempting suicide that kind of thing is bad, nobody condones it, nobody should condone it and all this. But in that kind of a situation where the person is now helluva sorry for what they've done, trying to come to terms with what they've done, trying to come back to whatever they have to come back to, because how much changes? Bloody nothing changes. Her father's still going to be a drunk tomorrow night, and then tomorrow night he's going to be a drunk for her that did this tonight, and that is the story of our lives. And no matter what I say or do nothing is going to change it. And this Dino (her eldest son) will not see, ok, now Charlie's dead, but even before Charlie died and I talked this kind of talk, it ends up in huge fights because as far as he's concerned his father did nothing wrong ever in his whole life. Diane (her older daughter) has a totally different story. She sees it as we could've been such better people if it wasn't for him always putting us down always making us feel like we not worth anything. And as you know Dino doesn't believe in himself at all, he's always got no self-belief.

We took a break here because Dino came into the room looking for something. We went into the kitchen and made Bovril and liver pate on bread, with tea and coffee, listening to the radio playing a Zamu Jobi song, the new young South African jazz singer. The mood lightened and we talked about when she and her two younger children, David and Della, went to see a therapist after Della's overdose. She reflects that this was the first time she explored her feelings about her mother and realized that if she could accept her mother as she was, everything became easier.

Brenda: Jessica (Brenda's granddaughter) was her eyes because she had the light complexion and the soft hair, whereas David she couldn't stand because he was so dark. She gave him a really hard time and he hated her.

The interview ended here as Dino came in needing his car moved.