

Charles University in Prague

Faculty of Arts

Department of Musicology

**Mapping the Individual Musical Experience  
in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A Bio-Ethnography  
of Township Dweller Lesiba Samuel Kadiaka**

Dissertation

**Mapování individuální hudební zkušenosti  
v post-apartheidní Jižní Africe. Bio-etnografie  
obyvatele townshipu Lesiby Samuela Kadiaky**

Disertační práce

Study program: Musicology

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## **Declaration**

Hereby I declare that the presented dissertation was written by myself, that all the sources and literature used were properly quoted, and that it was not used to fulfil qualification requirements during any other university study or for acquiring the same or another academic degree elsewhere.

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## **Abstract**

The dissertation is a biographical ethnography of an individual, ordinary musician and Mamelodi township dweller, Lesiba Samuel Kadiaka (\*1962) in South Africa. It is based largely on fieldwork totalling more than 12 months conducted in five periods over six years between 2006 and 2011.

It examines the possibilities of studying an average (rather than 'leading') musician ethnographically and their implications and consequences for wider ethnomusicological and South African music research. It makes a practical contribution to the wider debate about the relationship between individual, social, and cultural structures, and breaks new ground in its focus on the previously little known music and practices of Mr. Kadiaka's church, the Zion Christian Church.

The research consisted mainly of ethnographic observations of various kinds of musical activities in which Mr. L. S. Kadiaka was involved in as a solo musician (songwriter and song singer) and as a member of the ZCC, on the one hand, and of deep interviews over the time span of six years, on the other.

It consists of a biographical part dealing with his narratives about childhood in rural Ga-Mphahlele and his later life in Mamelodi township. Iconographic historical sources of a private nature are use too. The second part describes in three large chapters ways in which he was musically involved in various social and cultural settings.

The core of the dissertation's methodological and theoretical approaches rest on detailed ethnomusicological and other examination of various ethnographic and historical sources, as they relate to L. S. Kadiaka's musical activities. These are understood as sites of the construction of specific cultural meanings and as such map his wider social and cultural position as a poor township dweller in a post-apartheid context.

As a reflexive interpretative ethnography it pays careful attention to the production and situatedness of the ethnographic data in particular research contexts providing a detailed account of the researcher's position too.

**Key words:** Biographic Ethnography, Music, Experience, Identity, Township, Migration, Zion Christian Church, South Africa, Ethnomusicology

## Abstrakt

Disertační práce je biografickou etnografií běžného hudebníka a obyvatele townshipu Mamelodi v Jižní Africe Lesiby Samuel Kadiaky (\*1962). Je založena na dlouhodobém a opakovaném terénním výzkumu přesahujícím celkem jeden rok, který se odehrál v pěti obdobích mezi lety 2006 a 2011.

Práce prakticky prozkoumává možnosti etnografického studia průměrného (spíše než „výjimečného“) hudebníka a jeho důsledky a dopady na širší etnomuzikologický a specificky jihoafrický hudební výzkum. Představuje tak konkrétní příspěvek do širší debaty o vztahu jednotlivce a sociálních a kulturních struktur. Zároveň je přelomová také díky svému vhledu na dosud málo studované hudební praxe Siónské křesťanské církve, jejímž je pan Kadiaka členem.

Konkrétní výzkum sestával především z etnografických pozorování různých typů hudebních aktivit, jichž se pan Kadiaka účastnil, jednak jako sólový hudebník („písničkář“) a jednak jako člen zmíněné církve, a hloubkových etnografických interview prováděných v průběhu šesti let.

Práce se skládá z rozsáhlé biografické části, jež v několika kapitolách pracuje s narativy o jeho dětství na venkově v Ga-Mphahlele a o jeho pozdějším životě v townshipu Mamelodi. Jsou zde využity také ikonografické dobové prameny soukromé povahy. Druhá část popisuje ve třech rozsáhlých kapitolách jeho hudební aktivity v různých sociálních a kulturních prostředích.

Jádro metodologických a teoretických přístupů disertace spočívá v podrobném etnomuzikologickém zkoumání různých etnografických a historických pramenů, jež se vztahují ke Kadiakovým hudebním aktivitám. Tyto činnosti jsou chápány jako místa konstruování specifických kulturních významů a jako takové mapují jeho širší sociální a kulturní pozici jako obyvatele townshipu v post-apartheidním kontextu.

Protože se jedná o reflexivní a interpretativní etnografii, pečlivá pozornost je věnována produkci a situovanosti etnografických dat v konkrétním výzkumném kontextu. Součástí je proto také podrobný popis pozice badatele.

Klíčová slova: biografická etnografie, hudba, zkušenost, identita, township, migrace, Siónská křesťanská církev, Jižní Afrika, etnomuzikologie



*For Samuel*

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# Authorship and Copyright

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# **Note on Orthography, Place Names, Interview Transcriptions and Abbreviations**

A number of words and passages other than English appear in the text, mostly personal names, place names and song lyrics.

Words and longer quotes in Sepedi (or Northern Sotho/Sesotho sa Leboa), mother tongue of Lesiba Samuel Kadiaka, are written the way Samuel wrote them for me. This mainly applies to words and phrases from interviews or to Samuel's song lyrics. In order to keep their authenticity no attempt has been made to correct them in accordance with the rules of Sepedi orthography.

For Sesotho hymns included in the *Lifela tsa Sione* hymnbook, I use their original Sesotho orthography in accordance with the hymnbook edition from which I quote.

In case of place names, I provide the most widely used version of the name based on a comparative study of current maps and literature. In case of vernacular place names in Mamelodi, it is sometimes impossible to find a codified written version of the name, so I write it either the way Samuel wrote it for me or as it appears in vernacular sources.

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My stays in Pretoria date from the period between 2005 and 2011. Many place name changes have occurred since then in accordance with the current language and cultural policies, concerning mostly street names. I use the names used at the time of the research. Where it was possible to find them (not even Google Maps have managed to keep up), I tried to add current names if the names have changed.

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To keep the authenticity of the sources, the quotations of interviews are largely left without any grammatical corrections. In order to ensure intelligibility of the text, however, I made some minor corrections, additions and explanations. All such places are marked by square brackets [ ].

In case of longer passages I use block quotations and italics. The speakers are identified for the first exchange of every conversation as LSK (Lesiba Samuel Kadiaka) and VZ (Vít Zdrálek). From the second exchange onwards the speakers' identity is maintained only by typography. I tried to leave the quotations as intact as possible in order to preserve the authenticity and pace of the interview. However, I left some passages out in order to keep the line of the argument clearer. Such places are visibly marked by square brackets [...].

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I avoided using abbreviations throughout the text. There are two exceptions and both are widely used and well established.

**AIC** stands for the African independent/indigenous/initiated/instituted churches

**ZCC** stands for the Zion Christian Church

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# **INTRODUCTION**



# Auto-Biographical Reflections on Position

Why does someone from the Czech Republic undertake research on South African township music? What does it mean and what is at play? How does it relate to South African music scholarship (local and international and mainly in English) and to ethnomusicological and musicological scholarship in general? Can and does it make any difference? Can and does it offer any new perspectives? These or similar questions may go through the reader's mind. But who is the intended reader? Why am I writing in English instead of Czech and what would happen, if I was not? Before starting to formulate my main arguments I would like to stay with these and related issues for a while and make my position as clear as I can. In the following sections of this preface I try step by step to unveil what it means for me to be a Czech Ph.D. student from a specific family and intellectual upbringing to research and write about a South African township musician, what are the implications of this, and to see what practical and theoretical potential it may have.

The situatedness of a 'second world' scholar researching a 'third world' experience or, more precisely, the situation of someone from a post-communist country and a post-soviet satellite, with its countless ramifications, doing research in/on the 'Postcolony' is unusual enough in ethno/musicology and cultural or social anthropology not to be taken for granted, and it must therefore be thematized and articulated. I start by describing the wider social and cultural background relevant to understanding my current thinking. I continue by describing my intellectual development in the course of my university education, which lead to an interest in the colonial and post-colonial history of Sub-Saharan Africa. Then I move to the role of language in academic writing and to my position as a Central European researcher studying the postcolonial African context. I give a couple of examples from my field research and my home musicological department, which illustrate my ambiguous position in relation to the more conventional pattern of 'Westerners' studying 'Africa', as I have come to see these concepts.

## Family, Society, Church, and School

Rather than an exhaustive account of historical events ‘as they went’ I offer here a consciously selective and reflexive auto-biographical construction of my experience, as I understand it from my point of view today, with primary regard to the relevance to the issues discussed in the main text. I would like to offer a possible explanation of my intellectual development, which I see as inseparable from my habitus, in Bourdieu’s sense, as it has been formed and transformed in the various environments I have inhabited. Because I find this development somewhat unusual in the wider context of English-language ethnomusicological writing I think it is important to address the relevant formative and transformative experiences in this development as problems, through which I hope to clarify my current position in relation to the subject of the following text.

I grew up in a small socially and culturally uprooted and deterritorialized town of about eight thousand inhabitants, Nejdek, in the western borderlands of former Czechoslovakia (about 15 kilometres from the then East Germany’s border) during the 1980s and 1990s. This area had been mostly inhabited by a German-speaking population since the Middle Ages, until 1945 when virtually the whole population, settled there for centuries, was forcibly albeit lawfully removed to (ruined) post-war Germany, to be replaced by a mixed population of people from all corners of the former first Czechoslovak republic (1918-1938). This new mixed population was composed mostly of lower-class people who sought the abandoned houses granted for free or sold low-cost and the plentiful work opportunities, but also partly comprised enthusiasts from various political inclinations who arrived to ‘build up’ Czech culture and take over the industry in this suddenly abandoned land, various kinds of adventurers and fortune seekers, and all sorts of political victims of the 1948 communist coup. The latter had had to leave Prague and other more hospitable places either because it was part of their punishment or because their political ideas precluded their finding a job in the capital or in other cities: such were my parents, who came to Nejdek in 1962.<sup>1</sup> This no-man’s-land

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<sup>1</sup> It was a blood land too. One of the worst communist prison/concentration camps in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and 1960s was situated near the historical town of Jáchymov (formerly Joachimsthal in German) about 15 kilometres from our town. Uranium for the Soviet nuclear programme was mined there by political prisoners who – as class enemies destined to be exterminated – were not shielded against the

accommodated them all, even the few Germans of local origin who were allowed or sometimes even requested to stay (mixed marriage cases, highly-skilled industrial workers and a few other exceptions). It had been a periphery of peripheries, the westernmost end of the Soviet bloc, and even in the 1980s the feeling of deprivation was still very much present, whether you looked at the falling-apart formerly proud town-square houses and local churches or the notoriously bad performance of the majority of children at school (less than 5% of my schoolmates made it to the university). When I was growing up one was still likely to hear Slovak (sometimes with a Hungarian accent), Czech with some unfamiliar accent in the street<sup>2</sup> or German in local Catholic churches and in other churches' prayer-rooms, which were often located in people's houses.

To make it even more confusing for a child, large groups of Vietnamese and Cubans (proportionally to the town's population) were arriving regularly throughout the 1980s for periods of practical training spent in the local wool mills or aluminium factory. They were learning how to use the machinery provided at that time by the Czechoslovakian government to these countries as a gesture of 'brotherly help' within 'the world camp of peace and socialism'. Their residences were coincidentally situated just above our street. A handful of them even stayed. In the 1990s the region was literally flooded with Vietnamese merchants trading with all kinds of goods, especially cheap clothes,<sup>3</sup> who now constitute a respected minority in the country. And there has been a growing Russian- and partly Ukrainian-speaking minority in the nearby spa region, settled mainly in and around Karlovy Vary.

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radioactive rays there. When I was a child in the 1980s the camp was already closed down and the traces partly effaced. The feeling of the place, however, remained.

<sup>2</sup> One of the four families living in our house was a working class family originally from the easternmost part of Slovak 'half' of the country (I could barely understand the older ones as a child), the other was a communist militia man's working class family originally from the central part of Bohemia (I played with their son a lot) and the third was a family of an 1968 expelled ex-communist – both parents were forest engineers – originally from the Eastern Bohemia and Southern Moravia. Our house was a good example of our town's population in this sense. No one belonged there except the few Germans who were allowed to stay.

<sup>3</sup> The largest Vietnamese market in the country grew in Potůčky, a mountain border village, with up to one thousand stands in the 1990s after the two German states had united and the Czech-German border re-opened after half a century. At the time it was locally called Klondike as the trading spirit reminded to many of the famous gold rush in the famous Alaska's region.

The striking think about our town, which I realized only after spending longer periods of time elsewhere in the country and abroad, was that there was no publicly visible or audible local folklore – perhaps not surprisingly – and only very few civic cultural or other activities, such as sport. (I do not count the state-organized May 1st parades or various political events where public participation was compulsory.) It was a shattered, confused and confusing region without a common sense of local identity or belonging, except perhaps that of being uprooted. The basic web of signs making any culture meaningful to its members and potentially intelligible to its students was like a damaged spider's web. There were a number of different webs of signs in fact, but they did not quite correspond to each other; nor, in case of the state-enforced communist web of meanings, although this was known, understood and publicly accepted and participated in by the majority, on a personal and domestic level it was internalized by very few. Even the ideological language (Czech) was used differently, and inventively, in every situation as people pursued their own agendas and interests (Herzfeld 2005). The region has started to slowly recover from the post-traumatic situation only since the 1990s when various kinds of non-state-organized civic activities began to mushroom.<sup>4</sup>

In my opinion this is where the potential for comparison with other experiences of forced removals and cultural uprootedness in other parts of the world, specifically in this case South Africa, lies. Seen retrospectively and analytically I believe that growing up in this unsettled, uprooted and wounded land/scape strongly formed my understanding of society and culture as something very unstable, fluid, shifting, with nothing to be taken for granted, and at the same time it allowed a feeling that politics is always near and that it must be carefully watched and examined, to develop. This experience enriched me with a sense for understanding a certain kind of provisionality and for appreciating various practical and theoretical strategies of survival familiar to people experiencing conditions of physical, social and cultural displacement, conditions of deterritorialization for the poor, migrants, minorities or those otherwise disadvantaged by the authoritarian state. This sense had been further enhanced by my upbringing, which I find important to describe briefly in this context.

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<sup>4</sup> Since 1990s this area opened to researchers from various fields ranging from history, sociology or anthropology to landscape ecology (see for example Čapka, Slezák and Vaculík 2005, Spurný 2006, Arburg and Staněk 2010 et al., Andrš 2010, Spurný 2011 et al.).

In order to sketch out our family's social status in this environment I must say that because my father (born 1938) was a company lawyer in the local wool mills and my mother (born 1942) worked as a teacher in the local primary, they basically were the intelligentsia of the town.<sup>5</sup> In more 'normal' countries and times this could have been an advantage in practical life but there and then it was not. My parents had qualified jobs, yet they were looked at with suspicion by many and with a hint of a true class hatred by some of the working class who – paradoxically and possibly without knowing it – earned more than my parents did. Even if these people had known, they would have probably found the situation justified. As we were all sharing the limited space of the small town this contact across social strata (in as far as we can talk about such thing within a supposedly 'classless society') was inevitable and often resulted into moments as bizarre as they were deeply socially enriching.

I and my two much older siblings were all brought up as Catholics and, what was equally unhelpful in the era of the 'scientific world view', we were quite anxiously but regularly being introduced to 'high culture', either via playing and listening to classical music (I played the piano, the flute, tried solo singing for a while and sang in a church and later a grammar school choir), or via our frequent visits to Prague's many

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<sup>5</sup> My father was born into a working-class family in an industrial coal mine and heavy industrial region of Ostrava in north-eastern Moravia but as a half-orphan he was sent to live with his uncle, a catholic priest, in Central Bohemian region in the age of four and he lived there till his studies. This association with his uncle had consequences for him after 1948 regarding his further education. He tried to get to a grammar school where he was not allowed to be accepted in order "not to become a priest one day too". Instead, he was – aged 14 – recommended to start working in a nearby steel work company "right from the school in order to become accustomed to the working class" by a local committee. Thanks to an intervention of another uncle the decision was reversed based on a subsequent proof of his working class origin – his father, formerly a gardener in a local chateau, already worked in Vítkovice steel work at the time – and as a result he finally was allowed to enrol to a business school meant as a final step in his education, that is without a university prospect. However, he miraculously was accepted to study law at the university four years later. Having graduated there he was, once again, not allowed to continue his career, this time in academia, given his catholic belief he still "provocatively practiced" during his studies and a constant denial to become a Party member. Having received signals not even to try in order not to get into unspecified troubles, he decided to take the first job offered at the moment – a position of a wool mill company lawyer in Nejdeč, a place he and his fiancée had never even heard of until then. My mother grew up in a working-class family in the region of Central Bohemia. Having graduated from an educational college she taught at a village primary school for two years before moving to Nejdeč in 1962 with my father. The above mentioned quotes come from documents in our family archives.

galleries and historical churches, or just via reading the hard-to-get classics and listening to the state-jammed foreign radio stations. This did not increase our popularity among our age mates: there was no one among them with whom I could have ever discussed a single one of these topics. Wearing the cheapest clothes and living in this cultural periphery we children were by our parents made to feel to be part of the great Western European Christian culture, a paradox so well described by Milan Kundera in his essay 'The Tragedy of Central Europe' in 1984.<sup>6</sup> It was as if the smaller our economic capital was, the greater our cultural capital – to use Bourdieu again (Bourdieu 1984) – should have to be, according to our parents. The symbolic capital we received through this kind of upbringing and education was considerable, nonetheless only to be used in other places and later times. It seemed to be a complete waste of time, energy and much more, there and then.

My frustration resulting from this alienation from my age mates as a child had quite devastating effects on my social self-esteem. Why did our parents do it to us? A high culture derived from the great Western Christian (and in our case Catholic) narrative of Czech and European history served as a distinctive feature of our identity, contrasting sharply to the communist world view and general malaise of ideas especially after 1968. We lived in a *counterculture*. We actively constructed our own 'world' based on the then 'old-fashioned' values and ideas which could be labelled as 'conservative' today but they seemed to be the only possible and sensible ones then. Seen from Western and especially from African colonial and postcolonial perspectives it must seem very odd to think of the great Christian 'universal' narrative of European history as a counterculture (to the communist all-encompassing hegemony), but it was true not only for our family but for many others under communism and even in the early years of post-communism. To recall Kundera again: he aptly described these different positions in his essay on 'different springs' in 1968, comparing Czechoslovakia with France (standing for the West here).<sup>7</sup> So already the 'oddity' of my childhood situation

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<sup>6</sup> The paradox and the frustration of being, on the one hand, seen from Western perspective as part of Eastern Europe and, on the other hand, the feeling of many Czechs, especially its elite, as culturally belonging to the West after 1968 became the main theme of Milan Kundera's essay 'The Tragedy of Central Europe', originally published in French (Kundera 1984).

<sup>7</sup> In his short essay 'On the Two Great Springs, and on the Škvorecký's', originally published in French, which interestingly echoes Kundera's previously mentioned essay, he again writes from his dissent position (in relation to the Western European left-wing intellectual mainstream) about the 1968: "Paris's

affects my current position in relation to the way my research area is a politically contested one, as well as affecting more general approaches and methods I have used and academic disciplines and traditions I have drawn on.

In the context in which I use the term ‘counterculture’ here, it should be freed from the usual Marxian connotations it has received in Western social sciences and humanities: that is, as an active socially shared and visibly manifested stance against some aspect of life in a capitalist society whose culture is understood as a hegemonic oppressive ideology. At the same time it should not be confused with the usual understanding of dissent (a problematic concept anyway, see Havel 1985) as my parents were by no means open public opponents of the regime, or with the concept of ‘subculture’ as it is usually understood in Western sociology, anthropology or cultural studies. Our family did not want to stand out or to publicly challenge the ruling status quo. My parents desired, rather to be invisible in relation to the dominant political discourse of the authoritarian state. In fact, their position was quite a lonely one and that aspect, isolation, could well be used as in describing and theorizing their situation. We were literally stuck in a small border mountain town with close-to-zero possibilities of open friendly relationships, as virtually no-one whose position would have even only partially matched ours, lived there. The idea of there being a community or society to which we belonged did not exist, which itself questions the way such concepts are used in the social sciences and humanities and suggests that they should be re-thought and re-contextualized if they are to be of any help for analysing socio-politico-economic contexts different from those they were conceived in. At the same time, seemingly differing concepts should not be denied solely on the basis that they sound different, or sometimes even contradictory, as they may aim at describing similar processes, only in different contexts. This experientially acquired awareness of the necessity to rethink the received academic terms, concepts and methods has warned me against their too easy application in a South African context, too.

In order to specify the meaning of counterculture as I use it here, where there was no *real* community our family would have willingly participated in – not even within the church structures before 1989 – I recall Benedict Anderson’s concept of

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May was a high-spirited challenge to a European culture viewed as deadening, tedious, official, sclerotic. The Prague Spring was an homage to the same European culture, so long smothered beneath ideological idiocy; it was a defense of Christian belief as well as of libertine unbelief, and of course of modern art (I stress ‘modern’ not ‘postmodern’).” (Kundera 2010: 117).

*imagined community* (Anderson 1991/1983). The core of our social, cultural and religious identity was made up, too, of both the artistic and musical distinctions of taste (Bourdieu 1984) and the Christian moral values we shared with the imagined community via various *media*. Both the distinctions of taste and the Christian moral values made up the cosmos or imagined community that our family inhabited, together with all the great figures of the European Christian high cultural tradition, dead or alive. This, not membership of any group existing in real life, constituted the core of our identity as we perceived it.

The media that enabled us to participate in this cosmos of, as we believed, universal Christian and Western European values (in our circumstances thought of as virtually matching each other) were not just the printed ones which Anderson's book highlights but also music records, tape recordings, radio, film and the various cultural performances we regularly took part in. All these media we creatively used to overcome distances in time and space. By mediating distant experiences they mediated our own experience too. Through them we could have taken part in communities we desired to be part of, something impossible in reality while living literally fenced in, in a communist state. Giving in to the effects of these media, and the multisensorial experience provided by them, meant to almost sensually take part in a communion (I am deliberately using this religious term here) of the European high culture tradition, and not only to participate in it but to feel a spiritual intimacy with people and ideas distant in time and space.

This is nothing unique in human experience and it is well documented that, for example music is an extraordinarily apt medium for mediating cultural intimacy.<sup>8</sup> Anthropologist Michel Bigenho writes about the idea of intimate (spatial) distance (Bigenho 2012), a useful term which I stretch here to apply to a time dimension too. Listening to Bach's *Matthew Passion* with a score on the lap during Easter and Mozart's or Dvořák's *Requiem* to remember diseased family members with candles lit on the living room table, reading Franz Werfel or Czech baroque poets, travelling by local mountain trains and hiking to nearby mountain villages' deserted and falling apart churches on Sunday mornings (not to be viewed in our town because 'communists are

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<sup>8</sup> It is useful to recall Martin Stokes's term *timbral socialities* he uses in his book *The Republic of Love: Cultural Intimacy in Turkish Popular Music* (Stokes 2010: 6-7). There is a plenty of studies developing Anderson's idea of imagined community *beyond* textuality as a medium and *beyond* nationalism or ethnic identity as its main areas of application (see again Stokes 2010: 1-34).



on the lookout'), admiring medieval sculptures or baroque paintings in the books as well as in galleries, conspiratorially going to the cinema to watch rarely screened films etc., all these activities – the indoor ones reminding one of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Biedermeier bourgeois and religious chronotopes and the outdoor ones pointing to conspiracies worthy of detective fiction – took us virtually as well as literally somewhere else, to other times and other places, which we experienced as if they were our own, intimately close and real. And they were as real as sensuous experience can only be. It fulfilled us with feelings of freedom within a system constantly trying to exercise its control over our lives and bodies.

Our habitus (Bourdieu 1984) was marked out by things and activities we did as well as by those we did not do or did only when forced to. None of us for example ever participated in any organized sport or other state-organized activities. My parents tried to avoid any kind of public political appearance as much as they could, though politics was thoroughly discussed at home. They never went to pubs or restaurants to socialize informally, though, being sort of public persons, they were always ready to talk to or help anyone regardless of his or her political or religious belief or colour of skin.<sup>9</sup> We never had a TV set at home as all TV programmes were totally state controlled (as the radio was, but there was classical music on the radio and one had a chance to tune up foreign stations). Odd and eccentric as it must all seem nowadays these activities and events constituted the main topoi of our family's habitus.

Such had been the social space I was brought up in and later had to deal with under rapidly changing circumstances of the 1990s. Growing up counterculturally generated many conflicts and contradictions and caused me a lot of troubles in my everyday life as a child. However, it compelled me to think hard later and made me to be quite grateful today for such an experience. The discrepancies and disjunctures experienced so urgently and in such an early age in relation to the environment I inhabited as a child forced me to constantly reflect upon my position. I believe that it has influenced me in developing an almost scrupulous urge for making constant social

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<sup>9</sup> Many Roma people have lived in Nejdek. They were moved in by the government especially in the 1970s from the Slovak part of the country. According to my memory my mother was the only teacher at the school they liked or at least regularly greeted on the street – something quite rare considering the state's approach to Roma assimilation, their dogged resistance to it and the generally negative approach of Czech majority towards Roma people. My father regularly helped people across social strata for years and for free with civil law advises.

and cultural analysis, because everything and anything have had a meaning for me. When I was introduced to theoretical concepts in the humanities and social sciences I started to regularly use some of them as basic instruments for analysing and understanding my own situation. Theory became an essential part of my life.

By sketching out these details I wanted to show under what conditions my thinking has formed and how my experience might have influenced it. Though it must still seem somewhat unlikely that someone with my kind of upbringing might find an interest in South African popular culture, it should be clear that the experience of inhabiting such a countercultural space, a fact I was more and more aware of and consciously reflected upon while I was coming of age, gradually undid any remaining feelings of comfort and taken-for-grantedness regarding the functioning of culture and society, their institutions and performances. This experience of cultural, religious, and social uncertainty at an early stage of my life and the feeling of not belonging, of some kind of an estrangement and alienation, has remained, but it has been an inexhaustible source for my thinking about culture and social life ever since.

This experience of living counterculturally under communism has also given my position a certain ambiguity regarding my South African research, an ambiguity that I use as a critical tool for developing my theoretical position, as I specify later in the text.

## **The Czech and South African University**

Having graduated from grammar school in Ostrov, a bigger nearby town rich in socialist-realist architecture of the 1950s, with a baroque monastery and a garden in decay and a huge baroque chateau used as a technical school at the time, where I commuted to and from every day for four years by bus and train, I headed for the inevitable – a university in one of the hinterland cities. Like my older sister and brother I never intended to return, something our parents silently, yet automatically, approved of. They had never really intended to live where they did and wanted us to decide for ourselves.

I went to study history and music education (symptomatically, I considered literature as a third possible subject) at the regional University of Hradec Králové, the only school offering such a combination, in 1999, with a view to becoming a grammar school teacher. The decision fitted quite well into our family habitus, to use Bourdieu's

term once again. At the time I still was in sync with the ethos of my family upbringing, I still was a member of this imagined community so to speak, and I was wholly determined to study and later teach the great history of European high culture, all the more so since the Czech education system had recently been liberated from state-enforced communist ideology and new possibilities for different approaches had opened up, especially in the humanities.<sup>10</sup> I was well aware of the changing situation as it was regularly discussed at home, although often in a rather discouraging way.<sup>11</sup> Topics previously ideologically distorted or underrepresented relating to Czech Catholic baroque culture – especially regarding literature and music – were my main interests in the beginning. I gradually developed a series of intellectual interests in other topics neglected by Czech humanities scholarship, such as the history of Czech Germans or German-speaking Czechs (the former inhabitants of my homeland), the history of Czech Jews, and the holocaust and the related topic of musical life in Terezín/Theresienstadt. These themes were not covered well in our courses and I enjoyed discovering the new literature which was just beginning to be published, tending to feel uncomfortable with what was officially studied as I knew from my early experience already that these offerings were not necessarily true, or substantial information was left out.

The role of a teacher is always important in one's intellectual development. In my case I was struck and swept along by the stirring lectures of one of our history teachers, an Iberian-American and world history scholar and former diplomat, Jan Klíma. For the first time in my life I was seriously exposed to themes related to Africa, at the age of 20.<sup>12</sup> His lectures literally opened up a new world for me, the world of

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<sup>10</sup> Following up my previous engagement in a local church choir and a school choir during my secondary school years, I even sang in a semi-professional boys' choir for two years, with which I performed mostly baroque music, recorded CDs and toured regularly the Czech Republic, but also the Netherlands (twice) and Japan (once).

<sup>11</sup> A typical discussion between my parents and me might go like this: "You should not do humanities, neither social sciences. Now it is fine, anything is possible and things look just wonderful. But what if another ideology comes or what if *they* return? History is the first thing to be rewritten. You should better go for physics, math or medicine or just something neutral. Or are you going to teach kids Marxism-Leninism then? You might read history or play the piano in your free time, do not you think?"

<sup>12</sup> Here I should perhaps remember that we had a number of older travel writing books in our bookcase at home, some of them of a missionary kind, including books on Africa and South Africa. The truth is, however, that I, unlike my father, had only found a fleeting interest in them before, always preferring closer 'home' themes to the 'exotic'.

modern global history and international relations. I attended his elective courses on colonialism, post-colonialism, the history of pre-colonial and post-colonial Africa and Latin America as well as compulsory courses in general history uncommon in Czech historiography and in academic discourse generally, for their emphasis on the world's historical interconnectedness, on the historical narrative of the modern world system.<sup>13</sup> His lectures were rather descriptive with only a very little if any theoretical reflection, but the impact of mere historical facts<sup>14</sup> on me was immensely powerful and his insight into the historical development of inequalities in the current world order sounded truly revolutionary to us. It was a bomb dropped on my neatly organized Eurocentric knowledge firmed up by the countercultural situation in which it had developed. My world view began to shatter and change dramatically and irreversibly.

His critique of political and theoretical positions serves to illustrate differences in thinking about these topics from positions held by Western academia, and has a bearing on my own academic positioning. While these topics are associated with the left in Western academia, it is impossible to classify the basic political approach in his lectures as right or left wing in the Western sense. Significantly, he never mentioned postcolonial critique, not a single name, while he practiced it in many ways. The leitmotifs of his lectures were as follows: Africa and Latin America have their own complex histories worthy of attention before the colonial encounter and its people have their own agency in history. The development of Western capitalism is unthinkable without considering the whole web of political, economic and cultural relations. Colonialism and slavery are inseparable from the development of the modern world. And these are just a few. We were confronted with some of the most critical points of postcolonial thinking but, it is important to note, *without knowing it*. Had I read the actual postcolonial authors *then*, the leftist Marxist language and terminology of many of them would have most likely discouraged me from reading any further or it would have deeply disturbed me at least. In order to understand this situation, difficult to make sense of from a Western intellectual perspective, we must take into account the post-communist context.

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<sup>13</sup> Retrospectively I can see that I was very lucky. It was quite exceptional to have an opportunity of attending such courses in the Czech Republic. To my knowledge there is no comparable offer of courses in any history department in the country at the moment.

<sup>14</sup> I am using this term in accordance with the common usage in historiography.

Reading such texts was difficult for two main reasons: lack of literature in libraries and a lack of translations. Czech university libraries simply did not have most of the literature published in the West before 1989 and it remained so well into the 2000s.<sup>15</sup> To my knowledge, not a single text of postcolonial critique, for example, was translated into Czech at the time.<sup>16</sup> Years of intellectual isolation of Czech academia had a deep and long-term impact especially in the humanities. Czech communism had been strong in anti-colonial rhetoric but did not support a serious debate as it could turn dangerous for the system. Dissidents and other anti-communist groups did not consider colonialism a pressing topic and its potential for analysing the post-socialist situation in Central and Eastern Europe had not been discovered. The private home seminars or smuggling of books organized in the 1970s and 1980s could not cover the whole range of topics and the organizers were selective. Living in a communist state, who would invite anyone from the West to hold a Marxist talk on postcolonial thinking? It would not have been distinguished from the tiring and omnipresent anti-Western ‘anti-imperialist’ propaganda. A critique of colonialism was simply not on the dissidents’ agenda.<sup>17</sup> We could thus say that the development of a Czech reflection of postcolonial thinking correlates with a Czech reflection of the country’s own communist past and communism and left-wing political reasoning in general.

In these history courses we practiced a critique of colonialism but it was not based on postcolonial thinking as conceived and cultivated in Western academia.

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<sup>15</sup> Some field have been more affected than others. The first thing I later had to do before starting courses in ethnomusicology in our department was to apply for grants in order to purchase basic literature for our library as there had been virtually none.

<sup>16</sup> Said’s *Orientalism* was published in Czech language in 2008, thirty years after its original publication and debates it inspired (Said 2008). A selection of texts by Fanon, Césaire, Wa Thiong’o, Bhabha, Mbembe, Appadurai, Chakrabarthy, Chatterjee and Spivak followed in a book series since 2011 (Fanon 2011, Havránek, ed. 2011, Bhabha 2013, Havránek, ed. 2013), interestingly, published not by an academic or any well-established press but by an alternative art NGO project called *tranzitdisplay* (<http://www.tranzitdisplay.cz>), which may partly justify poor quality of translation and editorship of the publications. It is worth noticing that the art context of the books’ publication, most visible in their distinct typography reminding of ‘samizdat’ or a DIY aesthetics, transformed the texts’ original context from an academic one into a political one and that of an artistic intervention.

<sup>17</sup> By contrast, a South African anthropologist and a medical doctor Mamphela Ramphele, for example, integrated arguments of Václav Havel’s *The Power of the Powerless* (Havel 1985) into her anthropological and medical analysis of life conditions in Cape Town hostels of the late 1980s (Ramphele 1993).

Taught in a history department, one would have tended to say then that the courses were less ideological and more descriptive and fact-based in the historiographical sense. From my present point of view, however, I would say there were other reasons and motives at play than just the time-tested historiographical routines.

There has been a strong anti-theoretical and anti-interpretative feeling in Czech academia since 1989.<sup>18</sup> Although it can only be fully explained after carefully analysing its local intellectual development, my tentative explanation would be that this feeling was rooted in a certain confusion of theory with ideology, that it has been caused in fact by a *fear of ideology* intrinsic to some segments of post-communist society, including academia. The feeling was enhanced by the suspicion (quite justified) that the background of many humanities theories was Marxist. Given Czech's social experience of the theoretical and practical application of Marxism-Leninism – which discredited and ruined the basic academic structures of humanities and social sciences as well as their wider professional reputation with far-reaching consequences – there is, I believe, an extreme sensitivity to ideology, unfortunately often uncritically confused with *theory*. As a result refuge is often taken in a supposedly ideology-free realm of descriptive, facts-accumulating pseudo-positivism.<sup>19</sup>

Influenced by this freshly acquired knowledge, the former ideological and essentializing binaries structuring my world view shattered and began to vanish. They went '3D' in the sense that what mattered now were the actual situations, positions and perspectives, and these suddenly were so many and so different. No world view or ideology was meaningful only of itself any more, everything turned relational, context-bound, 'it depended'. My fight for the recognition of Czech baroque culture, once so important to me, became somewhat obsolete from the newly acquired 'world' perspective. This move encapsulated a shift from the anti-communist countercultural position of my parents towards more nuanced approach open to pressing problems of the contemporary, and for myself and my fellow students suddenly re-opened, world. In this 'new' world, as I began to see it then, the anti-communism expressed via

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<sup>18</sup> In some fields it has been greater than in others, musicology being in the forefront of this resistance – interestingly, a situation not that different from Western musicology (Cook and Everist 1999).

<sup>19</sup> Here I write of my experience in the Institute of Musicology of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, an institution I have been part of and observed since 2001 first as a student and as a staff member since 2010. It is based on my observations and discussions with colleagues from various humanities and social sciences too. My rationalizing may not, however, be generally applicable.

conservative association with the values of the great Christian tradition of European high culture could no longer serve as a sensible countercultural refuge (and countercultural to what, now?) or as a viable critical position. This experience has remained an important source of inspiration for me. Homologically, this move encapsulated a shift from oppressive cold-war binaries towards more nuanced sensitivity to a globalizing world getting more complex more quickly than ever before. For me, retrospectively, it has meant a moment of re-connection to a wider international academic debate, no longer bound up with the immediate national history, no longer limited to the struggles of intellectual life under communism.

Not sure about my prospect as a high school teacher I started to study musicology at Charles University in Prague in 2001 so that my studies partly overlapped.<sup>20</sup> In my musicological beginnings I still was quite dedicated to European classical music but under the influence of Jan Klíma's history courses, introductory courses in popular music studies by late Zdeněk Berger and ethnomusicology by Vlastislav Matoušek, my view broadened and my thinking shifted in the direction I just described above. I started to feel more and more uncomfortable in a musicology department where music culture was treated from an unreflected ethnocentric perspective informed mainly by a German musicological tradition moving between Guido Adler and Hugo Riemann as the founding fathers and Carl Dahlhaus and Hans H. Eggebrecht as its best offspring. There was virtually no reflection of Anglo-Saxon developments in musicology since late 1970s in our courses and virtually no literature of this kind was to be found in local libraries (at that time the university had subscribed to few electronic databases).<sup>21</sup> As an exception Tereza Havelková, then a graduate student who had previously studied in the UK, in the US and in the Netherlands, taught

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<sup>20</sup> I continued with the first study programme from which I graduated in 2004 becoming a teacher of history and music education. I have worked as a high school teacher part-time since 2004.

<sup>21</sup> There seem to be interesting parallels between histories of Czech and South African musicologies' attachment to the idea of European art music and, at the same time, their resistance towards cultural critique of any sort. It is all the more surprising as the two surrounding political ideologies, communism and apartheid, claimed to oppose each other. Careful and locally sensitive comparative examination might, I believe, come out with interesting results. The relationship between (apartheid) politics and musicological practice has been reflected quite well in South African musicological circles (Ballantine 1984 and 2012b, Lucia 2005a: xxi-xlvi), in Czech musicological circles it has gone largely unnoticed so far though.

a course introducing us to cultural analysis in 2005.<sup>22</sup> For several years she had been the only one to subvert the academic inbreeding in the department (and one of a few in Czech musicology at large) that had lasted for decades.

After graduating from my first study programme in 2004 I already knew that I wanted to focus on ethnomusicology (of which I had a very limited understanding) and go and study abroad, if possible, in a non-European country. Influenced by a number of factors ranging from my growing interest in colonial and post-colonial histories to my fascination with African and Afro-American music I dreamed of studying somewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa. My aim was to learn more about a music other than European classical music, preferably an African one. On an academic level I wanted to get a proper ethnomusicological training too. I hoped to acquire a different cultural perspective, too for which I saw a greater chance if studying out of Europe. My motivation operated more on the level of compensating the imbalance in my previous education in terms of 'getting to know more about the other musics and histories' than on the level of methodological or theoretical approach. Nonetheless, it was a significant move towards my further intellectual development.

A colleague of mine from the same study year, Magdalena Šolcová shared the same idea of going to study 'somewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa' so we started to search for opportunities. Remarkably, it appeared there were two possibilities in the whole Sub-Saharan Africa only, both in South Africa: University of Pretoria and University of Cape Town. As the inter-university agreement with Cape Town had just expired it was decided that we were going to Pretoria. In the meantime we attended a course on South African history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century taught by anthropologists Hana Horáková and Petr Skalník which revealed a completely new world to me. In July 2005 we headed for Pretoria to spend one semester as international exchange students at the University of Pretoria's Department of Music.

I soon realized that I could learn very little about South African music in this music department. There were literally no courses on South African music of any kind at the time and only one general introductory course on basic principles of music of Sub-Saharan Africa. Given my previous education and thanks to our freedom as

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<sup>22</sup> The situation is in many ways symptomatic of the post-communist developments in Czech humanities. Graduate students and younger researchers in lower academic positions are more likely to introduce fresh ideas, often drawing on their study experience abroad, than the well-established staff.



exchange students I shifted my attention to the anthropology and history departments. A course on the anthropology of South Africa by John Sharp turned out to be influential on my further development. It helped me to identify some of the problems I could see more and more clearly around myself as a temporary inhabitant of the South African metropolis, some of which I later decided to study. The University of Pretoria library (and in later years also the University of South Africa library) with its open shelves and bottomless full-text databases of Africana offered the most exciting experiences for me. There it suddenly all was, the authors and books I could have only dreamed of getting to in Prague. I was spending days and weeks there reading, copying, and downloading. Except for student group travel to more or less tourist destinations (certainly essential for getting to know the country) and a couple of eye-opening trips to nearby Ga-Rankuwa with a Ugandan music teacher and great friend, Charles Mugerwa, I remained rather untouched by the daily realities of the majority of South Africans however.

While Magdalena returned to the Czech Republic after a semester, I stayed for the summer holidays and another semester as an elective student. It was during this prolonged time that I started to develop my future research interests in the African township as a place of overlapping musical spaces and the Zion Christian Church as a musical world – both great examples of the most contemporary of South African realities – and later, in individual experiences of these environments as mediated through musical performances shaped by different musicians. These interests grew partly from the anthropological and ethnomusicological literature and partly from my growing experience of everyday life in Pretoria, which had gradually become the major focus of my observations. As part of this paradigm shift I finally broke free from both musicology's preferred high culture based on a judgement of the 'pure aesthetic' and ethnomusicology's emphasis on cultural 'authenticity' and 'purity' and the related cultural policy of preservation and heritage. This shift was influenced by reading David Coplan whose writing (especially 2008/1985 and 1994) represented the kind of research I dreamt about at the time. The other ethnomusicologists who had already written on South African popular culture I began to discover only later. This all led to my current thinking and to this research project, which I have designed (and designated) as a bio-ethnographic study of an average, popular, and amateurish township musician.<sup>23</sup> During

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<sup>23</sup> A reflection of this experience can be found in my article (in Czech) for the Czech musicological journal *Hudební věda* (Musicology, Zdrálek 2008).

this time I underwent my first ‘field’ encounters too. I reflect upon further stages of my thinking in the relevant chapters below.

I have tried to demonstrate the wider context of my personal and intellectual development while I was a student at three university institutions in the Czech Republic and South Africa. My interests dramatically shifted from themes associated with the period when family upbringing and communist and post-communist contexts played a major role to subjects resonating in international academic debates, which are becoming more and more pertinent to the Czech context as it tries to reflect its own new position in the globalized world. By decentralizing history and broadening it with colonial and post-colonial perspectives I could engage with a critique of Eurocentrism and musicology and study non-European music from a non-European perspective in a non-European country. I shifted from historical to contemporary music and from history and historically-based musicology to anthropologically-based ethnomusicology and cultural analysis (though I have never lost sight of the historical dimension), from high to popular culture, and, analogically, from an emphasis on the immanent aesthetic value of works of the art towards the study of cultural products as objects open to more context-based interpretation, or rather, from studying musical objects to studying musical performances and processes, and the individual experience of them. This sequence of more or less homological binaries matches the discursive distance between musicology, ethnomusicology, and popular music studies. Today, I feel at home in a wider frame of cultural analysis, although I find it fruitful to relate to existing disciplinary traditions. The radical transformation I have described is part of wider changes in my personal attitudes and positions which I am, naturally, not going to elaborate on in this text, but there remains one large issue to discuss in relation to position and positioning, and that is language.

## **Language and the Question of Position**

The decision to write my dissertation in English has various reasons, some quite clear from the outset, some revealing themselves only in the writing process. It has many implications and consequences. There is a practical reason for writing about South African topics in a language understandable to most of those concerned with South African township and music scholarship, not least the subjects of the research

themselves. Then there is the consideration of English as a 'lingua franca' in scholarship, and it is this issue I want to explore further now.

English has become so dominant in humanities today that a text written in any other language risks getting unrecognized regardless of its quality. A certain language blindness has affected cosmopolitan English-speaking academia (with a few exceptions) preventing its scholars from seeing, let alone recognizing and assessing production in local languages. The situation is further enhanced by job pressure on publication productivity which does not allow for the time-consuming contemplation of all the 'foreign' literature. Immediately a question rises: What does this blindness constitute? And what does it miss? Perhaps not much, in practice but I believe a lot in principle, including a dialogue with its potential to unsettle accepted theoretical frameworks. Given the embeddedness of any knowledge in the world of political, social, cultural and other agendas, one simply cannot believe that the English-speaking scholarly community is theoretically self-sufficient or positionally neutral, that it does not need a wider dialogue.

The more English becomes a 'lingua franca' the easier it becomes to fall into a trap of a false self-confidence that English language texts are capable of mediating universal experience. Language may thus work as an instrument of hegemony.<sup>24</sup> This strategy of sorting the intelligible from the unintelligible, the 'reasonable' from the 'unreasonable', filters and reduces the body of texts and, far beyond texts, the complexity of the world, harmonizing it with the cosmopolitan English-speaking academic world view. This may perpetuate its discursive practices,<sup>25</sup> sometimes mythical<sup>26</sup> in their nature, about others and about the world, more easily and ad infinitum. The paradoxical problem for postcolonial critique lies in the fact that, in order to make any significant difference or an intervention into a dominant discourse, one must assume its rules and enter the community, which means, first, to publish in English

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<sup>24</sup> In ethnomusicology it has become a widely addressed topic (for a Latin American ethnomusicological point of view see for example Loza 2006) resulting recently in founding a special fund allocated to translating important other than English scholarly literature into English by the US-based Society for Ethnomusicology.

<sup>25</sup> I use discourse in the broad Foucauldian sense.

<sup>26</sup> By mythical I mean perpetuating a single set of ideas which, instead of being developed further and generating new levels of knowledge, just restructures and recombines the same old ideas ad infinitum. I draw on the analysis of the concept of 'primitive society' by Adam Kuper here (Kuper 2005).

and, second, to use the commonly accepted (because acceptable) theoretical language, otherwise one's text will hardly get heard let alone recognized.

It would seem that I find myself in a situation similar to the vast majority of postcolonial critics here but I believe there is a difference which may turn out to be an advantage. My position differs in that I do not find myself on the usual axis between the colonizer and the colonized or at least not in a strict sense. Though I wholly admit that colonialism is not just a matter of those directly involved and that the actual extent of impact and influence of colonialism in countries not directly involved in it (here I mean especially Central and Eastern Europe) still waits to be seriously studied, I may hopefully comfortably say that my position implies interests and agendas so different from those directly involved on both sides of this axis that it may provide me with a different perspective compared to the usual postcolonial writing.

However, this statement should not be confused with a statement of 'neutrality', but rather the opposite, in fact. As should be clear from the autobiographical narrative provided above, I think of my theoretical position as embedded in the actual experience of myself as a situated subject. I see this subject as constructed and as negotiating between contesting ideologies, interests and agendas taking place on various social, cultural, and political levels. In short, I believe that the potential of my perspective is actually given by the very situatedness of myself as a studying subject. To the two well described positions – that of the colonizer and that of the colonized (as far as it can be generalized for my purpose here) – I add a third position. This position is neither disinterested nor neutral. It is a situated position, but situated differently. Its perspective is, I believe, different enough to shed a new light on some themes concerning the study of colonialism and post-colonialism, or South African popular musical culture in my case.

There has been diverse criticism of postcolonial theory pointing out a number of problems. One of them is that while criticizing previous binaries and generalizations it does not recognize local differences and thus creates new generalizations blind to local developments (Horáková 2007b: 69-71). One of such generalizations in my opinion is the image of the colonizer, the imagined West, and that of the colonized, the imagined Rest or in my case 'Africa', in postcolonial writing. The critical question is: Where do *I* belong in this picture?

What has bothered me about texts of the main postcolonial authors, as far as I know them, has been that they completely ignore the experience and position of the

‘second world’ (which I explain below), as if it has been somehow disinterested in colonial and post-colonial situation.<sup>27</sup> Though it has most certainly not been, its experience has been different compared to that of either colonizer or colonized. I draw attention to the uniqueness of the ‘second world’ position because I see it as a fruitful one for formulating new critical positions and perspectives. My experience and position is clearly neither ‘Western’ nor ‘African’, nor is it ‘Eastern’, in terms of the received Western association of my country with the Slavonic, ‘wild’ and ‘mysterious’ Eastern Europe (and where do we locate its borders?), recently associated with the (post)Soviet empire. I have felt as if sidelined and pushed away from the academic debate, which has settled down on the conventional trajectory between colonizer and the colonized, limiting its scope to the Western colonial and imperialist project of ‘the West’s’ modern era.

To further complicate the problem, calling my position and experience postcommunist or postsocialist – using the terms as analogical to colonial and postcolonial as master frames for describing the multiple of African experiences of the last centuries – tends to reduce the complex realities of my historical identity to a simplified and generalized image of the experience of four decades of communism and the Soviet rule; which was, first of all, not one experience but multiple and of diverse shapes and, second, represented just an episode, albeit an important one, in the formation of the Czech Republic and of my own historical identity. My experience, as I have described it above, clearly comes from another world and another time too. It is not wholly defined by the communist system framed within the post-World War II world order. This is why I find useful Gellner’s concept of Central Europe, basically meaning the countries of former Austrian and Austrian-Hungarian Empire, as a point of departure for further theoretical elaborations on one’s historical identity, position and experience (Gellner 1998).

In my dissertation I want to speak about South African township music from this ambiguous and – with regard to the usual practice – somewhat *inappropriate* position, a position from which I have to fight in order to be heard. First of all I must write in

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<sup>27</sup> We should only think of the involvement of the Soviet bloc in the ‘Cold War’ as it was fought ‘hot’ in Sub-Saharan Africa. This involvement, similarly to the Chinese involvement today, which was far from disinterested, tends to be overlooked in postcolonial writing. Suffering from this blind spot its authors consequently tends to assume the stance of one of the sides, which may not always serve as the best critical point of departure. That is not to say it has not been fully morally justifiable.

English which, paradoxically, is more difficult for me than for many formerly colonized. I must know, quote and relate to canonical authors in Anglo-Saxon humanities in order to be accepted. And while doing so I am getting in danger of losing my case – to make a difference. Again, while doing so, I am becoming unintelligible for many in Czech academia, not only because of the language but because of the academic tradition I have chosen to fit my inquiry in and which is not practiced in my country. In fact, in Czech musicology, my ‘home’ discipline, I have become ‘heretic’ or simply ‘wrong’, on the one hand, and irrelevant, peripheral and ultimately marginal, on the other.

## **Ambiguous in the Field, Ridiculous at Home**

This marginalization is further strengthened by the interdisciplinary of my research and my theoretical eclecticism. In interweaving different approaches I find a subversive potential for violating the usual disciplinary procedures and borders which often reify old ethnocentric prejudices and stereotypes, especially in musicology and ethnomusicology but also in anthropology and other fields. As Michel Bigenho has pointed out, there is a view in academia of music as a unique realm of social life. Ethnomusicologists find the potential of participant observation research in music via the supposedly direct experience of the ‘musicking’ researcher as a unique way to the indigenous knowledge otherwise unreachable. Anthropologists, on the other hand, mostly leave the realm of sound untouched on the basis of the expert knowledge it supposedly requires (as if for example studying a strange new language would be so much easier). A common basis for both beliefs lies, according to her, in the ethnocentric stereotyping of music as a socially, culturally, politically, or economically autonomous activity, as an expert field accessible only to true devotees, and therefore as a realm of experience beyond any but an aesthetic verbalization. This stereotype took shape in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has remained as a basic organizing structure for our thinking about music (Bigenho 2008). By posing my research questions across the borders of several disciplines I hope to overcome the fixation on the *subject matter – music* and to move to more pressing *problems* in which music certainly is more or less present in various

ways, yet these problems are not defined by the ‘thing itself’, music.<sup>28</sup> In short, researching ‘South African township music’ bio-ethnographically failed to fulfil a lot of expectations both in South Africa and at home.

For many white South Africans both Afrikaans- and English-speaking and both in and out of academia I was a bit suspicious given that I was coming from a post-communist world, focused on a kind of worthless music and musicians (no ‘authenticity’, no ‘virtuosity’) and had a difficult-to-define topic which was not clearly formulated in advance but rather developed over the years. When asked about it, I was not often able to give a satisfactory answer. I seemed to be somehow careless about security issues, went to townships, slept there, used local taxi-minibuses etc. For township dwellers, and black South Africans in general, I was, on the other hand, incomprehensibly poor to be a European. In fact, there were moments when I was dependent on people’s hospitality when my financial resources dried out for a period of time – a priceless experience that I shall discuss later.<sup>29</sup> I used English as my second language as my African friends did (if not using it as their third or fourth language) but I was not used to English to the extent they were, and therefore in the very beginning I was less fluent. My native language was as ‘obscure’ and unintelligible to them as their languages were to me. I had never been to the UK or to the US. I could not speak Afrikaans. Despite all this I was seen as a member of the white university educated liberal crowd to beware of. I simply did not easily fit any pattern or expectations; I was confusing in every possible way and it always took people some time to comprehend what I was up to.

To give an example of one such confusion, early in 2006 I started to go to a small congregation of the ZCC near Pretoria meeting regularly in an abandoned former primary school in the bushveld every weekend. I often spent the time before the actual

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<sup>28</sup> The terms ‘subject matter’ and ‘problem’ I have taken from Popper’s often quoted sentence: “We are not students of some subject matter, but students of problems. And problems may cut right across the borders of any subject matter or discipline.” (Popper 2002: 88-89).

<sup>29</sup> Not surprisingly black South Africans and especially the poorer people I have kept in contact with, had very little if any experience of people from my part of Europe. They generally tended to think of Europe as Western Europe and more specifically as the former colonial powers. Their image of Europe was thus reduced to its more affluent part taking practically no notice and somehow even ideologically denying the very existence of its economically poorer and culturally and historically different parts. In this view Europe simply *must be* rich.

worship began with a group of about five priests talking and drinking 'holy coffee'. It was a good time when we could learn more about each other. Once we chatted about politics and religion. As so often happened to me, especially with middle-aged black South Africans, the priests knew former Czechoslovakia better than the Czech Republic and did not know much about its political developments in the past two decades. One of the priests started to praise communism and congratulated me how happy we have been having this wonderful political system in our country. I began my reaction by telling him that he as a priest might be concerned with the fact that communism did not go along well with religion. The priests were surprised and it was a start to an interesting discussion. I believe that this image of communism and communist countries as primarily helpful (rhetorically as well as materially) with their struggle against apartheid, or colonialism and imperialism elsewhere in Africa, so widespread among older black South Africans opened some doors to me, which may otherwise have remained shut. Besides *practical implications* such as better access to some sites and occasions in 'the field' (positive) and limited resources and a lack of local academic support in terms of advice and supervision (negative), this situation has in my opinion had important *theoretical implications* for my research, which I am going to explore later.

At the same time, it would be naive to expect my home department or more generally people around me to show any natural understanding for my topic. It does not fit the expected stereotyped patterns. The music I have studied does not sound strange and exotic enough, in fact it sounds quite Western, commercial, poppish, very unprofessional and non-virtuoso to them, and so is perceived as inauthentic in the usual sense. My colleagues' and other people's – usually never posed but implicitly present – question might simply be: Why on earth do you invest so much (energy, money, time) in studying such trash?

This perception came home to me when in April 2013 I gave a presentation in our department at Charles University that was open to the public, as part of a faculty event to popularise our research and give the institution exposure. After a short general introduction about the discipline of ethnomusicology and its methods and about my South African research I moved to discuss my topic, the ethnographic interview. Using few selected examples from my interviews with Lesiba Samuel Kadiaka I was showing what I had learned from interviews and how an interview complements other methods. I played some related video examples of performances too.



Besides the public and students there were two senior and one junior members of the departmental staff present, all of them historical musicologists who do not know my research. I was taken by surprise, not to say shock, by the violent reaction of two of them. One object of attack was the value of the music researched: “Before you started any research you should have tried to find out whether there is any music worth researching in South Africa at all... They are like Gypsies here, there is no value in the music”, a comment followed by a parody of a Gypsy accent in Czech speech. The second problem was that my research topic was not ‘about music’ because I was talking about the interview method and contextualizing the findings broadly in South African history and culture.

These reactions can be analyzed in various ways: using Bourdieu’s notions of habitus and social distinction based on the judgement of taste or symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1984), or identified as emerging from an orientalist discourse (Said 1978), or seen as a plain manifestation of racial imagination in music value judgement (Bohlman and Radano 2000: 1-53). Class, race, and ethnicity all play a role in forming such reactions. The second argument simply shows a lack of knowledge of methods outside traditional historical musicological discourse. My goal here is to end this chapter, which has focussed mainly on the production of my position and my research method and discourse, with reference to some of the reception it has received so far. The kind of reactions I may be confronted with on ‘home ground’ may resonate with other music departments, especially where ethnomusicology and musicology are seen as occupying separate turf. Not all my colleagues think alike, however, nor are they so explicit and in time, some may even show some interest and support.

## **Further Reading**

This dissertation is first of all an ethnography and fieldwork has a strong presence in most of the text. My thinking about it was shaped by a collection of essays, *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (Barz and Cooley 2008). The importance of the collection is well reflected in a high number of references to it, its strong presence in professional discussions as well as its commercial success in the otherwise rather small field. Unlike many anthropological fieldwork ‘cook books’ this is no easily utilizable textbook though. In 15 essays (in its second edition) by different

authors of quite a remarkable generational span it offers self-reflexive and usually theoretically rich and extraordinarily open insights into their authors' own research experiences and dilemmas in a manner without precedent in ethnomusicology. Contemplating its impact I may naturally only talk about the English-speaking ethnomusicological academia where it has become a compulsory advanced text on fieldwork in the meantime. My experience of discussions inspired by the collection during the first *International Doctoral Workshop in Ethnomusicology*, which took place in Hannover and Hildesheim in 2009, confirmed the influence of the publication as ultimate and formative for my generation of researchers. Judging by its high-profile academic supervision and a presence of 16 Ph.D. candidates from 12 countries – USA and Europe (including France, Spain, Germany and post-communist countries, a fact rather unusual) – this statement may be evaluated as rather representative of contemporary English-speaking ethnomusicology. It appeared, too, and took us all by surprise, that the questions of ethics and ways of ethnomusicological writing were the ones that preoccupied us most there. Complemented by some other anthropological writing on fieldwork (most influentially Fabian 2002/1983) and particular passages scattered throughout ethnographic monographs this book has served as a point of departure for my thinking about fieldwork until today.

A number of texts from several disciplines and different periods as well as works of fiction and poetry (South African and other) profoundly influenced my thinking with regard to my research in the past ten or so years. In course of gradually obtaining my ethnomusicological research experience I have realized that it has been a flow of often heterogeneous ideas based on doubts around and about modernity what best fits my own view and most truly represents my experience as a researcher. This should not, however, be mistaken with a postmodernist confession or at least not in the usual sense. My stance could possibly be described as post-modern (not necessarily postmodern<sup>30</sup> or anti-modern), that is *reflecting* modernity and being aware of it as something *not to be taken for granted* and '*unfamiliar*' in the anthropological sense but, instead, carefully examined. The texts that have influenced me are too diverse and contradictory to fit one

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<sup>30</sup> I use the 'postmodern' and 'post-modern' analogically to 'postcolonial' and 'post-colonial', that is the former in both pairs labelling the intellectual way of thought, the latter expressing simple chronological order – after modernity (roughly after the Second World War), after colonialism.

preconceived line anyway. Though they sometimes overlap with particular intellectual ‘schools’, as a whole they do not belong to any. I shall point out some of them now.

My thinking has been formed by Walter Benjamin’s critique of modernity and his writing on mimicry (Benjamin 1999, 1968/ 1979/1933), his interpreters Susan Buck-Morrs (Buck-Morrs 1992)<sup>31</sup> and, in anthropology, Michael Taussig (Taussig 1993 and 2006). I have found most inspiring the ‘anthropology of the senses’ stemming from Johannes Fabian’s writing (Fabian 2002/1983, Stoller 1997, Howes 2003 and 2005 et al.) and recently influencing a number of ethnomusicologists who we read with my students (Hahn 2007, Friedson 2009, Stokes 2010 et al.). I have been constantly fascinated by the intellectual – often unscholarly, literary and poetic – reflection of the holocaust (Hannah Arendt, Jean Améry, Paul Celan, Enzo Traverso, Winfried G. Seebald et al.) with its various ways of explicit and implicit critique of the modern thought, bringing into attention human body and contemplating the limits of human freedom and agency.

My thinking has also been irreversibly changed by reading in French postmodern philosophy (especially Foucault’s writing on discourse), literary poststructuralism (especially Barthes 1977), postcolonial thinking from Fanon (1970) and Said (1978, 2000) to Bhabha (2004/1994) and Mbembe (1992), cultural studies (Gilroy 1993 and 2002) and feminist critique (Nagl-Docekal 2004 et al.). My anxiety about the possibility of human freedom and agency has been saved number of times by Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1996, 1998), whose social and political engagement I greatly admire, and Sherry Ortner’s ‘theory of practice’ (Ortner 1984, 2006). In my own home discipline I find the various criticisms of historical musicology from the position of ‘new musicology’ still most pertinent, especially in Czech musicology where it remains largely unreflected (McClary 1991, 2000, Solie 1992, Cook and Everist 1999 et al.).

Contrary to what may appear, I have not broken the bond with the Central European intellectual perspective, though, ironically, I am going to mention two Jewish life-long émigrés who, nevertheless, bear witness to the unique milieu of the Central European space. I have found extremely insightful Ernest Gellner’s writing on nationalism and the dilemma of universalism-atomism versus particularism-communalism (Gellner 1997, 1998), including his fierce criticism of postmodernism and postmodern anthropology, which I find as witty as unfair at times though. Another

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<sup>31</sup> For introducing me to the article and its author I am glad to my colleague Tereza Havelková.

Prague-born Jewish émigré Bruno Nettl contemplating basic concepts and history of ethnomusicology seems to assume a more reconciliatory position among the many radical views formulated in humanities in the past six or so decades while at the same time not stripping the authors of their achievements and us, consequently, of the theoretical benefits they may bring us in a form of heightened sensitivities (Nettl 2002, 2005, 2010). His stance I find very agreeable – theoretical eclecticism in the best sense of the word. Naturally, with regard to the just mentioned names, I may only talk about the little I have learned from them so far.

Reading some of the authors' extreme stances I often found myself in disbelief, though I usually discovered some justification for their positions in wider context of the debates. I have nevertheless constantly missed a stance which would comply with my own position of an *ethnomusicologist of Central European origin doing research in South Africa*, as if an appropriate frame for situating such a creature was missing both in Czech as well as foreign intellectual world. I have been repeatedly asked about my motivations in Czech as well as non-Czech academia. My activities are seen as strange in Czech music studies (most of the few Czech ethnomusicology practitioners do research 'at home' and focus either, in line with the older local folkloristic tradition, on folk music of the region and its derivatives or, more recently and influenced by contemporary American ethnomusicology, on local urban music scenes and 'subcultures') as they seem unusual or even kind of inappropriate in English-speaking ethnomusicology. An ethnomusicologist of South African origin expressed his support for my research activities in 2009 saying, as roughly reproduced, that it is great there is someone with no colonial or imperial history and from a post-communist country doing this kind of research. Though I am not sure whether I fulfilled his hopes, he certainly articulated an important point regarding my research position.

The way of research I had been mostly introduced to while studying history and musicology at Czech tertiary institutions was an unreflected positivism scared of theorizing and interpretation. As I try to situate myself in the environment of Czech music research I may tend to take more radical methodological and theoretical stances compared to those working in more liberal and open environments. Because here the notion of 'theoretical discussion' itself would often be understood as a bad word and serve – in the spirit of false and belated anti-communism so widespread in current Czech political debates – as a substitute for some kind of left wing revisionism, 'relativization of values' (from the point of high culture) or 'betrayal of the factual'

(from the positivist scholarship view). As I described above I have faced this kind of arguments even in my own department. I try my best in negotiating between all these un-negotiable worlds – which have so much in common with the experience of roughly ‘the first’, ‘the second’ and ‘the third world’ and with as much understanding and regard to their different (but always inevitably simplified) experiences as I may afford. I have tasted a bit of all these experiences – but I can by no mean please all. This dissertation, besides other things, is an attempt to find a frame for myself and, perhaps, for some others too.

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This biographical auto-ethnographic chapter has been necessary given the theme of my dissertation – writing a bio-ethnography of a South African musician. Devoting a text to another person’s life without introducing and positioning the one who is writing it in a similar way, seemed to me problematic.

# Introducing Bio-ethnography

## Bio-Ethnography: An Outline

This is an ethnography of an individual ordinary musician and Mamelodi township dweller for the past thirty-three years Lesiba Samuel Kadiaka (\*1962), a father of six children, a husband and a partner, a constructor and a gardener, an accordion player, a songwriter and a song singer and Zion Christian Church member and priest. These are just some biographical frameworks relevant for the present study, which I am going to follow in order to understand his social and cultural positions in the world he had inhabited until the end of my research in 2011. As we became close friends during the six years of the research I am going to refer to him as Samuel for the rest of the text.

I got an opportunity to conduct this research in five periods during six years between 2005/6 and 2011 spending altogether over 18 months in South Africa and Lesotho, of which 12 were devoted solely to the research. Although the second half of 2005 studying at the University of Pretoria and getting to know the country cannot be called research in the strict sense, it was extremely important as pre-research, as a preparation period during which I not only got familiar with the environment, the field in which I later conducted fieldwork (and, of course, followed a number of courses on South African anthropology, history and music at the University), but also underwent an important change of perception which became essential for starting the project I write about here.

Writing biographically about an ordinary, working class, economically poor African man who is an average popular musician in the context of (South African) music and ethno/musicology does not make equal sense to everybody in and outside academia. As hinted in the previous chapter, my research seems to flag core predicaments and dilemmas in ethnomusicology and its sister disciplines. I now explore issues within the genre of what has become known as 'bio-ethnography'.

In contrary to what may seem to be the reality, 'bio-ethnography' or biographically focused ethnography has been around some time. There was Crapanzano's ethnographic study *Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan* based on individual

interviews and ethnographic observations as early as 1980. Biographically focused research direction became more prominent since 1990s as one product of the wider discussion about the 'crisis of ethnographic representation' in the 1980s and early 1990s. Michael Herzfeld pointed out the potential of this kind of approach in the introduction to his appraised study *Portrait of a Greek Imagination: An Ethnographic Biography of Andreas Nenedakis*:

The tactic of ethnographic biography allows us to move along the trajectory of a life that has bisected many histories and of a person who has dwelt in many communities rather than staying (as most conventional ethnography does) within a single place. (Herzfeld 1997: 1)

Herzfeld saw the potential of the bio-ethnographical or ethno-biographical approach in its ability to transgress cultural, social and geographical boundaries thanks to its focus on individual life in a diachronic perspective. Its potential has been realized especially by researchers dealing with people living in variously defined 'border' areas such as migrants or otherwise culturally or socially displaced or 'deterritorialized' people, to use Appadurai's term (Appadurai 1996/1990: 27-47). As such it proves to be a very useful perspective for studying social and cultural realities of apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa where migrancy and various kinds of displacement and deterritorialization have become part of everyday life experience for a vast majority of the country's population, and since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the course of my research it transpired that a number of studies dealing with individual musicians have actually been published within South African musical studies, as I will show later.

An obvious objection towards the individually focused approach would be the issue of *representativity*. Can such a research speak of broader social realities than one individual experience? Does it make any sense to speak about an individual today? Following up the research in anthropology we can see a return of an individual into the focus of the discipline (for a summary see Ortner 1984 and 2006: 107-154). It is not the old modern autonomous individual, neither is it the socially and culturally subordinated and determined subject as it was constructed in sociological and anthropological writing approximately till the early 1980s. While *subjectivity* is already conventionally seen as culturally and socially constructed today, there has been an enhanced interest in individual *agency* again in the past two or so decades. I have especially drawn on the practice theory as represented in the writing by Sherry Ortner (Ortner 2006: 1-18, 107-

154). Conceptualization of an individual as both constructed *and* acting at the same time answers the initial question. By studying shapes of individual negotiation of his or her position as an active social and cultural *practice* we generate knowledge by far exceeding the ‘minor’ scope of the individual and seemingly irrelevant personal story. Not only that it still makes sense to speak about an individual today, it opens up new perspectives and possibilities for the research as I am trying to show in this text.

What would we like to know about someone in order to generate bio-ethnographical knowledge and how can we find out? Musical bio-ethnographic research is first of all an ethnographic research. A long-term and ideally repeated ethnographic research thus becomes an essential method. The core of the ‘bio’ strategy within the ethnographic framework is (1) following the individual musician’s activities as closely as possible and for as long a period of time as possible and (2) conducting repeated deep ethnographic interviews focused biographically, but also unfocused occasional discussions. By ‘activities’ I mean *all* kinds of musical performances the individual musician participates in but also other related activities. In case of Samuel I not only focused on his solo compositions and performances, though they were already quite diverse, but I included his participation in collective choral performances within and outside of religious structures as well as the music he liked to listen to on the radio or from commercial recordings. It was equally important too to map the environments and places where he spent time: his several homes, work place public transport he used and performed in and so on.

The biographical as well as previously thematically unfocused interviews should ideally be conducted along with the observations so that the observational part can be closely reflected in the interview part. The main aim of musical bio-ethnography – as I came to understand it in the course of my research – is getting to understand the links between and intersections of various positions and world views as expressed verbally in the interviews, on the one hand, and the observed musical and other practices *as* expressions of these positions and world views, on the other. Both sources of knowledge shed light on each other as both are expressions of a single subjectivity. My main research aim was to understand various musical activities Samuel took part in as places of his wider cultural and social negotiations. I try to see various repertoires and performance contexts as maps of wider social and cultural experience. I see them as both media functioning to construct Samuel’s social and cultural subjectivity as well as



media through which he re-shaped and re-constructed these wider social and cultural frameworks he found himself in.

Following an individual does not, however, mean excluding other people from the research. By its very definition, ethnography is an open social activity and the environment an open one. Following Samuel naturally meant meeting dozens of people both related to him as family and friends as well as rather strange to him, during a great number of occasions and activities and in different social and cultural settings. It has been through his musical engagement with them and his involvement in variously socially and culturally structured performances that I got an opportunity to observe him, so that I could understand bit by bit how he negotiates his own position within wider social field and constructs his multilayered and complex subjectivity – as a solo musician, as a Zion Christian Church member and priest, as a father and a partner, as a son and brother with his strong ties to his rural home in Ga-Mphahlele, as an inhabitant of Mamelodi's various quarters and a member of its local communities, and as an unskilled male labourer and daily train commuter between Mamelodi and Pretoria.

By focusing an ethnomusicological study on an individual average black popular musician I believe I do more than just chose a different or yet another new subject within the usual and common framework. I write against standard practices of music scholarship in musicology, ethnomusicology, and popular music studies and other disciplines. I try to consciously write across disciplinary borders which are still institutionally well maintained even now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to keep musics, people and ways of scholarly thinking apart. If I seem to *con/fuse* methods and approaches common in musicology and ethnomusicology – namely individually focused biography and collectively focused ethnography – I do so deliberately as I strongly believe that presenting things in an other than the usual way enables some problems to emerge more clearly. It has a potential similar to a contrast medium in medicine; it makes visible what would have otherwise remained invisible or hardly visible, that is namely persisting stereotypes of different kinds within our disciplinary practices and in general. I, however, suppose that just *doing* it is not enough therefore I would like to *formulate* and *articulate* the problems as I see them and position the whole undertaking in the relevant theoretical context.

## From Collective Identities to Individual Practices

From my ethnomusicological point of view I try to show how the individual is part of a world musically understanding music, whatever it means in the given context, *as* an expressive culture (not just *part of* or *in* culture), and in this sense I agree with Reyes' view that it is absolutely unthinkable to view an individual independently of culture (Reyes 2009: 14). I understand the human subject as embedded in wider social and cultural structures – be these belonging to a particular social class and language group or using certain compositional or improvisational form, voice timbre and dance movement as a musical convention – which always enter and impact but never fully determine one's acting and creativity.

Together with 'practice theorists', I believe that one is more or less fully able to understand one's situation in the structure and then act accordingly. In other words, though shaped by various influences, one is never fully determined by them because one is to some extent *aware* of them and capable of using them consciously. There always remains some space for individual *agency*, even if it was quite small or invisible at first sight (this is not to say that one may ever act completely independently of the structure). These acts may, however, not be comprehensible to those who are not familiar with the actual situation. Moreover, anthropological studies have showed us many times that what looked like senseless behaviour at first sight turned out to be the most rational of acts and conscious decisions by people highly aware of their situation and position in the structure. It only needs to be studied from sufficiently close-up a perspective to show up; detailed ethnographic knowledge of the immediate context becomes necessary.

As should already be clear, then, I subscribe to a 'theory of practice' as formulated particularly by anthropologist Sherry Ortner and acknowledge the influence of scholars she mentions in her writing, especially Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens and Clifford Geertz (Ortner 2006: 1-18, 107-128). This theoretical frame seems to best represent what I describe as 'the third way' and, I believe, offers a way out of the well-known and exhausting dilemma of the individual-society relationship. It could be described as an attempt to avoid both of the two well-known dangers: on the one hand considering the individual as fully autonomous, an approach well at home in musicology and other disciplines rooted in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century historical writing, especially in those dealing with aesthetic objects and their authors, and, on the other hand, dull

determinism of Marxist thinking where, for example, culture tends to be already seen as an oppressive ideology and social class as full determinant of one's acting and aesthetic creativity. In this view, adopting the *constructivist* approach to human subject does not necessarily mean to resign to a *human agency* all together.

It is important to explain these points, as two opposed confusions might arise here: first, among anthropologists and possibly sociologists, whether I am aware of the discussion on 'the subject' and whether I am not simply repeating the old stereotype while only camouflaging it as ethnography, and, second, among musicologists who as a rule are mostly unaware of this discussion and might get confused over the use of 'the individual' in an ethnography. As a problem discussed for decades in anthropology, sociology and other fields it might not seem to be such a pressing topic. In musicology, however, with its long-19<sup>th</sup>-century based European tradition of writing histories of outstanding personalities as more or less progressive male geniuses, it is far from taken for granted.<sup>32</sup>

At the same time, this change of perspective changes the way biography could be written, its very structure (for a feminist critique see for example Solie 1992). It may no longer go as teleologically informed chronological story. Instead, it should closely focus on all the careful and sensitive *negotiations* marking out different kinds of relationships between a subject on one side and her/his social and cultural structural and structuring powers on the other side, as represented by various other actors. The main task, then, is to identify the *places of* such *negotiations*, and research questions and problems then come up out of these. As I pointed out above, the organizing principle of such writing then becomes ordered not solely by chronology (which may nonetheless be present too) or attempts for exhaustiveness, but by questions and problems arising from such negotiations and situations of ideological ambiguities.

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<sup>32</sup> Some Anglo-Saxon scholars later called 'new musicologists' started to critique this trend in the 1980s and tried to introduce a number of borrowed analytical concepts and methods from humanities into musicological expertise. Nonetheless, the impact of their ideas, albeit powerful in some circles, has been rather limited even in the English speaking world (Cook and Everist 1999), let alone the vast number of local traditions of music studies over the world, which went largely untouched by it (Duckles et al., online). In the Czech Republic, where I am a member of the broader musicological community (even if only based on my departmental affiliation), its impact has been, with few notable exceptions, virtually non-existent and often even explicitly opposed. One can get a good picture of the situation from programmes of annual conferences of the Czech Musicological Society (Česká společnost pro hudební vědu) and from articles published in the main Czech musicological journal *Hudební věda* (Musicology).

Given all these caveats about what biographical ethnography or ethno-biography could be and has been, my aim here is to show the subject, a musician Samuel Kadiaka, as shaped and shaping, as *acted upon* and *acting* at the same time, and to see his acts – various musical performance-related and other decisions – as being outcomes of complex negotiations. What I try to offer here is no clear good-bad, this-or-that description. I do not intend to demonstrate any kind of clear cut *resistance* relationship between individual and social or cultural structures. Instead, I would like to describe and analyze these negotiations and especially the moments of ambiguities with regard to the individual experience and music.

It came out of both my field observations and my interview data analysis that the studied subject takes possession of expressive means, practices and ideologies which could be described as opposing not only each other but, at first sight at least, even the very interests of the subject. As a result it often appears that what constitutes the subject could be described as constantly changing, ambiguous and multi-layered flow of practices and ideologies rather than as a neatly bounded identity of any kind. It seems, however, that this flow is nonetheless perceived by the subject as being in a harmony, as homogenous, perfectly possible and even necessary – as a strategy.

It has led me to two related conclusions: first, that individuals are very active in building their own ideological *alliances* regardless of their social and cultural identity as conventionally ascribed to them by different structural frameworks (the academic ones included) and, second, that it is the people themselves who already *have a theory* or, perhaps, *live it* and where seeming ideological conflicts are reconciled by practice.

I have found inspirational the article introducing and proposing the concept of so-called ‘alliance studies’ by ethnomusicologist Beverley Diamond (Diamond 2007), where she tries to show a new way for dealing with – in her case – ‘world music’ musicians of the so-called first nations in the age of globalized and technologically advanced music world. I believe, her idea is applicable more widely and it is especially pertinent to the South African situation. She tries to go beyond what she (after Penny van Toorn) calls the ‘patron discourse’ of imposed ethnic/cultural identities dictating these musicians how to sound (‘Inuit’, ‘Sámi’, ‘Pygmy’ etc.) in order to meet certain expectations of a particular, usually metropolitan, audience. She tries to get the musicians rid of the imposed identities by shifting her conceptual framework “from identities to alliance studies”, from researching people as more or less fitting examples

of their identities to actors who actively position themselves in a complex world via their performances.

She thus problematizes the traditional concept of cultural identity as the main and often only theoretical framework for ethnomusicological research. She has unsurprisingly found that musicians transgress borders of identities ascribed to them by others by what she calls *alliances* during their performance and by various post-production decisions. These alliances may take place in choices on different levels such as language (mother-tongue, language of majority, mix of some kind etc.), sound (overall sound, style/genre, voice timbre etc.), personal collaborations (intra- or cross-cultural, gender specific etc.), various kinds of citations, allusions etc. This shift of emphasis from identities to practices enables her to recognize these practices as structuring and to give them a central position in her research. She goes even further to suggest that we “should regard musical practices *as* theory not as objects to which we might apply theory” (Diamond 2007: 169). This is a clear call for ‘theory of practice’ in opposition to studying cultures as systems. As such it belongs to the wider flow of anthropological thinking ‘against culture’. Both her approach and theory of practice seem extremely useful for dealing with South African music and its discourses so heavily burdened with identity issues and popularized notions of culture as something fixed and defining its members’ qualities.

In much of South African music, and it is the case of Samuel’s musical worlds too, we are confronted with richly layered musical textures, practices and ideas containing elements clearly pointing to so many directions in terms of their ethnic/cultural<sup>33</sup> and/or geographical origin that it has led many to describe South African musical world using enthusiastic terms such as ‘Eldorado’ or ‘paradise’ for ethnomusicologists and musicologists (for its critique see Lucia 2005a: xxi-xlvi) or

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<sup>33</sup> I write ethnic/cultural as these categories overlap here. I am aware of the complex and tricky interplay between concepts of race, ethnicity and culture in South African imagery and political rhetoric and practice since the segregation era through post-apartheid situation. I try to use these terms as carefully as I can. Though apartheid conceptualization, unlike the previous segregation one, was – with help of academic disciplines such as *volkekunde*, later renamed as *etnologie* – quite consistently based on cultural rhetoric, race remained part of the imagery even if in a kind of masked form and, according to my findings, it has widely remained so in popular consciousness till today. The key apartheid term, *general acceptance*, as a resultant of biological, cultural and socio-economic criteria continues to form the most basic conceptual framework in popular consciousness (see for example Horáková 2007a, Kuper 1999: 145-170, Skalník 2000, Sharp 2000 et al.).

writing more analytically about ‘hybridity’ or ‘mixed’ culture or, in older days, about ‘acculturation’ etc. In other words, as musicologist Christine Lucia pointed out in an introduction to her historical anthology of texts on South African music, there is an extremely strong preoccupation with the idea of *origin*, that is ethnic/cultural roots of particular musical genres, styles, and features, in writing on South African music (Lucia 2005a: xxi-xlvi). Ethnic/cultural *identity* of the music and its makers seems to be an umbrella frame for thinking about music be it masked behind terms such as black, white, Coloured, European, Indian, Afro-American, Zulu, Pedi etc. or other terms going often along in some kind of *homological* relationship such as (neo)traditional, indigenous, modern, rural, urban, collective, individual and many others.<sup>34</sup> To give an example, one of the first questions I got from the head of the music department at the University of Pretoria in 2006 when explaining my research interests not really clear yet went roughly as: “Are you going to research rural or urban music? As you know these two are quite different topics.” I was not ready to answer in any sophisticated way then, though I knew that what I had seen and heard all around so far was too messy to draw any lines of this sort.

This framing is complicit with the well-known apartheid categories too – the less clearly defined the better applicable to serve various ideological interests – and altogether it complies with the master frame of modern thinking about ethnic/cultural identity as it has developed in the West in the last centuries as one of the colonialism-related discourses, that is the discourse of radical cultural difference, a seemingly complementary twin of would-be universalistic ideas (in reality, however, often based on Western ethnocentrism seeing the other(s) as marked and different – though somewhat similar to each other – in relation to the own and unmarked – though somewhat unique). In relation to music and music research this issue has been brilliantly addressed by ethnomusicologists Ronald Radano and Philip Bohlman in their introduction to a collection of studies on the ‘racial imagination’ in music scholarship (Bohlman and Radano 2000: 1-53).

Lucia, as a contemporary South African musicologist, also points to the analytically destructive power of *dichotomies* and *binary opposition* based on or derived

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<sup>34</sup> So there we have a body of musicological literature on ‘white’ music and a body of ethnomusicological literature on ‘black’ music but, for example, first writing on music of the so-called Coloured communities started to appear only recently (Jorritsma 2011).

from the colonial (and nationalist) obsession with ethnic/cultural identity in scholarly and popular discourses on South African music, which, as a result, deprive South Africa (and the non-European world in general) of the same treatment as that of the West even in academic writing:

the traditional-modern and African-Western dichotomy persists in current thinking about music in South Africa, as do other frequently encountered pairs such as individual-communal, urban-rural. The difficulty in moving away from binaries is compounded by the degree to which they are constantly re-inscribed, if only to be manipulated afresh [...], the problem with them being precisely that they are so much part of the way South Africans think about themselves musically. In the global context, such dichotomies place us automatically in anOther [sic!] country, another hemisphere, another culture, from that of the imagined West. They reduce the historical and economic contingencies of a more nuanced reading of South African music – where the West has been part of the script for several centuries – to secondary status. A single word in any pair operates mainly in relation to its opposite and becomes a signifier of difference [...]. (Lucia 2005a: xxv-xxvi)

Relational quality of identities comes to the fore in this statement, qualities to which I am going to return later. There is no identity without another identity, one inevitably defining the other. Our mental capacities to structure in dichotomies and binary oppositions going hand in hand with deeply embedded modern colonial stereotypes create a situation where clear analytical thinking paradoxically becomes difficult. This problem directly relates to the old anthropological dilemma of universalism versus cultural relativism/particularism (Gellner 1998).

Anthropologist Hana Horáková summarizes the *universalism* versus *cultural relativism* anthropological debate and offers an interesting critique demonstrating implications of the latter when the doctrine becomes politicised as happened in South Africa under apartheid and where this originally well-intentioned and for a long time uncontested idea of the founding anthropological authorities came to justify the worst kind of racial oppression (see Horáková 2012: 160-178 and Horáková 2007a). Was not the core of apartheid ideology just the most extreme and perverse application of cultural relativism? Was not, for example, one of the implications of Bantu Education the recommendation for black music students to learn a tonic sol-fa instead of a staff notation (Lucia 2008: 11-34; Olwage 2002 and 2003: 2-103), the most perfect

implementation of so-called separate development?<sup>35</sup> More importantly for me, however, are the theoretical consequences of this kind of critique; even the very basic anthropological research imperative such as cultural relativism, that is the recognition of culture in plural, may prove to be a research enemy, a Trojan horse in theorizing about South African situation, a problem to be aware of at the very least. The concept of people caged in externally defined ethnic/cultural (and class) identities, as it was formulated and implemented by apartheid social engineering, makes the notion of identity as a basic theoretical frame a delicate and thorny issue in any research on South Africa.

There have been many attempts to deconstruct the concept of reified ethnic/cultural identities demonstrating their ‘shifting’ and ‘fluid’ quality, their ‘constructedness’ in South African ethnomusicology especially since 1980s (see for example Coplan 2008/1985 and 1994; Erlmann 1991, 1996 and 1999; Ballantine 2012/1993 et al.) and more importantly anthropology since as early as 1920.<sup>36</sup> Using various methodological strategies they have helped to dismantle the concept of fixed ethnic/cultural identity and I have learned from them immensely. In my dissertation, however, I try to offer another solution, which might be especially pertinent to music research and by which I want to bypass the old problem of cultural identity while still benefiting from the rich scholarly discussion on it.

I basically suggest a methodological move from researching collective identities ‘back’ to individuals (as would be familiar in musicology) while, at the same time, I try to keep and benefit from what we have learned in ethnomusicology. I suggest moving to biographical ethnography, a method of a long-term (and ideally repeated) research-based, ethnographically informed, individual-focused and diachronically constructed research. I do not see it as a step towards a higher evolutionary stage in research

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<sup>35</sup> As Grant Olwage pointed out so well, this problem has an intersectional dimension as class imagination entered the racial/ethnic/cultural evaluation of especially choral music performed by black South Africans already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Olwage 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Hana Horáková, for example, mentions A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, the first professor of social anthropology in South Africa between 1921 and 1926, who, already in the 1920<sup>th</sup>, came out with an idea of *one*, though diverse, South African society (as a social anthropologist avoiding the term culture) opposing thus both the foundational proto-apartheid ideas of Afrikaans ethnologists about the existence of closed cultures on one side and later even Bronislaw Malinowski’s framework for studying South Africa as an example of different interacting cultures on the other (Horáková 2012: 159-160; see also Kuper 1999: 145-170).



methods, though. I offer it as a possible solution to the old problem and it is clear that I am not alone (Ruskin and Rice 2012).

This approach is all the more useful when it comes to environments as unstable, open and deterritorialized as urban black settlements have historically been, called townships under segregationist, later apartheid and most the recently post-apartheid state. (And not only are the old townships growing fast today but new ones are still being founded, see Harber 2011). I use the word ‘open’ here in the broadest possible sense in order to express openness and vulnerability of these ever-changing suburban environments to all kinds of local and global flows or *-scapes*, as Appadurai would put it (Appadurai 1996/1990: 27-47).

This kind of fragile environment in which Samuel lives (the details of which will emerge later) contrasts markedly to the more independent and closely knit traditional societies spatially located in rural parts of the country and structured into villages and family households (a pattern part of which is partly followed even in the townships), the kind of rural environments traditionally researched by anthropologists using the common frames of cultural identity. Appadurai’s term *deterritorialization* becomes very useful in this context.

As a kind of writing ‘against culture’ (Abu-Lughod 1991), bio-ethnography can contribute to the debate about the concept of culture in anthropology. Conceived diachronically bio-ethnography can most readily capture change and indeed tends to go across, conventionally conceived cultural borders. As such it is essentially an *anti-essentialist method*. It may be usefully deployed especially in contexts where essentialism has been historically and chronically taken for granted if not applied by political ideology and practice. It should help to show us, first, cultural ‘heterogeneity’ experienced by an individual person in reality as *simultaneous*, *continual* and *meaningful* and second, the process of its never-ending *construction* and *re-construction*, that is *change*.

I believe that re-introducing an individual-focused micro-level long-term and/or repeat-based ethnographic research might show the great inventiveness, creativity and openness in struggling for unity of one’s own world, especially in the fractured environment of South African suburbia where globalization started very long ago (see Erlmann 1994 and 1999).

I suggest that this world, however complex, ‘mixed’ and ‘heterogeneous’, that is seemingly made up of ‘parts’ and ‘particles’ of different cultural and other origins, is

experienced as a continuum and as one by an individual living in it. There is no sense of 'hybridity' in that person's experience, unless they want to state it for some political reason, entertaining one or another identity concept. In daily life any preconceived identity borders are often crossed or disappear altogether and rules of musical styles, too turn irrelevant on an individual level. It would be too daring and foolish, however, to talk about a complete 'deconstruction' of a cultural or any other collective identity and it is not my intention here to discuss the competing concepts 'for' and 'against' culture. I only try to change the most common perspective and turn our attention from exhausting, though certainly fruitful, discussions of identity and musical style towards *individual musical experience of the world and its change over time*. I will return to this argument throughout my text.

What do I mean by a biographical ethnography and what are its benefits for writing about South African music? In my text, I am going to pay close attention to individual practices and ideologies behind them as they have resulted from various kinds of negotiations. By focusing ethnographically and biographically on an individual, instead of the conventional group categories defined by ethnicity, identity and class or even more conventional musical ones such as genre or style,<sup>37</sup> I hope to deconstruct some of these categories as they are conventionally used in South African music writing and show how stereotypically and analytically unproductively they tend to be. I, of course, take these categories seriously but as emic ones, as part of the local discourse, and where they become constitutive of negotiations.

Notwithstanding the radical post-structuralist calling to get rid of the individual acting subject – especially the concept of an author, one of the most central categories of modern literary, art and music criticism – from our thinking, and with a great respect to this writing and using its approaches, I have found it useful to 'ethnographically follow' an individual. I believe that a close-up ethnography of an individual gives us new methodological possibilities. It should help us to think about South African music in a new way, neither primarily as a manifestation of identity of any kind, nor primarily as medium of resistance, but as something individually *experienced*, as something individually *used*, as a way of *being* and *orienting* oneself in the world. In this view, the

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<sup>37</sup> Concepts of genre and style as they are used in popular music studies when dealing with the conventional repertoire of Western popular music and its derivatives become problematic when it comes to non-Western environment but also, for example, female musicians in the West (Mahon 2014).

usual frames such as identities and origins of the music, but also genres and styles, still play a minor role as markers of distinction, which never disappear as they are part of local public as well as academic discourse. It has, however, become apparent in my research that these and other concepts do not play quite the role one would expect.

I show Samuel as a *user* of available musical structures as cultural structures, through which he nonetheless expressed himself as an individual. He acted within wider frameworks as well as actively used them to serve his interests. And I mean not only various social and cultural frameworks but also music as sound and as text, structured by as well as structuring these wider social and cultural frameworks. It can be seen in great detail in discussion of Samuel's performances in Lefiswane or on the suburban train, of his song texts or of his carefully stylized photographs from the 1980s and 1990s. As I demonstrate in the text, he was well aware that in order to address his compatriots as potential listeners he must draw on widely resonant topics and familiar musical sounds when composing his songs as well as perform in appropriate contexts. I describe moments of great tension caused by his conscious attempts to reshape the established cultural frameworks and their unexpected results. I do not reveal these tensions on the level of spoken discourse only, as it may be rather deceiving, but I analyze the performances on the level of sound using musicological expertise too.

## **The Individual in the World of Ethnomusicology**

An individual music maker, his or her presence or absence, has for more than a century made up one of the basic distinctions between theoretical practices of musicology and ethnomusicology. Both disciplines with their histories embedded in their times and places have either tended to overemphasize the importance of the musical individual, usually as an author/composer and as a virtuoso, or suppress its very notion covering it under various collective umbrellas called ethnos, nation, people, culture, community etc. While musicology, similarly to its academic fellows in arts, literary or theatrical history, has become populated by names of (usually male) geniuses, the so-called comparative musicology and later ethnomusicology mapped the world of variously constructed social and/or cultural groups. These groups were given names, although not usually by their members, and if their presence amounted to a little more than what Bruno Nettl likened to "specimens of flora and fauna" (Nettl 1983: 292). Too often they

simply were not present as individuals at all and this situation has begun to change more profoundly only since the mid-1990s (Ruskin and Rice 2012: 303). Jonathan Stock described the reasons for the situation as follows.

This generalizing tendency in what I am labelling (as, at worst) cultural-average accounts is one that would appear to arise from ethnomusicology's heritage as a discipline that engages in cross-cultural comparison [...]. Insofar as it lives on in our disciplinary consciousness today, it does so perhaps more as a matter of habit than design, the inherited assumption being that ethnomusicological writing considers and compares people on the level of what was once called 'the culture.' The other music disciplines have their own standard units of measure, each equally infused by historical tradition and habit [...]. (Stock 2001: 8)

I agree with Stock's historical argumentation. Having discussed the reasons for historical lack of the biographical writing in ethnomusicology, he moved to explaining its recent (2001) rise. The reasons are:

1. a recognition that certain societies give exceptional attention to exceptional individuals[,] 2. a reappraisal of representational stances in ethnographic writing – the "voice of God" problem[,] 3. a reconceptualization of 'culture' as a mosaic of individual decisions, evaluations, actions and interactions; consequently a desire to draw attention to individual cultural agency. (Stock 2001: 10)

These reasons reflect Stock's experience as a Chinese opera specialist but do not necessarily apply more broadly. Attention to local discourses and emic perspectives as well as sensitivity to the problem of representation in ethnographic writing are also reasons. The reason I am most interested in is Stock's third one, which hinges on the relationship between the individual agency and cultural and social structures.

In their important and illuminating overview article published in 2012 Jesse D. Ruskin and Timothy Rice researched different forms of non/presence of an individual in more than one hundred ethnomusicological monographs in English published between 1976 and 2002 and showed that, despite the general paradigm, individuals have relatively strong presence in their sample, though they are rarely admitted a status of feature figures. In their introduction the authors described "a seemingly paradoxical position" of individual musicians in ethnomusicology and, acknowledging Stock's contribution, came up with four other factors "pulling ethnomusicologists toward study of individual musicians".

On one hand, the name of the discipline, whose roots include the Greek word for nation, race, or tribe (*ethnos*), suggests that it will focus on the study of groups of people, not on individuals. [...] On the other hand, at least four factors pull ethnomusicologists toward the study of individual musicians. First, when conducting fieldwork, they work with and rely on individual musicians [...]. Second, as communities under the pressure of globalization and political instability fragment and ‘deterritorialize’, as Arjun Appadurai (1990, 1991) put it, ethnomusicologists have been drawn to the study of individual musicians who are trying to make sense of collapsing worlds, create new individual identities, and knit themselves into emerging or newly encountered social formations. Third, ethnomusicologists belong to a subculture that values the exceptional and valorises individual achievement. Fourth, interventions in theory and method over the last quarter century have led ethnomusicologists to highlight individual agency and difference, and acknowledge their own roles in the musical communities they study. (Ruskin and Rice 2012: 299)

Here we can perhaps see again how the authors’ research experience entered their thinking (Ruskin has conducted his main research in Nigeria so far and Rice famously in Bulgaria). The trouble with the ‘ethnos’ root of the discipline’s name and has often been addressed (see for example Stobart 2008). While I have some reservations about Stock’s arguments, I more readily subscribe to Ruskin’s and Rice’s, especially to their second point. Their argument invites more reasons, which I am going to add as I specify my own situation in more detail.

Ruskin and Rice addressed five main themes in their research.

(1) the importance of individuals in musical ethnographies; (2) the types of individuals discussed and analyzed; (3) the theoretical purposes served by these treatments of individuals; (4) the nature of ethnomusicologists’ encounters with individuals; and (5) the narrative strategies employed when individuals are included in musical ethnographies. (Ruskin and Rice 2012: 302)

It is clear from their first reason, or theme, that though few monographs focus “solely on communities without considering individuals”, ethnomusicologists treat individuals more “as members of communities than autonomous actors”. Publications dealing directly with single individuals began to appear only since the mid-1990s, as they point out (Ruskin and Rice 2012: 303) and in so doing the question of ordinariness versus extraordinariness arises. Ethnomusicologists work with what Ruskin and Rice call “innovators”, “key figures” as well as with the “ordinary or typical individuals” and even with “anonymous audience members” and “others [playing] role in music production, dissemination and reception”. But, at the same time the authors state that –

quite eurocentrically – the “majority of musical ethnographies [...] focus on innovators and other key figures who play some important role in their musical culture” (Ruskin and Rice 2012: 304).

This is an important point for my dissertation. It reveals that it is highly improbable to find an ethnographic research account where ordinary or average (or below average) musicians are the focus, because the ‘norm’ is that extraordinary musicians “must” be “an important part of every musical tradition” (Ruskin and Rice 2012: 306). Only then would such an individual be put into the centre of musical ethnography.

The authors distinguished two kinds of ethnographies, one where individuals are treated as specific examples of some social and cultural principles (and as sources of the ethnomusicologists’ knowledge of them), and another where the approach to individuals is more nuanced and diversified, allowing for the acknowledgement of the musicians’ individual skills and experiences and their situatedness in different kinds of social and historical positions within a culture. It may see “musical individuals as agents who give meaning to – and change – social, cultural, and musical systems in specific instances” (and thus contradicts the notion of a petrified and almighty culture). And, in resonance with the reflexive turn, it may “[foreground] the experience of ethnomusicologists and their encounters with individuals during fieldwork” (Ruskin and Rice 2012: 307-310). Regarding the fourth theme, the authors point out that:

[a]lthough ethnomusicologists often generalize about music and culture from encounters with a limited number of individuals [...], few musical ethnographies contain detailed reflections on the nature of these relationships and how they impact research method, theoretical orientation, and narrative presentation. Individual-centred ethnographies, however, tend to deal with these issues more explicitly. (Ruskin and Rice 2012: 311)

Elaborating on the last theme, narrative strategies and techniques with regard to the representation of the individual in musical ethnography, they distinguish between a biography, an assisted autobiography, a dialogue, polyvocality, and an analysis of musical texts and performances. Each narrative strategy and technique they further specify and “illustrate not only their rhetorical aspects, but also the implications of each for theorizing the paradoxical position of the individual in ethnomusicology”.

Having demonstrated the main trends in thinking about individual ethnography in ethnomusicology, I now position my research within the field of South African music

studies. A biographical approach to the study of music has become more and more common during the past decade or so in the realm of ethnomusicology and popular music studies in South Africa. It seems as if researchers of South African musical culture were more aware of the dangers of reified cultural, ethnic and class boundaries, as I described them above, than their colleagues in other parts of the world, who are still largely happy with variously defined concepts of identity as the most prominent analytical framework and tool.

The oldest individually focused ethnomusicological studies were published as early as in the 1990s. Veit Erlmann's historical study about popular ragtime musician Reuben T. Caluza appeared in his collection of essays on South African popular music well before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in 1991. He later broadened his methodological scope to ethnography combined with historiography in an important book about Joseph Shabalala, the leader of the male *a cappella* choral *isicathamiya* group Ladysmith Black Mambazo, which became famous thanks to their participation in the recording and tour of Paul Simon's *Graceland* album in the late 1980s (Erlmann 1996). Christopher Ballantine delivered a paper during the Ethnomusicological Symposia in 1996 and later published an article (Ballantine 1997) about the same musician, calling for individually focused research on South African black musical composers and compositions. He based his arguments on John Blacking's article about the "myth of 'ethnic music'" (Blacking 1989). None of these studies may serve as directly exemplary to my research, however given the different status of their protagonists and different research methods and goals.

Christine Lucia has published several articles about individual South African musicians, jazz pianist Abdullah Ibrahim (2005b), classical music composer Kevin Volans (2009) and choral composer Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa (2008 and 2011). The few publications on South African classical music composers appearing from within local musicological circles are not relevant for me due to their different method of research. Then there is the recent experimental writing of Carol Muller on jazz singer Sathima Bea Benjamin, co-authored by her (Muller and Benjamin 2011). As Christine Lucia pointed out in a personal communication, all these musicians are "claimed as in some way or another exceptional, leading, ahead of the game, pioneers, special or highly regarded within their own social and musical communities".

Unlike them, Samuel, my research subject, was an 'average' musician, lacking all these attributes. He enjoyed a moderate popularity among a particular segment of

Mamelodi township but he could not have been considered famous or pioneering in any way, as far as these characteristics usually function as criteria for choosing a musician as a research subject. He was an ardent musician, but Samuel's extraordinariness lay not in his musical prowess as conventionally perceived but rather in his ability to not only survive but even reflect upon the situation of historical structural disadvantage he suffered from. But his musicianship clearly showed that he did not feel to be a victim or a loser in the game; indeed, music empowered him. Anyone watching Samuel performing live, in the video or even hearing him just audio may immediately recognize this.

Using a phenomenological approach (Rice 2008, Friedson 1996 and 2009) I would like to claim here that music making of various kinds became Samuel's way of relating to the world. As a specific kind of knowledge it became a medium of experiencing and reflecting upon the world in the broadest sense. I would argue that music was not just a supplement of his 'real' life, an escape or an 'opium' as Marxists would put it, it was a *way of life*. As I try to demonstrate throughout the dissertation choosing Samuel as a research subject was an extraordinary opportunity for me to witness music making as a truly phenomenal activity, an experience which could have been easily obscured or made dysfunctional within the setting of an ethnocentric value system of 'quality' or 'innovation'.

Although there are a couple of other shorter studies on individual South African musicians, none of them has been a result of similar research project to mine. There are articles about musicians comparable to Samuel by Jaco Kruger (1996 and 2001) and there have been a couple of articles dealing with *maskanda* musicians (see for example Muller 1999, Titus 2013). While their research subjects could be compared to Samuel given, for example, their (low) social status, none of the studies mentioned above is a result of a long-term individually-focused ethnography and none of them share my theoretical approach, perspective and goal.

## **Ordering Biographical Fragments Subjectively**

I could possibly write a brief biography, dense with facts and dates. Would not this, however, be covering up the most important message, that is the fragment-like nature of the ethnographic material, its situatedness in particular research experience and



inseparability from the process of acquiring the data during the research? I have not been given a package of biographical facts and dates to be taken as they were and written down. Instead, I have been slowly, in course of five years, introduced to various shapes and aspects of Samuel's life as elusive fragments. I have not been told a story, a narrative, an autobiographical account but have, rather come across these fragments accidentally, by chance in an opportune moment, listening and watching. These situations and contexts therefore inevitably became parts of the revealed information, as it was rarely given fully verbalized or 'as such'. Had not something happened, had not a particular situation occurred, a fragment would not have been revealed for what it finally was. By the same token, I might have easily been informed about something else or had something else revealed.

In other words, Samuel's life unravelled before me not as a meaningful story but rather as a mosaic of shapes where some parts gradually became sensible, or at least intelligible, while others were missing several or even all of their stones and could only be sensed or guessed from what surrounded them. Does the whole compose a picture? Or can we and do we – Samuel and me – compose one together, one that we can recognize as sensible? What does this picture look like? It seems that Samuel finds particular fragments sensible – they would not otherwise present themselves to me – but he rarely chains them into an overall narrative or even theme, except perhaps that "it was God who never let me down". I as a historically, anthropologically and ethnomusicologically trained researcher and as someone at home in these fields' debates, however clearly see these fragments fitting into a broader picture that scholars have created and got used to calling 'South Africa's recent history' or the 'life of the black poor migrating working class under an apartheid and post-apartheid condition'. We could also frame, and thus create this picture in musical terms by referring to 'black popular musical culture'. In terms of gender we could talk about 'developments of black masculinity' etc. There are a number of frames which may give these fragments sense in personal and broader social, cultural, political and other contexts.

Which one(s) do I choose? And who am I to give these fragments, clusters of knowledge, results of improvisations a *sense* by telling them as a meaningful story, and what are they meaningful for and to whom? These are the questions that concern this chapter: question of how Samuel's story is told, and how it is written. I am of necessity selective and I do not, could not, use all fragments, and not only do I impose myself there but the narrative I compose here inevitably includes a story I make about myself

too. It was me who was told things at certain places at certain moments of time, in particular situations (mostly informal, unprepared, improvised) and in certain moods (both Samuel's and mine).

Using my intellectual, analytical and theoretical capacities I have digested, translated and interpreted the information and experience into something that aspires to be called an autonomous scholarly piece of writing. However, I clearly am not just an innocent or invisible mediator. I have been a participant here. I have become a writer of what I have experienced of someone else's experience, which I have been part of for an allocated period of time. I have most definitely been no mere witness. I have been an actor on the scene I am trying to describe. I have both unconsciously as well as deliberately assumed a perspective that is subjective and both engaged *and* relatively autonomous.

In her contribution to the now classic collection of essays representing post-modern anthropology, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, literary scholar and a specialist in the travel writing literary tradition Mary Louise Pratt analyzes a number of ethnographic arrival narratives as they are told in more or less classical ethnographic monographs of anthropology's past (Pratt 1986: 27-50). In these anthropological narratives about various ethnographers' experience of their arrivals in the field she identifies literary tropes widely used in older travel writing on these particular regions (including Africa), often sharing its stereotypes and participating in the same discourses. Exposing the literariness of these ethnographic texts she demonstrates ethnographers' vulnerability to wider cultural and literary influences. Further, she points to two related facts: that these descriptive passages often remain the only self-confessed subjective descriptions left in the otherwise objectifying texts, and that they tend to be of an extremely unreflected nature, striking considering the science-like nature of the rest of these texts. She asks why it is so and why these texts need such highly personal accounts at all. As an example, she provides a summery of a 1980s debate about trustfulness of one particular ethnographic monograph allegedly based on secondary sources only and therefore considered to be of questionable reliability because missing the 'immediate' bond to the real field experience. Her ultimate answer is that these untheorized personal passages are to provide *evidence* of the very existence of the researchers' personal experiences and consequently and most importantly to *guarantee* the ethnographers' *authority to tell*. As a seal of authenticity they need not to

be further theorized, on the contrary, their unreflected 'raw' character serves their purpose even better.

This dissertation uses that artificiality Pratt has exposed, of the line between these two kinds of texts – subjective narratives and research anecdotes on the one hand, objective 'hard' science on the other. One text may seem to support the other in mutual symbiosis – the former guaranteeing something as elusive as the authenticity of the latter – but both are strictly separated by a belief that a clear line between the subjective and objective may, and even should, be kept in an ethnographic text. The lesson learned here would be that it clearly is both parts of the texts that bear witness to their authors' wider backgrounds, positions, and identities. No clear line can be drawn between them and both benefit from mutual cross-fertilization through theorizing (my contribution) of the individual accounts as being rich in silent participation in wider social, cultural or other ideological patterns, on the one hand, and de-objectifying the supposedly positive findings as possibly similarly biased, on the other. It is as possible to analyze the two subjective accounts as sources of rich ethnographic knowledge as it is possible and useful to prove the scientific-like parts of the hard data ethnography as biased in many ways. The self-confessed subjectivity should not remain on the level of field tales and anecdotes peppering the otherwise boring (because supposedly objective) ethnographic treatise, however or as a guarantee of their authenticity and authority. It should become a subject of as serious theoretical scrutiny, as would any other research problem; moreover, I argue that it should be weaved in the whole ethnographic writing as an essential part of its texture.

In my writing the subjective is present in the ethnographic description to the point it creates or is constitutive of what is being described. The subjective choices and no less subjective interpretations are mine as far as I can talk about myself as a subject distinguished from my environment, yet inevitably being part of it. In my writing the subjective research experience is fully part of the research themes and methods it helps to construct, and by which it is constructed at the same time. Thus, if I return to the arrival narratives discussed by Pratt, I see my first field encounters and meetings – as unimpressive, unheroic, unromantic and unexotic, that is extremely mundane as they were, and especially because of this – extremely important and telling for contemplating the formation and development of my later research interests, questions and problems, and for shaping my research as it has been practiced.

Reflexivity, in other words, is for me no mere rhetorical or routine exercise but the most honest and hard won attempt to mediate the ethnographic knowledge so difficult to extract and verbalize. Having tried different modes of writing during the past six years when presenting partial findings of the ongoing research at various academic fora, I came to the conclusion that the presentation of fluid, contingent, and mutually interdependent subjectivities was the only acceptable way of writing up my research. Saying this I do not, however, intend to confine myself within the range of the particular.

It was both experience and temperament that drew me to making long-term field relationships on an equal basis and what has ultimately drawn me into the bio-ethnographic method. I had always been aware of *obvious* difference, trying not to reduce the difference of the cultural and social (however open) in which the people lived, to compare it to my own. It was a long and painful process, looking for a suitable approach, method, frame and, ultimately, a theme of the research project. It is the result too of contemplating how to use the data I have gathered as fruitfully as possible, how to make use of its potential and turn some of its disadvantages and gaps into advantages. Most of all, I understand bio-ethnography as one of the ways potentially capable of undoing the distance-producing ethnographic rhetoric.

Working biographically – that is, using the well-established, yet much contested genre of my ‘own’ culture – one explicitly recognizes and accepts the other as truly equal, and equally worth studying as an individual in one’s own cultural world, as no longer just a specimen of its (more or less strange) kind. Following an individual ethnographically offers a possibility to use and critically combine the personal narratives obtained via interviews and ethnographic findings gained via participant and non-participant observation.<sup>38</sup> Despite the intimacy growing between any researched and researcher as a result of the long-term research trajectory, ethnographic observation remains indispensable in order to keep some anthropological distance. However equal I was with Samuel, I remain the researcher and he the researched. The crucial difference hangs on the focus and the nature of the ethnographic ‘data’. It is *individual-focused* and it is long-term and thus of a *time-lapse nature*.

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<sup>38</sup> Not to be confusing I conventionally use the term observation, though from the point of anthropology of the senses its oculo-centric bias is strongly present in the word (Howes 2006: 1-17). This point, naturally, gets even stronger in the ethnomusicological context.

## Shapes of the Research

I have used different kinds of sources for my writing. Besides the more conventional ethnographic ones such as recorded interviews and field notes from all kinds of observations there are personal ones such as e-mails sent to various friends and family from South Africa and notes in my diary, often interestingly intertwining with the field notes. The personal texts are complementary to the more formal ethnographic ones. The reflexive strength of both and especially of the first is almost overpowering when I read them now – from (at longest) almost ten to (at shortest) four years since I wrote them. I decided to use direct quotes here, that is to quote the first two types only. This personal writing helps me to situate my research and my ‘researched’ as described above, in terms of the development of my motivations, expectations, interests and feelings, which all impacted on the conduct of the research. This more immediate, though necessarily already referential, writing (and talking) is surprisingly fresh and often different from my memories, shaped and re-shaped as these have been by layers of what happened later and by the process of selective forgetting. I try to base my writing on written field and personal records of the time as much as I can, which becomes even more important considering the time elapsed between the research experiences and my writing up, and the change of place (I am writing in Prague), and other changes in my life (I married and had two sons since the research was finished).

I conducted 42 recorded, semi-structured interviews with Samuel, including several interviews over videos, audio recordings and a few music performance sessions, the total coming to almost 31 hours. These interviews took place in five periods: five interviews and sessions between February and April 2006, seven interviews in September 2007, 15 interviews between July and August 2008, nine interviews between July and August 2009, and six interviews between August and September 2011. These periods overlap with the time I conducted other research activities such as non/participant observations at various kinds of musical events in which Samuel took part, purchasing CDs, DVDs etc., though these exceeded the interview periods considerably in some years. Besides interviews I shot videos during some of these events Samuel took part in lasting altogether over 22 hours (7.5 hours in 2007, 2.25 hours in 2008, 9.5 hours in 2009 and three hours in 2011).

I transcribed all interviews ‘by hand’ myself. Due to Samuel’s level of English and his use of a number of Pedi words/concepts I could not use any automatic device

(or research assistant) and I did not use any software for qualitative data analysis, even later. It was not appropriate. The experiential understanding I brought to the text and context became essential during the transcription process. I could perhaps call the transcription process a *second research experience*, so strong were both the immediacy of the recorded material and the moments of illumination I had during the transcriptions. Though it really was an extremely time-consuming process, especially in the beginning, there was no way to skip it. The very intelligibility of Samuel's speech has been dependent on the understanding I have gradually acquired during the years. And I do not mean language intelligibility only but also and especially understanding to the often 'thick' content of the speech, its diverse subjects, various kinds of references, codes, jokes etc. It demanded real *inner understanding*. No one else except me could do the transcription, let alone an analysis of its content.

I can observe how my abilities improved over the years of the research, on the level of both language and more general understanding to the 'thick' content. It was not only that I gradually understood things better, but I often had to correct my former misunderstandings which were, on the other hand, sometimes not wholly my fault and are interesting in themselves and even though there was an incompleteness of the information I got so far, given the level and depth of our relationship at some stage of the research, it was useful. These same conditions that did not allow Samuel to give me but partial information at some point did, however, allow and perhaps even motivate him to tell me more later on.

The research time structure, divided (after the first year spent in Pretoria) into four periods of roughly two months each in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2011 had understandable disadvantages. On the other hand, it turned out to be an advantage in some regards too. Instead of a single and rather linear cumulative process of acquiring data from 'disposable' and never-to-see-again informants my research took the shape of a *spirally recurring activity* enabling me to return every year to the same or similar problems and questions, and to the same people, yet always on a different level of already gained knowledge, insight and trust. Almost year-long pauses stretched the research into six years long period, a fact which had a number of inter-related consequences on the level of the relationship between researcher and researched on one hand, and on the level of developments in understanding the subjects discussed, on the other.

Developments in our relationship during these six years were influenced and structured by a number cultural and social patterns that were either shared or unique to my or Samuel's cultural background. They were related among other things to age and generation, the Christian religious and postcolonial imagination, gender, and ethnicity. It is important to note that cultural patterns related to these aspects do not operate in isolation but in a mode of mutual intersectionality sometimes difficult to decipher and isolate from each other. I find important to describe at least those I am able to recognize, because they have been entering the very research process as well as the later writing, which both they shaped. It should make my position a little bit clearer too.

To start with the *age* aspect, in 2005 there was a 24 years old single student approaching 43 years old grown up married man and father of 6 children, in 2011 there was a 30 years old man shortly before marriage talking (and introducing his fiancée) to a man almost 50 years old.<sup>39</sup> The age gap of a generation between us, and changes in our lives during the period of six years naturally influenced our relationship. It has developed from what I would describe as a postcolonial 'ja baas'<sup>40</sup>/'white European student in Africa' pattern in the beginning into more and more intimate *father-son* or grown up man-young man pattern, that has eventually tended to take the shape of serious mentorship/studentship.

Both father-son and mentor-student relationship could have been easily observed during most of our encounters. It is also quite clearly recognizable in the recorded interviews. Samuel often extended his discussion of moral points contained in his songs or ZCC hymns to teach me about life with regard to the particular topic just discussed. He was never far from his role of a preaching ZCC priest too. These situations often occurred at the end of our interviews when I was packing my things. Similarly, Samuel tried to teach me about the music. All our research discussions were basically framed in this mentorship-studentship setting. Father-son relationship found its expression more rarely but there were moments, especially when I felt tired of the research, when I was

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<sup>39</sup> There have been further changes in our relationship with regard to our social roles and life experiences more recently, about which we know as we stay in touch till today, but I decided not to include them into the research which I stop by the year 2011.

<sup>40</sup> Formerly, under apartheid, a conventional mode of black person approaching a white man or even a boy regardless the configuration of the potential age gap between the two, meaning roughly 'Yes, mister' or 'Yes, sir'.

losing courage or otherwise felt not well, when he encouraged me and gave me various advice as man to man.

While our first encounter could be interpreted as paradigmatically *postcolonial* – Samuel working as a gardener around what once was a family house used later by the University as an accommodation for mostly European and American (white) international students, me being one of the five students – I believe our later research relationship subverted these original positions, as it should become clear below. That is not to say that I ignore the basic economic and status differences between us. There were different kinds of capital to be profited from and their importance changed according to the situation.

A *Christian imagination* and especially Samuel's experience of being a priest in the ZCC also, I observe, entered our relationship as an ideologically structuring force. It, for example, resulted into mentoring and preaching in some interviews and in various situations where I was the one who was addressed. I was the one to be given advices how to conduct my life and Samuel the one giving them. It endowed the secular father/son structure of the relationship with a transcendental overtone. The effectiveness of this pattern was further enhanced by my Catholic upbringing and by the fact I lost my father when I was 19 and my mother in 2008 when I still was in the middle of my research in South Africa. I felt very vulnerable at the time and, though I was gradually leaving off regular religious practices, I still was quite receptive to a Christian religious imagination, which has structured my world view and 'cultured' my body quite independently of my will.

*Gender* cultural patterns entered our relationship too. First, it made the male-male research collaboration widely acceptable. Intersectionality of gender and *racial imagination* at work here would have, for example, made long term white man (European)-black (South African) woman collaboration, though formally framed by the research context, much less generally acceptable and it would be most likely interpreted with suspicion – and not only by black South Africans. Second, as a young unmarried man I could have fitted into the traditional patriarchal framework shared by most black South Africans as someone not yet fully grown up, someone who still needs the guidance of the elderly. Fitting easily in this framework has, however, been complicated by the colour of my skin, my European identity and my association with an academic institution (generally held in high esteem in South Africa, unlike the Czech Republic). These were factors *increasing* my social age and making me appear more serious than I



may have deserved in a traditional (African) setting, given my biological age and marital status.

It would be misleading to say that our relationship developed linearly along all these lines in a regular way. Instead, it would be more appropriate to talk about *relationality*; though there was clear continual development over the years, some aspects grew in importance at certain times depending on particular contexts and situations and regardless of the length of the research. Neither of our identities and positions existed *per se* and for all situations. While we communicated more and more openly when being alone, the situation immediately changed when someone else entered his room or when we were out among other people. Be it a ‘white’ or ‘black’ environment (the university and the city in general or Mamelodi, Pretoria downtown, rural settlements and other places) more stereotypical and generally acceptable roles had to be played. It was the reason too why I always preferred quiet and somehow secluded places for the interviews, where we could be free of this role playing to some extent.<sup>41</sup>

These negotiations, or perhaps one can almost see them as games, however, soon became quite clear to both of us and we played them with as much respect to each other as we could, sometimes even enjoying them, subverting stereotypes about the relationship between white and black man or between a member of academia and an unskilled worker. On the other hand, we also played small conspiratorial games, for example against the staff in charge of access into the Pretoria campus in order to find a place to conduct the interviews. As far as I could observe, we both found some pleasure in playing them sometimes, though our motivations might have been different. It should be clear now that our mutual positions resulted out of complex negotiations between several cultural and social structuring frameworks of which none was fully defining and a prominence of which always depended on particular context, and that not every detail of this complexity could be noted and discussed as we went along.

We discussed a number of topics in the interviews, most of them recurrent while some unique to a particular occasion or to an event we just attended. These may have been Samuel’s solo or participative performances at various events, his biographical facts and memories, an inexhaustible range of musical forms of ZCC religious

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<sup>41</sup> This obviously applied only to the interview scenes, not to other research events. A couple of interviews nonetheless took place in a more or less attentive presence of other people and I took their impact – as far as I could identify it – into account when later analysing the interviews.

performances and other specific themes derived from these more general topics. To be more precise, yet still rather brief for now, topics were influenced by particular opportunities opening up every year and varying greatly, from attending large social events such as various churches' services and gatherings, weddings, a coming out of initiation school, an unveiling tombstones ceremony etc., in all of which Samuel musically participated in one or another way, to discussing his solo performances on suburban trains and during a number of other events, shooting video clips for his promotion, walking through and recalling places of his (and his parents') memory in Pretoria, Mamelodi, Ga-Mphahlele and elsewhere or just idling around Pretoria downtown looking for and commenting on cassettes, CDs and DVDs with the ZCC and other music available from street music sellers. All in all, these were some of the worlds Samuel inhabited and tried to make sense of often musically, performing either his own songs, participating in larger performances and privately or publicly listening to and watching his favourite performers. Any of these themes and many others may have become topics of our conversations, some of them more recurrent and systematically discussed than others. Out of these fragments I have constructed this project.

The spiral-like progress of the research stretched out into several periods allowed for a new level of discussion and understanding every year. It is important to note that the long pauses between the research periods allowed for profound developments in thinking of both of us about the material we discussed. In the meantime, I contemplated the results of the latest research period, studied literature and eventually consulted other people, both within and outside academia. In addition, I gained more and more of a direct experience from the non/participant observations in the field every year.

It may seem natural to write about my intellectual development here but it obviously is not the researcher only who is entitled to intellectual activity. I could have noticed a clear and steady qualitative progress in Samuel's abilities to *conceptualize* the problems we discussed from year to year.<sup>42</sup> He must have contemplated 'our' themes in the meantime too. This was already clear during the interviews and it became even clearer in the process of transcription, and is all the more noticeable thanks to the

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<sup>42</sup> This statement should certainly not be understood within any kind of the old evolutionary scheme about the 'civilizing mission' and 'upliftment' etc. but strictly as an observation related to the problems discussed.

comparison I could make between discussions of similar topics in consecutive years. I think it is no exaggeration to say that Samuel slowly but surely began to theorize himself. That is not to say that he lacked some kind of understanding before but to emphasise his increasing verbal ability to *grasp* these matters and think about them abstractly. My questions – asking amateurishly about the (to him) all too familiar – must have seemed rather odd in the beginning and it is clear from the interviews’ transcriptions Samuel did not know how to deal with them. This however changed through the years so that we could later discuss some theoretical concepts I tried to apply and he became interested in reading some academic ethnographic texts dealing with older Sotho and Pedi traditions, which I copied for him. Our interaction thus changed from formal asking/answering questions into a more informal *dialogue* over the years. Samuel’s intellectual development and growing insight also continued to pose questions for me about the nature of anthropological research with regard to the degree of the final share in its findings and conceptualizations between the researcher and the researched.

This progress should be seen too in the context of a growing English proficiency by both of us. Samuel, who is a Pedi<sup>43</sup> native speaker, used to almost solely communicate in Afrikaans with whites until the 1990s. The situation was enhanced by the fact he has lived and worked in the wider environs of Pretoria, ‘the white Afrikaans capital’, since the early 1980s. English became his ‘second white’ language (to Afrikaans) only around the end of apartheid when it entered the public space more widely as a ‘lingua franca’ of the new political order. As most of his generational fellows, he knew some English before but he was not used to communicate in it. Compared to his generational fellows, his English communication skills beyond doubt much improved thanks to the location of his job as a gardener at the University of Pretoria since 2002.

As an extraordinarily communicative and open person, he used every opportunity to speak with students and especially the international ones, an activity he always liked. “I can learn from them”, he used to say. He often told me about the international students who were spending a semester or two in the houses he looked after in between my departures and arrivals. Some of them even visited Mamelodi and

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<sup>43</sup> Sepedi is part of the large Sotho-Tswana language group which is one of the two main language groups in South Africa. The other is called Nguni. Sepedi belongs to Northern Sotho or Sesotho sa Leboa group specifically. It is one of the nine officially recognized indigenous South African languages.

Ga-Mphahlele with him, as he always proudly reported to me.<sup>44</sup> Seen from this point of view I was never ‘his only white’ friend. And vice versa – I kept a number of friendly relationships with other people in Mamelodi, some of them related to Samuel, some of them not. Our relationship was open and public and it fitted into wider social structures which we both maintained. Its uniqueness has rested on its duration, stability, complexity, and the depth of our collaboration over the years, some aspects of which I have described above. As such, our relationship has resulted in the most special kind of friendship that I have ever had.

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<sup>44</sup> I even found a short video of one of such students’ visit in Mamelodi with Samuel playing his accordion on the Internet (I am not going to put a link here of privacy reasons). It is an interesting document of unintended and unplanned consequences of students’ exchanges in South Africa as well as of local people’s active involvement in these encounters enabled, in this case, by a spatial proximity of their jobs to the students. Samuel perceived these students as ‘international ambassadors’ and mediators teaching him about their countries and spreading the (great) image of South Africa he makes them to get. As it has been described many times by anthropologists, the exchange is always mutual.

## **CONSTRUCTING A BIO-ETHNOGRAPHY**

# Sites of Ethnography

## Unbearable Ease of an Arrival in the Post-Apartheid Field

*I am lying in my bed. It is early morning. It could be around 7 o'clock. I am slowly woken up by sounds of a bumping plastic grass container on the brick yard in front of our international students' house, no. 491 Festival Street in Hatfield, Pretoria. Surely not a pleasant sound to be brought back by from dreamland. Another hard day before me. A hard day for an exchange student whose English is perhaps already 'good enough' but does not allow for effortless listening to our lecturers or discussion with my fellow students. A hard day too for someone who, unlike most of my international fellows, has to think about budgeting from meal to meal. (diaries and recollections)*

His name was Samuel or Sam as he later introduced himself. I did not and could not imagine then that both these disadvantages – together with other aspects related to my origin in a post-communist country – are going to become advantages. Least of all did I imagine that this man in his green overall in the yard of our international student house, himself indistinguishable from an army of similar-looking workers I met daily on campus, is going to become the focus of my research attention, of my dissertation project one day.

These were my first months as an international exchange student in South Africa, an almost completely new world to me. It was the freezing-cold, blue-sky, sunny southern winter 2005. We might have exchanged careful and shy greetings when we met but it was not until late summer and autumn 2006 we engaged in any meaningful conversation. Until then I would have not had the slightest idea about this man's life beyond his green overall-bound duties as a University of Pretoria gardener (see Figure 46). For me and, I dare to say, for my four other international fellows (Swedish, American, Dutch and Finnish, and later all Dutch) living in the same house, and for most of the people moving around on campus – especially the higher university personnel – Samuel, together with his uniformed compatriots who spoke a strange language, gardeners, cleaning ladies and other 'maintenance people', was simply a 'no

name' for us, a shade not to be thought of, an invisible man. From my present point of view, though paid for his work and recognized as a full citizen of his country, he fitted well in the never ending row of anonymous servants, as it goes from the beginning of the colonial encounter in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and similarly anonymous contracted wage labourers since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Any uniform is capable of stripping someone of his or her individuality, visually at least it makes one's individual character invisible. For us, then, this man simply did not exist for quite a long time, except for the noise he produced while manipulating the grass container on early mornings.

*Later there was another man, less fleeting and more real, living in a one-room backyard house behind our students' house. There were two bathrooms in our student house, adequate for five people, each staying in his single room. There was no bathroom in his house and an open toilet with an entrance only from the garden. The 'garden' was also a somewhat contested space. On my first visit we used a side door, not the main one and we did not go to the backyard as we somehow felt it 'belongs' to the man. It, of course, did not, but he somehow claimed it for himself and we knew it. How did we know? Do I just model him on Petrus in Coetzee's Disgrace or did he have anything in common with the literary character? We did not know this man either, though we knew his surname as his friends were calling him Khumalo from behind the high and massive sliding gate which always clanged loudly while being unlocked and slid aside. He did have a key, as we did to our room. Later we were told by someone he was a former worker from the maintenance staff of the University, now retired. These were the old days' parameters – however paternalistic, the University took some responsibility for its former employees. Samuel, I later got to know, was subcontracted, that is having almost no employment certainties comparatively to the 'old' staff. This elderly man was getting quite many friends and even family members from time to time as guests in the backyard. We talked very little to each other though, so we did not know him better than from his slow and careful, yet still powerful appearance. (diaries and recollections)*

What did these men think of us? What were they like? Where did they have their families, did they have any wives, children? Where did the gardener stay? Why did our backyard house inhabitant live alone? What did it look like in their homes? What did they do in their free time? What music did they like or perform? Have they had ever done any sport or were they perhaps fans of a soccer team? Did they go to church, and to which one? To what social environment did they belong? Where did they actually come from? What were their life histories?

They were no youngsters and these men must have experienced a lot in their lives given the turbulent realities of South African recent history. We did not have a

clue, in fact we did not ask and if we did, our questions were just partial and asked out of politeness, never leading to any real interaction. As if there was some invisible barrier. We were shy and they had their experience. But there was something else on our side as students, at least in the first weeks and months. It was fear.

From the very beginning of our stay we as international students were repeatedly and on many occasions instructed that all ‘these people’, the black people it went without saying, are potentially dangerous – as thieves, as burglars, as killers and, perhaps the most scarily because one could not see it, as potential HIV/AIDS transmitters. That was the atmosphere of 2005. We, newcomers with zero previous experience of South Africa but at the same time all having a rich cultural pre-consciousness of a black person’s image from our countries in Europe and North America, were easily made to believe we are surrounded by an omnipresent indefinable lurking danger just waiting for our single mistake in order to hit us. Our certainty was shaken and our dignity compromised by fear. By our white tutors and guides we were looked at and treated as rather naive creatures who had to be introduced to the inevitable one day, and this lurking danger was the only possible reality of life in South Africa as they perceived it.

Though the students often lamented that they felt as if they lived in a prison (high walls, fences, barbed wires, cages, entrance cards, no street life, very little night life, everything controlled, surveilled and checked, inability of free movement without a car and not complete freedom even with one etc., that was what we felt then), we more or less accommodated to the situation. It was not difficult to buy into this view given the crime statistics of 2005 and the horrific ‘instructive stories’ told to us. It might have prevented us from some unfortunate events to a certain extent but it certainly caused a lot of harm too. Fear became the regulative feeling of our daily life. Various security measures quickly became part of our new habitus and crime became a regular topic of our daily conversations. We would have hardly invited any of these men whom we otherwise regularly met and greeted in our garden into the kitchen for a cup of tea or coffee. If someone did and the accommodation staff got to know, harsh rebukes followed, including threats of losing one’s accommodation. Most of the students did not, however, hesitate to leave their dirty dishes to be done by black ‘cleaning ladies’. Their presence in our kitchens and bathrooms was somehow okay in these situations. That was how we got to participate in the post-apartheid experience, which I only very slowly started to learn, deciphering and describing it analytically.



It took me almost half a year to realize that it was not the way one could live, not even for a temporary period of the exchange. Ultimately, I felt this could hardly be a starting point for getting to know the country, its people, anything about it at all, let alone ‘doing research’. Deeply unsatisfied with the situation of being, often literally, locked in a cage I urgently felt I must get rid of this fear before I can sensibly do anything. In the course of time, I realized that the fear comprises of a complex mix of different ‘smaller’ historically evolved and culturally constructed fears. The structure of fear itself needed to be deciphered. Though formulated in terms of safety and health issues, the warnings we received were informed and made powerful a good deal by the historically constructed *white fear* internalized to the point beyond self-reflection, a phenomenon of which we, though not South Africans, were not completely excluded.

It was a generally accepted fear, which I could not accept. It was a fear of the different, of the unknown, the fear of another race/ethnicity/culture and it was a very existential fear.<sup>45</sup> As international students we had an advantage of being ‘naïve’, we lived with our own stereotypes though, some of them well in sync with those South African ones. The longer we stayed, however, the more some international students rebelled against the ‘rules’ and regularly broke them. Some managed to free themselves to various extents and to experience the country ‘uncensored’. Others were leaving for home after half a year explicitly upset.

These issues became defining factors, influencing the very structure and nature of my research. I need to articulate, here what it is like to begin a research in an environment generally (and based on statistics<sup>46</sup>) considered dangerous and loaded with a heavy historical burden. In order to situate myself – then and now – it is important to show what the arrival in the rainbow-nation post-apartheid field was like for me as a white male international student from a post-communist country.

Dismantling these fear-constitutive stereotypes gradually ‘unblocked’ me and ultimately enabled me to talk to people I would have never talked to, go to places I would have never gone to and be interested in topics I would have never even thought of. A turning point came in December 2005 and January 2006. Quite surprisingly, I

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<sup>45</sup> It is well described in contemporary South African fiction, both short stories and novels, and even in non-fiction (see for example Coetzee 1980).

<sup>46</sup> South African Police Services, RSA: April to March 2004 – 2014: Provincial and National Figures and Ratios, [http://www.saps.gov.za/resource\\_centre/publications/statistics/crimestats/2014/crime\\_stats.php](http://www.saps.gov.za/resource_centre/publications/statistics/crimestats/2014/crime_stats.php) (accessed 2 Dec 2014).

spent this holiday summer time in Lesotho, having obtained permission to continue at the University of Pretoria for another semester and equally importantly, having had my study permit extended by the South African Department of Home Affairs. The only problem remaining was where I was going to spend the holidays. I did not have money to go back to the Czech Republic and return again in two months, neither could I afford any kind of accommodation in Pretoria or elsewhere, nor could I spend the time travelling to other countries as some of my fellows did. And at that time I did not have local friends, who would be willing to accommodate me for such a long time. I decided to contact my slightly younger age mate Sebitiea Makutla whom I met in Semonkong in Lesotho during a spring break trip with three other international students earlier that year. We knew each other very little, having had spent just two afternoons together then, but I got his mobile phone number, I called him and to my surprise and a great relief he offered to host me for as long as I needed. The next two months I thus spend with different parts of his family in Maseru and surrounding villages and up in the mountains in Semonkong. Though of an already older age he was just out of a high school waiting for the final results and he was free to spend his time with me.

I was completely dependent on Sebitiea Makutla and his family not only as a stranger in a new country but literally: I had almost no money and without the help of his family I would be in a trouble. It was only at the end of my stay that some money arrived and I could reward my hosts a bit. The usual power relations were shaken and temporarily reversed and both sides had to deal with it. This utterly paradoxical situation of being dependent on local people in one of the economically poorest countries in the world (when I was perceived as coming from the rich north) taught us all a lesson. Of course, my status as a 'white man' with its symbolic capital did not completely vanish but it temporarily lost one of its substantial essences – financial superiority (something so often silently overlooked by better-funded scholars). For other people too, I was not easily classifiable as a tourist or a development worker. It often resulted in confusing situations during which the shaken stereotypical positions had to be re-negotiated.

The great variety of interactions I was exposed to during my stay in Lesotho meant a great personal, social, and cultural experience, laying the foundations for my future ethnographic knowledge. Makutla's was economically a rather poor family, though still far from the poorest I visited in Lesotho. Yet even this family always shared the little they had with me. We shared everything, from room, mattress, blankets, and

meals to a washbowl. Thanks to his extensive networks of friends, acquaintances and family members I visited a great number of households of different economic and social status in Maseru and Semonkong during my stay and everywhere I was welcome with great hospitality. I never felt unwanted and what was even more important for changing my fearful South African experience I never felt in any danger of any kind there. I believe it was this feeling of personal security what literally unblocked me so that I opened up to meet people freely and talk to them without the usual hesitation and distress I had always suffered from in South Africa. It was a curing and transformative experience which I desperately needed in order to get in real contact with black Africans in South Africa later. Equally importantly, every such social visit meant an opportunity of an unusual insight into a particular family setting and an invaluable ethnographic experience. It literally opened a new world before me. When I returned to South Africa (bravely – and carelessly<sup>47</sup> – by a direct minibusc-taxi from Maseru to Johannesburg changing over to another one to Pretoria) at the end of January 2006 I felt I was a different person. Quite soon after my arrival I started to build up networks of people, of whom some became my collaborators or informants and remained friends till today.

I became less and less afraid to travel by all kinds of public transport, to go to ‘unrecommended’ places like townships and, most importantly of all, I was opening to a more and more spontaneous interaction with common people, mostly black South Africans. In course of time I became quite careless about many security recommendations too. Various safety measures, however, always entered my research decisions often making my movement in the ‘field’ a bit complicated but they certainly paid back. Since 2006 I have travelled hundreds of kilometres by local minibuses, long-distance buses and people’s private cars in cities as well as in the country, I have walked kilometres in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and other cities’ downtown

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<sup>47</sup> Later that year when I was returning from a short visit to Lesotho using the same direct route via Johannesburg by a minibusc-taxi, our minibusc crashed into the car in front of us in a high speed and an accident followed. Luckily, no one was hurt except some scratches. It caused me such a shock that I was afraid of using minibusc-taxis and cars in general for some time, even after my arrival back to the Czech Republic. I have tried to avoid using minus-taxis for long distances in South Africa since then but it has not been always possible as there have often been no other available means of transport. Especially Lesotho is very isolated in terms of safe public transport, which still well corresponds with the politico-economical history of its relationship to South Africa and vice versa (see for example Ferguson 1990 and Coplan 1994).

streets, hung around in townships and in the countryside with local people, spent nights and days in Mamelodi's poor quarters and to a lesser extent in other townships, and lived in the countryside both in South Africa and Lesotho. In course of these six years, I was never robbed, nothing was ever stolen from me, I was not threatened, and I never experienced any serious accident. Though I am still aware of various potential dangers for conducting research in South Africa, compared to the fearful beginnings, there is a great difference in my perception of the situation today. I must, however, admit that safety issues naturally enter one's research decisions, which may result in either omitting certain areas of potential research at all or in not devoting enough of the ethnographic time and attention to the people studied.

Not using a car (not owning even a driving license), always having just very basic financial resources at my disposal and having no official local university support<sup>48</sup> I became very much dependent on people I met either by chance or deliberately, be it my richer usually white friends, some of them members of academia, or poorer black people I collaborated with during my research. Today I am strongly convinced that this vulnerability and marginality turned out to be my strength and advantage. Given my ambiguous status, in course of the years, I got opportunities to meet people and stay in places so diverse regarding their social status, cultural belonging and geographies that I dare to say there are probably few South Africans who have had a comparable experience, except perhaps for some of the old anti-apartheid activists – but not even today's social workers or researchers, I suspect, were so deeply immersed in 'the field' as I was.

## **Where and When Does the Field Begin?**

Having described how I entered and managed to negotiate 'the field' I now try to provide the reader with a basic idea of my ethnographic activities, which should help to clarify my position in relation to different people and environments and to understand the often indirect and complicated ways of acquiring ethnographic knowledge. In the

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<sup>48</sup> Except the time of my exchange stay in the very beginning between July 2005 and May 2006 when I was an exchange and later elective student. I make a comparison here to researchers from Western universities who usually have both very good academic, thanks to historically well-established networks, as well as financial support.

literature the truth about ethnographic research is often spoken of as a wild stream of a richly textured and all-encompassing experience in the broadest sense of the word, which is always personal and more often than not difficult to isolate (and write up) for academic purposes. In ethnomusicology this problem has been well addressed, for example in *Shadows in the Field* (Barz and Cooley 2008/1997).

It is as difficult to *locate* the field I worked in spatially as it is hard to decide *when* the actual research started and ended. Its borders are blurred with regard not only to the actual ‘stays’ defined as *time spent somewhere* between two air tickets or other time markers but also to other more nuanced realities. Even while being physically in the ‘field’ the *intensity* of the research greatly varied, from organizing and waiting for something to happen to seemingly pointless idling around and ultimately to the rarest and the most rewarding pure immersion in the long moment of an intense research situation. Based on my experience and depending on their intensity, I distinguish three ‘states of being’ in the field as the basic frames of my research experience.

The three kinds or intensities of research experience lay on a continuum between total frustration and complete euphoria. My research was rich in hours of waiting for people, cancelled appointments at the last minute, hours and even days of boredom and frustration when ‘nothing’ was happening while the strictly allocated time ran so fast. I also spent hours and days of more or less interesting and productive ‘idling around’ alone or ‘hanging around’ with people in Pretoria, in Mamelodi or elsewhere. It may have been experienced as killing of time – yet often with important, though usually unexpected, results – but at other times also as a pure joy of human fellowship, which I often missed in a familiar yet foreign country and therefore sometimes deliberately sought for. Even this kind of being in the field, however, enriched me of precious ethnographic insights from time to time, as in the following example. In order to illustrate one such a ‘wasted day’ (which turned not to be as wasted as it might have seemed at first sight) I shall give an example.

I spent one whole day in 2011 in a ‘four plus one’ or ‘private’ taxi with my young friend Sello Nkambule who was renting a car in order to earn some money as a taxi driver in Mamelodi (having no license he avoided driving to town, though he still gave me a lift there a couple of times).<sup>49</sup> A wasted day, one might say. The insight I got

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<sup>49</sup> I wrote a short ethnographic article on this young man’s musical activities as an electronic music home maker where I elaborated on the way electronic music is being produced on the grass-root level and its

during this single day was invaluable, though. Driving through large parts of Mamelodi up and down the whole day with a taxi driver gave me a greater sense of orientation and knowledge of the place (of both, places, sites, buildings and their spatial relations) than I had acquired in the past five years. I met various kinds of people who we spoke to as the small ‘private’ car provided more intimate space for such exchanges than the big minibus-taxi where people often keep silent or the loud music distracts any potential discussion. It also helped me to understand the vehicle as an intimate space where one could and sometimes deliberately did seek a relative privacy from the busy street or even one’s own house (as in the case of this friend of mine) and where reproduced music (loudly) played an important role in encapsulating the bodies inside the car space even audibly (Schutte 2012).

As virtually all taxi drivers are male, I could observe in other situations too, it creates a specifically gendered relationship with their female, especially young, customers or friends. The drivers often intentionally chose ‘hot’ women on the street just to show them off as part of the male power play (in general and among taxi drivers in particular) and they used these women to attract other customers. This led me to a realization of a great degree of familiarity with large areas of Mamelodi individual people have, greeting friends and acquaintances well beyond one’s home part. It nonetheless clearly showed that even a taxi driver does not feel so comfortably in some parts of the township farther afield. To close this excursion, it also confirmed the poor regimen of these young and usually single taxi drivers, a fact that has far reaching health consequences.<sup>50</sup> Summed up, this experience, seemingly redundant and unrelated to my research interests, became integral part of my thinking about various aspects of

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impact on the producers’ sensoria in a poor township environment for Czech alternative and contemporary music magazine *HIS Voice* in Czech language (Zdrálek 2011). I presented a paper ‘Mediating the Better Future: Recording Technologies in Lives of the Township Poor in South Africa’ on this topic at the annual conference of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology in 2011.

<sup>50</sup> Without breakfast they sat in the car in the morning eating often only when they earned the daily rent they had to pay for the car to its owner. It may have been as late as in the afternoon and even then it often was just ‘spatlo’, a local version of a hamburger, and a sweet sparkling cold drink. When they came home, often quite late in the evening, they may have prepared ‘spagheti’, a local name for a mix of baked beans in tomato sauce, canned fish in tomato sauce and atchar (spiced mango pickled in oil) with sandwich bread, or they may have gone to bed hungry. This observation became part of my argument about electronic music production in my conference paper and an article in 2011 (Zdrálek 2011).

life and negotiation in Mamelodi, and in a South African township in general, and therefore became integral part of my research.

The third and the most rewarding ethnographic experience, the *ethnographic event*, came rather rarely, only once or few times during the single research period. It may have typically been ZCC religious rituals, be it the whole afternoon long Sunday worship or a night vigil, events I attended with Samuel and in which I sometimes took part in to the point I gave speeches and I was being prophesized and blessed. It may have been some of Samuel's solo or group performances either as parts of larger events such as weddings, or organized by him only. It may have been days and nights spent in a group of young men making electronic dance music in Mamelodi where I participated with my knowledge and technologies. The last but not least, even some interviews, occasional visits to Mamelodi or other journeys with Samuel were very exciting either as suddenly enlightening problems I had tried to solve for some time before or because of new discoveries.

One such discovery was Samuel's album of photos he has accumulated since the 1980s, in 2008. Visiting people's houses in Mamelodi and elsewhere and thinking about their design, furnishing and equipment in relation to the aspirations and social life of their inhabitants always was another interesting discovery. There I often kept myself busy by trying to remember the spatial configuration of the house and of its furnishing in order to sketch it later. In all these situations of highest concentration and awareness I felt like a hunting animal forgetting distractions and paying the closest possible attention to what was going on around me. Having experienced this state of flow I always felt great satisfaction, all the more so, if it was after days of nothing interesting happening. These situations complete the activities and experiences of different intensities, which kept me busy in the 'field'.

As I pointed out above, there is no clear border of the field in a spatial or temporal sense. At the moment of my arrival to the field I did not leave my previous life-long experience and my social and cultural environment behind. In fact, I have become even more aware of it face to face the different world. It was there 'with me' because it was me – my socially and culturally constructed being, my memories, pending relationships and duties at home. I was not, obviously, born anew 'in the field'. I heard what I was prepared to hear, I saw what I was prepared to see and I understood what I was prepared to understand. My moods, feelings, and habits continued to follow the old patterns. I did not leave my consciousness 'outside'; there was no outside. It

happened in course of time only that I got to know and assumed new perspectives which in turn helped me to adapt to the environment and to start gaining my ethnographic knowledge. It is no either-or matter, in or out, when we do research in most of the contemporary world. I continued reading books in the field produced somewhere else, I thought about what I saw and heard and I kept in touch with home, family, and friends (even though it was not on a daily basis). In that sense I never really left home.

And then, when the time came, I left the place. But I could never leave the 'field' behind me. It has remained stuck in my changed consciousness. It has got integrated into my habitus in the meantime. There was (and remains) no clear here and there as there was no beginning and end regarding the field. It was a continuous experience. There were different physical places and different physical times between which the body moved, but the experience was ever cumulative. The situation was enhanced by technologies enabling communication over long distances. It was not 'in my head' only. I continued getting (and sending) e-mails and text messages from the people 'there' when at home. The field has literally kept coming to my tiny room and later our marital living room the same way as 'home' reached the most ramshackle parts of the township during the research via communication technologies, often causing the most improbable situations. However real at times, however, the research field has been a very fleeting intimacy. The real distances, not least the physical and the ones of various other kinds remain. This has brought about all kinds of ethical dilemmas, especially with regard to the economic gap between the subjects involved – myself and others – which I have always tried to solve the best way I could.



# Moving in Urban Spaces: Sites of Memory

## Domesticating the Field: A Research Day

In this chapter I would like to describe my activities during one research day. It is important for understanding the context in which I acquired substantial part of the research data and in which majority of the interviews took place. I quite randomly chose a day immediately following my arrival from Lesotho in 2008, which in many ways contains a couple of essential moments typical for daily routine of my research days in Pretoria – arrival from somewhere, getting adjusted to the place, walking in the city, looking for the familiar, meeting and interviewing Samuel, idling around and observing, meeting friends and walking back ‘home’ at dusk.

Many days in the field were similar to this one, especially during the week when people were at work. Sometimes Samuel worked on Saturdays too, busy with “piece jobs” as he used to say, but these days we usually did not meet because it was difficult for me to get there and because the schedule was quite unpredictable. I had to adjust to Samuel’s and other people’s working schedules in the week. Weekends were always different as various events might have taken place in Mamelodi or elsewhere. There was more travelling and moving from place to place. Though Samuel was always very reliable and punctual (unlike younger township folk I kept in touch with), weekend schedules were quite unpredictable. Here I am going to focus on one particular week day.

It was Thursday 24 July 2008, my third research trip to South Africa, the first day after my arrival from Lesotho where I had visited my friend Sebitiea Makutla and his family. I got up in the flat of my Ugandan friend Charles Mugerwa, a teacher of African music and dance and a student of late Prof. Robert Kwami at the University of Pretoria. The flat was situated in a block of flats in ‘deep’ Sunnyside in Pretoria. According to my diary I had a breakfast, I did some washing and I walked to Hatfield, a university quarter where I usually met Samuel, who worked there, for an interview. I

always walked measuring distances by feet and consumed energy. Distances walked along South African streets and roads where a pedestrian always comes second after a car were a tiring experience – few sidewalks, often with cars parked across, streets and busy roads difficult to cross, and the omnipresent arrogant noise of speeding cars – the power of speed, size and loud noise. It gave a feeling of something large-scale, something beyond human being, of a vast country where one ‘simply cannot do’ without a car, that intimate homey space in an urban or rural wilderness, a personal fortress on four wheels (Schutte 2012). It could be an expansive huge ‘bakkie’, a luxurious BMW, but even an old wreck or a chic refashioned old Golf of a university student, ‘just to get ‘round safely’, would do. By all these cars I was driven by different people at different occasions so that I could experience the feeling of being transported inside them through different environments from Mamelodi to Sandton. As a white researcher from Europe I had a privilege to compare. Yet, there were people who walked, who had always walked. They knew the soil, dust and tarmac of their country’s streets and roads by feet and some of them turned this spatial experience into a song (Muller 1999). I did not try to be like them, but like them I often had no choice.

At 1 pm I finally met Samuel. We usually met between 1 and 2 o’clock. It was Samuel’s lunch break and virtually the only time in the week he was able to meet me. Coming early morning he started working and when he finished at 4 pm he was in a hurry to catch his train in order to be in Mamelodi before dark, which was even more pressing in winter time when most of our audio recorded interviews took place. Most of our interviews took place in this time of the day, few of them after work later in the afternoon and still less in Mamelodi during weekends. So we usually spent about an hour talking. Samuel usually ate his own meal he cooked at home in the evening for himself for the following day. As he commented one day in the beginning of our meeting, his cooking was not always successful as he usually did not have enough light for cooking in the house in Castro Street where he stayed with his girlfriend at that time.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> This is just one of so many obstacles in peoples’ lives in poorer parts of Mamelodi, not so visible at first sight. Some people, nowadays a minority, do not have electricity at all but even those who do must buy the supply via a hated system of prepaid ‘airtime’; they are not connected permanently. When the ‘airtime’ runs out they have to go to the nearest company’s selling point (often not that near) usually situated inside of a big container, wait in a queue (I experienced over an hour long waiting one winter

*I think this pap [is] without milk. I do not want to eat it. Because I pour[ed] in too much fish oil when I [was] cooking because it was dark. I never see. I say [to myself], pour fish oil, but it is too much...*

(24 July 2008)

Sometimes I would bring a snack for Samuel but he often preferred his own meal. He had several reasons for this, the most important one being his religiously restricted diet which impacted on the actual content of a particular meal but also the cooking process and place of the meal's origin. He regularly expressed his concern about ingredients of a meal referring to the "rules of the church" when a brought him something. As a Zionist he for example avoided pork and generally he preferred the meal he could trust – either the one he cooked himself or an African traditional food someone trusted prepared for him – to the already processed meal bought in a shop.<sup>52</sup> I observed it several times when I tried to buy him some food or invited him for pizza or another affordable meal in some of Hatfield's restaurants. Given the long-term stay in a male single-sex hostel in Mamelodi through the 1980s he was used to cooking for himself and in my experience he was a very good cook, especially considering his extremely limited financial sources for buying food.

Besides pork there were other church restrictions and recommendations as to what to eat and drink. While we were talking he usually drank a ritually blessed tea (originally a Joko label) that he never ceased praising for its radically body purifying and mind refreshing effects. As Samuel mentioned to me many times this 'holy tea' played an important role in the musical creative process as a divine source of the right inspiration for his songs. I write about its richly textured meanings later.

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weekend morning in 2009) and finally buy a new ticket. Fair as it may seem from the provider's point of view, it nonetheless complicates daily life of the people immensely.

<sup>52</sup> Anthropological researchers of South African Zionism Comaroff (1985) and Kiernan (1974 et al.) both agree that it was the general reluctance of Zionists to participate in the 'white world', especially as represented by the exploitative apartheid economy, as the basic factor of their distinctive religious identity. The same reluctance and an effort for independent self-subsistent economic systems (including buying land and cultivating it) was well described in case of another influential AIC in South Africa, the Nazareth Baptist Church, founded by Isaiah Shembe (Muller 2006/1999) at about the same time Engenas Lekganyane founded Zion Christian Church applying similar strategy.

As usual we were sitting on the lawn in the garden behind the house 491 in Festival Street, Pretoria Hatfield where I lived as a student between 2005 and 2006 and where Samuel still maintained the lawn as a subcontracted university gardener in 2008 (see Figure 46). It was a place of most of our interviews in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. Only in 2011 did we meet in University of South Africa's Sunnyside campus. It was a quiet place, perfect for our interview meetings. On the recording I can clearly identify noise from a nearby main road, a clanging gate and a barking dog from the neighbouring house though. Having lived in the house for almost a year the place still had a familiar feeling for me. Our meetings had become rather informal in the course of four years. As a fixed part of our daily routine and given their regularity in terms of time and place they became a kind of our common ritual during my visits. The schedule was fixed, the content was not.

Besides introducing new themes and problems, the interview below also practically demonstrates how the ethnographic data were gathered, transcribed, analyzed and interpreted. It shows their situatedness in particular moments and contexts of the research as well as the way they were later 'processed'. The following parts are by no mean complete or exhaustive but it should give a substantial initial insight into Samuel's historical and geographical imagination and consciousness as expressed from his contemporary perspective. It should help us to understand his cultural, social and religious position and to situate him in the broadest sense. It is also important for further understanding shapes of his musical engagement in the world via his own songs or as a participant in collective musical practices such as those of the ZCC. By examining his particular reflections upon various historical, geographical, and political topics the following chapter introduces some basic topics which then resurface throughout most of the text. It may thus be read as a kind of introduction to the following chapters.

## **Imagining Mamelodi's Geographies**

Sitting on the lawn of the student house in Festival Street during his lunch break, as usual, Samuel was listing and writing down various Mamelodi's parts and sections where regular ZCC prayer meetings took place every working day in the evenings between 7 and 8 pm and where Samuel used to take part. It was part of our wider discussion of music in ZCC we extensively discussed that year. He did not confine

himself to enumerating the names, however, but always added little other information as, for example, where the particular part or section is situated in Mamelodi (relating it to places I knew), what its name means (if he knew), its local history (if there was anything worth mentioning in his opinion) and most interestingly who, that is what ethnic group of people lived there or should have lived there by the original apartheid design. He systematically wrote name after name, information after information into a table he made for this purpose in my exercise book/research diary, numbering every line from 1 to 46 under a heading “1962 Mamelodi Sections for the praying Z. C. C.”. He commented upon them. He continued and finished writing the list the following day only. I was, as usual, recording the whole thing. I try to keep the authenticity of the actual interviews as much as possible in their transcriptions. I could not completely avoid editorial interventions, however, but the chronological order of the quotations is kept and they follow each other as they did in the interview with occasional skips which are indicated by square brackets [...].

LSK: [...] [The local congregations meet there] *for one hour.*

VZ: *In the church?*

*In the... gathering inside the home, the pastor's home.*

*In pastor's place.*

*In pastor's place.*

*It is near the... Is it near the church?*

*All just... You see... All of... You see... RDP<sup>53</sup>...?*

*Yes.*

*There is church there.*

*In RDP is a church?*

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<sup>53</sup> Local name of Mamelodi's part where Samuel had one of his homes this year. The shortcut 'RDP' refers to governmental Reconstruction and Development Programme launched in 1994. One of its main features has been building simple houses – locally called “RDP” – for the formerly ‘underprivileged’ people. In this part of Mamelodi their construction had been promised for a long time, hence the name of the area, but it actually started only in about 2008. During one of my visits there that year two Samuel's sons were preparing the plot where a small garden used to be in front of the old shack for a new construction. I could also see similar development in nearby Lusaka between 2009 and 2011. The project has been widely criticised not only because of its unrealistic goals (to build houses for all needed) but also by contemporary urban planners who have been constantly pointing to the fact that it replicates the old modernist apartheid urban patterns (implicating a nuclear family model and a necessity of a car in order to get anywhere among others) irrespective of the actual family, social, economic and geographical configuration (see Harber 2011: 136-169).

*Yes... or the gathering.*

*It is the gathering.*

*For the...*

*Pastor's place?*

*...the pastor's place.*

*I see.*

*And then Lusaka.*

*Hm. It is...*

*Lusaka... and then Phase 5...*

*Yes.*

*...and then Phomolong, Extension 6 and Extension 5 till to the Hall... the whole location is supposed to have the... the gathering.*

*Hm. OK.*

*Because it is nearer. Because to go to the main church... it is far.*

*I see.*

*We need on Sunday only.*

*OK. So everybody goes to this big church only on Sunday.*

*Yes.*

*And during the week...*

*They go there... to the pastor's home.*

*To different places.*

*Yes.*

(24 July 2008)

This excerpt shows Samuel as a ZCC insider with knowledge of its regional structure. It shows his perception of the church as an immaterial spiritual structure – a gathering, a congregation, not a building – attached, in this case, to the church pastor/priest (*moruti*) living in the particular area, close enough to the people so that they do not have to go far to the main church during the week after work. These evening rituals are multipurpose and, besides other things, they serve for distributing blessed fresh ‘holy tea’ the members carry with them to their homes where they boil it and often carry it to their work place the next day in order to protect themselves against all kinds of evil, misfortune, accident or sickness and also to keep their mind fresh and creative, most importantly in Samuel’s case, for making up lyrics and music of songs. I am going to return to this essential topic later in this text.

The quoted passage above shows how the interviews were conducted and also that the information often got just half understood or misunderstood by me or Samuel

and that we spent substantial parts of the interviews just clarifying what we meant or wanted to say.

Samuel made a lot of comments about some place names and stopped here and there to give a more thorough explanation of the origin of the name, of the place, of the people living there and so on. His knowledge was admirable and its structure clearly mirrored his personal history and experience. He usually emphasized the information and places more important to him or familiar to me. At times he stopped to further develop on one or another topic. This trend had become more prominent in the course of the interview.

LSK: *Sun Valley.*

VZ: *Who stays there?*

*It is mixed people.*

*Everybody.*

*Everybody.*

*I see.*

*Then 3. B3.*

*Why it is called B3?*

*It is the sections.*

*Hm.*

*It is calling B3.*

*Hm.*

*B1.*

*B1, ye.*

*Hm.*

*Why you put B3 before B1?*

*Because the sections is just like that.*

*I see.*

*You see. When you come from...*

*OK.*

*...that is the section from that side, from the town.<sup>54</sup>*

*Like from Tsamaya? If you go along Tsamaya.<sup>55</sup>*

*Yes.*

*It is what you see, if you go along Tsamaya.*

*Yes, so that you must know this.*

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<sup>54</sup> Meant when coming from Pretoria and entering Mamelodi via Denneboom.

<sup>55</sup> Name of one of the main roads/streets going through almost the whole Mamelodi from the West to the East.

*I see.*  
*From here.*  
*I see.*  
*You see, from here we go step by step.*  
*I see.*  
*Till to the Lusaka.*  
*I see.*  
*Lusaka is nearer to... to RDP.*  
*I know. So...*  
*So I want to put them with the lines.*  
*Hm. I see. Ye, it is perfect actually.*  
*Because the... the B3 it come first...*  
*First before B1.*  
*...before B1. Then when you go B1... it is just like the next...*  
*Ye, OK.*  
*(laughing) just like the next.*  
*I see.*  
*You see?*  
*Who stays in B3, 1, 2...?*  
*B3 is Shangaan people.*  
*Shangaan.*  
*Hm.*  
*B1. Is it specific or is it like everybody?*  
*It is Shangaan, always the Shangaan. OK. And B2 is Shangaan.*  
*Hm. So all these Bs are Shangaan.*  
*C1 it is just mixed Zulus.*  
*Hm.*  
*C2, Zulus.*  
*Hm.*  
*No A2. It is A1... ZB, Zebediele.*  
*Who are these?*  
*It is from ZB. It is another Ndebele, this...*  
*Oh... It is a group of Ndebele.*  
*Yes.*  
*I see.*  
*You see, D5... It is D5, the first from the hostels.*  
*Hm.*  
*First from the hostels is D5.*  
*You mean hostels where you used to stay or...?*  
*Hm... It is a Xhosa.*



*Hm. So there are hostels there?*

*Ye, near hostels.*

(24 July 2008)

First, someone not familiar with South Africa might be overwhelmed by the technical character of most of the place names, referring to apartheid social engineering and its resulting geographies. Second, one could be surprised not only by continual use of the old apartheid names but also by the use of the ethnic terminology derived from the old 'population groups' implying the existence of the 'pure' and the 'mixed'. I did not do any research as to what the real composition of the population was at the time. I can, nevertheless, write that the old ethnic geographies still powerfully work, at least in Samuel's imagination.

Third, one is struck by Samuel's ability to map without actually using a map. He talked as if he was pointing the places on a map but he was not. I used a car map during our interviews but he never even looked at it (*MapStudio Street Guide 2007*). Many places relevant to Samuel's life in Mamelodi were simply not drawn on the map. I used to draw new places on the map and write local place names so that I could use it later to help my memory. Samuel used place names important to him or known to me such as RDP, Tsamaya and hostels as referential.

*LSK: Naledi, just like star.*

*VZ: I see.*

*It is Naledi.*

*Naledi means star?*

*Yes.*

*What people stay there?*

*It is Naledi. It is Pedi. Because they say it is Naledi.*

*I see.*

*Naledi is a Pedi...*

*Pedi word.*

*Yes.*

*But do you know that this word is in Sesotho? It is there too.*

*OK*

*There is a part of... part of Maseru... part of the capital in Lesotho.*

*Yes.*

*It is called Naledi.*

*Yes.*

*So it is there too.*

*Yes.*

*I did not know it is a star. I see.*

*Ye, Naledi, then just from V and U.*

*Hm.*

*A section U and section V.*

*Hm.*

*Naledi section. ... They got with the sections.*

*So section U...*

*...and V.*

*...V.*

*It is Naledi.*

*I see.*

*If you come from, you see, Denneboom<sup>56</sup>... this part from the garage. You see from the garage when you go... you come from Denneboom, near to the hostel, this section is section... is section V, U.*

*Hm*

*It is section V and the other side it is section U...*

*Hm.*

*...till to the bridge, you see that bridge. You see that bridge, it is Naledi.*

*I think I do.*

*The bridge...*

*Yes, it is close to Denneboom.*

*When you go to... to Lusaka...*

*From Denneboom to Lusaka.*

*Yes. From Denneboom it is Naledi till..., you see the boundary, the river...*

*The river.*

*You see the river when you cross the the river. You see the road there?*

*Is it the river where you were baptised?*

(24 July 2008)

This quotation shows the character of our exchanges again. I always tried to use my limited knowledge and learn more, here drawing on my experience from Lesotho (close relations between Sesotho and Sepedi, or formerly Southern and Northern Sotho, languages enable these comparisons). In the midst of all the technically-derived names suddenly poetic names like Denneboom (Afrikaans), Naledi (Sepedi and Sesotho) and

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<sup>56</sup> A major transfer point and a business area in Mamelodi, kind of a gate to Mamelodi, the word's meaning is fir tree in Afrikaans.

Moretele/Moreleta (Sepedi)/Pienaarsrivier (Afrikaans) river appear a place names and as a border between two parts of the township, no longer a straight line and a right angle but a meandering river marking a natural border.

The place naming demonstrates an ambiguous identity of township dwellers between rural and urban, 'traditional' and 'modern' and, on the one hand, nature- and environment-derived and, on the other hand, technically derived geographies. It shows too how different languages and cultural imaginations co-create the common geographical space of the township, here namely Sepedi and Afrikaans, but also Zulu, English and other languages as it becomes clear from other parts of the interview. The use of different languages *per se* naturally mediates different cultural meanings and symbolic capital for different people in different contexts.

Another dimension also appears in the quotation. The natural running river water becomes purifying water during baptismal rituals of the ZCC, which takes place by and in the river every Sunday, and has for decades. Samuel was baptised there himself on 15 September 1985, a date he is always ready to recall, unlike most other dates. He later used to baptise people there when he became a priest. As he repeated to me many times, he loved to perform this religious ritual very much, and I am going to discuss his involvement in it later. The importance of ZCC topoi reemerges in the following quotation again.

LSK: *This is 22. It is our main church [ZCC].*

VZ: *Main church, I know exactly.*

Hm. *Near to the road.*

*Yes.*

*Then when you cross again then you go to Khalambaze... Khalambaze.*

*What it means?*

*Khalambaze is a Zulu people.*

*Hm.*

*Khalambaze say where it is... you see... the axe... the axe?*

*Yes?*

*Axe to chop...*

*Oh, I see.*

*To chop.*

*Ye. Axe.*

*It is Khalambaze...*

*To cut the wood.*

*Yes... it is crying. Yes, it is crying. Khalambaze or... The axe are crying.*

*Hm...*

*Khalambaze... You know you... you know... you know they uses to fight these people sometimes.*

*I see.*

*They sometimes uses to fight with axe or just like that.*

*I see.*

*I do not know what is the meaning of this word but they say it is axe.*

*Hm.*

*Are crying... Axe are crying.*

*Hm.*

*You see, Khalambaze. It is Zulu people. You see, Zulu people. Always they are warrior.*

*Hm.*

*They want to fight. Just like Shaka.*

(24 July 2008)

Here we come across the most important ZCC local topos, the main church of the Mamelodi branch of the Church, as the main marker of this section of Mamelodi for Samuel. He mentioned the main church as a referential topographical point many times while listing the Mamelodi's parts and sections. It could be seen as quite logical considering that all the mentioned names actually referred to "sections for the praying". Everything he was writing down was, in fact, a religious topography, even though its names overlapped with 'secular' topography sometimes, both traditional and modern. The main church thus served as a central point of the whole structure of the environment for Samuel and other members of ZCC in Mamelodi. This understanding can be supported by describing the church organizational structure and hierarchy as given by Samuel elsewhere and to which I shall still return.

Similarly to the previous quotations Samuel mentioned another poetic place name, this time a Zulu compound word Khalambaze, which he correctly explained, though he is *not* a Zulu speaker himself: "*they say it is axe*". We may therefore presume that he lacks deeper insight into cultural meaning of the word in isiZulu. In this light we should see his further attempts for explanation. They seem to be quite clearly based on a widely shared and popular image of Zulus as warriors leading to the notorious king Shaka. At the same time we could see his explanation as clearly mirroring the historical experience of Pedi and other Sotho-Tswana people with Zulu expansiveness in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century called *difaqane* in Sotho languages. It shows the imaginary continuity of Zulu identity as seen from a perspective of a middle-aged Pedi man living

in a township in 2008 and it yet again points to the ambiguous identity of a township in the simplified framework between the so-called tradition and modernity.

Samuel continued by listing other parts and sections of Mamelodi further revealing his understanding to his reasoning for their structure.

LSK: ... *and then you go to straight to S&s.*

VZ: *Hm.*

*The way I say S&s. You see, what is the meaning of... I do not know what is the meaning.*

*Salomon's town... Salomon's side?*

*Salomon... Ja!*

*Somebody told me but I do not know.*

*Yes, Salomon's side.*

*Salomon's side. There probably used to be some Salomon...*

*Yes.*

*Some...*

*Ja, just... because they say Salmon bilded the school.*

*OK!*

*That is long back.*

*So this is why. Then it is clear.*

*Yes. It is clear.*

*Salomon's side.*

*Yes.*

*So he built the school.*

*Yes.*

*Who was it, that Salomon?*

*I do not know where is he...*

*Nobody knows.*

*Hm.*

*Long time ago?*

*Yes... Salmon's side. ... It is like that. ... S&s they got with the sections.*

*Hm.*

*They call them with the sections.*

*Hm.*

*All that people... everybody there. Everybody... Zulu... It is all of kind of people there.*

*Hm.*

*They mix together.*

*Hm.*

*But they almost... The people there is mixing... Zulu, Shangaan, Pedi... They were... tired... to renovate the people I think soon. Because each and everybody they not want to... to be patient.*

*They think: 'We need the place, we need the place.' So the government say: 'Ou, go! Go, all of you!'*

*Hm.*

*'You can choose where you can stay.'*

*Hm.*

*I think just like that because it is mix people there.*

*I see.*

*Hm. Everybody there. You can find Pedis, you can find the Zulus, you can find the Thsangane people.*

*So it is not divided.*

*It is not divided.*

*But the...*

*You can find the Swazis but the Swazis... is no place of the Swazis here.*

*Hm.*

*Because for Swazis there was Swaziland not here.*

*Ye, I see.*

*You see?*

*But the... all the other sections... all the other parts... and sections they were divided?*

*Yes. They were divided.*

(24 July 2008)

The beginning of the quotation demonstrates that we should not presume complete knowledge of places even with someone who, like Samuel, spent almost three decades in the township. I have heard different explanations of this place name's meaning from other township dwellers but no one seemed quite certain. Some thought it was named after a farmer called Salomon who owned the place before the township was erected there (as is often the case of other place names in the region), while others referred to the Mamelodi's anti-apartheid activist Solomon Mahlangu (1956-1979) and the school named after him in the area. Living in a township generates different kind of knowledge of the place compared, for example, to Samuel's rural home area in Ga-Mphahlele, given especially its relatively short existence and the way one moves in a township environment, often along the same routes, for example between home and work. One cannot know all parts of the dense and complex urban setting.

In the case of this part of Mamelodi Samuel also emphasized its mixed character, which he again perceived as unique and in marked contrast to most other sections of the township where different ethnicities were kept apart. We can interpret it as an interiorization of the apartheid ideology of cultural identity, which has been still

widely accepted on popular level as a kind of popular anthropological knowledge (Horáková 2007a: 120). Notably, these statements are said quite regardless of the time elapsed from the period when this situation actually was an enforced social reality. Samuel's – unfounded – reasoning for the situation is remarkable also for its ahistoricity in that he explained it in terms of contemporary 'delivery protests' (see Harber 2011: 1-6) of 'impatient' citizens who were granted a free piece of land by caring government/state which is personified here as is so often the case (Herzfeld 2005).

## Eastwood and Related (Pre)histories

The former black locations around Pretoria appeared as an unexpected topic of our previously mentioned interview 24 July 2008, originally focused on explaining organizational structures of ZCC in Mamelodi. We had never touched this topic before. It revealed completely unexpected information of great relevance with regard to migrancy in Samuel's family. It gave my image of Samuel up to then a new historical dimension. At the same time it showed Samuel's ways of thinking of various topics, revealed his historical consciousness and demonstrated his ambiguous position in relation to the distinction conventionally made between the 'white' and 'black' imagination in South Africa, uncovering shared concepts and ideologies. Samuel's explanations cannot be understood without a knowledge of the broader contemporary context of the interviews. Thus they often speak more of the present moment than the actual historical event they seem to speak about. I try to highlight such moments and give them a further interpretation.

Following one by one the list of places of ZCC prayer meetings in Mamelodi during the week as it was discussed in the previous part I asked Samuel about history of the geographical ethnic distinctions in Mamelodi. This question quite unexpectedly unravelled a completely new history before me. The next quote followed the last one.

VZ: *When were they divided? When were they created?*<sup>57</sup>

LSK: *This is 1962.*

*1962?*

*Yes... The beginning of Mamelodi. And they told us... Hm... 1962... the same as me.*

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<sup>57</sup> The ethnically divided sections of Mamelodi.

*Yes... as you are. Mamelodi is as old as you are.*

*It is my brother. Because my mother and my father uses to stay... the place that is Eastwood. You know, the street is Eastwood, inside the town.*

*Here.*

*Yes. There... Nearer when you go to Wessels<sup>58</sup>. You can see, the street is Eastwood.*

*OK.*

*Eastwood.*

*Yes, ok.*

*Hm.*

*Eastwood! Yes, it is there, I know.*

*Yes, so... there was the place for the black people there. Before.*

*They used to stay there!?*

*Yes...*

*Your parents!?*

*My parents...*

*But then they moved to Polokwane.*

*They moved to Polokwane.*

*So... Oh... I thought they stayed in Polokwane like... since ever...*

*You see... Yes. You see this Pretoria... There was the place for the black people. There uses to be place for the black people.*

*So Eastwood was...*

*Eastwood... Eastwood is where our parents stayed... There was a... a location..., just like a... They... they build the houses with soil... Soil houses..., just like at the rural areas. You see? The people was suffering that time.*

*When was it?*

*I think it is 1940 something... just like from there... till to... I do not know what exactly... but from that time.*

*And were they born there? Were they born there or they came there from somewhere else?*

*They come... they come from Polokwane to... to search the job there.*

*Oh, ok.*

*When they search the job... So my... my father found the job at... inside the Galileo. So he needed my mother to be nearer to him, so he bring [her]. Just like me. I need my wife to be [with me].*

*Yes. Already the second generation.*

*Yes.*

*Polokwane, Pretoria, then back to Polokwane and then back to Pretoria.*

*Yes.*

*But you were born in Polokwane already?*

*Yes... Near Polokwane.*

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<sup>58</sup> A street name, one of our usual meeting points that year for our journeys to Mamelodi.



*So when did they have to leave?*

*They removed them!*

*When?*

*I do not know when but I think it is 1962 just like when they removed them to Mamelodi. They say the people is not need anymore nearer to the town.*

*And they did not go to Mamelodi but they went to Polokwane...*

*Yes, they uses to go Riverside before. Riverside is nearer to Eersterust. When you go to Mamelodi you see East Lynne. You see, East Lynne. East Lynne is the where... Riverside is there. And then was another place there... nearer to... nearer to Atteridgeville, Saulsville... the location for... for the black people... They say... it is Lady Selboney<sup>59</sup>, Lady Selboney. I talk about Lady Selboney. Lady Selboney, I think it is the name of white people... Just like Sophiatown. Sophiatown... Just like the... Inside Jo'burg there is Sophiatown where the people... the black people was gathering there.*

*Hm. What was the name of this place in Eastwood?*

*Yes... it is other... Lady Selboney.*

*How was it called?*

*Lady Selboney.*

*Write it somewhere... on the side may be... you know, not there but somewhere that...*

*OK. Lady...*

*Oh, Lady...*

*Selboney. Lady Selboney is the surname of other white guy.<sup>60</sup>*

*[...]*

*This is another location for the black people.*

*Where?*

*When you go to Pelindaba, you see Atteridgeville. You see Atteridgeville.*

*Hm. I have been there.*

*Yes. If you go to Atteridgeville you pass from Lady Selboney.*

*It is on the way?*

*Yes. But it is not any more!*

*Oh, I understand.*

*They removed it.*

*And Eastwood?*

*They removed the people. They... they drive them to Pelindaba.*

*And Eastwood?*

*And then the... the Eastwood... They drive them to Mamelodi.*

*From Eastwood to Mamelodi?*

*[...]*

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<sup>59</sup> While Samuel wrote it as Lady Selboney, it is usually written as Lady Selborne or Lady Selbourne. Both can be found on maps and in literature.

<sup>60</sup> It was named after Lady Beatrix Maud, Countess of Selborne (1858-1950).

*The whole location was called Eastwood?*

*Yes.*

*And it is somewhere there where the street Eastwood is today?*

*Yes.*

*Plus minus. Somewhere there.*

*Yes... They remember, the old people from Lady Selboney.*

(24 July 2008)

The interview with Samuel shows how closely his family's history is intertwined with regional history driven by the country's segregation politics which gave it the particular dynamics. Mamelodi is personified by Samuel's pointing to his and the township's 'common age' and by his poetic expression that "it is my brother", as if they had more in common than just an age. Quite unexpectedly for me he suddenly started to talk about his parents who used to live in a black location called Eastwood in Pretoria, emphasizing that there were more such places in Pretoria. He even proudly named some other locations, later comparing them to the well-known Johannesburg's Sophiatown of the same period. I had always thought his parents and the family came from G-Mphahlele area near Polokwane and that he belonged to the first generation of migrants in his family. I was taken by surprise then by the realization that already his parents used to migrate between rural and urban space driven by the need to earn money in order to live. It obviously was not an unusual pattern in their generation, though the numbers were considerably lower then than they are today.

Samuel's knowledge of the history of Mamelodi comes from oral tradition and popular knowledge: "they told us", he would say. He is right when identifying the year 1962 as the beginning of Mamelodi under its current name, though the beginning of the township as such, formerly known as Vlakfontein or 'Vlak' (named after an older farm in the location), was already there in 1953 (Chiloane 1990: 116). Since the very beginning in 1953 it was already "rezoned along ethnic lines" (158) so Samuel was wrong when suggesting 1962 was 'the beginning' of Mamelodi. According to Chiloane, the creation of the township was part of a larger relocation scheme targeted at older black settlements such as freehold settlements like Lady Selborne, Eastwood, and Riverside, where people could own land and houses (and where a system of landlords and tenants had been established for decades by this time) and other municipal black settlements in wider Pretoria area. Their inhabitants were forced to move to the newly

established township of Mamelodi owned by Pretoria municipality who also rented the houses and thus limited and controlled its population (152).

The original area of Mamelodi, however, assumed just a minor part of today's township, usually referred to as the old Mamelodi. It was an area of about eight square kilometres only, to the North-East from today's Denneboom station, marked by a railway (which had already been there so that transportation to work was secured) in the South, Moretele River in the East, Magaliesberg mountains in the North and Sun Valley settlement in the West. The former locations were 'rezoned' for white residential areas, Lady Selborne for example becoming Suiderberg (92) and the rest of it an empty land<sup>61</sup>, Eastwood becoming Garsfontein (named after a former white farm, 133) and Riverside becoming East Lynne etc. The process took a long time, throughout the whole 1950s and early 1960s (90-108), which again well corresponds to similar processes elsewhere in the country.<sup>62</sup>

When the relocation scheme was launched early in the 1950s the inhabitants of these locations were put under pressure to move out but, as Chiloane writes, it was a gradual process taking more than a decade (Chiloane 1990: 90-108) so it is quite unclear when Samuel's parents actually left the location. It could have been as late as 1962 but it could have been much earlier too. His bitter note that "they removed them" might suggest that his parents tried to stay as long as possible. This would be in accordance with Chiloane who writes that people in Eastwood and Lady Selborne were reluctant to leave as they felt quite secure knowing that they are the owners of the land and the houses, unlike inhabitants of some other locations and squatter camps on municipal land (94). Although Samuel did not say whether his parents were in the position of landlords or tenants, and whether they could get any financial compensation for their property or not, but it is more likely they were just tenants. Coming from Polokwane to Pretoria in their adult age already they were newcomers among the location's inhabitants who might have been settled there for decades and of whom many had been born there and were thus completely urbanized (232-3). Chiloane writes that the tenants were removed first, and the landlords followed (97). These, however, are

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<sup>61</sup> Lady Selborne, unlike Eastwood or Riverside, is still indicated on maps. Large parts of its landscape are just empty though. A satellite view on Google Maps clearly shows that there used to be a settlement.

<sup>62</sup> The whole process, its motivations, history and consequences are thoroughly discussed in Chiloane's well-researched dissertation on the establishment of black settlements around Pretoria focused on Mamelodi (Chiloane 1990).

just relative chronologies. Samuel indicated that his parents were quite dedicated to staying in Pretoria and to keep their job moved first from Eastwood to another black location called Riverside and only from there back to Polokwane. They probably found the conditions of life too difficult in Riverside squatter camps so that they finally preferred to leave back for their home base in Ga-Mphahlele near Polokwane. Thus were Samuel's parents, who had tried to urbanize, affected by forced removals in the 1950s and 1960s. Samuel simply followed their steps in line with family tradition when he arrived to Mamelodi in 1982, the main difference being that there were no longer any freehold black settlements around Pretoria by that time.

Interestingly, Samuel located the place his parents used to live in Pretoria around today's Eastwood Street near the Union Buildings. I even went there together with him the following weekend. I asked him to show me the place, hoping he would tell me more about his family history. He repeated more or less the same information he had already told me. He was quite uncertain about the actual place and tried to find some reasoning for this location. He expected the settlement to be closer to the mountains, the reason being – as he explained to me – that people preferred building their villages nearer to mountains where they could hide in time of war, to more vulnerable riversides. Notable as this information is coming from someone living in a township for two and a half decades it was wrongly based. Only last year I found out that he was completely mistaken as to where the actual location was, and I was too. As I wrote above, there used to be a couple of freehold black locations in Pretoria, one of them called Eastwood, where Samuel's parents stayed. But this location was situated about 9 kilometres to the East from Pretoria's main Church Square where Garsfontein suburb is today. Unlike some other old black freehold locations, I found absolutely no indication of its existence on contemporary maps and in today's local topography.

Samuel's mistake may lead us to another kind of conclusion though. It shows once again that not even someone like Samuel, a tirelessly curious observer as I got to know him, can easily find out about the immediate history of places he and his family quite recently inhabited. Relocations, resettlements, changes in place names etc. comprise a complex difficult to decipher for a township commoner, even a curious one. Everything seems to be covered up and well hidden from such people. This inability to pin down the exact family places and locations obviously has consequences regarding

one's self-evaluation and a sense of identity and belonging.<sup>63</sup> At the same time, it does show Samuel's will to find out. Why otherwise would he have readily mentioned the wrong street to me, had he not searched for it before? He most likely heard the name Eastwood from his parents and tried to find it either by asking people or coming across the street name by chance. It is a story of both the dedication to find out and the obstacles one faces while trying to do so.

Samuel fluently continued his narrative by appropriating the urban space of Pretoria using the shared popular historical knowledge echoing contemporary discussions about the city's history and identity.

*LSK: You see that... that where Paul Kruger... statue of Paul Kruger was staying? It was the place of Mr. Tshwane [a legendary Ndebele chief]... Mr. Tshwane... the chief of Ndebele people.*

*VZ: Hm. Where the Paul Kruger statue is now? At Church square?*

*At Church square... So there was a kraal [homestead, originally a fenced area for cattle] of that man, the black man.*

*How do you know all these things?*

*Yes.*

*How do you know these things?*

*Ja, I know this because when you look on the building there they put the picture of that guy. He carrying a stick and everything. If you can look on the building there when you go to...*

*Which one? Which building...*

*The...*

*...at Church square?*

*...Prinsloo [Street]. If you go to the Prinsloo... just like Andries [today Thabo Sehume Street], you can look there... from the SARS [South African Revenue Service].*

*South African...?*

*...tax... SARS is for tax.*

*OK, OK.*

*Yes, you can see the building there. Or when you go to the... Newtoria where they print the Rand [South African Reserve Bank?], you can see that picture [statue] of Mr. Tshwane.*

*Hmmm!*

*Yes.*

*From outside? it is on the house outside?*

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<sup>63</sup> These are the moments when I see some affinity to Samuel's situation. Growing up in an area resettled by a new population after centuries of German speaking settlement, houses destroyed, falling apart or rebuilt, place names changed one could have only guessed what this or that was or meant before. And, what is even more pertinent here, it was almost impossible to find out for a very long time before historians started to do their job over forty years after the events.

*There splendid picture, and the nice one.*

*Hm. I have never seen it.*

*Nice one, yes, the nice one... they paint... They do the huge picture of Mr. Tshwane.*

*Hm.*

*It is very nice.*

*He was chief of Ndebele.*

*Yes.*

*And his kraal was...*

*...in...*

*Church Square.*

*Yes. You see? (laughing) You see this... I know history.*

*But long time ago. It must have been very long time ago.*

*Yes, yes, because when the white people come they drive them out there, they need their place.*

*Because that place they want to build the... the city of Tshwane.*

*Or Pretoria.*

*Yes. They drive that man... he must out there.*

*Where did he go?*

*Because they need that people.*

*Where did he go then?*

*He go to Wonderboom. You see... north of Pretoria. It is nearer to the mountain there. They say it is Wonderboom. Wonderboom is wonder tree.*

*Hm. Wonder tree.*

*They say... wonder tree. Nobody can climb there because that tree, if you can go there, you do not come back again. You see?*

*Tree... like tree... like...*

*Yes. But it is just like the wondering tree because other times you go there just like a woman... or something just like that.*

*Oh.*

*It is wondering, that is why they say it is Wonderboom.*

*Oh, I see.*

*Hm. So now the people do not go there but Mr. Tshwane go there because ancestors place. So... The Ndebele people, they are staying there.*

*Hm.*

*Yes. But when they..., they removing them and then they taking to Ndebeleland... to Kwagqafontein [apartheid homeland called KwaNdebele].*

*Hm.*

*You see?*

*I see.*

*It is the little that I know.*

(24 July 2008)

This part of the interview shows the way Samuel participated in the world of contemporary public opinion. Samuel starts by contraposing two major figures, the president of the South African Republic, Paul Kruger and the legendary and at the time much discussed chief Tshwane, who is believed to have lived in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and who has given his name to the area where Pretoria was later founded by the Dutch settlers or Vortrekkers who soon after that started to call themselves Afrikaners. This legendary figure – real or not – has played an important role in creating a new historical narrative for Pretoria even leading to attempts to rename the city of Pretoria Tshwane, an act which would, along with the ongoing street renaming, quite dramatically change perception of the city on many levels.<sup>64</sup> I could have seen, heard and felt echoes of these debates even in the main campus of the University of Pretoria in 2005 and 2006 where Afrikaans-speaking students organized debates and demonstrations for maintaining Afrikaans as a major medium of instruction at this traditionally Afrikaans university. The whole campus was covered by posters targeting this topic.

Naming the two male figures as key representatives of their ‘crowd’ implies Samuel’s perception of the historical situation as fair or at least understandable struggle for land between two more or less equal peoples. Noticeably, he did not first use the ‘white’ toponym Church Square, instead, he mentioned one leader/chief against whom he put another one who owned the place before but was driven out of there later by the people of the first one. The fact that he was aware of the historical irony here was revealed by his laugh at this point of the interview. Besides, this contraposition resurfaces an interesting mental framework where Bantus and Afrikaners are seen as a kind of equal in both struggle and peace. Contemporary debates have seemed to support this perception even from an opposite perspective: Afrikaners have taken possession of the indigeneity discourse when fighting for greater recognition of their language, framing Afrikaans as an indigenous language, for example, in the post-apartheid context (Horáková 2009).

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<sup>64</sup> According to oral history, Tshwane was son of chief Mushi who settled in the area of today’s Pretoria Church Square about a century before the Vortrekkers arrived there. Attempts has recently been made to officially rename the city of Pretoria after him, instead of Vortrekker Andries Pretorius, arousing a heated public debate partly recorded by local media. A more than six-metre tall bronze statue of chief Tshwane was unveiled in front of Pretoria City Hall in the midst of these debates in July 2006 (Marschall 2009: 327-332).

Both sides have seemed to participate in a common texture of social poetics here, regardless of the official and representative views. The warmth of the intimacy between the two enemies is quite clear, though South Africa is not a typical national state for the use of Michael Herzfeld's term 'cultural intimacy' (Herzfeld 2005). Samuel's view is further enhanced by the sources of his historical imagination as he demonstrated it here. Though he (wrongly) talked about a picture – possibly due to his insufficient English vocabulary – and (mistakenly) situated its location at several places, he most certainly referred to the then only two-year-old grand bronze statue of chief Tshwane situated in front of Pretoria City Hall, which shares the space of Pretorius Square with statues of Andries Pretorius, a famous Vortrekker after whom the city is named and his son Marthinus Pretorius, the first president of the South African Republic and the founder of Pretoria.

The very existence of the statue of chief Tshwane motivated Samuel to make this historical excursion and the contemporary surrounding discussion surely became an important source of his knowledge. It shows the potential and the power of these monuments (and place renaming alike) for creating public opinion and shaping historical imagination especially among generations of the common black population who, as a result of the Bantu education and of other reasons, has had very little historical awareness. Samuel draws most of his knowledge from newspapers such as Sowetan or Daily Sun, public debates, discussions with people around him and curious observation, but most certainly not from formal education, a point I shall return to it later.

There is an interesting moment in Samuel's narrative when he suddenly switched to the apartheid history of forced removals of Ndebele people to the homelands immediately following the 19<sup>th</sup> century histories of the city's foundation which are also ahistorically connected to the much earlier history of Chief Tshwane. Samuel thus created a kind of *imaginary (a)historical continuum* where three historical epochs about a century distant from each other are thought of along each other as *contemporary*. The imaginary conflict between Paul Kruger and chief Tshwane, regardless of the real history, may thus serve as paradigmatic and as a substitute for a wider social and cultural conflict between two groups, which has continued. The legendary character chief Tshwane, about whom little is known (and nothing for certain as information about his existence has been passed down via oral tradition only) thus perfectly serves the current ideological needs as a universal and basically versatile



figure. We can see Samuel here as creatively participating in these popular histories, new mythologies, and contemporary discussions and we may suppose that his image of the situation is not a unique one.

Another dimension of Samuel imagination is revealed towards the end of the quotation. It shows him as someone firmly rooted in a traditional world view where ancestors play an important role in one's life and wonders and miracles are possible and do happen. This is just one example of Samuel's strong ties to 'tradition' as it is commonly understood in South Africa.<sup>65</sup> Already in this quotation there is, for example, also a strong patriarchal feeling when Samuel discussed the male historical figures of the past. Here again, it is a space shared by African and Afrikaans traditional world views alike, both informed by appeals to tradition on secular as well as religious level, needless to say as expressed more readily by men than women. Be it ancestral belief, patriarchal and generally 'traditional' world views, it well corresponded to Samuel's other opinions and some important features of his habitus as pronounced namely by his membership in the ZCC, but also in topics of his songs and in his other activities. It should be clear that I by no mean try to introduce Samuel as a 'traditional' person in the old apartheid sense here. I just want to emphasize one important aspect of his wider social and cultural identity.

Still continuing writing the numbered list of the week prayer meeting locations in my exercise book/diary, Samuel quite spontaneously added further information on the people living in particular parts and sections of Mamelodi as a heritage of the ethnic divisions within the township. He touched on the larger politics and policies of segregation under apartheid namely bantustans or 'homelands', and the movement and transportation of people, as he perceived it.

*LSK: That 14th is Pedi people there. Pedi people... and then 15th... Ndebele and Pedi. Because Sotho was always Free State [South African province]. They supposed to be...*

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<sup>65</sup> I am not going to discuss the notion of tradition in contemporary South African debate. There is a plenty of literature on this topic. In agreement with anthropological writing on South Africa I understand tradition as a construction and as an interpretation. Boonzaier and Spiegel for example related tradition to other notions such as heritage, indigeneity, authenticity, culture and identity. But instead of simply damasking appeals to tradition as hopelessly inauthentic, they productively ask "[how tradition] is used" and "what functions do appeals to it serve" and they readily give a number of brief examples of its role in social identity construction and dynamics of gender relations in South Africa (Boonzaier and Spiegel 2008: 201, 195-208). For more see Boonzaier and Sharp 1988 and Shepherd and Robins 2008.

VZ: *QwaQwa* [apartheid homeland]?

*Yes. And Tswana... it is... Tswana were also in... Free State... and in Bophuthatswana [apartheid homeland]. Bophuthatswana... Mangope [Lucas, a puppet president of the homeland]...*

*Or in Thaba 'Nchu [part of Bophuthatswana in Free State]...*

*Yes. They do not allow them, the Batswana, to come here. You see? There is Bophutatswana there, the chief Lucas Mangope uses: 'I need my people to be together'. Then the Basotho to be together to Lesotho. So the people who are... was few Zulu and then the Pedi. And the Pedi was too many because they got no government... rural government. They got no independent. They go all over to South Africa, just like from there to Polokwane till to... to Vaal...*

*Hm.*

*To Vaal, they go just like that.*

*Why do you think it was so that they did not get any land, any place?*

*They... Because the chief... Only the chief of Bapedi need to be nearer to these people. They need the towns.*

*Oh.*

*They say: 'If you need the... if you need me to be independent, so I need all the towns. From Limpopo till to the...*

*Vaal?*

*...Vaal.' So the white people they say: 'No, you can not (laughing). You can not. I want to give you a piece of land..., ja..., just that you got the boundary.' So our leader say: 'No, we do not need this.' So this is why we got no independent.*

*Hm.*

*Yes. They were supposed to move... And then the contractors... the contract people they go there... to find the people [new workers].*

*Contractors...*

*Yes...*

*...for mining... De Beers...?*

*The mining. They uses to go there... from Shangaan, from... from Venda. You see from Venda, from Polokwane.*

*Hm.*

*But the Venda they got the independent. They got the independent, they say Venda...*

*Lebowa?*

*Lebowa. Just like that... But they do not... do not allow people to go there. So Shangaan you can visited, the Vendas... and the Vendas can visited the Pedis. So ye, just like that.*

*Hm.*

*And if you go to Bophutatswana, you do not... never go there. You are not allowed to go there. Because it was strictly...*

*Even for visit... even for visit?*

*Even for the visit.*

*Nothing.*

*Because just... you got their own... their own ID book. It is only Bophutatswana. But the Dompas... the pass... passbook... When they got the passbook... Pedi got the passbook, Shangaan got the passbook so that they can carry them to the mines..., come to work in the constructions. It is the who who build the constructions..., they go to the hostels..., they were working there... Shangaan, Pedi and Vendas.*

*So they got the pass... passbook...*

*Yes.*

*...South African?*

*Yes.*

*But the others from Bophutatswana they had their own?*

*Yes.*

*They did not have South African?*

*And then... the railway, the only... the only services was the railway. South African railway. We uses to go there. They got the trains, got the buses, got everything.*

(24 July 2008)

Samuel identified and marked a difference here between the ‘self-governing’ and ‘independent’ bantustans and also independent states such as Lesotho or Swaziland (which to a large extent played the same role as bantustans in terms of labour supply for South African mines and industry and in terms of their more less total economic dependency on South Africa). As we could see in the case of chief Tshwane and Paul Kruger, we can see again that the responsibility for particular situations such as an existence or non-existence of an ‘independent’ or just ‘self-governing’ Bantustan is given to the hands of male representative figures who are seen as real initiating and active agents, while they were actually just corrupt puppets of the apartheid government who could have only acted in accordance with its lines. There is the same attempt present here as there was before to see the Bantustan authorities as equal partners or opponents of the South African government, while, in fact, the power relation was totally disproportionate. In spite of the systematic degradation of traditional social structures and authorities that Samuel paid much respect to them still (or anew?) in 2008 as they were represented by the actual male authorities quite regardless of the measure of their corruption and their actual complicity in the whole system.

Another interesting point here is that Samuel sees his Pedi people as ‘townsmen’<sup>66</sup> and puts particular words into the mouth of their ‘leader’ (whose name was nowhere specified but who clearly acts here as a bright and shrewd man): “If you

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<sup>66</sup> I deliberately use this term referring to Philip Mayer’s famous study (Mayer 1961).

need the... if you need me to be independent, so I need *all the towns*. From Limpopo till to the... [...] Vaal” to which Samuel had “the white people” (personifying the state) react: “No, you can not. You can not. I want to give you a *piece of land...*, ja..., just that you got the *boundary*.” (emphasis mine) to which again he had the Pedi ‘leader’ reply: “No, we do not need this.” and sums up: “So this is why we got no independent.” This anecdotal story (and he was laughing during this part) reveals Samuel’s insight into the underlying logic of the system thematising, though not explicitly, important issues of urbanization and social change – which he clearly saw as happening at least with regard to Pedi – and which implicitly the Pedi ‘leader’ defended, in Samuel’s words, and, on the other hand, the pressure to geographically circumscribe the people somewhere in the middle of rural nowhere – to give them a “piece of land” with a “boundary” – from the apartheid government. Another interesting point made by Samuel in this quotation is his perception of Pedi people based on social rather than ethnic criteria: “they need the towns”. There are no references to markers of culture or tradition in this context.

He describes some of the effects of the pass law after the introduction of bantustans and he recognizes the differences between ‘self-governing’ and ‘independent’ bantustans with regard to the restricted possibilities of free movement. He basically talked about his own experience and an experience of his fellows when mentioning “Shangaan, Pedi and Vendas” who, having obtained the “dompass”, an internal passport regulating at the first place movement of black African population within South Africa, worked in construction industry and lived in hostels of Mamelodi from where they daily commuted to work and travelled home to their respected ‘homelands’ for family occasions. I have never seen Samuel’s ‘dompass’, not even asked him about it, but I suppose he must have had one. He could not have otherwise worked in the ‘white’ South Africa.

Samuel mentions means of transport, talking about the monopoly of the state-owned railway company operating bus network too towards the end of the quotations. Transportation was a strategic field in the situation of migrant labour system responsible for continuous supply of labour. Given the remaining apartheid geographies and spatial relations between places of living (often several places used by one person) and those of work, public transport, its means, safety and costs, has still been among the most important concerns for majority of black South Africans. Samuel later talked about the growing importance of the buses he used to travel by to and from Ga-Mphahlele. This situation changed at the turn of 1980s/1990s when minibus taxis started to operate on a

large scale but their prices have been too high for many who commute daily. Suburban trains are still very much preferred by many like Samuel, and I am going to write about this later in the text.

By quoting, analysing and interpreting these passages I wanted to provide the reader with insights not only into the ways most of the interviews were conducted and later 'processed' but to introduce themes and problems important for understanding Samuel's social and cultural positions, which are still going to reappear throughout this dissertation. They can be perceived as miniatures of wider themes and problems. Historical and anthropological analysis and interpretation is needed in order to understand them and to make them meaningful.

My analysis and interpretation of part of the interview conducted July 24 2008 may serve as an example of such an attempt. I tried to choose the most representative parts of the interview in order to present Samuel not just as an informant answering the ready-made questions but as someone who, in the course of a dialogue, is creatively thinking and conceptualising the world which surrounds him and of which he is an active part. Though the interview was originally focused on identifying the locations of ZCC prayer meetings in Mamelodi, Samuel managed to touch upon and discuss a number of important topics which are widely relevant for the rest of the text.

# Trying out the Bio-Ethnographic Method

For a text called ‘bio-ethnography’ there has not been much chronology so far. I gave some reasons for my doubts about constructing linear chronologies in one of the introductory chapters and I am going to add few more. In this chapter I bring chronology back but not quite, not in the conventional sense. I try out possibilities of a bio-ethnographical method here. I see this method as a solution for me in reconciling the irreconcilable dilemma of chronology in relation to biography and ethnography.

On one hand, we know that Samuel’s and anyone else’s life is being lived chronologically, at least in a biological and physical sense. One grows and gets old, things happen and there is no way back. On the other hand, we know that at the moment we start contemplating the past chronology gets lost. Because one’s life is full of such reflective moments it is most doubtful whether our consciousness lives chronologically in any sense close to our physical and biological lives. In fact my answer the answer is no. We constantly, albeit with varying intensities, re-construct our lives and re-tell these constructions as realities to ourselves and to others. From this point of view, a genre of biography, let alone auto-biography, is a complete fiction in any other than strictly physical and biological chronological sense – which alone, on the other hand, would not tell us much (Anderson 1991/1983: 204-206, Herzfeld 1997).

Thus we could say that chronology is a narrative device of historical writing, that it is a specific kind of narrating. There is no true chronology in a narrative except of its own physical chronology, chronology of the long moment of narrating. No ‘total’ chronology can be captured in a narrative, the least of all in an auto-biographical or biographical narrative. Such a narrative is closer to a statement and a testimony of the present moment or a series of moments than to the past it is believed to recall or describe aspiring to fidelity to this supposedly independent subject. Means of knowing (sources, methods, theories etc.) and variously defined contexts of the moments and situations of narrating become keys to understand some of the ways by which knowledge about one’s past is being produced. Figure central to it is the person of the narrator, in our case two persons, two subjectivities – Samuel and me.

There are various kinds of sources used in this text. In most cases they were produced by Samuel or me or together, be it transcriptions of interviews, audio and video recordings, my and Samuel's photographs etc. They were produced in particular contexts where they belong to as objects and they were listened to, read and watched in other contexts. We should take into account not only the 'surrounding' situations and moments influencing the objects' production and reception but also the historically constructed subjectivities involved in these processes – focusing on particular themes or motives, hearing something rather than something else, capturing certain things rather than other etc. All these arguments lead to an inevitable conclusion that rather than encountering past in writing up one's history we are confronted with a series of momentous context-bound fragments homogenized by our subjectivities into a coherent narrative.

I approach my sources with uncertainty, maybe naively, but still I try to make the context of their production as clear as possible. My overall theoretical agenda was explained in the introductory chapters. The methods used overlap as well as they leave many gaps unfulfilled. Their seams remain blurred and they are not quite complementary. There are clearer views next to blind angles. I cannot say that participant observation complements analysis of Samuel's pictures or that an interview complements the recording of a performance. Heterogeneous as these sources are, they certainly relate to each other closely enough to be thought of together but they do not comprise a coherent whole either in themselves or in their sum. They may only be made to seem so, for example, under the title of this dissertation. Conventional biography usually pretends to know someone's past as it was and, using narrative devices such as chronology, covers up and masks the fact that it was written from one or several points 'of view' using variously limited sources and exercising a particular agenda. In this text, I openly admit, I offer just a series of momentous context-bound research fragments mediated by different sources connected to each other and made coherent by either Samuel's or my own theoretical agenda, which I both try to clarify as much as I can.

The advantage of a bio-ethnography would be that I was present to all the research situations within which the data were generated (in case of Samuel's old photographs I shot a video of him commenting upon them, at least). The disadvantage would seemingly be that they were 'gathered' within a limited time of six years of the research. I was not there when he went to school in Ga-Mphahlele, neither I was there when he arrived in Mamelodi for the first time. But, compared to a biographer using

historical method, what is the qualitative difference? Would such a biographer have had written sources at hand for all the important moments of his subjects' life? Would these sources have been substantially less biased than the ones acquired orally, iconographically or by the researcher's own observation? Should have such a biographer have used substantially different critical evaluations from someone acquiring the 'data' orally or otherwise 'unconventionally'? I do not think so.

Answering yes would, besides other things, mean to buy into the ethnocentric bias well described by scholars of orality in Africa, where the literary is placed above the oral only to create the desired hierarchical order on the 'line of progress'. The essential conclusion of the discussion would be that there should be no substantial qualitative difference in this regard between writing the conventional historically conceived biography based on written sources and writing a biography using sources generated by wider range of methods, including ethnography. Both of them use sources produced by people of historically constructed subjectivities in particular contexts and both of them approach the past from these particular moments having no direct access to it themselves, moreover, adding to it their own subjectivities and contexts of the particular research and writing processes.

I do not completely give up chronology as it may give us a useful and conventionally understandable framework. I structure the following chapter into three parts. Both of them are defined by places of Samuel's living, basically the part of his life he spent in Ga-Mphahlele and the other part he mostly lived in Mamelodi. This structure, however, tends to emphasize certain discontinuities over continuities between activities related to these places. Thus it should be read as purely artificial and without any deeper justification than the chronological convention. My argument in this and the other chapters would be that there are, in fact, far greater continuities between the rural and urban social life than it is usually claimed, especially concerning the large group of township dwellers still pending between the township and their rural base, including Samuel, despite the fact it has been more than two decades since the end of apartheid law now. It seems as if this historical practice pronounced, for example, in particular geographies (from urban planning to spatial distribution of economic opportunities to name but a few) set up a pattern which is going to be around for a long time to yet. The third is not defined chronologically but by the kind of sources. It deals with Samuel's collection of photographs from the 1980s and 1990s as a specific source of information shedding new light on the Mamelodi period.



For the two periods and other realities of Samuel's life I have different kinds of sources at hand. I partly combine them and partly treat them separately to offer different perspectives without an aspiration to coherence and completeness. I rely on transcriptions of the interviews, which can be mediated most easily in this academic textual form. I use my and Samuel's own pictures as sources of valuable information. Similarly, I use either Samuel's or other songs where it is useful. Ethnographic observations are indispensable for acquiring first hand experience and legitimacy to use my own judgment. In a way, they, along with literature, constitute background for analyzing and interpreting all other sources. I do not use ethnographic descriptions so often in this chapter but I provide ethnographically-based information quite often in order to situate other sources. In the following text I first approach every topic or a kind of source via my own, often initial, ethnographic experience of it in order to situate it into the particular research context. Then I continue by using the particular sources with regard to the biographical information.

## **“It's a Rural Area, They Respect Other People”: Ga-Mphahlele**

After two years of knowing Samuel I got an opportunity to visit places of Samuel's childhood and his mother's house in Maralaleng village in Ga-Mphahlele near Lebowakgomo in Limpopo province, in September 2007. We arrived late Friday night after a long drive from Pretoria with Samuel's cousin from Thembisa, Samuel's girlfriend Ledi and two other young men from Mamelodi. We came for the wedding of a family friend which took place the next day in nearby Lebowakgomo. But, in fact, the whole visit was marked by Samuel's own agenda to promote his brand new album *Mmamona*, released on CD and cassette earlier that year, everywhere we went and by all possible means. Being expected, we had been given a room where we spent the rest of the night. Early morning I could noticed a picture of an ZCC bishop on top of the wardrobe in the room we slept in, a sign of the family's affiliation to the Church (see Figure 47), and a poster of Samuel in a grey suit posing with his accordion in a promotional photograph for his album (the same one as on the cover) on the wall of the main room (see Figure 48). We spent the whole day and evening at the wedding. We went there together with group of teenage girls, children of Samuel's brother and sister

and other children from neighbouring houses, whom Samuel readily formed into a backing vocal and dance group for a promotional performance of his songs at the wedding. Bringing a CD along with him he asked the wedding DJ to play it at one point. He partly sang live into the microphone covering his own voice on the recording and partly he danced along with his group on the music being played by the DJ. He sang and played live wedding songs there too in the morning, accompanying the procession before entering the church where another band of church musicians was prearranged to play (see Figure 50). I could observe that his live procession performance received more attention, probably as it naturally fitted the situation, than the *Mmamona* album semi-playback promotion in front of the wedding tent later on during the day. We returned to Maralaleng late at night by a minibus along with the girls' group, singing a hardly distinguishable mix of children songs, school songs, church songs and wedding songs and apparently enjoying the wild night improvisation.

Only on Sunday morning it was possible to look around the house and talk to people there. It was a dry and open landscape of reddish rocky mountains, small bushes and people's single story square greyish houses with neatly brushed yards, scattered in single rows along dusty roads. The house of Samuel's family was like that too (see Figure 51). At the time of our visit Samuel's mother lived there with a couple of other relatives. Samuel's father passed away in February that year aged 84. His brother's, sister's and uncle's families were living nearby.

But Samuel was not born in this house. As he showed me that morning he was born under the mountain visible on the horizon called Naka tša Pudi (in Sepedi meaning goat's horns, after the shape of the mountains) where the family lived at the time of his birth in 1962 (see Figure 52). This house was built much later and the family moved in there in 1984 only. At that time, Samuel had already been living in Mamelodi for two years, substantially helping the family to build and furnish the new house. There were traces of Samuel's activity not only in and on the house but also in the yard. He proudly showed me a beautifully blossoming tree he had recently planted there. As with many other things he brought it from Pretoria, where he worked as a gardener.

It was a short weekend visit, certainly similar to most of Samuel's other visits, but a busy one. After the Saturday promotional performance at the wedding he still had other plans related to his new CD, trying to make use of every moment and of my presence, especially of my camera and video camera. As usual everything was thought through in advance, so shortly after breakfast he appeared with his oldest brother and

both dressed up in dark suits, asking me to take a promotional photograph of him solo and with his brother. I took a series of pictures of him posing with his accordion, the CD and the cassette in front of the tree he planted in the yard with his brother and the two young men from Mamelodi (see Figure 53). The rest of the morning we spent sitting in the shade of a grown up tree in the middle of the yard, chatting with his relatives and neighbours, both male and female. After lunch he assembled the same group of teenage girls as the previous day, arranged some audio equipment on the stoep of the neighbour's house and I spent the rest of the afternoon shooting a video of him, the two young men from Mamelodi and the group of girls dancing on his CD *Mmamona*, in the neighbour's yard watched by the house's inhabitants and a group of children. The girls group of about six organized in two or three rows (one small boy, Samuel's girlfriend Ledi and other girls joined in from time to time) made synchronized moderate danced steps, while Samuel with the two young Mamelodi men danced more wildly, a kind of 'township jive' with elements of more recent urban dance styles, sometimes synchronized or sometimes each differently. Again, it was meant for the promotion of Samuel's album. Soon afterwards we got in a car and drove back to Mamelodi and Pretoria. This was my first and the only visit to Samuel's birth place. Videos are included on the accompanying DVD. For a particular track see Appendix A.

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Samuel was born under Naka tša Pudi mountain near today's Maralaleng village in Ga-Mphahlele near Lebowakgomo in 1962. His parents were both born in the area but, as I discussed above, they both tried their luck in Pretoria's Eastwood freehold black location, today's Garsfontein, in the 1950s but had to return back to Ga-Mphahlele due to the hardening apartheid laws. Their seven children were already born there. Samuel had an older brother, a younger twin sister and brother, two other younger brothers and a younger sister. Samuel spoke rather rarely about his family or maybe I did not ask enough, only on a special occasion like the visit to Maralaleng or accidentally while discussing something else. From what I got to know of him or saw in Maralaleng, his family could serve as an example of a rather poor but decent rural family whose children have tried their best either there, in nearby towns or even in farther cities under apartheid and who, in turn, tried to ensure the best possible future for their children in the new situation. I had never heard about anyone who would be considered family's outcast from Samuel (and he did complain about people's ill behaviour sometimes). As

far as I know he was the only one of his siblings who came down to Gauteng but not the only one among his relatives.

I managed to collect a series of Samuel's memories of his childhood, though. In the beginning of the research they often appeared just accidentally and as such I did not pay much attention to them. It was only later that I focused on gathering Samuel's biographical data more directly and I began to ask him about his childhood and school years explicitly. Music often is part of these memories, something I overlooked during the interviews themselves. Here I have chosen a couple of examples, which I situate in the context within which they were mentioned and relate to each other. The first passage is an example of accidental information appearing completely by chance and without asking. While talking about the ZCC's contribution to Samuel's musical knowledge in 2007, he mentioned how he learned his first songs and how he learned to make them from his mother when he was a child and looked after his younger twin siblings. It interestingly fits his personal autobiographical narrative about himself as a musician.

LSK: [...] *from my childhood I was singer. I uses to sing. Ja. My mother [...] know that I uses to sing just like the... You see the... the child like this* (pointing to a woman with a baby sitting in the garden with us). *I uses to sing for my younger [...] brother [and sister]. It was twin of girl and a boy.*

VZ: *So you had a twin sister?*

Ja, *a twin sister... that time. So I helped my mother... [...] I helped my mother to carry the other child. So when I carry the child I uses to sing. Sometimes just like... I saw the dog there. I sing the song [about] the dog there. You see. My mother told me [to do it] just like this. Then I see... I sing for the child so that he can keep quiet. Because he is crying. So from that time I am uses to sing, just like this. You see?*

*That's nice...*

*You see? From the childhood you uses to sing. If you see something just like chair. You sing about the chair. Or just you see [someone] what he is doing. You sing about what he is doing. So you tell other people. You [tell] the people about the story. Your singing is about the stories. Ja. When you see the chair, you say: 'My mother sit on the chair', or 'This is my brother's chair'. This is... and it's really a song. Ja. [...] Say: 'My brother's chair, I want to sit on this chair.'* (singing a melody). *This is a song. And then, you see, [you] go forward. Other people, they [are going to] prefer you. [...] You see? It's the way that you do, we do, the songs.*

(18 September 2007)

The passage is illuminating in several ways. Besides telling us the immediate social context of his first conscious musical attempts, Samuel reveals some of the traditional

compositional process of a song as a basic musical unit based on phrasing everyday experience into a text. Notably, music as sound is not mentioned as it is not usually mentioned in discussions of compositional process either of his own or ZCC songs. It is the text that always comes first. The music is conceived as somehow readily there to be just used. This short narrative thus sheds light on his later perception of song composition. It is confirmed even here where Samuel immediately followed up by describing composition of *Senwamadi* (in Sepedi the one who drinks blood), one of his songs on *Mmamona* album, demonstrating use of this compositional logic in his current composition. I am going to discuss later.

He recalled several other memories of his childhood during our interviews. These images had clearly remained important in his memory, some of them still powerfully constituting his current self-awareness. I am going to mention a couple of these memories here exactly because they not only tell us about his childhood but, may be even more, illustrate his current ways of thinking and the way he constructs an image of himself from his point of view as a musician today and possibly, also as a subject of my research. Again, it shows him as someone with a strong urge to homogenize his memories into a coherent story, constantly connecting and re-connecting situations and events of his life in order to fit them into the broader image he desired to create. As we could see in the previous passage, he for example, easily connected a childhood memory to his contemporary preoccupation as a musician, even on the level of development of his compositional technique, as if he had always been predestined to be a musician. The same applies to other memories as I am going to mention now.

Samuel went to a local primary school in Ga-Mphahlele. According to his memories he performed very well there and became a target of jealousy of his mates and their parents. A stereotypical concept of ‘black people’ is used here when witchcraft is discussed illustrating hardly-to-believe obstacles in the everyday life of a diligent school child in a rural area of the time.<sup>67</sup> In his memories Samuel excelled in his class and liked to compete with other clever children. Under the influence of his schoolmaster he seemed to think of himself as an exceptionally clever child and a dedicated pupil. This conviction had apparently remained strong even later and helped to constitute

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<sup>67</sup> I am trying not to generalize here but as other people confirmed to me number of times various practices covered under the concept of witchcraft occur not only in rural areas but in townships and even in cities still today. There are various studies of historical as well as contemporary practices related to witchcraft in South Africa (see for example Niehaus 2012).

Samuel's own perception of himself as a person of extraordinary qualities and, consequently, as a great observer and eloquent commentator and educator – as a musician. He apparently enjoyed talking about his early successes.

*VZ: How was the school like?*

*LSK: Just ordinary school.*

*How big was it?*

*It had six classrooms, it is like a block.*

*How many were you in the classroom?*

*My class was 50 or 51 or 52, like that.*

*Boys and girls together?*

*Yes. But from my beginning, I was, I think Standard 1, I come first. I come first. I beat all the people in the class.*

*So you were the best.*

*I was the best. That time they given us the spare box, the spare box for money... the gold one...*

*So you got it there... because you were the best?*

*Yes.*

*As a price... for being the best in the class?*

*Yes.*

*And how did it go later?*

*That time I was very shy. I was very shy. Because they call us [...] in front of all the people. The children were just looking at us and you are shy... You see? They clap hands and all the people they are looking at you. And when you are at street they say: 'This one, this one...' They told their mothers...*

*But it was nice, your parents must have been very proud of you!*

*Yes, but the hatred! The hatred! [...] You see, the black people they always have the witches... witch doctors... They [be]witch you. [...]*

*I see. So it was actually not good for you...*

*It was not for good, yes.*

*Why do you think people were envious? [...]*

*It is jealousy. When they told their parents the parents became to be jealous, jealous to you. This one says: 'Ma [mother]...'. And then they go to the doctors, the witch doctors...*

*Did anything happen to you?*

*[...] my parents are supposed to shield me so they go to the strong one [witch doctor] and shield me.*

*So they had to go to witch doctor?*

*To another witch doctor, so that they can protect me. You see?*

*And did it work?*

*I think it worked because I was young and I do not know nothing about it.*

*Nothing bad happened to you.*

Yes.

*Did the children try to beat you or attack you somehow?*

No.

*Did not they look badly at you.*

*Yes, they just looked badly at me.*

*They did not touch you.*

*Yes, because other days there was a corporeal punishment. I think one day other boys, two boys, we were inside the classroom and then so... I was there and... just reading. Other boys just come and disturb me and play with me and they do a lot of noise so that I must join them and play with them. But my mistress [schoolmaster], the teacher, it was mister, it was man, he called me: 'Sam, come here.' I go there with pleasure, not knowing nothing. I go to him. He just hit me [...], one clap. [He said:] 'Why are you so disturbed? I know you, you are a clever boy. Do not play with these stupid boys, please. Read your books. I do not like you to play with these people because I guide them but they do not listen to me but you, you must listen because I know you are clever. It was the last time...' [At the] end of the year I was the very first man. I was [...] the first class. I was one man who beat all the children in the class... because of this [teacher].*

*And how did it go later when you were in you Standard 2 and 3...? Were you still good?*

*Yes. But they brought other children from other place. We just compete. There was very, very [tough] competition, it was very, very good. Because we knowing each other and we call ourselves 'Top 11'.*

*Out of?*

*Out of 70 something children. [...] You did not fight alone. You see.*

(18 September 2007)

He continued speaking about his other school successes choosing the pleasurable or otherwise significant moments. Mathematics and Science were his favourite subjects. He excelled especially in Mathematics to the degree that his former classmates still remember him. He was shy to speak in public so the teacher who liked him often called him to the blackboard to show the others how he had arrived at the correct result. He could write it on the board without necessary speaking. He was “beaten” in English by other children but he “beat them all” in Math. Here he added a story with a strong moral and consequences for his self-awareness. Once, he told me, he arrived at a correct result in Math as the only child in the class but because he suffered from chronic uncertainty he thought he was wrong and “corrected” it according to his classmates making thus a mistake too. The teacher who saw the correct result on his paper next to the wrong one reproved him for doing it telling him he must always believe in himself. From this

experience, he said, he drew a moral for his whole life, always to rely on himself, and as an example of this point he gave his persistence as a musician.

*It is from that time I am knowing, if I am right, I am right. And when I am talking the right things I just do not listen [to] other people, the wrong people, I just listen [to] myself. And I want to be myself. It is the way you see me when I am singing. I just want to sing myself. And I am singing my music. They do not love it [in the beginning]. But when they go and then they come they love my music. Because they can listen, listen, listen. They say: 'Oh, this man, he wants to do this.' You see? They just come to me: 'Oh...' Like now... You know Mams FM [Mamelodi local community radio]. They are playing my music. All the people say... They open mouth and they just listen: 'This song is so beautiful. It is very nice.' They just... (mimicking people listening to the radio). You see? All the people they want to know me, they want to know who I am.... because of the radio.*

(31 August 2011)

As I mentioned above, this perfectly demonstrates Samuel's ability to make temporal connections in order to support his current stances and to see his life as rationally driven, basically in his own hands and coherent. To further demonstrate this and, at the same time, the impossibility to separate doing an ethnography from reflecting upon oneself while doing it, I add a passage immediately following the previous one. Here I was given as an example of dauntlessness and as someone who is not easily made to change his mind. At the same time, it is an example of Samuel's rhetoric as a ZCC preacher. There are elements of praise poetry in its poetic images, some of them taken from the Bible. One can only imagine how it would have sounded in Sepedi where Samuel's eloquence would not be debilitated by the limits of his English. Last but not least, it shows Samuel's perception of me and my activities in South Africa, in comparison to those who succumb to the most common stereotypes about the continent and the country, which Samuel knew well. In this view, I am God-sent, and no obstacles can ever stop me because of my righteous motivations.

*You see now. You, you chose the right way. But other people from your country or from your clan they can say to you..., they bring fear to your heart. They say: 'Vitek, if you go to South Africa... the people there are ugly and...'* And you, you know exactly from God that nothing can happen. You are trusting God and you just go through. You just go through because of your belief. And the God knows exactly what you need and that you do. And if you do the righteous things you just go through. They said love. You can cross through the... the wall... You see? No gulf that... It is not... it is not open without... enough love. You just cross the gulf, cross the



*rivers, if you got enough love. They can say: 'That river got the crocodiles.' You say: 'I go through there.' And when you are nearer to this, you see some other guy have the ship there. You see? And he says: 'Vitek, climb inside.' Then you cross. You see? That is a miracle, you see? [...] Nobody can climb from heaven to do the miracle here to earth. It is us who are here on the earth [to] perform the miracles.*

(31 August 2011)

I asked Samuel about other subjects and about the language of instruction at school. He said that they started learning in Sepedi. English and Afrikaans became languages of instructions of some subjects from Standard 3. Considering the immediate South African historical context of the 1970s it is interesting that he did not complain about this. Answering my question about other subjects he mentioned Math, Science, Biology and History. I asked him about history. He gave me a remarkably heterogeneous list of topics. They learned “about Jan van Riebeck and about the earthquakes... astronomy... and about Louis [Neil] Armstrong who come from the Moon”. As for Pedi history they learned “about chiefs... Gazankulu... Ciskei, Transkei... Zululand... Rhodesia...” He apparently was well aware of the impact of the so-called Bantu education system. Answering my question whether they had literature as a subject and what they actually read at school he briefly answered: “You know, it was Bantu education.”

They read the Bible. A verse number was given and they were supposed to find it and read it. There certainly lie the roots of Samuel’s extraordinary ability to quote from the Bible, a quality further perfected by his later practice as a ZCC priest. They read other books too in Sepedi, English, and Afrikaans as they practiced reading in these languages. He mentioned traditional instructive stories in Sepedi as their common reading too. Here, I asked whether he used these stories in his songs and plays too as I could have long observed traditional themes in them. “I mix [the songs] with the stories because, you see, I love the stories... storytelling.” He added that it is important to read and listen to stories when one goes to school “so that you know where to go”. Extending the meaning of the story from school instructive story to people’s stories in general he added:

It does not matter whether you know it from newspapers, radio or elsewhere. You learn what people need and what they laugh at. Then you know this is the right stuff [when composing a song]. [...] people are laughing when I am singing these stories [inside the train].

(31 August 2011)

Here we can see again the immediate actualization of a past memory to the present context of his train performances on the way to and from work between Mamelodi and Pretoria.

Another time Samuel mentioned his membership in school choirs in both primary and secondary school and he expressed his pride that they won many trophies. He went to Phauwe Secondary School situated about ten kilometres to the East from toady's Maralaleng village. During an interview in 2008 it turned out that it was there where he learned to sing in tonic sol-fa notation (31 July 2008). However, a year later in 2009, he identified the time he learned to use tonic sol-fa to the primary school years (20 September, 2009). As so often, the information did not appear as part of any extensive biographical narrative. He touched the issue again while we were discussing the meanings of church songs recorded on ZCC CDs, in 2008. While talking about sefela 174 *Jerusalema, ua benya* (in Sesotho, Gleaming Jerusalem) from the *Lifela tsa Sione* hymnbook, he recognized the song as one they used to sing at school, moreover, in tonic sol-fa notation.

LSK: 174... *Jerusalema, ua benya*.... *I uses to sing inside the school this one. This Jerusalema, ua benya... with the notes. You see? Jerusalema, ua benya...* (singing the beginning of the song) *mi mi mi do do ti ti do, mi do mi so, la so so so, so mi la ti so, so la so mi...* (singing the melody using tonic sol-fa syllables). *You see? Just like that.* [Compared to the sol-fa notated hymnbook *Lifela tsa Sione* I found out that he was singing the first two lines of tenor and that he made breathes exactly between the phrases. The recording is included on the accompanying CD. For a particular track see Appendix A.]

VZ: *So you use sol-fa notation!*

*Yes, yes. This is notes...*

*Yes, yes, I know it.*

*...that we uses inside... inside the school...*

*Oh!*

*...when I was in the secondary.*

*So when did you learn it?*

*In secondary... 1980... 1979. [...] Ja, when I am doing the Grade 7, just like this. Or Grade 9, or just like this. Form 1. Standard 7 [he confuses the old (Standard) and the new (Grade) terminology].*

*Was it in a choir? Was it in a choir?*

*Choir of the school.*

*School choir.*

*School choir.*

*I see.*

*We uses this.*

*And you know how to sing it in this sol-fa.*

*Yes, I remind [remember] it. I remind [remember] it... because I... I got remind [remember] everything [...] So God... so God help me so that he gives me the wise so that I do not forget so easily. You see? (a little bit moved) From long time... And I surprise[d] my mother when I told her the past things that she...*

*...forgot...*

*...she forgot it already. Say, I uses to sing when... I uses to sing the song... when I was 7 years old. But I still remember it. When I... when... You see, there [were] twins, twin brother and girl, they were together [...]. And then I uses to carry the... the baby boy and my mother uses to carry the girl. So when we are together I sing it.*

*Hm.*

*You see? OK, that is good (laughing). Mi mi mi do do ti ti do, mi do mi so, la so so... (singing the beginning of the same song again slightly higher). You see now?*

*Hm.*

*Yes... (laughing) do re mi fa so la ti so so la so mi (singing)... I still have the notes.*

*Hm.*

*I can practice. And then I can see to... to teach others, the youngsters so that they can... knowing the notes. I can going to buy a notes book... so that I can uses the notes... to sing.*

(31 July 2008)

Though the second part belongs to the earlier memories I quote it here to keep the continuity and inner content logic of the passage. The first part confirms the common practice and ongoing use of tonic sol-fa notation, the popularity of school choirs and the wide practice of choir competitions at the time of Samuel's schooling (see for example Ndlovu 1995 and 1997 et al.). However, it is not likely that Samuel would have used tonic sol-fa later in his life, regardless of the proposal he made at the very end. I never saw him using it during the entire time of my research or when we were discussing other songs. It could be partly confirmed by his mentioning the same song the year later in 2009 and singing it using tonic sol-fa syllables again (20 September 2009). I never heard him singing any other song like that, though. On the other hand, he remained faithful to the choir practice as the ZCC, of which he later became a member, basically structures its members into distinct choirs in a social as well as musical sense. From the second part of the quotation (as well as from the related one further above) it is clear not only that he is proud of his good memory and intellectual abilities in general, but that

music making constitutes an inseparable part of his childhood memories, embedded in the most intimate moments and relationships.

In 2011 I asked Samuel what he did after school in the afternoons. His answers show the traditional pattern common in rural areas of South Africa at the time – using young boys and young men as herdsmen after school or sometimes even instead of school. Besides children’s play, there were other duties too.

*VZ: What did you do after school? I do not mean after you left school but in the afternoon, when you were still young and... you know... What were you doing?*

*LSK: Ye, I was playing football.*

*Was it popular there?*

*Yes, but all the time I uses to [be] a herdsman, the herdsman for the cows, the donkeys...*

*Like a shepherd...?*

*Yea, I was a shepherd that time.*

*So in the afternoon you went with donkeys?*

*Yes, donkeys. And then we have a donkey cart so that we fetched the water and we go [distribute it] to the people. [...] Other days we go to a mill [...] where we are grinding mabele [sorghum]... [for] a lot of our people... We collected the sacks... it is not full, half. Other people half... and then full sack... and we carry [them] on the cart. The mealie [in South African English corn] grinding was far from us. You crossed the river when you were going there. With me and old man who... I was a shepherd for him. [...] We did not go there every day.] Other days we go there and then we have... Each and every person [a customer], they pay [us]... 20 cent... for mealie and the other 10 cent is for us. It is for us, to pay us.*

*So you collected 30 cents?*

*Yes. You see? Then we are supposed to go there [to the mill] and when we are there we bought bread and sugar [...] and eat there. It was very nice. Because now... Because in the old days when you eat bread you was a rich man... You was a rich man, yes.*

(31 August 2011)

Samuel’s memories here sound as a distant echo of days long past. It shows his wider integration as a child in the social and economic life of the village and his participation in generating the family’s income. In the context of Samuel’s later food diet as a member of the ZCC with its emphasis on self-prepared unprocessed food of ritually limited ingredients, it is noteworthy how he captured here the changing dietary pattern from the traditional one, home-produced and processed ‘mealie’ and ‘mabele’, to industrially produced and processed bread and sugar. While he conceptualized his ability to buy bread in terms of economic success referring to his childhood joy over his

own earned money, he clearly preferred home made food based on African traditional cuisine to any kind of ‘fast food’ at the time of the research. He confirmed it in the very same interview telling me about the meal he prepared for himself that day, which included precisely this traditional ‘mabele’ pap and other ingredients.

As the designers of the ZCC ritual rules (and of any other diet prescriptive religious system) must have known quite well, diet may function as an important marker of various identities. Already James Kiernan argued that it was the line between the sacred space of the church and the (white capitalist) ‘world’ rather than any other, for example ethnic line, what distinguished the Zionists from the rest of the society (Kiernan 1974). According to them, the return to a simple African traditional diet, though conceptualized in religious ritual terms, may thus be interpreted as an act of withdrawal from the (white capitalist) ‘world’. Paying attention to these dietary details may help us to further understand Samuel’s position within the complex net of South African culture, as would considering Samuel’s attendance to an initiation school and his attitude to it.

Samuel went to an initiation school in 1976 in the age of 14. I would not have probably even asked him about it but an event we were both present at motivated the discussion. We attended a coming out of an initiation school celebration in Mamelodi on 1 August 2009.<sup>68</sup> We followed three boys returning from the chiefs’ kraal after being dismissed to their families. Samuel performed various commonly known songs during some parts of the family celebration, from early morning till late evening that day (watch a video on the DVD, for a particular track see Appendix A). He obviously did not want to tell me any details about his own experience from the initiation school. However, his overall opinion about it was largely positive. I asked him about some

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<sup>68</sup> It was a large Ndebele initiation school in Mamelodi called “BAKGATLA BA GA LEKHULENI, PARAMOUNT CHIEF TREKPASS V. V. NDUKU, INITIATION SCHOOL, FOR, BOYS ‘n’ GIRLS” according to its flag. I managed to get into the kraal and interview two Ndebele chiefs there. It is noteworthy that the Chief Sixpence Lekhuleni presented two contradictory opinions that, first, there is no contradiction between African initiation school and Christianity as circumcision is based on the Old Testament Abraham’s story, not on culture and, second, that even white South African should undertake circumcision as, having taken African women in the past, they became Africans and black. He continued by presenting extremely conservative and explicitly antidemocratic arguments about social order, its structures and hierarchies. It was, however, a great honour that I was let in and given their kind attention during the important event.

basic and general information only but even these limited answers are quite illuminating.

LSK: *You know, in the time of us, we were one thousand. During my time 1976 when I go there.*

VZ: *Was it up there?*

*Yes, Ga-Mphahlele. We were there one thousand boys with the tents that side [...].*

*It is a lot. So did you go to the mountain? What mountain? Is there a special mountain?*

*Yes, there is a lot of mountains in Ga-Mphahlele. But it is special one.*

[...]

*How long did it take?*

*Take...? That time... only two months.*

[...]

[You learn a lot of things there but you must not talk about it when you are out.] *When you come from there, it is finished there. It is to keep you busy, not to think [...] too much. It is to keep you busy so that your mind can be busy, not thinking about home, thinking about everything. You see? It is just like the idiom. Do you know the idioms? When I say the Moon can fall down. But you rather know the Moon can not fall down. It is idiom.*

[...]

*They keep your mind busy so that you do not think too much [...]. Your mind can be busy and [you can] enjoy.... the stories. Just like the storytelling. You see?*

[...]

*It is like jokes or just like this. But it is only for that place. And they are changing the topics there. You see? When you call this a bag and then it is not a bag, They got the name of this there. You see? When they are calling fire, it is not fire, it is a taung... It is the fire, it is taung... like a lion, you see? Like a lion... on the match box. There is lion. They call it taung there. [...] They call it with the name of other.*

*Why do they do it?*

*You see, the men, they are thinking too much. They got the plants... They teach you [how to talk] when you are talking nearer to the children. You must talk like this. You got the topic that they, the children do not listen. So when you go home you must choose your topics when you are talking. They teach you this. [...] Because now you are a man, you must talk like this. And nearer to the woman, do not talk like this. You must talk like this. And the woman do not know why you are talking about this. [...] Very interesting this school. And if you do not come there, you are not allowed to go inside the kraal [a place where initiated men traditionally meet, discuss and drink traditional beer]. They do not allow you. That is why I am going straight because I come from there. If [I do] not come from there, I must be shamed to go there [to the kraal]. And then I come to be suspicious and then each and every person can [look at] me: 'This one, he got suspicious!' [...] But if you come from there, you go straight. And then you know everything, you can go [there]. Then you know. If they ask you many questions, you can answer them. Yes.*

(August 3, 2009)

Besides practical details, Samuel's opinion of his social, cultural, and religious position is important, and this passage clearly speaks much more about his position at the time of the interview than about anything else. His world view would be best described as African traditionalist and conservative as it is conventionally understood today. It is expressed in his opinion about women and children and then especially about the male traditional gatherings in the kraal. It is an anti-modern stance expressing admiration for the imagined old good days of the male dominated gender order of traditional African society as he saw it. This is interestingly mirrored in statements by Chief Sixpence Lekhuleni who spoke in a similar way just two days before this interview, during the coming out of the initiation school final ceremony in Mamelodi. It is possible that Samuel, who was present there too, might have unconsciously use similar arguments in the interview.

This position is not unambiguous in Samuel's case, though. As a member of the ZCC he is supposed to condemn this practice and in fact he did so every time we touched the topic before.<sup>69</sup> But still, he paid much respect to it then as a traditional practice capable of disciplining the youth in a difficult age – talking about boys only. At the same time, we can hardly readily reconcile this opinion with Samuel's modern secular world view as he expressed it in lyrics of a number of his songs, for example the one called *50/50* about gender equality. In order to make any sense of Samuel's often ambiguous and even contradictory statements and stances one has to get as complete a picture of his activities as possible. Only then he may appear as an active negotiator between various world views and frameworks, where an outcome always depends on a particular context.

During our very first interview in 2007, which took place on August 29, Samuel told me that he interrupted his secondary school studies for a year in 1980 due to money shortage. He went to work on a farm in Marble Hall near Groblersdal in Limpopo. It was a white farm where, according to him, about 50 black families lived and worked.

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<sup>69</sup> This topic was especially pressing for him as his ZCC membership was temporarily suspended for two and a half year beginning 18 October 2006 and he was deprived of his position as a priest by the ZCC authorities (a position he did not assume back till my last research period in 2011) following an accusation he allegedly sent his son to an initiation school in Ga-Mphahlele, which he repeatedly denied. He informed me about it during our very first meeting in 2007 as one of the most important updates since we last met in May 2006. I am going to discuss his membership in the ZCC later in the text.

He stayed there for the whole year as it was too far from Ga-Mphahlele to commute daily. He recalled that he earned R28 a month and that, for the first time in his life, he bought new clothes for himself, of which he was very proud. He also bought his first radio Omega there so that he could listen to music. He emphasised that it was a very good radio at the time and that not many people had it.<sup>70</sup> These memories make him appear as a modern youth of his time and as a music lover. In 2011 he added:

*You see, from the beginning I was a man who loves music. Yes, I love music a lot. First of everything I bought a radio [when in Marble Hall]. And when I came here, Pretoria, from my first salary again, I bought a radio. Another. But it was a radio-tape [recorder]. So that I can listen music.*

(31 August 2011)

In 1981 he returned to the secondary school and finished Grade 9 the same year. He said that he performed at school and that he was still very good in Mathematics. He enrolled in Grade 10 in January 1982 but his finances dried out in March and he quit school for good.

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This selection of memories related to Samuel's childhood may make it seem quite idyllic. However, I did not try to purify the image in any way. Samuel never mentioned anything he would complain about regarding this period of his life (except the jealousy related to his school successes). His memories of childhood can therefore be seen and conceptualized as many other childhood memories are – cleaned up and full of underlying nostalgia.

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<sup>70</sup> I found out that it was a small portable radio type 1974 powered by three 1,5 V batteries produced by Romanian company Tehnoton in Iasi for foreign markets.



## **“Full-Time in Mamelodi”:**

### **Becoming a Township Dweller and a ZCC**

My first visit to Mamelodi dates back to March 21, 2006 when I still was an elective international student at the University of Pretoria. Quite interestingly, that day I had already known or just met almost all the people I later collaborated with. In this sense, it was a decisive moment but I naturally did not realize it at the time. I was invited by Samuel whom I had known since 2005 but then talked to more regularly and played with, accompanying him on drum in our international student house since the end of January 2006 when I returned from the two months' stay in Lesotho. It was Tuesday but it was Human Rights Day and a public holiday so people were available to meet me even though it was during the week. Thanks to my many photographs taken that day indicating the time of their exposition, and an audio recording of the afternoon performance, I can easily reconstruct the main features of the day or, more precisely, of the six hours between noon and 6 o'clock in the evening when my visit took place. The significance of various moments and situation in this single afternoon of experiences became clear only later.

The visit took place out of pure curiosity without any specific research intentions, except that I wanted to see as much as possible of township life and related musical practices. I simply took it as a belated opportunity to learn something about that side of South Africa I had been constantly warned against it as an international student at the University of Pretoria and I consequently had no clear idea why, despite the fact I had spent more than seven months in the country by then. Though I usually carried a SONY minidisc and a camera with me ready to document anything I found interesting during my 2006 trips to Mamelodi and elsewhere, there was no particular focus or interest. Anything and everything was new and potentially attractive as I was entering this completely new world. That is not to say various agendas and motivations resulting from my previous subjective experience would not be at play.

As with the introductory part of the previous chapter on Ga-Mphahlele, while describing the initial visit, albeit using sources made at the time, I use knowledge obtained only later. I could not write this kind of account then being quite unaware of most things I saw or heard. Therefore it should be understood as a retrospective reflection rather than fieldwork description.

My visit started in Samuel's house where we arrived together by a minibus taxi from Pretoria Hatfield after changing over in Denneboom station to a smaller 'local' taxi at about noon. We got out in Dilankulu Street in Extension 5 in Mamelodi where Samuel had lived with his first wife and their children. To this day I remember my great uncertainty mixed with a good dose of anxiety about what to expect. I was surprised by the peaceful tarred street and decent brick houses. Samuel's house was just a few steps from where we got out. It was not a brick house but a rather large and well maintained one storey house with several rooms made of various materials, mostly wood and tin (see Figure 54). Two of Samuel's sons were inside playing a game on their computer in their room. His wife was out with their two younger girls. He showed me all the rooms. I took several pictures of him posing with and without his two sons. Some of the pictures are quite intimate and tell much of Samuel's character and identity and of our still just establishing relationship.

There is a picture of Samuel posing in the entrance room, serving as a room where guests were received, in front of two cabinets filled with glasses and family photographs and shelves in between them covered under a 'Home sweet home' embroidered tablecloth with a stereo and a small TV set on them. He is holding a microphone in his right hand and posing as if singing: the stylised picture of a musician and music lover. He is dressed up in casual but decent clothes appropriate to his age and status, with a ZCC silver badge on the left side of his chest. There are traditional decorative clay pots and his wife's framed certificate standing on the top of the cabinets. There are many posters on wooden walls all around, ZCC and other calendars and historical line-ups of Samuel's favourite football team, Mamelodi Sundowns. The central position just under the ceiling-roof made of corrugated iron (just next to the football team photograph) belonged to a standard black and white framed picture-photograph of the current ZCC bishop, Barnabas Lekganyane, the same one I saw later in his mother's house in Maralaleng and in many other houses of ZCC members in Mamelodi and elsewhere (see Figure 55).

We soon left the house and took a taxi to a part of Mamelodi called 'Mandela' which was only beginning to turn into a permanent settlement at the time. I remember visiting a young keyboard player, Given Kekana who later collaborated with Samuel on his album *Mmamona* in his 'zozo' tin house. I remember myself wondering about his khaki clothes and white boots hanging on the wall not knowing they were his ZCC uniform as a member of its 'Mokhukhu choir'. I was taken by surprise by the inner

spatial arrangement of the single-room house where a double bed occupied most of the space along with huge audio speakers connected to his keyboard. I later found similar arrangements in a number of young single male musicians' houses. Samuel took his accordion out of the bag and they played together one or two songs (see Figure 56). After a while Given packed his keyboard in a black plastic, locked up the house using a chain and a massive padlock and we all walked to another house. I remember our walk along narrow paths in the grass balancing between stinking pools of muddy water and waste of the temporary settlement area. It was my first walk through Mamelodi.

We were expected by a group of about 15 people, some of them middle aged but most of them rather young, and by a group of children. They were dressed up with care but rather informally. I felt welcome and comfortable among them. Most of the people, though not all of them, were members of the ZCC, men and women alike. It would explain why there was no alcohol consumed during the whole performance. We passed through a narrow hall into a room with a table and few chairs along the wall. Given put his keyboard on the table, connected it to a car battery and the big speakers there, and started to try out some of the pre-recorded keyboard accompaniments and arrangements he had previously saved on a floppy disc. Given playing the keyboard and Samuel playing the accordion and singing, they performed some of the songs prepared for Samuel's album, about which I did not know then. Gospel songs too were being sung or rather practiced in different arrangements. People joined the singing or they were just listening. A couple of girls danced on the music mimicking the contents of some of the songs, notably a popular tune *Tate mogolo* (in Sepedi, Old man or Grandfather), which was included on Samuel's album (check the Appendix A and the CD). The afternoon performance could have been seen as a public rehearsal for Samuel's album, on which not only he and Given but also a couple of women singing backing vocals performed. I already knew some of Samuel's songs but as I was not quite familiar with this kind of music yet, did not understand their lyrics and partly because all songs had roughly the same overall sound to my ear, it was difficult for me to tell one from another. I made an audio recording of the performance (check the Appendix A and the CD) with an unclear prospect that I will return to it later with someone who will tell me more about the songs.

After about two hours of performing, chatting and drinking cold drinks we took a couple of photographs of us all in the yard and slowly left the house. Samuel and I went to his house where we found his wife and the girls. Samuel asked for yet another

stylized picture at the entrance of the house. On the photograph, his wife is sitting in a worn out armchair with the two girls partly leaning against her and Samuel is sitting on the bench and posing holding his accordion as if playing (see Figure 57). We even managed to play some of the music I recorded in the afternoon from my SONY minidisc using Samuel's amplifier. Soon after that I left for Hatfield by a taxi. It was my initiation trip to Mamelodi. There was much to contemplate but as is usual in such situations the true significance of many things I saw, heard, and experienced that day remained hidden from me for quite a long time. I knew almost nothing about Samuel's life in Mamelodi and I did not even know that he was not born there.

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It happened like this. Advised by a next-door older neighbour, he decided to try his luck further south together with him. It was agreed at home that they will go to Dennilton, a town between Groblersdal and KwaMhlanga in Limpopo, but when they were checking the names of bus destinations in Polokwane they changed their mind and decided to go to Mamelodi instead. Thus Samuel arrived in Mamelodi township in March 1982 by a long distance bus of the South African Railways. His vivid recollections of the journey and of the arrival confirm that he saw it as a major change in his life. In other South African contexts, Patrick McAllester or David Coplan, for example, identified labour migration understood as a transformative ritual close to the traditional initiation (McAllester 1980, Coplan 1994). Though some aspects of Samuel's narrative suggest a similar understanding (dedication to stand hardship or demonstration of endurance, for example), I never heard this kind of interpretation from him explicitly. Illustrative of the significance of the journey in Samuel's memory is a minor story he recalled.

He was supposed to deliver a bracelet sent by his mother to someone in Dennilton but, instead, he dropped it from the bus window at the bus station in Dennilton hoping that someone will deliver it, and continued his journey to Mamelodi.<sup>71</sup> He even showed me the place when we were passing through Dennilton one time. The insignificance of the story nevertheless remembered so firmly shows the excitement he must have felt on the way from home to the completely unknown city environment of Mamelodi.

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<sup>71</sup> Dropping items from windows of passing busses hoping they will be delivered is still common in rural areas of Lesotho where I saw it several times.

The two young men accommodated themselves in a single-sex male hostel situated in Mamelodi East near Denneboom station. Theirs was block Y, number 6 Samuel clearly remembered. The long low houses of the hostels were still used by the poorest at the time of my research. In 2011 he conceptualized his housing situation as natural with regard to his marital status at the time. It shows how he tried to negotiate between his traditional views and the situation of modern racial capitalism and to reconcile them. He seemed to, at least partially, incorporate the new situation into the traditional framework.

*Then [in 1987] I got to lodge a room, into the location. I am like a family now. You see? From the youth... till to the... you see, now. I start a new life. Because when you are a youth, like a young man, you are supposed to stay at hostels. So that it is beginning of life, and then after meeting your maiden, your girlfriend, then you are supposed to go out of the hostels.*

(31 August 2011)

This description reminds us of the transformation and continuity of traditional institutions in a new environment described so brilliantly by David Coplan, for example, in the case of Basotho migrant workers on the Johannesburg mines. Though here the situation was not as tough as in the mines, where one's life was in constant danger, and the migrants did not keep so close ties among each other, they nonetheless maintained relationships based on their common origin in rural area to the extent quite surprising to an outside viewer. This invisible affinity appeared many times during my research when I could see that practically all people Samuel maintained closer relationships with were Pedi speakers coming from Limpopo and often from Gampahlele, Lebowakgomo, or Polokwane.

Samuel never talked about hostel life in detail but his occasional descriptions perfectly fits Mamphela Ramphela's ethnographic and medical study of Cape Town hostels of the 1980s (Ramphela 1993), including the extremely hostile relationships between hostel dwellers and township residents.

*[...] The hostel people is never allowed to got to the location people [township residents]. Because they gonna going to beat you inside the location. They not need the hostels [hostel*

dwellers]. *They say they come from far.*<sup>72</sup> *Just like you here, [if] you are a hostel of the schools [staying in a student residence], you are never allowed to go to the city. That time.*

(18 September 2007)

It took time to find a job. No job ever was permanent and the wages were always rather uncertain. It took him two months to find his first job. He went to Ogies near Witbank to work in the ground constructions of a local coal mine. He described his first work experience since his arrival to Mamelodi in quite some detail, compared to his later occupations, which demonstrates his early excitement in the 'city'. The job was so hard and the workers were treated so badly there that he left the place after a week and returned to Mamelodi bringing back quite a generous sum of R140 for that one week. He looked for another job for a month.

Between 1982 and 1985 Samuel worked as an unskilled worker in the construction industry. He named several companies he worked for, a number of places where he worked and even specific buildings he helped to build. He mentioned various kinds of work he did at the work place too. He for example built the police station in Pretoria Street in Silverton, which he showed me one day on the way to Mamelodi. He built blocks of flats in Wonderboom in Pretoria North in 1984, and since July 1984 he built the premises of Kentron armament company (today Denel Dynamics) in Centurion. Then his work place moved back to Pretoria Central to build a blocks of flats as a subcontractor for Shorodise company. These were the main occupations he mentioned during our first biographically focused interview 10 September 2007.

The last contract ended up bitterly for the workers in 1985, as they did not get paid for their work. Samuel described the situation, which is in many ways illustrative of the wider conditions of black contract or subcontract workers in the 1980s. Samuel began by explaining the logic of subcontracts, comparing his situation then and today. The passage illuminates in particular detail not only a specific situation at the work place but also other related issues such as wages, hostel rents, inflation, racial relations etc. as he experienced them and reflected upon two decades later. As such, it is a good example of Samuel's reflection of his first years in Mamelodi from his contemporary perspective. It shows that not much changed with regard to his still vulnerable position

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<sup>72</sup> The historical hostility of township residents towards people coming from outside got new meanings during the violence called xenophobic in recent years. Samuel shared majority's opinion about foreigners in this regard seeing them as rivals in competition for jobs and as more likely to commit crime.

in the job market as an unskilled subcontract worker between the 1980s and the time of the interview in 2007.

LSK: [...] *it was a subcontract. You see, just like this [he turned his back against me so that I could see the name of company he worked for as a subcontractor in 2007 and which was hired by the University of Pretoria to maintain the green printed on his T-shirt]. Subcontract. You see my T-shirt. It's a subcontract for other people.*

VZ: *So how was it like?*

[...] *They took the sub from the big company. Just like [as if] you took the sub from me. I'm a big company. [...] You come with bricks. I'm come with concrete. [...] Then me when I [get the] money [...] I share it [with] you so that you can pay your people. But [...] that man, he not paid us. He just eat the money. [...] Always he promise us [that] we [will get] the money. [...] We finish the month without pay. So we requesting: 'Whe[n] you come [with] our money?' Yes, this man, he is a white man. So all the time he didn't want to talk with us. He [sent] us [to] the supervisor: 'Go to talk with your supervisor', because we are black, all of us. And when we go to talk with the supervisor, supervisor says to you, to us: 'Me, I got no money. Me, I'm just like you, I haven't have a pay.' So we are supposed to do the strike to that man. We are prepared to took the tools [to organize a violent strike armed with work tools].*

[...]

*So you prepared your tools and what?*

*Yes, we... when he come to the job, he come late. When he [finally] come late then we requesting him: 'So where is our money?' [He] talk this and talk this. We say: 'Today, we are going to beat you.' You see?*

*And did you?*

*Yes, with a lot of people. You see? We are very angry because we got no money and then we are supposed to buy the ticket to come to the job [...] from Mamelodi to [Pretoria] Central. And then we got no money to eat. And then we are living inside the hostels... and the hostel is supposed to be paid. But we got no money.*

*How much did you pay for the hostel?*

*The hostel, it was R10. [...] That come to raise, to be R12. 1985, it was R12. And then we go, we say to him: 'We go to beat you because we need money.' So he go to the police station because it was near. [...] He go to the police station, he say he is going to report us. [But] when he go to the policeman he find there are black people, the black policemen.*

*Oh, there was black policeman.*

*Yes, the black policeman. They saw [our case]... we discussed our story: 'This man he do not want to pay us. We work for him so long time. We got no money, we got no pay. When we talk with him he want to beat us so it's why we chase him so that he [is] here.' They said to us: '[The job] is now near to be finished... so don't worry, we are not going to open the case against you. Because he is supposed to pay you.'*

*So the policemen was good.*

*Yes, was good. [But since] that time we do not see this man again. [...] We are losing the money.  
[...]*

*And for how long time was it?*

*I think it's only one month, the money of one month. I lose it till now.*

*How much was he supposed to pay, how much was it?*

*Me, I'm thinking it was R250... because I was working for one month.*

*And what was the... like normal wage you got every month?*

*[I]t's two weeks time you got the [wage]..., they say fortnight... every two weeks you got R125.*

*[...] So it was in 1985, R125 per two weeks. And before? Was it more or less.*

*It's less, it's less.*

*So, for example, in 1980.*

*1980, I think it's R60. Because the things was very cheap. [...] That time was very cheap. The Rand was weighing more money. If you got a Rand inside of your pocket you can buy a lot of goods.*

*And, for example, then in 1990?*

*1990, I think that people earn more, more, because you got R500 per month.*

*Ye, and how much did you get?*

*Yes, that time, 1990, I think I got R800. It goes with the jobs. It depends what kind of job you do.*

*For the qualified people you get more money.*

*Have you ever worked as a qualified?*

*No, I do not work as a qualified ...since I started to work.*

*Never, not even now.*

*Not even now.*

*I see. It's a pity.*

*It's a pity because now I struggle to do my living. Now I uses my disc, my CD. I want to work with my CD. Sometimes the life can be changed.*

*[...]*

*Ja, after that the job was finished. Ja, the job was finished so that I was to stay at home.*

*At home in...?*

*In Mamelodi.*

*I see.*

*I was stay at Mamelodi. No... nothing to eat and I got nothing.*

*In a hostel?*

*Ja, I was in hostel.*

*I see.*

*I was in hostel that time. And then so... in 1985, 15 September I [was] baptized inside ZCC church [Zion Christian Church].*

(11 September 2007)



Besides biographical details, this part of Samuel's account shows the less well-known side of the apartheid building projects. Both kinds of constructions which Samuel helped to build could be seen as deeply symptomatic of the apartheid state ideology, preoccupied with Afrikaans population growth and safety, based on latent fear of "the barbarians" as J. M. Coetzee poetically put it at the time (Coetzee 1980). Within this very same framework, we can see Samuel – and millions of others – as actively participating in building up this project meant to maintain the status quo. But, as it is generally agreed on by historians, anthropologists, sociologists and others, the South African political economy was designed to create an environment of gross structural violence with very few possibilities of practical survival beyond full or at least partial participation in the system's economy (for the latest general historical introduction and bibliography see for example Hamilton, Mbenga and Ross 2011). Though the anti-apartheid movement constantly grew throughout the 1980s and the situation was turning more and more violent, large segments of black population simply tried 'to live their lives' joining open anti-apartheid activities and protests only at times or not at all. The millions of members of the so-called African independent or indigenous or initiated or instituted churches (AIC)<sup>73</sup> preaching peace and non-violence would be a good case in point.<sup>74</sup>

Various strategies had been historically developed by black labour migrants to deal with the systems of segregation and apartheid (Hunter 2009/1936, Mayer 1961 and 1980, Beinart and Bundy 1987 et al.). For many, one of the possible solutions to the dilemma was represented by the AIC.<sup>75</sup> Some of the larger churches like the Nazareth Baptist Church or the Zion Christian Church had been around for many decades representing, on the one hand, continuity of the missionary universalistic 'civilizing' and emancipatory project (Olwage 2003 and 2006) out of which many AIC's early founders grew and, on the other, a living attempt to re-create the Christian message within particular cultural and historical context (Kiernan 1974 et al., Comaroff 1985,

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<sup>73</sup> There is a general conceptually and ideologically based confusion about the meaning of the middle 'I' in AIC. I put it here in a roughly chronological order respecting the development of its historical usage from "independent" to "indigenous" and the most recent "initiated" and "instituted" (Venter 2004).

<sup>74</sup> The actual 'complicity' with the system or its 'subversion' are subjects for further discussion which I touch upon in this text only.

<sup>75</sup> There has been a general disagreement as for their classification depending on different approaches applied.

Schoffeleers 1991, Pretorius and Jafta 1997, Anderson 1999 and 2005, Anderson and Pillay 1997, Muller 2006/1999).<sup>76</sup> Especially the so-called Zionist churches, focused on healing rituals with their apolitical and anti-political rhetoric and stances, could become a convenient refuge for many, not only in the ideological sense but especially as imaginary and real spaces and places where coherent cultural practices could be re-constructed anew as refuges offering widely conceived healing of complexly structured illnesses.

Matthew Schoffeleers interestingly examined the relation between “practice of ritual healing and absence of political protest” pointing out aspects of collaboration of the Zionist churches with the apartheid state, using the term ‘political acquiescence’ which is “tending to justify withdrawal” from the ruling order “rather than fostering active resistance” (Schoffeleers 1991: 1-3). Joining Kiernan he thus criticised Jean Comaroff’s influential framework of the so-called latent resistance in Zionist practices (Comaroff 1985) trying to draw a more nuanced picture. His observations comply well with mine with regard to the construction of Samuel’s world view and habitus which showed a high level of what I would call a *coherent ambivalence* between resistance and collaboration or opposition and participation, which is paradigmatic of ZCC ideology too. I use this paradoxical term in order to emphasise that – since he accepted certain explanatory frameworks, in this case ZCC ideology – the various levels of ambivalence were no longer experienced as a problematic uncertainty but, instead, as an accepted state of affairs which need not to be challenged. As I have shown and as I am going to demonstrate further, this *coherent ambivalence* applies to Samuel’s various positions and activities during as well as after apartheid. In fact, we can see it as a ‘reflection’ of the same quality in the ZCC ideology and practice, including musical performance.

This was an environment where Samuel found a refuge after three years of living and working in Mamelodi and around. This important transformative step was motivated by his deteriorating health, which could be, in Western medical terms,

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<sup>76</sup> There was a discussion of the appropriateness of the term ‘acculturation’ or even ‘Africanization’ with regard to this issue. The use of both terms has been rather polemical and highly politicized offering thus a rather limited analytical potential. The issue of Christianity in Africa was productively addressed, along with other topics related to cultural identity, for example by Jean-Francois Bayart (Bayart 1996).

explained as somatization of the wider problems and dilemmas indicated above.<sup>77</sup> The problems at work were actually further enhanced by clinically indefinable health problems. Samuel began to suffer from pain in the lower part of his stomach, loins, and lumbar spine already in 1984. I cannot discuss the complex conceptualization of illness and the research about it so I will point out only that he basically had three possibilities in looking for healing. He could have tried Western medicine, traditional healers or among healing churches. Each of them offered a specific expertise and a specific conceptualization of his health problems. He went to a medical doctor who identified it as flatulence but the prescribed cure did not help. Significantly, he did not go to a traditional healer or he did not tell me. Instead, he turned to Christian churches, though he had not practiced any religion actively before. He went to Saint John Apostolic Church in Mamelodi where they tried to help him using an enema filled with 'holy tea' but it did not help him either in the long term. He felt sicker and sicker. In 1985 he lost his job and became even more desperate. He basically was just surviving spending his days lying on his bed in Mamelodi hostel. This difficult period culminated in Samuel's conversion to the Zion Christian Church.

The ZCC is the largest AIC in South Africa with a strong affiliation to Pedi cultural tradition, cultivating a spirituality of wholeness in the fragmented and deterritorialized world of old traditions falling apart. It has combined various world views and older African as well as European and American traditions into a coherent whole. It has historically attracted mostly poorer black rural and urban membership. Due to its striking Pedi affiliation it has had a strong appeal especially to Sepedi speaking migrants in Mamelodi and other townships in the region<sup>78</sup> for whom it has helped to re-construct a coherent world and re-create a new sensible habitus in conditions of cultural and social fragmentation, disorder and loss of personal dignity

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<sup>77</sup> There is a long tradition in dealing with the interconnection of illness and colonial or post-colonial condition beginning with Franz Fanon's psychological observations of his Algerian patients in the 1950s as suffering from 'the colonial syndrome' (Fanon 1967/1952 1970/1964) and developing into studies of various concepts of illness and healing in (Southern) Africa in contemporary medical anthropology and ethnomusicology (see for example Janzen 1992, Friedson 1996, Řezáčová 2010 and 2011 et al.).

<sup>78</sup> According to the 2011 census Pedi comprised 42.35 % of the population of Mamelodi, which makes them by far the largest single ethnicity in the township. Of the City of Tshwane municipality similar figures apply to Atteridgeville, for example. See <http://census2011.adrianfrith.com/place/799046> (accessed March 10, 2015).

(see for example Sundkler 1961/1948, Comaroff 1985, Anderson 1999 and 2005, Müller 2011 et al.). As such, it offered Samuel one of possible solutions in a situation of complexly structured distress and sickness which ZCC healing practices were able to conceptualize and heal more satisfactorily than Western medicine. Another solution could have most likely been to return home and undergo a traditional healing ritual, which could have nonetheless brought about a stigma of failure (Řezáčová 2010).<sup>79</sup>

Though a substantial part of my research focused on cultural meanings of ZCC musical repertoires and performances due to Samuel's membership in it, I focus on the immediate context of Samuel's involvement in the church only here. A separate chapter is devoted to his musical participation in ZCC performances and to his understanding of its musical practices. In the following passage from an interview on 18 September 2007, I quote Samuel's recollections of his dreamy vision of the ancestral calling, which brought him to the ZCC, his baptism, and healing.

LSK: *When I am sleeping at my hostel [...] it was... You see the bed, the double bed, somebody underneath me and I'm on the top, the hostel bed [bunk bed]. When I am sleeping, one of the good days, they say..., the voice come from somewhere... from nowhere. When I am sleeping they say: 'Go to Zion, you can be healed there.'*

VZ: *So who did tell you that you should go to Zion?*

*Somebody when I am sleeping, I hear the voice.*

[...]

*And how [did] it happened [that] you heard the voice? Was it like a dream?*

*Just like a dream. Somebody say, because I was sick, somebody told me: 'Go to Zion and then you can be healed there.'*

*When you were sleeping?*

*Ja.*

*It was no real person?*

*No.*

*You didn't know who is saying this.*

*Ja, I do not know. But when I go to baptize inside the church, they told me: 'This is your ancestors of you.' This is my [grand] parents, my grandmother or my grandfather who told me just like that. Because when he deceased he was a ZCC member. My grandmother [too]. My grandparents. [...] They were ZCC members already that time but they did not choose anybody to*

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<sup>79</sup> The problem and the concept of sickness among migrants caught in an irresolvable dilemma between 'home and the 'city' in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa has been addressed by medical anthropologists (see for example Řezáčová 2010 and 2011).

go Zion. They chose only me... [of] my family. Because nobody was ZCC of my family. My mother and my father they uses the traditional doctors.

[...]

*The voice, which told you [that], was it a male voice or was it a female voice?*

*Only the... I hear only the voice. [...] I do not know, I do not prefer [any of them]. But when I wake up [...] I go to somebody who wearing the ZCC emblem. It was my [cousin].*

[...]

*And he was a member of ZCC?*

*Ja, he was man of ZCC that time.*

*And it was in Mamelodi?*

*Yes, it was in Mamelodi and I told him that I want to go Zion. I want to go to baptize in Zion.*

[...]

*We prepare to go other Sunday. [...] He say: 'We can go [to the church] next weekend.'*

*So you had a dream and in two weeks you were in the church already.*

*Ja.*

[...]

*And then from that ZCC I saw many changes. [...] Because I was suffering that time*

*So what year was it, was it 1984?*

[...]

*1985, September 15.*

*September 15, it was the baptism.*

*Baptism of me.*

*So how long, or what did they tell you when you first entered the church?*

*They told me that, you see, your ancestors, it's them who sent you inside this church.*

*So was it some priest who told you this.*

*It's the prophet.*

*Prophet.*

*Ja. They [gave] me the advices, you see, so that I can live just like, they say: 'Can I drink Holy Tea, something that I can wash with and that I can do that and that and that.' You see?*

[...]

*Before you go to church you must baptize first, before you are a member of church. [...]*

[...]

*How was it? How was the baptism? How was it?*

*[...] It's inside the river. [...] Inside the river, there is a moving water.*

[...]

*Was it in Mamelodi?*

*Ja. It was in Mamelodi. [...] There is a river. We cross it all the time.*

[...]

*I was suffering that time, I got no job, I got nothing. But they told me we got the food for you and your children. If you got no children, forget! [...] I found a job today, tomorrow it [was] finished. [...] It was a bad luck.*

(18 September 2007)

Dreams and ancestral calling are not unusual in the context of the ZCC, and illness is often the main motivation of an individual to join the ZCC.<sup>80</sup> Identification of the voice as ancestral voice and as a voice of particular family members emphasises the sense of continuity on a family as well as cultural level suppressed in the situation of economic migration and deterritorialization of life in a township hostel. The fact that his parents were not ZCC members is pointed out by mentioning their use of traditional healers. Thus a clear line between the ZCC and this traditional practice is drawn. Samuel could easily find a ZCC member to talk to thanks to the Church's strong visual public presence, their members' distinct uniforms they always wear on Sundays and feasts, and thanks to silver badges in the shape of five-tip star, a symbol of ZCC, they wear on a piece of green cloth on their left chest all the time.

Prophets are an inseparable part of ZCC ritual too. Basically anyone may become a prophet but I observed that it is usually women who get into state of changed consciousness during ZCC services. Samuel's later explanation for this was that women are not strong enough to keep the 'spirit' or 'môya'<sup>81</sup> inside, which further indicates Samuel's conceptualization of gender order mirroring wider frameworks. There is a more or less fixed set of advices one gets from a prophet according to what Samuel mentioned here and in my own experience too. I am especially going to discuss the use of 'holy tea', because it turned out to be an important issue in order to understand Samuel's conceptualization of musical creativity. Baptisms take place in Mamelodi every Sunday and the custom of baptism by three immersions in running water shared by most of the AIC is maintained. In the last passage ZCC emerges as an independent economic power thanks to regular members' donations and its own business enterprises

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<sup>80</sup> Pretorius and Jafta quoting Lukhaimane wrote that "[...] 80 per cent of its followers joined because of an experience of illness or similar trouble [...]" (Pretorius and Jafta 1997: 223-4).

<sup>81</sup> Môya in Sepedi or moea in Sesotho, both pronounced roughly the same way, mean 'spirit' which is in the Christian context overlapping with the Holy Spirit but it keeps part of the original meaning (for more see Anderson 1991 and 2000).

able to help members in need. Samuel as a single man at that time failed to meet the requirements to be helped materially due to the strict rules for ZCC charity.

I started the interview 20 September 2007 with a general question how his life had changed since he joined the Church..

*VZ: How your life changed since you became member of ZCC?*

*LSK: My life changed altogether. I see the differences. Before... I was fighting [because of every misunderstanding]. [...] It was no right life... It is the Spirit of God who changes the people. The people who got the Spirit of God never do the evil things. They want him to come and work for God. Too many people are suffering because they do not know the way of God... youngsters.*

(20 September 2007)

He could clearly see changes in his life since his conversion. Never again did he mention the health problems that drove him to the Church. This might indicate that they really were of psychosomatic origin and disappeared when he “found peace” in the ZCC or that they somehow simply became no longer pressing. The Church started to function like a safety net for him very soon after his baptism, solving his critical financial situation. A member of the Church offered him the job of wall painter in his small painting business. The group of painters, ZCC members, basically followed constructors painting freshly finished houses. Not only work but his whole life soon became inseparably intertwined with the Church activities. It became one whole where everything was framed in a ZCC world view.

*It was good job. The first job was [in] Nkangala [district] in Mpumalanga. We paint schools, classrooms, windows. It take one year. Every Sunday we go to ZCC church branch there... [and] also during the week after the work. [...] We can find there holy tea and the prophe[ts] are there. They tell me how is the life [how to handle life]. And then we go to the [people's] houses and pray for the sick ones... for sick people so they can be healed. [We] go there with the congregation. [...] From 1987 we go to Johannesburg. Or before we go to Jo'burg... we paint in Hatfield, painted in flats near to the Standard Bank. We stay there just from January to February [1987]. Then we move to Jo'burg. [We were] paid low, R90 per two weeks. It's not good. I uses to cry to my elder so [that] they can increase my money. They increase the others but not me. I go to the church but they told me I [shall] marry first, [that] they have money just for [the ones who have] wife and the children not for me alone [single]. I go to the prophet to ask what is the matter about my life. [He said], it is my fault, because I have no family to support..., because I am a sinner. [...] [They] promises to increase but they do not. So they told me I go to the headquarter to the elders... throw there 50 cents into to trunk for the money so they can hear my*

*problem. So I go there in May 1987, straight to headquarter, I got that 50 cents..., throw it into the trunk... box for money... for the people who are crying so they are going to pray for you for that money. So that the blessing comes forward. I think it works very hard [well] for me.*

(20 September 2007)

Samuel got an increase and R120 per two weeks almost immediately, and R140 in September 1987, on the two-year anniversary of his baptism, he said, and he became luckier with women and finally met his future wife in June that year. His future wife had already had a two-year-old daughter with someone else and she had been already living in Mamelodi with her sister but she originally came from Limpopo too. Samuel clearly saw it as a gift from God mediated by the Church. He recollected that he met her when he was coming back from the baptism of his friend whom he had brought to the Church. Again, we can see that Samuel's life became completely interconnected with the Church, in fact there was no division between secular and religious life any more. Everything, all daily acts became part of the wider religious framework. In the course of the years it entered Samuel's habitus and so re-structured his subjectivity that he literally became an embodiment of the religious order.

*I think it was blessing from God. I think it was a gift from God because I am working for him, for God, so he want to open my things. That time I meet my wife, on that time when I am coming back [from] the baptism of other guy. [...] When we are at hostels we see the ladies just outside there... The girls were coming to hostels. [...]*

(18 September 2007)

He continued by telling that he was cleaning up his ZCC uniform in front of the hostel when the girls came there with a friend of him who joked that he will give one to him. Marriage became another important transformative moment in Samuel's life. But he must have solved several problems first. A typical and many times described situation among male migrants occurred, he finally had a girlfriend "at home" and another one in Mamelodi so he had to decide. The ZCC was to help again here with its prophetic visions. He must have proposed to her, get an agreement from her parents and pay 'lobola' or the 'bride wealth' to them. Only then the wedding could take place.

*[...] so it was to choose because I do not want to have two wives at that time, I must choose because I got one at home [Ga-Mphahlele] and I got one here [Mamelodi]. And this one... I do not know her... her family. [...] We just meet here in Mamelodi. But first I got to [ask] God to the prophet so that they can tell me the future, future of my life. They say to me: 'This is your wife but the ancestors of her... but ancestors of this lady are very difficult. You must pray. Keep on*



*praying [so] that they can allow you to marry her.’ So I prayed and I uses to pay lobola for her in 1987 in December because I got enough money. I got paid R140 [fortnightly]. [...] I marry her in 1988 in December. [...] I do not do the ‘white wedding’ so it was not a Pedi culture (sic!). You see my picture there, we were wearing the suit and the costume. [...] We do not slaughter the cow. Because, if you slaughter the cow, there is coming more, more, more people. We got no money to invite so many people. [...] The wedding was in Lebowakgomo, Ga-Mphahlele. Then I come to Jane Furse. It is name and surname, the first person who came [there], it is a medical place, just like hospital, part of Limpopo. It is my wife who is staying there – Glen Cowie. I think this one is a name of the hospital again, near to Jane Furse. [...] Many people come there. And from Glen Cowie is Jane Furse and from Jane Furse is... when you go to my place. From Jane Furse, you say, is Mamone, Ga- Marishane... then is Mashabela... [then] Ga-Masemola, there you cross the bridge. It’s the bridge of Olifants River... and then you cross the Olifants River... [there] is Phatudi bridge. Phatudi is former chief minister of Limpopo, former minister chief of Lebowakgomo.<sup>82</sup> And then you go to... straight to Lebowakgomo. And from there..., there is only the rural areas. And then you go back to Habakuk Shikwane.<sup>83</sup> Habakuku is the reed or cane furniture. This man was beginning selling by the road, the chairs... Now he got money from it... He built a house in Lebowakgomo. Glen Cowie was the place of my wife. It was the second day of the wedding. Then back to my family so she get to know my family... and then back to Mamelodi because we uses to stay in Mamelodi. Full time in Mamelodi.*

(20 September 2007)

Neither Samuel nor his future wife were from Mamelodi. She came from Glen Cowie, a village not so far from Ga-Mphahlele and stayed in Mamelodi with her sister. Although she had already had an almost four-year-old girl and she was pregnant with a boy by Samuel and although both of them stayed and planned to stay in ‘the city’ in Mamelodi, traditional procedures must have followed, including ‘lobola’. Despite Samuel’s difficult economic situation he managed to pay part of ‘lobola’ for her in December 1987. It consisted of R600, 2 goats and a “costume” for her mother and a “jersey” for her father. Purchase of a cow was postponed and never realized. He basically paid the wedding expenses himself as both sets of parents were poor. He mentioned that later he supported parents on both sides. It shows Samuel as someone insisting on traditional procedures. It demonstrates – together with his implicit mention of polygamy in the beginning of the quotation, which he later, in fact, realized – that he conformed to the gender order conventionally understood as African traditional, though it had by then become more and more difficult in conditions of apartheid’s political

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<sup>82</sup> Cedric Namedi Phatudi, Chief Minister of Lebowa bantustan 1973-1987.

<sup>83</sup> Habakuk Makgabutlane Shikwane, born 1928, a successful businessman with cane furniture.

economy.<sup>84</sup> The ZCC basically adopted this part of traditional culture so there was no conflict for Samuel there.

Though most of the second part of the passage quoted is not directly related to the biographical facts in the strict sense, it shows Samuel's style of narrating quite well. Moreover, by enumerating the place names he not only accurately marked route of his wedding journey between the first and the second wedding day, between the groom's and bride's house and back, respectively, but he also drew a map of an area which remained his home despite all the years spent in Mamelodi. It shows the ambiguity of spatial identity of many township dwellers who remain closely affiliated to places they were born in and grew up, though living in a township from decades. The place names spoke to him as deeply culturally meaningful. The landscape became familiar by the names recalled. Local histories were revived in the topography too, regardless of the people's reputation; a name of apartheid bantustan Chief Minister uttered next to a name of a businessman who was given as an example of success among *his* people. As with so many of Samuel's other narratives I only discovered its significance years after I recorded the interview.

Samuel finished his wedding narrative by mentioning the couple's move to Mamelodi. The figure "full time in Mamelodi" strongly expressed the idea of the place in Samuel's imagination. As if already the mere staying there was a job. As if it already was a work place where one's job was to fight for survival. 'Proper' work, if one found it, became just part of this greater and tougher job of living in the township. Samuel continued by describing the situation in Mamelodi after the wedding or since he met his future wife the year before. He mentioned the moment he left the hostel for the 'location' because there was no place for couples in the hostels. However, their status was the lowest among the township dwellers as they were just 'lodgers' surviving in rented backyard shacks as they were not allowed to build even their own shack. It was allowed only later. For Samuel it was marked by Mandela's release from jail. He, typically always spoke of himself only, never about his wife, whose name he never even

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<sup>84</sup> It was pointed out that it has been precisely this conflict between demands of traditional culture framed in traditionally defined gender order where the male pride was derived from male ability to provide wealth and security to the family, on the one hand, and the impossibility to meet these demands in apartheid and post-apartheid situation, on the other, which has often resulted in frustration among men and even family violence (Richter and Morrell 2006).

mentioned. This could have been influenced by their bad relations at the time of the interview.

*I found a shack. I hired the shack. And then after 1990 when Mandela was released from jail. The people... they allowed them so that they can build anywhere they need. That time [1987/1988] you must be lodged outside of other people's house, [in] the back yard, something like this (pointing to the backyard house in the garden where the interview was conducted). The shack was built only at the back of other people's property. No one can built a shack in a[ny] place [freely]. I pay [rent] just like R20 a month in 1988. I uses to lodge since 1987 when I meet my wife in June so from July I was there. We stayed together from July [1987]. [...] The first [backyard room/house] was very small and second too [behind his wife's sister's house]. That time I was still painting. [...] I got the job just inside the town Johannesburg... painting international hotel. Everyday from Mamelodi to Johannesburg, everyday. [...] We stay in Naledi that time, close to Denneboom. I got R140, they increase in 1988 to R170 because we are in hotel. The hotel owner give more money. [...] I buy clothes... the nice one. Johannesburg was very nice place with cloth.*

(20 September 2007)

The clothes he referred to here and the fashion he and his wife preferred at the time is documented and preserved on Samuel's own stylish photographs taken at that time. I return to this invaluable source in the next chapter.

Five days later we continued with the interviews and, besides discussing my visit to Samuel's mother's house in Ga-Mphahlele and the wedding in Lebowakgomo, we continued Samuel's biographical story. He recalled the birth of his first son and the never-ending troubles with looking for a job. His Zionist world view and practice framed and structured his activities, be it the birth of the child or job hunting. This passage is a very good example of his overall ZCC conceptualization of reality.

*I lose the job in 1988 because people are fighting [with] me. I was fired... with group of other people. But it was when I [made] the budget for the wedding. We are expecting a baby but I got no money... I had no work. 11 April 1989 the boy was born. Because I was a ZCC... When this boy is born I was inside the church that time... And the prophet is calling me secretly. They give me instructions what can I live [how I should live]. They say: 'Ancestors are happy because they give you a present.' They give me a present, present of a boy. They say I must be happy because the ancestors give me a present, with the child. I answered: 'Yes, I am happy, you give me the child. But what [about] the money I get to support this child? Because I am not working. Yes, I am happy but have no money to support the child.' They give me another instruction. They say: 'Now, you can drink the 'holy tea' and you must wash your body with it... And use the Vaseline. Then you must go back to your boss. He can give you a job. He [...] retrenched [you before] but God promise... [You] must go there [again]. Do not be afraid, go to talk with him and he can give you a job, I promise you.' [...] It was on Sunday that time. So I do this instruction. I drink*

*the 'holy tea'... and then I do everything. Early in the morning... on Monday... I got the money for ticket. I go with a taxi. It was near Waverley [part of City of Tshwane today], it is on the other side of the mountain, early in the morning. When this man, the boss, go to the job early in the morning. He see me: 'Oh, Sam, it is you. Long time I do not see you. What do you want? Are you working?' I say: 'I am not working.' [He said:] 'Do you want to work?' I say: 'yes.' He say: 'Go, go with me. I got another job. You are going to paint corrugated iron, just like this, at Pretoria West.' [He] give [me] a lift on the 'bakkie' [in South African English a light pick-up truck]. Then I was there. I begin to paint the corrugated iron. [...] From then I am working, working, working... till 1990. In 1990 the job is finished, there is no work. I forget what [pay I get] then. I forget [...] but it was little bit higher, between 140 and 200. And in 1990 I finish it [...] all in December.*

(25 September 2007)

This indicates that Samuel's wife was already pregnant at the time of the wedding. It shows his and their permanently desperate economic situation. It can be summed up that most of his contracts were shorter than one year and some of them lasted just a couple of weeks in the 1980s. In such a situation there was absolutely no space for creating a sensible economic stability for the household. This state of permanent economic insecurity was to be balanced by the wide religious, social and cultural framework of the ZCC operating on many levels, providing its members not only with the sense of overall ideological coherence but often also with practical support thanks to its various formal and informal networks and organized charity. As it has been pointed out, many aspects of the AIC in South Africa, in fact, function as social systems parallel to the state's official, but often dysfunctional, structures. It has been true of both pre- as well as post-1994 era.

Samuel's previously quoted narrative draws on Biblical structures in its rhetoric at two moments at least. There is the disobedient protest in his objection: "Yes, I am happy, you give me the child. But what [about] the money I get to support this child? Because I am not working. Yes, I am happy but have no money to support the child." I see it as parallel to protests of several Biblical protagonists against God based on the 'yes, but' structure. And then there is the act or the 'leap of faith' in the narrative of his going to his former boss, in spite of the fact that he fired him before, based on his obedience to the elders of the church and on his religious faith. Again, it may be read parallel to the well known story of the apostles' disbelief that they should cast their nets on the other side of the boat, though they have already tried one side, resulting in the miraculous catch of fish (John 21: 6) and parallel to other stories as well. If we consider Samuel's early and intimate familiarity with the Bible since his school years, his further

deepened knowledge of it as a ZCC member and later as a priest, such reading becomes acceptable and quite plausible. It does not matter whether he used this rhetoric consciously or not. but we can see Samuel's deepened understanding of his situation through Biblical stories and religious conceptualization. The ZCC world view had become fully integrated into his subjectivity not only as a ZCC member but also as a ZCC preacher.

Since 1990 Samuel's work situation started to change slowly. Though he still worked for other people's small businesses in the construction sector at the beginning, it was for black employers, his jobs began to be more diverse and he started to experiment with doing his own business too.

*I begin to work in suburbs, with the black people... We do 'piece jobs' ['part-time', usually weekend jobs paid for finishing particular tasks, very popular as a source of extra income among black workers till today] in Mamelodi. [...] We were builders... building stone walls.*

(25 September 2007)

Here he recollected that the boss did not allow him to build, though he was a skilled bricklayer. He was allowed to carry bricks on a wheelbarrow only. Instead of being a supervisor he just worked as a helper. The same story of working without being paid repeated again. Now, the injustice was strikingly noted by a ZCC member.

*[We] worked for six weeks without payment. You see? [But] God help me a lot. I saw a lot of miracles from the Church. That man [the owner of the firm] was a crook, [he] take other people's things [...]. He was a trickster... [...] of the same church with me. [He] do tricks to other people. [He] never pay us. He take everything... R700. Only R150 is left [for me and another worker]. [That time I] build a stone wall... From that time... it is very nice. When you cross the boundary... from Denneboom when you go to 'Mandela'... on the left... you can see the wall, you cross the bridge and a bump, you can see the stone wall from that time. [...] And from 1991 I had my own construction. I hire the people. [A white] man was searching for someone who can work with stones. [Having seen them there,] he said: 'I need you.' I hire five people. It was good time.*

(25 September 2007)

Besides showing pride in his work, Samuel mentioned an important moment when he started his own small construction business. He recalls this time with certain pride, talking about his much improved economic situation. At that time he helped to substantially rebuild his parent's house in Maralaleng in Ga-Mphahlele, originally built and furnished with his help in 1984, enlarging it from two rooms to the current four with a large front room for accepting guests, clearly designed after 'white' houses. He particularly proudly mentioned buying the large French windows in Pretoria for the new

extension. “[I was] enjoying to be boss... because the money I earn is very, very interesting. I got R1000 a month in my pocket.” Then the situation worsened again.

*[...] Then after that 1992, the job was finished. [...] I begin to suffer again, No job, nothing to eat. We move to ‘Mandela’ [from Naledi]. It was o ‘zozo’ house. They stole my camera there. [...] I go to police... to report. No help. [...] We did not have a cent... stay in somebody’s shack.*

(25 September 2007)

They had two children at the time already and they lived in a one-room shack loaned to them by somebody who stayed somewhere else. The rapidly changing wider political situation affected them too. They were given a site for their own house. So after ten years spent in Mamelodi Samuel got an opportunity to live in his own house for the first time.

*I begin to build [my] own house... of river stone and sand in ‘Mandela’, Phase 3. I got no corrugated iron to make the roof. [So I] begin to search ‘piece jobs’ again to build for other people.*

(25 September 2007)

He earned the money to buy the corrugated iron for the roof and the family moved in there in 1992. Not very successfully, he started to sell sweets, atchar (a South African name for popular Indian mango pickles), fresh milk, and chicken meat from house to house.

But soon after this he started his most successful business so far – constructing ‘zozo’ houses in Mamelodi (see Figure 43). Not only did it pay very well but it gave stable and long-term income to the whole family for the next six years until 1999. Success of the whole industry was enabled by a continuous flow of rural immigrants to the city since the late 1980s after lifting the ‘influx control’ law in 1986, a trend which culminated in the 1990s but basically have not finished till now. Interestingly, he mentioned his extra job as a photographer here, to which I shall return later. Then he specified their constructing strategies and rates in quite some detail.

*In 1993 I begin to build ‘zozo’ houses. My sister’s child gave me a camera Ricoh. The camera is another part of my job. I work for somebody... He do not pay me so [I start my] own business. I get the loan money from brother of my wife, R800. [I buy] a lot of blank [...] palette[s] of tin [...]. One-room house is R350, [made of] five corrugated iron [palettes]. One and a half room was R450 [made of] seven corrugated iron [palettes]. But I do one room with six corrugated iron [palettes] so that they can be big. Two rooms was R800 in 1993. I work in ‘zozo’ construction until 1999. [...] I was with three helpers. Sometimes, it took one day to built two houses. We build every day... We work with deposits. When we got it, we start to do the [wooden] frames.*

(25 September 2007)

In 1996 Samuel finally managed to build a house he could be proud of for his family, the house I visited in Dilankulu Street in Extension 5 in 2006 (see Figure 57). He bought five stands where normally five ‘zozo’ houses could be built so that he could build a large house. When they were moving in he threw a party for the whole family. It was to purify the house. In order to get ancestors on his side they slaughtered a goat.

*I do the nice party with all my family relatives. They pray so that the ancestors are with me and God. To everyone... I give one sack of mealie-meal [flour made of maize] when they go back home. So you see, if I got the money I want parties. I need the people to be pleased all the time. [...] but now I got nothing. I uses to do birthday parties for my children.*

(25 September 2007)

In 1999 he stopped constructing the houses because people often did not pay him and then blamed him for asking money, ‘blackmailing’ them. They even reported him to the police, he was detained for a weekend and was only released when he paid bail. He decided to stop in order “not to be killed”.

This bright period was marked too by his elevating status within the ZCC ranks. As a dedicated member of the Church Samuel was ordained a preacher in 1996 and a priest (*moruti*) allowed to baptize, besides other things, in 1998. According to my observations and Samuel’s insider information, the ZCC is strictly hierarchically structured and, unlike most other AIC, any appointment such as this one demands approval on several levels from the particular congregation to the local headquarters to the Church’s main headquarters in Moria in Polokwane. In Samuel’s case it was the same, he received the ‘white certificate’ and ‘blessing papers’ (*mogau*) as a priest and was “blessed” by a flag of which he believed was a flag of the senior ZCC ‘Brass band’ (*Diphala tše di kgolo*) as one of the main symbols of the ZCC in Morija. I write more about the ZCC symbolism in another chapter. In 2011 he recollected the ritual in Moria.

When they blessed us to be a pastor or priest they just uses this flag. I do not know [whether] this [is the] one [of the ‘Brass band’] but they uses the flag. We were inside the church [the main church in Morija]. That church, they told us, can take ten thousand people. Yes. We are standing. They just spread the flag over our heads, just like that. So that now, before they blessed us, they just read Matthew 28[19]. It follows: ‘Go to the nation so that you can teach the nation. And bless the people so that they can repent and be baptised.’ It is the verse written for us. It is why we uses all the time to spread the evangel... when we are there and there we just spread this... Because of what? We were just blessed for this. This is why we can do this. Because we bind ourselves so that we can work for this peace, which should struggle to bring this peace. Yes.

(15 September 2011)

His translation of the Biblical verse is rough but it shows again his ability to use the Bible with competence. The singular form, the nation, instead of the correct plural, the nations, could be a relic of the common form of talking about South Africa as a nation (*setšhaba*) in the public discourse. If this was so, it would have interestingly situated Samuel as a priest chosen to serve the South African nation.

Such an appointment does not require any formal Biblical or theological education, though it may be an advantage. On the other hand the Church itself organizes various kinds of meetings for differently defined groups of members (children, single men or women, married men or women, priests etc.) in order to educate and mentor them on the level of a congregation, local headquarter or the whole Church on a weekly, monthly, yearly or other basis. 'ZCC knowledge' is thus transferred and distributed among its members. As he told me, Samuel always liked to take part in these meetings and he was active as a volunteer for the Church too, especially when he was younger. In the period between 1992 and 1999 he, for example, used to sell 'holy tea' and fat cakes in a church shop in the Zion City of Morija during the festive events the ZCC organizes three times a year.

During several ZCC services in Hazeldean in 2006 and then 2008 and 2009 I could observe that Samuel liked preaching and enjoyed his social position as a preacher (see Figure 58). It could be said that next to the musical performance it was another opportunity for him to be at the centre of attention, which he always liked and often expressed. As I argue in another chapter, Samuel skilfully combined roles of entertainer and educator which met in his priestly position. As he expressed several times he especially enjoyed his task as baptizing priest in Mamelodi on Sundays because of the excitement of the moment, adding that some priests did not like as much as he did. The church priestly performance often overlapped with the musical one in the use of topics and lyrics of his own songs. He performed various church songs out of the immediate religious context and generally in the overall style of his performances which were always meant both to entertain and educate.

His career of a solo musician started in the 1990s too. As he repeated many times during interviews he had loved music since his childhood. I wrote about his mentioning his musical creativity as a child when inventing songs for his younger siblings, singing in school choirs and also buying a radio. He emphasized too that ZCC deepened his knowledge of music and a passion for it immensely. But it was not before 1995 that he bought his accordion. He remembered carrying the instrument with him



“just as a toy” or something to show off but he did not know how to play it for quite a long time. He only learned to play it two years later helped by someone he met in Mamelodi. Since then he has developed his own style and learned hundreds of songs, his own, secular wedding songs, religious songs etc. so that he is basically able to start to accompany almost anything, anywhere. I write about his musical development, repertory and performances in detail in a separate chapter.

When he finished the ‘zozo’ construction business in 1999 a difficult period started again. He could not find a long-term job and lived basically on temporary ‘piece jobs’ for three years. In 2002 he finally switched from the construction business which had employed him with numerous interruptions for the past 20 years since 1982. He became a gardener at the University of Pretoria. He worked as a subcontractor for Khomanani, a firm which had a contract from the University to maintain its greenery (see Figure 46). For the most of my research I knew him as a gardener there and in the course of time I became quite familiar with his daily routines in this position as I often visited him there during the week. He worked at the University with a number of other unskilled or semi-skilled workers such as male gardeners and female ‘cleaning ladies’ with whom he commuted daily between Mamelodi and Pretoria and with whom he either shared his ZCC affiliation or, for example, membership in a Metrorail Choir or in a Mamelodi based social club/‘stokvel’ he belonged to. I could see him maintaining a rich network of social relations there. He was well known among his fellow workers from Mamelodi as a performer on the train and therefore as a kind of public person within the milieu of the unskilled workers at the University of Pretoria. I write about his musical performances on the commuter train elsewhere.

For the more senior maintenance staff he was a nobody and the perverse structure of contract relations where subcontracts were preferred to contracts by the University resulted in a situation of permanent uncertainty for the workers. Samuel compared his situation to that of the one of his predecessors in this regard, referring to the man who used to stay in the backyard house behind the student house where I stayed in 2005 and 2006 and who, according to Samuel, was not only allowed by the University to live there but got a pension as its former employee. On the one hand, Samuel was quite happy about the steady income he had there as a gardener but he complained about the low pay. In 2002 he was paid R960 a month. At the time of the interview in 2007 he was paid R1200 a month and it slowly raised up to R1800 in 2009. He complained that he spends all the money for the month fare and food and that

nothing remains left at the end of the month. In 2011 I found him in a similar position at the University of South Africa where he worked as a gardener again in its Sunnyside Campus. I went to interview him there number of times that year too. He did not stay there for a long time. I got a text message on my cell phone in 2013 from him that he does not work there anymore and that he – as so many times before – makes a living selling sweets on the train in the week and doing temporary ‘piece jobs’. Though he has kept me updated assuring me that he is “fine”, last time in February 2015, he has not answered my questions about work and other things since then.

Samuel’s family life and relationships were discussed during this series of interviews too. The discussion was initiated by me as I was getting confused by Samuel’s various relationships, women and children whom I was meeting or hearing about. Samuel would not have probably started to talk about it himself. When asked, he spoke about it freely and without hesitation, though. I am going to briefly outline the main features of his family life and relationships in addition to what has already been mentioned. It is an inseparable part of his biography and it serves as one of the inspirational sources for his songs too. At the same time I am not going to expose any personal details beyond basic data concerning other people, as they are not part of the research project.

During my research Samuel maintained relationships with four women. He called all of them “wives”, though he was legally married to the oldest one only. He had long-term relationships with all of them and with three of them he had at least one child. With the fourth one he had no children. He claimed to have seven children all together, though the oldest daughter was his stepdaughter only born before the relationship started. While in 2006 he still invited me into his large house he shared with his legal wife since 1996 (see Figure 54), in 2007 and 2008 I already visited the house in ‘RDP’ he shared with the second “wife” and in 2009 and 2011 he brought me to the house in Castro Street in Phase 1 he shared with his fourth “wife” (see Figure 59) whom I met most often already since 2007. He moved between the houses of the other three women, especially since 2007.

His first and the only legal wife had a special status. She was the subject of many of Samuel’s photographs from the 1980s. She was the one who continued to live in the large house he built for the family in 1996. She was a member of ZCC ‘Female choir’. She had four children with Samuel. They had a daughter who was 23 years old (Samuel’s stepdaughter), a son who was 18 years old, and two other daughters who

were seven and three years old in 2007 according to an interview with Samuel conducted 11 September 2007.

During the same interview he mentioned that “when I got the first woman I saw she do not respect me” and he found another one for himself “so that I can consolidate” in 1994. He had a boy with her in 1996 but soon she found someone else and he did not maintain the relationship with her till 2005 when she was free again. She was an owner of the house in ‘RDP’ part of Mamelodi. He met his third “wife” in 2002 and they had a girl in 2003. She lived in D6 in the old part of Mamelodi near Denneboom station. The fourth one he met in 2005 but they had no children at the time. She lived in Castro Street in Phase 1 in Mamelodi. She was a ZCC member. Samuel mentioned another son who should have been 21 years old in 2007 but did not relate him to any of these women and I never met him.

He never mentioned any problem he would have had with this arrangement in any religious or legal sense. Though there apparently is no clear view of polygamy in the ZCC, its attitude to it is generally quite benevolent based on the Pedi traditional part of the Church’s culture. Samuel expressed his will to marry all these three women, identifying his financial situation as the main obstacle. At the time of the research he did not have means to support his legal family, never mind other families. He expressed his hope to make some extra money from the album he recorded in 2007 in order to support them but it did not work. This inability to fulfil his traditionally conceived role as a man was a source of constant frustration for him (see Richter and Morrell 2006).

Most of the biographical data in this chapter were collected during a series interviews devoted to Samuel’s biography in September 2007, supplemented by information acquired in later interviews focused on other issues. This biographical outline should provide the basic framework for further discussion of particular aspects of Samuel’s various activities.

## **“All the Time I Used to Match.”**

### **Capturing the Festive Everyday**

I was supposed to shoot a video of Samuel’s accompanying dance choir in “RDP” in Mamelodi on Sunday 16 September 2007. Samuel picked me up at the crossroad of Church Street and Hilda Street at about 11 o’clock in the morning. He had already been

sitting in a minibus-taxi from Pretoria downtown and we continued to Mamelodi. Having made some shopping in Denneboom station for lunch, we got in another minibus-taxi and were driven to Mandela from where we walked to the house of one of his “wives” where he stayed at the time in “RDP”. While he was cooking preparing the meal of chicken skeletons, tomatoes and onion which went along with “braai pap”, we were chatting with his friends who popped in the house from time to time. When they left Samuel brought a large plastic bag from another room and began to take out smaller packages of old photographs and photo albums. He began to lay out the pictures on the floor made of carpet squares in the front room telling me who is who on them. I realized that what I could see before me was an illumination of his 1980s biography I had been told about so far, moreover, taken from Samuel’s subjective perspective. However, much more than just an illumination of the interview narratives, the pictures represent an independent narrative and are an important source on their own.

In this chapter I try to offer an introduction to some possible ways of looking and interpreting this collection of photographs in the context of Samuel’s wider cultural and social negotiations. The actual photographs constitute an essential part of this short chapter but they are not included in the main body of text of technical reasons. Instead, substantial selection of these photographs is included in Appendix D along with detailed captions giving information as to where and when these photographs were taken and what are their notable features or possible interpretations in relation to the problems discussed in this as well as other chapters. This chapter should thus serve just as a short introduction to the actual collection and offer yet another perspective on some aspects of Samuel’s life as indicated in the previous or following text. My own experience of looking at these pictures is essential here too.

I shall start by a brief outline of Samuel’s photographic activities as he described them to me. Though there are a couple of photographs from his pre-Mamelodi times taken by other people, most of the photographs were taken by him after he came to Mamelodi. Already since 1982 when Samuel came to the hostel and bought his first Praktica camera he had taken pictures of people to earn some additional money and for his own enjoyment. This camera was stolen in 1992 during a burglary into the ‘zozo’ house in ‘Mandela’ part of Mamelodi where he lived with his wife and the two children that time. He got a Ricoh camera in 1993 from his sister’s son, which he used till 1999 when it got broken and he did not replace it again. There are no more recent pictures in his collections taken by him. All the photographs are colour photographs, there are no

black and white ones among them. Though many of them are worn out and sometimes partly damaged, they are relatively well preserved on the whole. The photographs I could see were taken between the early 1980s through 1990s. Many others got lost during his numerous movings from place to place, which is a feature of life in a township where nothing ever gets preserved for long before it is lost or stolen or destroyed by dust, mud, water, fire or whatever else.<sup>85</sup> The lost pictures as missing gaps in the ‘story’ could be thought of as witnesses of life in a township along with the preserved ones. Many of the pictures miraculously survived stored and masked in several layers of envelopes and plastic bags and thanks to Samuel’s extraordinary care.

The essential value of the collection rests on the fact that the photographs were taken by Samuel himself. There was no other exoticizing or mediating eye behind the camera or around the scene, which would have influenced the composition or disturbed the joy of capturing what I call the *festive everyday*, which is often so evident in these pictures. That is not to say that various cultural patterns of the ‘white world’ would not be identifiable there. On the contrary, their presence is strong and for some perhaps surprising; stylized poses, fashionable clothes, attributes of status, family scenes, documents of individual achievements. Scenes so familiar, yet so strange for me as a white European observer. Their essential quality lies precisely in the tension caused by the familiar feeling they evoke in me, a kind of ‘my father could have taken them’, on the one hand, and of their quality of being *not quite* like pictures ‘my father would have taken’, on the other. These pictures were similar to stylized photographs of my parents when they were young or our family photographs from the time of my childhood. Yet there was something strange and unsettling in them at the same time for me. As if the mimicry were not quite complete to use Bhabha’s famous phrase “almost but *not quite*” (Bhabha 2004: 128), as if they actually were somehow dangerously incomplete (Ferguson 2002). I find it important to articulate this initial tension I felt but could not articulate in the beginning as a useful point of departure.

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<sup>85</sup> Every year I gave all the pictures I took or videos I shot there to the people concerned, developed on paper or on CDs and DVDs in more than one copy. The following year I was often asked for them again as the media were destroyed by improper storage (dust, water, mud etc.) in the meantime. One might argue that the people should have stored them better but, having come to know the places quite closely myself, I knew that they simply could not while living in the conditions they were. Anything valuable and fragile preserved in poorer parts of the township for over a longer period of time is a small miracle.

It is precisely this tension that has confused and unsettled many about South African black culture for more than a century. In the field of music there is the study on African modernity – ‘Africa Civilized, Africa Uncivilized’ – by Veit Erlmann, who demonstrates the ambivalent reception of the South African choir in Great Britain at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century caused by the music’s diversion from the audience’s exotic expectations (Erlmann 1994). It sounded too close and familiar to be African. It sounded more like Victorian hymnody than primitive “musical utterances” but it was not quite like it either. Grant Olwage describes the delicate aspects of hearing determining the final verdict about the “black voice” in South African choral music (Olwage 2004). Similarly, Christine Lucia mentions her colleague’s exclamation about the “strangely familiar” in the beginning of her chapter on 20<sup>th</sup>-century black choral composition (Lucia 2008). All these texts deal with situations somehow revolving around Bhabha’s “almost the same, but *not quite*” on different levels, which had wider implications for the reception of such music.

I think we should look at Samuel’s photographs in a similar way. Along with Samuel’s music they could be seen as a worthless pop cultural kitsch of no artistic value from the high art perspective. But from a sociological or anthropological perspective they could be seen as a creative and conscious construction of his world and as powerful media of cultural and social negotiation aimed at assuring its actors’ self-evaluation or expressing their social aspiration.

It has been pointed out by several researchers of (South) African black (popular) culture that it bears features of ‘both’ worlds. Various concepts from acculturation to hybridity, from evolutionary schemes to subversive mimicry, depending on the researcher’s ideological affiliation, have been used to describe this (for a useful summary see Ferguson 2002). Rather than subscribe to any of these interpretations when dealing with Samuel’s photographs, instead, I want to present the photographs as media for re-constructing cultural and social coherence on the subjective level, as re-constructing its actor’s social selves. I would call these photographs scenes of the *festive everyday* following the usage of Bourdieu’s term ‘solemnization’ in his sociological study of photography (Bourdieu 1990). There are captures of everyday life but always carefully stylized and constructing a particular image of one or another ideal, of one or another aspiration. They helped to re-construct certain image of Samuel, of other people close to him and of his life in general.

The more the reality differed from the ideal the more care he obviously devoted to its realization and appearance in these pictures. The visual image was supposed to make the ideals come true via the act of looking at the pictures retrospectively. Do not they picture what once – at the moment of taking the photograph – *was* reality, after all? There seems to be not much difference from what Bourdieu argued to discover among French working class taking pictures in the 1960s (Bourdieu 1990). Using the essential features of photograph as a media Samuel literally realized certain imaginary worlds through his photographs, which were thus ‘coming true’. He especially used the potential of stylization of people and things and he carefully worked with framing. Thus all the pictures show traces of reality and falsehood at the same time. The pictures are clearly aspirational of higher social classes whose images are derived from the ideal basically defined by white South African middle (or lower middle) class life style. It seems to mimic them not because it would have desired to subvert them but with a disturbing honesty. As in many other areas Samuel world view and habitus can not be interpreted in terms of resistance to the white world but equally in terms of collaboration and active participation.

It would be wrong to think that Samuel simply started to systematically describe every picture that afternoon when he laid out the photographs before me on the floor (see Figure 45). As in many other research situations, it was a matter of a fleeting moment which came and passed rather fast. It took about 20 minutes only before he left for the kitchen and started to cook lunch for us not to return to it any more. I managed to take pictures of about forty photographs which I found most essential for they were, unlike others, contained in a special album which Samuel presented first and with most care to me. I managed to shoot a video of a number of other pictures capturing Samuel’s explanations along (screenshots from the video are used as stills in the Appendix D). But most of them I did not capture at all and many of them I did not even get to see myself. However, I believe the ones I have got and which I selected for this text are representative enough to support my arguments. Though all these pictures are from Samuel’s private collection, he encouraged me to look at them and to take pictures of them in order to use them in my research.

Most of the pictures included in Appendix D were taken in the second half of the 1980s and are part of a photo album. I deliberately cut the pictures in the Appendix D the way that their immediate visual context in the album can be seen. Many of photographs are from the time Samuel met his future wife, his wage increased and, as

he mentioned in the one of the interviews, he worked in Johannesburg where he bought clothes for himself and for her. We can see stylized pictures with him and her posing against various backgrounds. There are their wedding pictures as well as pictures of other family members and friends. All the pictures are quite telling and with a rich potential of further interpretation. They would certainly deserve more thorough discussion than I can offer here. But still, I find it important to include them in the text and provide them with the basic explanatory framework at least. The captions added to each picture provide a further set of information relevant to every picture.

When Samuel was laying the photographs out on the floor before me he was taking them out randomly as they came to his hand, more recent next to the older ones without any linear chronology. They had not been ordered in any way at the moment of being taken out. Similarly, the album was not ordered chronologically either. There were older pictures next to more recent ones and one set of pictures spread over the whole album. The relationships and hierarchies among the pictures were not chronological. They made up other but certainly no less relevant relationships that were sensible to their organizer. As it can be seen in the last picture of the Appendix D, having taken the photographs out, Samuel immediately started to sort them out into variously organized piles whose logic only he understood. This process might serve as a metaphor for the construction of a biographical narrative: the same way as the photographs are sorted out and variously hierarchized into sensible piles, so the fragments of the narrative are organized and re-organized in order to communicate something sensible in one or another way.

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There are different lenses being used for narrating different periods and events of Samuel's life, though. It is not possible to say that we are told a conceptually homogenous story. The childhood era, for example, is relatively safe from the imposition of the ZCC perspective and instead is driven by rather Western secular or modernist images and frameworks of the successful and clever pupil and student, on the one hand, and the emerging music lover and musician on the other, along with the common nostalgia for the lost time of childhood and also for the African tradition.

I would argue that these secular or modernist images and frameworks became pertinent and useful precisely because it was the only period in Samuel's life when this secular and modernist logic seemingly or predominantly worked for him. It was the



time when he basically got what he wanted through his own effort, for example the status of a good student for being clever and diligent at school. It is the only period of his life for which the modernist vision of linear progress can be used with some success and he strikingly used it too in his narrative of this period. As such it is defined by a kind of predictability where causes result in predictable effects solely based on one's activity. The end of the period is already marked by its crumbling when Samuel had to temporarily leave the secondary school and work on the farm for a year. Ultimately, it was to be destroyed at the moment he fully entered the world and logic of the apartheid political economy and left the school and home for good. We can see the school system, albeit crippled by the Bantu education system, as the last bastion of modernity as defined by the Western Enlightenment's and other modern humanist ideals (developed in South Africa by the missionary education system), within the wider frame of the anti-modernist apartheid ideology.

The moment that Samuel left Ga-Mphahlele for Mamelodi in March 1982 can be seen as the end of the applicability of the modernist vision of predictable individual progress based on one's own diligence. This modernist ideal fell apart at the moment of the difficulty of finding a job, at the workplace, and in the hostel. It was not wholly unpredictable but its predictability was of a different and more hostile kind. Neither this ideal, nor the traditional African one ever completely vanished for Samuel. Both lived on in parallel with other realities. His mentioning of buying clothes for himself and his girlfriend and wife and then especially his stylized and carefully framed photographs tell us an interesting story about the new situation. They show Samuel as participating in the secular capitalist ideology of success and materialism and some of them are also well in line with the historical imagery of black South Africans modelling themselves after Afro-Americans as part of their identity negotiations (see Olwage 2008). At the same time, interestingly, there clearly is also an attempt to accommodate the new situation to the 'traditional' framework when Samuel conceptualized the hostel as an acceptable and even desirable way of living for single men (compare to Coplan 1994). There apparently is no single preconceived ideological framework within which we could define Samuel in the beginning of his stay in Mamelodi in the 1980s.

The more or less coherent vision of one's place in the world, be it based on an African traditional or modernist understanding, fell apart in the situation of economic and other distress, resulting in a deep crisis. It was only 'natural' that Samuel finally turned to the ZCC for help. The Church not only provided him with new culturally

sensitive as well as modern (in a new sense) ideology and practice capable of making the world coherent and his position in it sensible once again, it helped him also practically and materially in the long run. The old modernist secular ideology of progress was replaced by this new ideology capable of dealing with fragmentedness and deterritorialization of the life in a township hostel. It goes without saying that it would be wrong to think of ZCC ideology as merely religious in the Western sense. It has offered a complex system of solutions to various situations produced by South African modernity since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In sum, it was the African Christian ideology and practice that provided Samuel with the new framework for conceptualization of the hostile world driven by apartheid ideology as he experienced it as a hostel dweller and a migrant worker. Moments of such religious homogenization can be clearly identified in Samuel's narrative since the time of his conversion on and sometimes even projected retrospectively.

The post-apartheid period brought about new challenges, namely the end of the predictable evil of the apartheid political economy and the beginning of the new unpredictable capitalist system of free market economy (Ferguson 2008). In Samuel's biography this is marked by a completely new phenomenon for him: entrepreneurship. At the same time we can see changes in the overall patterns of his work positions, occupations and earnings. There are moments of success immediately followed by moments of deep economic uncertainty, which are new compared to the apartheid period. After the stormy 1990s of dramatic ups and downs Samuel takes a worse paid job in exchange for a stable income in 2002. His attempt to make success in the music industry by recording his first album in 2007 belongs to this period too. We can see new opportunities of the post-apartheid era, some of them actively and creatively taken by him, side by side with the crippling historically derived continuities of structural inequality (lack of proper education resulting in unskilled or semiskilled work positions, post-apartheid geographies enforcing migrancy and commuting etc.). He, like many of his fellows, found himself trapped between the capitalist myth of unbounded individually achievable success, on the one hand, and the crippling reality of the apartheid historical heritage together with the unpredictability of the capitalist economy in the emerging democracy, on the other (Ferguson 2002).

We can see Samuel as discovering and playing with different ideologies in the new era. He was at the centre of various ideological dynamics. He participated in the secular ideology of success when pursuing his own construction enterprise for six years,

building the new house, throwing parties for relatives and children as well as when later attempting to succeed in the music industry. At the same time, we can see him retrieving to the financially secure and peaceful environment of a university gardener in which he spent the ten following years. We can see him too as a traditionalist trying to revive the values of 'traditional Pedi culture' among the township youth, as I will still show. We can see him as a musician pursuing his solo career performing his own entertaining and socially critical songs and organizing various musical collectives around him with an uncertain vision of a success in the music industry, next to his disciplined involvement in religious choral singing as a member of the ZCC. Though the post-apartheid period was clearly the most dynamic in terms of various competing ideologies, it was the ZCC world view what ultimately provided him with the most stable and reliable ideological and practical support the whole time. And this is true in spite of the temporary suspension of his membership between 2006 and 2007 and his being deprived of the priesthood position since then. Although ZCC has proved to be the most viable framework for Samuel for the past 30 years, it never completely excluded or replaced other competing cultural frameworks.

## **SAMUEL'S MUSICAL WORLDS**

# **Samuel as a Member of the Zion Christian Church**

## **The Musical Empire of Zion: An Outline**

Among the fairly large body of literature on various religious practices of Zionist and other African ‘independent’ churches from various academic fields very few titles are relevant for an ethnomusicologist dealing with the musical culture of the ZCC. There are two main reasons for this. First, the term Zionist can refer to an extremely great variety of religious formations across South Africa, which do not have so much in common when one tries to understand specific music-cultural meanings. Thus a number of texts with ‘Zion’ or ‘Zionist’ in their title are ruled out. Second, most of the existing literature belongs to missiology, theology, and religious studies, some of it to anthropology but virtually none to ethnomusicology or musicology.

The missiological, theological and religious studies literature (see for example Sundkler 1961/1948, Naudé 1995) does not usually include music and if it does it deals with lyrics only and from a theological point of view. Much of this literature, too, suffers from an unreflexive religious bias. Anthropological studies, though more useful (for example West 1975, Comaroff 1985), shares the same problem, that most authors tend to ignore sound, let alone deal with even a small segment or aspect of the huge, diverse and complexly structured repertory of the ZCC. Outside this scattered information of imbalanced quality and different approaches, there is no single publication thoroughly dealing with the musical culture of the ZCC as part of its overall ideology and practice, and this dissertation is thus the first attempt in this field. Blacking’s work on Venda-speaking Zionists – not on the ZCC specifically – remains the only serious ethnomusicological trace in the literature (Blacking 1981). However, its overall argumentation and framing in terms of political resistance is somewhat outdated today and, though it has some strong general points, it does not contribute much to our knowledge of ZCC musical practices specifically.

James Kiernan began to research Zulu Zionists in both rural and urban settings around Durban in the 1970s. Though there are huge differences between ‘his’ Zionists and the ZCC, some of his findings are of great value for studying musical practices of ZCC members (see especially Kiernan 1976b and 1990). Less relevant to the present study of ZCC music is the writing by David Dargie who has done substantial research on rurally based Xhosa Zionists in Eastern Cape since the 1970s (especially Dargie 1984, 1987, 1997 and 2010), because these decentralized rural religious groups are even further from the ZCC than the urban Zulu Zionists researched by Kiernan. There are virtually no overlaps or just on the most general level.<sup>86</sup> On the other hand, though geographically distant from my work, Carol Muller’s ethnomusicological series of publications on Zulu Nazareth Baptist Church of Isaiah Shembe is more relevant, as there are many parallels on the level of the overall cultural and musical practice between both churches (Muller 1993, 1997, 1999, 2006/1999, 2002, 2010 et al.). Bongani Mthethwa researched the same church’s music as an insider and his writing is also relevant (Mthethwa 1984, 1991 and 1992). The Nazarene Church and the ZCC were founded at about the same time by similar charismatic leaders with similar strategic intentions. Though the musical practices are framed in different cultural world views as they are deeply rooted in Zulu or Pedi traditions respectively, the overall logic of construction of the repertory is surprisingly similar. I would argue that, if anything, Shembe’s church is the closest to the ZCC of all South African AICs.

It would be a mistake to think that no space for comparative perspective remains among the many AICs. However, the particular musical practice *as cultural practice* has to be studied in its proper context. Thus, for example, while there are considerable overlaps in musical repertory on the level of the common missionary heritage, the way this heritage is used may differ considerably and, moreover, other layers of the repertory are often derived from particular cultural and church traditions. This is why the ZCC can, in this sense, be called a Pedi church as it has heavily drawn on older traditional Pedi musical practices. It is simply not enough to state that call-and-response structure

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<sup>86</sup> When I discussed the topic with this doyen of Zionist studies in South African ethnomusicology in Dargie’s Munich flat in 2008 for the first time he was quite surprised by almost total incompatibility of our findings. It demonstrates both the limits of us as researchers focused on our delimited research areas and the immensely complex and wide range of South African religious practices. It is extremely problematic to generalize in this area of research. A comparative study of it by many more scholars is needed.

has been a common feature everywhere or that all the churches have to some extent drawn on the missionary tradition which they have somehow ‘Africanized’. Their musical practices as cultural practices are richly textured and endowed with particular cultural meanings and deserve to be studied in their proper context in order to avoid rough generalizations.

Some recent publications touching on ZCC music, which may signal a new interest in a previously largely neglected topic, include Marcus Ramogale’s and Sello Galane’s short popularising article, written as a programme note to a 1997 Festival of American Folklife; it is a relevant introductory text to the *mokhukhu* genre of the ZCC (Ramogale and Galane 1997). An ethnographically based study of ZCC religious pilgrimage by Retief Müller, though written from religious studies point of view, contributes to our knowledge of the immediate context of the musical performances (Müller 2011). A recent article by Lesibana Rafapa focuses on the slippery notion of ‘popularity’ of music and music making in the ZCC (Rafapa 2013). He makes some generally relevant points and even provides a brief textual analysis of one praise song. The short study is not ethnographically based and draws on literature and commercial recordings only. A brief but useful introductory description of the most frequent kinds of ZCC performances is to be found in an article by Madimabe Mapaya (Mapaya 2013). It is based on what seems like a once-off observation of two ZCC congregations in Alexandra and Tembisa and a couple of interviews with their members. Besides useful explanations of some of the emic terms and concepts, the overall interpretation is rather limited. Surprisingly, the most interesting recent study for me of the ZCC religious practices close to my research approaches and methods is a master thesis by Colin Skelton from dramatic arts (Skelton 2009). He used theories of ritual and performance to emphasize the performative aspect of creating various church-related identities, including music. However, he did not recognize, let alone analyze, any ZCC musical genres or their particular roles in the process of cultural performance. Nonetheless, he used the most viable approach to the study of ZCC performance as a cultural performance of all the available literature I know about.

The lack of a comprehensive, rigorous view of music within the ZCC so far may have something to do with the fact that religious choral music sung by Africans was a blind spot for both ethnomusicologists and musicologists alike for a long time, and for various unreflecting ideologically-based reasons (it was seen as culturally ‘impure’, as ‘functional’, as ‘popular’ and ‘commercial’ etc., for a useful summary see for

example Olwage 2002 and with regard to the ‘impurity’ issue, Lucia 2011: 62-66). But another reason has certainly been ZCC’s own ideological practice of closing off from the non-ZCC world. Its secretiveness, stiff hierarchical structures, mostly (not solely) poor black rural or township-based members, Sepedi as the main (albeit not only) communicative medium may have played a role too. Despite its rhetorical openness, it is extremely difficult and nearly impossible to get an open access to its worships and practices, if one does not intend to become a member and does not speak Sepedi. Last but not least the overall labyrinthine and immensely complex structure of South African AICs where the term ‘Zion’ and ‘Zionist’ is used hundreds of times yet always with a different meaning, have contributed much to the confusion about what is actually being discussed.

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As I wrote in the previous chapter, Samuel became a member of the ZCC on Sunday 15 September 1985 when he was baptised in the Moretele River in Mamelodi following a call of the ancestral voice he heard in his dream two weeks before. He became a preacher in 1996 and a priest (*moruti*) in 1998. He was an active Church member and as a result his world view was completely transformed in the course of years, his life gradually became a *ZCC life*. Various ZCC practices he took part in played an important role in this process as he admitted himself. Musical performances were among the most prominent ones. Their importance was expressed through their actual strong presence in religious life of an individual as a member of the whole community. According to my observations, they dominated different kinds of religious meetings basically covering their whole duration. Religious services and various worship gatherings were virtually inseparable from musical performances. They were realized through them.

Music’s presence was, however, not just an audible one, because the performances affected the whole body of their participants. Most of the ZCC musical repertory was based on collective choral singing going along with moderate or wilder bodily movements (from hand clapping and small rhythmical dance steps to stamping and leaping to performance of theatrical and almost acrobatic elements). I would argue that, in the course of time, the singing and dancing bodies adopted and interiorized rules related to the particular genres, and repeated performances ensured a gradual embodiment of various Church cultural values. My initial argument would thus be that musical practices of the ZCC are an essential part of the overall Church practice within



which they play an indispensable functional and otherwise irreplaceable role. If we take the ZCC as a specific cultural formation, we may say that the singing and dancing bodies literally perform that culture. The culture inscribes into its bearers' bodies all the more effectively, the more often and the longer they take part in the performances. I basically adopt theoretical interpretation of Tomie Hahn who used a similar approach to the study of Japanese dance 'nihon buyo' drawing on writing of anthropology of the senses where she argued that particular cultural values literally flow through the disciplined dancing bodies (Hahn 2007).

To perform for hours and hours on a weekly basis was more than singing in a school choir or attending a traditional ceremony from time to time. On the other hand, it was no coincidence that the Church organized its members into several distinct or variously overlapping groups defined *as choirs*. As such, these groups were ascribed a certain repertory and a certain register of bodily expressive elements constituting a distinct genre although the groups as well as the repertories may have overlapped. Therefore it was difficult and rather problematic to draw lines between them. The musical repertories seemingly defined by a distinct group of performers at one moment may have been performed by another group or by two different groups together at another moment. There were regular patterns in the relationship between the music performed and by the performers, though. While some repertories were more likely to be shared, others were partly or completely distinct to one particular church group or 'choir'.

I find it important to distinguish here between repertory and genre. However imperfect, the word 'genre' seems more appropriate than for example 'songs' or 'a repertory'. It is because the distinctive elements of particular church musical groups may not be contained in purely musical structures or a particular repertory but in other performance elements such as timbres, bodily movements, clothes worn, and the overall performance contexts. They are based on different *ways of performing* the often shared repertories. Performing of the same song may simply not have exactly the same cultural meaning across different musical groups. I use the term genre here, then in this broadly defined sense.

To briefly introduce the basic performing groups defined to a certain extent by its musical genre we should start with the male *mokhukhu choir* (in Sepedi *mokhukhu* means a shack and a particular story revolves around it, see Ramogale and Galane 1997) and *female choir* as the two basic socially structuring bodies organizing the Church's

'youth' into two 'halves' of opposing gender identities. They were not restricted by age and basically every member had once belonged or still belonged to these two social-musical formations. Both groups sang hymns (missionary derived or newly created or arranged) and African choruses but, besides wearing distinct 'uniforms', the actual performances differed in the way they were being performed (see Figure 31). While the *female choir* performed in the usual multi-part choir set up in one or several rows behind each other accompanied by hand clapping and moderate body movements and dance steps, the *mokhukhu choir* was made up a circle of a single or more concentric rows (organized as a multi-part choir too) with an 'entrance' being open and closed at particular moments of the performance and a conductor (*corus*) standing in the centre of the circle with a stick or a knobkerrie, suggesting songs and body movements made up of steps. This resulted in a circular movement of the whole choir as well as of distinct rhythmical stamping and leaping. While *female choirs'* movement was carefully coordinated and disciplined, *mokhukhu choirs'* performance, though 'conducted' allowed for individual action when individual performers stepped out of the row, entered the circle and did various, often acrobatic, movements, sometimes, for example, mimicking the recognizable behaviour of an animal, generally considered by other dancers as funny, entertaining and relaxing.

While there was no recognizable tension among the women in the choir, making an impression of a homogenous group, there was a clear tension between the 'conductor' and the rest of the *mokhukhu choir* and a certain level of acceptable indiscipline, disorderliness and individual boldness among its members.. We could thus assert that these two basic church bodies represented certain basic gender orders cultivating and disciplining certain embodied cultural ideas about the acceptable *via musical performance*. Certain distinct *gender-specific virtues* were learned, reproduced, and thus enhanced by *particular ways of performance* of basically *the same or similar religious repertory* in the strictly musical sense.

The Church community could become musically unified by singing the above mentioned hymns and choruses together despite being spatially divided, which happened during Sunday and other collective services and occasions, or by performing a completely different genre called *mpoho*. Unlike hymns, musically and textually derived from the missionary Christian tradition, and choruses, musically African-derived and textually driven by the Christian tradition too, *mpoho* deliberately brought in the Pedi tradition in terms of its musical and basically non-semantic textual structure.

Musically, *mpoho* consists of a descending pattern roughly based on pitches equivalent to G, F, D, C. Samuel once wrote this as lyrics: “Mpoho – ho – hoho – ho –”. They are repeatedly sung by the whole group. This pattern represents the traditional core of the ‘genre’. Individual spoken-sung exclamations in Sepedi were then inserted into this pattern. While traditionally its lyrics most likely praised the ancestors or chiefs<sup>87</sup>, individual religious or biblically derived exclamations are used in the context of the ZCC performance although the tie to the traditional culture is still clear. Consider, for example, the exclamation: “Nkadime tšhilo le lwala ke šila dibe tšaka” (in Sepedi, Lend me the small upper mill stone and the lower big mill stone so that I can grind my sins). When *mpoho* is performed theatrically such a popular exclamation may result in a scene where a person puts a stone on her head grinding symbolically her sins, as can be seen on one ZCC DVD<sup>88</sup>. The costumes and the overall performance context reminds one of a Pedi traditional setting rather than a religious one, yet even within the new religious ZCC context the transformed traditional Pedi genre kept its distinct cultural identity.

*Mpoho* represented a distinct feature of ZCC cultural identity and was considered significant as such by both its Pedi as well as non-Pedi members. As Samuel tellingly pointed out, non-Pedi members of the Church often avoided its performance as they were not able to separate its strongly felt cultural affiliation from the supposedly universal Church context. Interestingly, the missionary derived repertory and most of the choruses too achieved the status of a culturally unmarked collective and a kind of new universal heritage with the potential to unify across religious borders, as I demonstrate in the last chapter. There clearly is a strategy of adopting and transforming traditional Pedi genres into the ZCC context. This marks the *mpoho* genre as a medium for performance of cultural Pedi identity, clearly marking the whole ZCC as a Pedi Church.

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<sup>87</sup> According to Eileen Krige (Krige 1931 and 1932) the term ‘mpoho’ referred to sorghum and to the beer made of it among Northern Sotho group of Lovedu at the time of her research there. According to Krige *mpoho* beer served as an offering to ancestral spirits for blessings of rain and as a thanksgiving for a good harvest. We can find a strong belief among ZCC members that the bishop is a powerful rainmaker and there is a series of examples when historically all three ZCC bishops traveled to places troubled by long droughts to bring about rain there (Müller 2008). In any case, there seems to be a strong and complex connection between the traditional Northern Sotho and the ZCC practices.

<sup>88</sup> Z.C.C. *MPOHO, MALE AND BRASS*. STDVD002, IRBV2091.

Similarly, though it did not feature as prominently as *mpoho*, there was a distinct traditional Pedi genre with an onomatopoeic name called *makgakgasa* after the sound of the shakers producing sound during the song-dance.

These three genres as I have distinguished them here are the most common, most often sung and most inclusive in terms of participation (if I do not count non-Pedi ZCC members refusing to perform *mpoho*). Besides these there were three other kinds of highly specialized groups which were – as in the case of the groups just discussed – partly defined by the music they performed but even more clearly distinguishable by the way they performed it. These groups were *male choir*, *nkedi*, and *brass band*. None of them is directly relevant in discussing Samuel's musical involvement in the ZCC and none of them I saw performing live during my research. However, I have got ZCC commercial and promotional audio and video recordings of *male choir* and *brass band* and I discussed all the groups' performances thoroughly with Samuel. I am going to characterise them briefly here.

While there are '*mokhukhu* choirs' and 'female choirs' in virtually all congregations, there are only a couple of 'male choirs' in the whole Church. For example, there was no *male choir*, according to Samuel, in Mamelodi at the time of the research, although Mamelodi serves as an important ZCC headquarters. Their performances were staged and they were not an immediate part of worship. They fit the long tradition of South African and Afro-American male gospel and spiritual choirs whose repertory they partly shared or emulated. Their function was rather representational, I suggest, and meant to reach out. They used English, Pedi, and other South African languages and could be found in the general ZCC repertory of hymns and choruses too. They could even join in *mpoho* but it would not be performed by them within their main repertory as a *male choir*.

*Mokhukhu* choirs and female choirs wore suits and matched each other. They would snap their fingers or make moderate rhythmical dance steps. They only made moderate body movements, unlike for example *isicathamiya* male choirs. Unlike the inclusive *mokhukhu* or 'female choirs' they have a limited number of members only, usually below 20, and the positions in them were highly contested.

I never observed *nkedi* live nor watched any video of it. I thus have very little information about *nkedi* other than that which comes in the brief mention in Mapaya (2013). ZCC *brass band* or *diphala* (in Sepedi horn) is an highly exclusive male group reserved to the representation of the bishop and through him to the representation of the

whole Church. I never saw the band live either but, besides recordings and short videos I had already seen before, I managed to get a more than 1-hour long video of the band parading along with the bishop in Moria. We had a long interview over the video with Samuel in 2011. Also because I had known the repertory before I feel more competent to speak about it, unlike *nkedi*.

There is only one band in the ZCC headquarter in Moria. It has a youth and senior part. Like *mokhukhu choir* they wear paramilitary uniforms and the performances of its senior part, which are a highlight of every church gathering in Moria, remind one of sophisticated military parades with the bishop marching in front of them dressed in a unique and specially decorated paramilitary uniform. Their repertory varies and they may play virtually all kinds of ZCC music such as hymns, choruses, *mpoho* or other songs. The symbolic and cultural meaning of the performances is extremely complex. It is an expression of traditionally conceived chiefly power and authority in a modern form. The continuities between tradition and the contemporary practice are to be found partly in the timbre of the instruments, its symbolic meaning as well as in the repertory, and this is something I would like to write about in the future.

There is in AIC generally – and even more broadly – a close relationship between the notion of a religious group and a choir, the latter often constituting the former as sung prayer has cross-culturally been understood as the most appropriate way of worship. In the Christian tradition it has been based on particular quotations from the Bible. Moreover, in ZCC I could see variously constructed and overlapping choirs/groups designed to establish and maintain certain non-musical social or cultural structures via a specific way of musical performance. Thus, for example, when *mpoho* was being performed by the whole congregation a common Pedi or generally African traditional identity was being reinforced and maintained. *Female choir* and *mokhukhu choir* maintained, besides other things, certain structures of the desired gender order via the way the songs were performed by them. Or *brass bands'* performances clearly represented a continuation of the complexly structured authority of the bishop as a religious leader and traditional chief via its distinct timbres and musical structures,

historically associated with British military and Salvation Army bands, on the one hand, and representative musical styles of the pre-colonial chiefs, on the other.<sup>89</sup>

## **Meaningful Continuities in ZCC Music:**

### **Samuel's View**

This chapter represents an insight into Samuel's understanding of the musical practices of the ZCC that I have just described. It is by no mean exhaustive as it draws on only a limited part of our discussions on music held between 2008 and 2011. In 2008 I tried to focus on the overall meaning of the music in the Church and on construction of its repertory, which I had found complex to understand from my previous experience of attending its Sunday services in Hazeldean near Pretoria several times in 2006. It turned out that Samuel had a very clear opinion on both topics (meaning and repertoire) and offered surprising solutions to my questions dealing with the heterogeneity of the repertory.

The interviews unravelled his understanding of the significance of the process of adoption and transformation of a particular musical repertory, from its original context into the new religious context of ZCC performance. Samuel's examples illustrating this process deal with the African traditional part of the repertory here. His explanation showed that both continuity as well as discontinuity between the source and the current use was important in order to constitute meaning of the musical practice to the Church members. On the one hand, the continuity of musical experience between original context and Church practice ensured a fluent transition, which served the Church's potential as well as current members in terms of shared musical structures and part of the cultural meaning. On the other hand, there had to be a clear line dividing the old and the new usage of the same repertory or musical idiom in order to reframe the practice as distinctively ZCC. While keeping various continuities could have been seen as a strategic decision in order to attract potential and keep current members as practitioners of various cultural frameworks, namely the traditional African and the modern

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<sup>89</sup> I presented a paper on this topic 'Whose modernity? Performing authority in Zion Christian Church, South Africa' at the 41st World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music held at Memorial University in St. Johns, Newfoundland between 12 and 20 July 2011.

Christian, a certain measure of discontinuity was necessary in order to stamp the original musical practice with a distinctively ZCC meaning.

The many-hours long sung and danced services, often organized as whole night vigils, are a rule rather than an exception in weekly religious practice of Church members. Thus an active ZCC membership efficiently and substantially ‘took over’ and re-created one’s subjectivity in accordance with ZCC world view over the course of time. Samuel captured this complex process from his early experience with ZCC religious life in one of our first interviews, focused on his membership in the Church in 2008, as follows.

*LSK: I [was] baptized inside ZCC church. So I was a member of Church that time. I begin to pray every time. And then we are sleeping at the church all the time.*

*VZ: So how was it? Like... you were baptized in the Church and then what did you have to do there? You slept there you had to pray... How was it?*

*You have to pray... You have to pray and then you have to sing for the Lord. You can praise the Lord.*

*You learned the songs there or did you know the songs already before?*

*I was knowing the songs before.*

*Oh, and where did you learn them?*

*And then... they increased my... my idea. They increased my knowledge about music in ZCC. Because all the time when we uses to sing and then I think about myself. Ja, so that I can... I can make myself.*

(18 September 2007)

Samuel was not quite able to express more clearly about it and to decipher the complex mix of its effects, but “make myself” is a fairly unambiguous statement about the reformulation of his subjectivity. The events were marked by praying realized by collective singing for hours and hours per week and often at night. This schedule adapted to the busyness of the members, mostly labourers more or less temporarily living in the township and being of rural origin, during the day in the week. On the one hand, the Church ‘time schedule’ accommodated to the workers’ possibilities but, on the other hand, it gave the capitalist ‘working schedule’ an entirely different rhythm. By transforming the overall measurement of time for members, via the daily evening prayer and educational meetings and via weekly vigils and services, the ZCC thus helped to re-establish a different order of social and individual life, competitive with or at least alternative to the capitalist one.

The fact that Samuel knew many of the songs before should not confuse us. Part of the repertory, its core, is shared and belongs either to the ‘common South African choral repertory’ or to the Pedi traditional repertory. As we could have seen, Samuel had been familiar with both to a certain extent and he had known its musical structures and performance practices before joining the Church, either from home or from school where he participated in both the Pedi as well as missionary tradition. ZCC performances ‘increased’ his ‘knowledge of music’, though. So what was the relation between ZCC music and its ‘sources’? What does it mean then to perform the ZCC culture while actually performing songs already circulating widely? In what way was his ‘knowledge of music increased’?

Samuel many times mentioned adoption as a key strategy of ZCC cultural policy. He usually personified the Church in the personality of the bishop “who decided” and “who chose” what should be sung in the Church in order to attract members. Although this initial exchange during the first of the whole series of interviews focused on music in the ZCC is telling, however I was not able to comprehend its true meaning at the time, and it only became clear to me in the subsequent years of the research.

*VZ: So why do you choose this music [as ZCC members]?*

*LSK: I think this one is African culture so our bishops... our bishop, when starting this church, he want to obtain the culture of South Africans because he knows exactly what South African means.*

*Yes, I see.*

*Because it is four... five kinds of music inside our church.*

(8 July 2008)

The answer indicates that there was a certain strategy in constructing the repertory. Samuel delimited the possible range of repertories to the “culture of South Africans” and he assured me that the bishop knew what he was doing as “he knows exactly what South African means”. As a result he chose “five kinds of music”. The culture of South Africans is thus understood in the plural. There is not one kind of music but five, together, alongside each other. And the bishop knew exactly which one to choose, Samuel believed.

The bishop, according to Samuel, turned to his own Pedi origin to choose *mpoho*, a music associated with drinking beer and ancestral worship and with chiefly



praises. *Mpoho* participatory performance worked as a unifying element for the Church membership as a whole. But, at the same time, he turned to the missionary tradition, the European (Protestant?) one as well as the American (Episcopal?) one to a lesser extent, establishing particular choral/social bodies using various ways of performance. As already described above, *Female choir* and male *mokhukhu choir* represented the basic gender-defined structures of the Church, and then there were the more specialized and rather exclusive *male choir*, *nkedi* and *brass band*. Regardless whether it was the bishop who decided the repertory, and which genre(s), these were the main kinds of music Samuel acknowledged, and which I observed being practiced in the ZCC at the time of my research. I could also find their recordings going back to at least the 1980s. Particular repertories and especially particular ways of performance by various choral/social bodies of the Church were closely linked to particular sets of cultural and social values mediated and maintained through the various performances.

But what was Samuel's perception of the reasons for their inclusion in the ZCC repertory? His initial one is that the music should bring joy to the people who perform it. Based on this argument the actual selection of the genres should be done in accordance with people's taste.

VZ: *Why the music is so important there?*

LSK: *Ja, the music is important because of what? [...] to cool up the heart... the beat of the heart... so that you must be pleased inside the heart all [the] time. You see, it is another scripture: 'Somebody who are glad you must sing.' You got that verse inside the Bible... Jacob... Jacob 5.*

OK.

*Ja, Jacob 5, verse 13. If somebody it is joyful, he must sing or she must sing. Yes, this is the way we are doing.*

(8 July 2008)

Samuel's explanation is based the Biblical quotation, "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise." (James 5: 13, English standard version). At the same time he brought in a concept of cooling or refreshment in relation to slowing the heart's beat. This interestingly resonates with Samuel's perception of the main function of music in general, also with regard to his own compositions and solo performances. It is a concept of music as refreshing and uplifting, entertainment performed in order to forget about daily worries and anxieties. It would be possible to

understand the word cooling in a traditional ritual framework too, perhaps, where hot and especially hot or “boiling” blood is traditionally conceptualized as ritually dangerous among Pedi and should be cooled. At the same time, it could be seen within a modern secular capitalist framework of busyness and economic stress compared to relaxation.<sup>90</sup> And it is within this framework that Samuel articulated it another day. Music making has another important individual and social function in his view.

LSK: *I mentioned the verse inside the Bible.*

VZ: *Yes. Jacob 5.*

*Yes, verse 13. I mentioned it inside the Bible. So when somebody is in pleasure he must, or she must sing. So we do the same. When we are happy we sing the song... for the joy. For the joy. To forget... to forget the bad things... To avoid... to avoid to be around there and then talking about the people and gossiping about them... judge them... [...] To keep ourselves busy with music.*

*I see. OK. And what about the beat of the heart? You mentioned something like that...*

*Hm...*

*What did you mean by this?*

*Hm... Just like when we are sad. Somebody is talking the vulgar words to you and then you see you are hurt inside your heart. You see? [...] So you [decide] to go to... [Y]ou must go to church. So that you can [go] to sing. Sometimes your family... they make you sad and then you say: ‘No. I right go to sing... inside the church.’ And then you forget everything. And then when you come back, and then you will see, you are well or you are right... because you meet some other people.*

*This is interesting.*

*They say: ‘Man, leave that thing.’ Because you are going to talk to other people. You say [...]: ‘I am coming from my home [...] my wife [did this and this].’ Just like that. They say: ‘Man, forget that.’ Then [you] sing. Then you forget easily.*

*I see.*

*And then... Now you enjoy music and all the time. Inside your heart it is music. It is music, it is not topics [grievances or gossips]*

(10 July 2008)

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<sup>90</sup> Comaroff wrote about the word ‘madi’ meaning both hot, blood, money and associated with red colour in her study about Tshidi Zionists (Comaroff 1985: 174-175, 223). She wrote about this concept as expressed in symbolic colour usage among the Zionists where red was rejected. Kiernan wrote about the colour symbolism in clothing among Zulu Zionists where red and black were rejected too (Kiernan 1991). Red and black were avoided in the ZCC of similar reasons. The word ‘madi’ exists in Sepedi and Samuel used it referring to blood in his song *Senwamadi* (meaning The one who drinks blood), on his album *Mmamona*.

In course of the participatory musical performance one forgets about daily problems, he suggests, and daily struggles. Music generates positive feelings of the whole sensorium. Samuel often emphasized the sensory or 'sensational' quality of music making. Its essential quality lies precisely, for him, in its effect on the whole sensorium, body and mind. As such it functions as a both a healing and a recreational activity.

Finally, Samuel explained the actual selection of the music, giving an example of *mpoho*, though he did not mention it at first. He gave a detailed explanation of the process of adoption of *mpoho* and of the transformation of its performance context from a beer drinking music into music of ZCC where beer is replaced with 'blessed water'. The following passage interestingly demonstrates his understanding of South African cultural identity too.

*LSK: Because, you see, the Pedi people. The Pedi people is not the same with Shangaan or Ndebele. You see. They got their culture... got their own culture. Or just like on the weddings to see... [...] An example. On the wedding they got their own culture. Say, before my children goes to... to other family he must pay lobola or they must slaughter the cow.*

*VZ: I see.*

*When we are going to the culture... Our church... we took the culture of the people there. He [bishop] knows exactly what the people need. Sometimes our bishop listening when the people they are... they are drinking beer or alcohol. What song they sing there? (laughing)*

*Ye, what?*

*What? The song what they sing when they are drinking... beer. You see? [...] When they are drinking they want to sing.*

*What do they sing?*

*They sing music with their mouth.*

*What? Which music?*

*[...] So our bishop is listening to this people: 'Oh this people they love music!' They are singing, just clapping their hands, just like doing the same... [...] In the shebeen or elsewhere, when we are on the wedding, when they are drinking.*

*Yes.*

*[Bishop says]: 'So God... So this people... To make this people to be joyful and love the church I must come forward with the things they are doing when they are drinking [I must introduce this music into the Church]. But here I will not allow them to drink... because they are going to fight.'*

*(10 July 2008)*

What Samuel is saying, in sum is that based on the existing popularity of a certain musical activity among Pedi people the Church bishop decided to introduce it to attract

potential members into the Church. Its particular performance context was then completely transformed and endowed with new cultural meanings. However trivial and repetitive this explanation seems to be, its essential message about adoption of traditional material and its transformation into new religious context is one of the most valuable things I learnt about music in the ZCC church, and it is confirmed by all other findings.

Samuel continued by exploring the notion of ‘blessed water’ and ‘holy tea’. His explanation is ‘confused’ in the conventional theological sense as he mixed the Old Testament Genesis story about creation of the world (Genesis 1: 2) with the beginning of John’s evangelising in the New Testament (John 1: 1) and added the ZCC concept of water as a seat of ‘spirit’ or ‘môya’. ‘Blessed’ or ‘holy water’ and ‘holy tea’ made of that water were of central importance not only to the ZCC but to Samuel’s own concept of musical creativity. As I write elsewhere he saw the drinking of ‘holy tea’ as primal source of his musical inspiration for the composition of his songs.

He developed his interpretation of the construction of the ZCC repertory here. Again, it was the bishop who decided to transform the practice (of drinking tea) in order to save the people from evil (drinking alcohol) and also to keep them happy through the musical performance. The musical performance should serve as a medium of recreation instead of alcohol, in other words.

LSK: [You give them water] *instead of alcohol. Blessed water so that they must fill [...] their hearts [...]. You see... I mention: ‘In the beginning was the word... mantšu’ And: ‘There was môya on the top of water, in the water.’*<sup>91</sup> [...] *Mantšu wa Modimo [in Sepedi word of God]. So it was on top of the water. So it was inside water, that word of God. So now, when we drinking the more water and then... you heart begin to be pleased. You see? And that water is blessed and then it got nie alcohol things.*

VZ: *I see.*

*So... [I am] knowing everything because of this holy tea, you see? Somebody who drink more beer... [...] So bishop he looking at this people and [see that] the beer destroy these people. [He] know: ‘I must do the tea. The tea. I must bless the tea so that they can drink more tea and then fill inside their body so the heart can be pleased all the time.*

[...]

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<sup>91</sup> John 1: 1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”  
Genesis 1: 2: “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” (English standard version).

*So we pull the people from the bad things to the right things... with music. They love [...] singing when they are in the shebeens.*

(10 July 2008)

A question about the choice of particular kind of music remains. Why this kind of music and not another? Samuel's explanation that it is because the bishop wanted it, first, to attract the people to the ZCC and, second, to save them from a problematic environment is certainly relevant, at least as Samuel's understanding of the situation, but I would argue that another logic was at play too. It is clear from the following quotation that particular elements of the traditional repertory were chosen based on their wider cultural meanings, which were to be continued inside the church. It made the Church's religious practice more accessible, on the one hand, but also distinctively African. Though Samuel mentioned a "mix" of inspirations, the ZCC has mostly drawn on Pedi tradition and partly on neighbouring cultural traditions.

*VZ: Do you sing exactly the same songs as the people sing in the shebeens?*

*LSK: Eh, mix, Sepedi and Sotho, Swazi... They are mixing cultures together. Do you see what in Dennilton they are singing?*

*Yes.*

*The elderly people, the women they sing and then they carry the sticks. [...] You see. It is a culture music. And when we are talking about mpoho, it is just the same, it is similar, but it is really same because there they are singing and praise the Lord. Instead of praising the Chief, they praise Lord. Because our lyrics is praying Chief of this place. Instead of praying the Chief [...] we put God. (Singing as if he was performing) 'God, he got power [...] drive us from the evil things to the right things...' Just like that. [...]*

*[...]*

*When you were talking about mpoho you were talking about people... who want to look like... 'ugly'.*

*Yes, yes.*

*Why? Why ugly?*

*You see, because they want the people to be laughing and then forget the things that is... the past things. You see? When you are happy and then you are smiling or you are laughing, you see, you forget the things. Just like when the children they got one day off... the children they are wearing the big trousers...*

(10 July 2008)

In case of *mpoho* the ancestral worship and chief praises were gradually transformed into worshipping and praising God but also the bishop, as a chiefly personality representing paramount secular and profane authority in the traditional sense. Samuel mentioned a practice of making fun during *mpoho* performances. The word ‘ugly’ means funny, crazy or generally laughable here and refers to a traditional practice transformed into religious *mpoho* of dressing up in a funny costume and playing funny theatrical scenes. Again, the religious message is not contained in the lyrics only, but in the very sensation of the performance as a recreational and refreshing experience. These cultural continuities between the old traditional practice and the new ZCC practice operate on different levels of the musical performance.

The actual effectiveness of various ZCC musical performances and genres was enabled and enhanced by the pre-existing cultural structures in its members’ minds and bodies. By cultural structures I mean various kinds of cultural concepts and practices, namely the concepts about and knowledge of particular musical structures and the habitus related to their performances. Thus the ZCC repertory was virtually built on what had already existed in its potential members’ knowledge and practice for a long time. It assumed this previous knowledge. ZCC’s essential appeal for its potential members was basically built on it. It drew on feelings of familiarity with and tradition of certain performance practices, namely missionary tradition of choral singing of hymns and choruses dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and pre-colonial local Pedi tradition of musical practices related to ancestral worship and chief praising. The ZCC repertory and genres were not exhausted by these two sources but they certainly constitute a core of ZCC musical practices.

Dedicated not to end up preoccupied with the geographical and cultural ‘origins’ in order not to fall a trap the worn out schemes of ‘cultural mixing’ and ‘hybridity’ (see Lucia 2005a: xxv-xxvii), I would like to emphasise the actual overall coherence of the musical practices. The familiar songs from the original contexts were gradually being endowed with a new cultural meaning and their new performance context lead to transformation of the original repertory into a new distinctively *ZCC style* on the level of cultural meaning, musical behaviour and sound to use Merriam’s triad (Merriam 1964). This process, which has taken decades since the Church’s conception in 1924 (or 1910 as it is usually given by the Church members based on the time of its founder’s initial vision) did not take place in isolation, and It was continuous, adopting and re-creating new songs and styles and transforming them into an ZCC style. Despite a

certain conservatism, not unexpected in a ritual context, it could be claimed that the repertory remained open and extraordinarily flexible to allow such changes and new transformations.

## **Contextualizing ZCC Music: Hazeldean and the Downtown**

In this section I am going to offer a brief description of my observations of ZCC musical performances and performance contexts in one particular congregation where my knowledge of ZCC musical culture started to form and later developed. I provide a description of a typical Sunday service based on my observations over a longer period of time. Its aim is to make the previous general information and interpretations more concrete and to set them in a proper performance context. As an example it does not offer an insight into all genres performed in the ZCC but it gives a good idea and, in fact, it is quite representative of the most common setting in majority of smaller ZCC congregations scattered around the country. I continue by discussing the development of my research of the ZCC music pointing to particular problems which open up new questions such as fixation of the repertory in textual and recorded form, changing ways in musical reception and consumption and commercial distribution of the recordings in relation to the live transmission of the repertory during non-liturgical ZCC gatherings.

I attended ZCC worship for the first time in March 2006. I was invited by Samuel to Hazeldean congregation which met in an abandoned Hazeldean Primary Farm School about 30 kilometres east of Pretoria every Sunday. The worship was about four hours (two in winter time), beginning at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. I visited the congregation and attended the Sunday service four times in 2006 and then repeatedly in 2008 and 2009. Compared to Mamelodi this was a small congregation of less than one hundred members. Women constituted roughly two thirds and men one third of the congregation. Samuel was one of about five priests leading the service at that time. He stopped going there when his membership was suspended temporarily in October 2006 but he went there in 2009 again with me, though he was no longer in a position of a priest.

My position was that of an honorary guest in the beginning but, although my visits were not regular and had long pauses between, in the subsequent years my status changed and my presence was kind of taken for granted by the majority. I became partly involved in the normal proceeding of the worship sitting among men in the male half of the church/classroom (not in front as a guest) doing what they were doing, trying to sing, and I was being ‘prophesized’ several times too (this is explained below) which I consider as evidence of my partial insidership. I was always accepted on very friendly terms by the priests and by the congregation alike, though I could feel quite understandable alertness especially in the beginning, and even later, from some people.

Moments spent in Hazeldean are among my most intense research experiences. I reached a kind of deep immersion in the long moment and a kind of total concentration, nevertheless trying to remember as much of my observations as I could. I was never allowed to record or shoot a video and I did not write any notes during my stay there as I did not want to disturb anything or anyone. I always spent several hours writing notes later when I returned to Pretoria the same day or the next morning.

My brief overview of musical activities before and during the Sunday service there is neither an ethnographic snapshot, as I use my current knowledge to interpret some observations already, nor a ‘thick’ description, as I skip too many things. It provides a basic overall picture of the contemporary ZCC practice as I witnessed it, and although it is the first such description it relates to the information that can be acquired from reading previous studies (Sundkler 1961/1948, Kiernan 1976a, 1976c, 1978, 1988, 1990 and 1991, Comaroff 1985, Skelton 2009, Mapaya 2013). It is important to write about this particular congregation’s practice, as it was the environment where Samuel belonged as a priest and the place where my knowledge about ZCC musical and wider cultural practices began to form.

Of the main ZCC choirs/genres there were *female choir* and *mokhukhu choir* only (see Figure 60). *Mpoho* was sung by the whole congregation in the beginning or at the end of the worship. Neither *male choir* nor *nkedi* was found there and obviously no *brass band*. Before the service started, both choirs performed separately outside, women closer to the L-shaped building of the Primary, men a little bit aside forming a single-



row circle.<sup>92</sup> ‘*mokhukhus*’ might have performed for the whole night from Saturday to Sunday already, then rested in the morning and continued their sung and danced worship again before the service started at 2 o’clock in the afternoon. I never saw Samuel performing with them although he used to be a member of *mokhukhu choir* when he was younger (see Figure 31) (and I saw him performing *mokhukhu* style later). As a priest he was spending the remaining time before the service with the rest of the priests, sitting on small primary school chairs, talking and drinking ‘holy tea’ or ‘holy coffee’ in an abandoned classroom (different from the one where the service took place) or in front of the building. I could be with them or talk to other members, who were not performing, or just observe. (Interesting discussions occurred sometimes, as the one I mentioned in the preface, for example. Later when I visited the congregation without Samuel, it gave my time there a different dynamic.)

At about 2 o’clock both men (with boys) and women (with babies and girls) entered the church via two separate doors. Women were singing and dancing when entering the church/classroom. Men were entering silently, as usual or they joining the women inside. Women and men assumed specific segments of the room’s space: women left and men right along simple benches arranged into rows behind each other or plastic chairs facing a table covered with a white tablecloth, which served as an altar. Chairs where the priests were sitting or standing were situated behind the table against the wall facing the congregation. The basic structure of the service consisted of regular parts where singing complemented and often interrupted the spoken word. The interaction between the speaking person and the singing congregation was very close, generating a constant interaction. These were usually mediated via short spoken calls and responses, “Kgotso wa Morena” (in Sepedi, The peace of the Lord) – “Amen”, “Kgotso” (Peace) – “Amen” or “Ke a leboga Morena” (Thank you Lord) – “Amen” etc. These calls also worked as expressions of mutual assurance.

The spoken part began with a reading of the service’s programme by a secretary or an MC called ‘maswara marapo’ (in Sepedi, to hold the bone, bone referring to a microphone here, though he held no microphone). After a song a priest known as ‘moruti wago bula’ (in Sepedi, an opening priest) welcomed and greeted the whole

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<sup>92</sup> There are even visible traces after the *mokhukhu choir* circle in the satellite photograph on Google Maps on the Internet. Look for Hazeldean Primary Farm School. It is actually wrongly indicated there, some 100 metres east of the actual building.

congregation and visitors and initiated a song – sometimes, on another occasion, the congregation did. A collective prayer followed, spoken y aloud while everybody was kneeling and bending forward (both doors were closed for the time of the prayer). People were otherwise sitting on benches or some women on chairs for most of the time. The opening priest thanked the congregation and the other priests for coming and introduced the next part. Brief reports about money collections for various purposes and volunteer work for the church were read by two or three ordinary male members, followed by a collection of money (children and women were walking on their knees up to the money box, men were walking normally on their feet).

Having read a passage from the Bible, the same priest then gave a sermon on it. While doing this, I learned, he may initiate songs or the congregation may interrupt him at any point. When he finished, a song was sung and two or three other priests followed each other always reading a passage from the Bible and preaching on it. The last and main priest called for a prayer of the same format as in the beginning, and the service culminated in the main priest's praying for the sick. One of the three most important healing songs was sung at this moment. Songs were often *Ke na le molisa* (No. 111 in *Lifela tsa Sione* (Hymns of Zion) hymnbook<sup>93</sup>, in Sesotho literally meaning, I have a shepherd or The Lord is my shepherd) or *Utloa sefelo sa moea* (No. 291 in *Lifela tsa Sione*, in Sesotho, Hear the wind of the spirit); or *mpoho* could be sung at this point, too. The Benediction followed, said by the same priest. The whole congregation stood up and performed *mpoho*, singing and clapping their hands.

All these activities were constantly and actively interrupted by the apparently spontaneous singing of hymns and choruses, which may have been initiated by any member of the congregation or any of the priests. The singing was always collective, sung *a cappella* by both men and women. Women seemed more active in initiating the songs, with the exception of the final short *mpoho* performance.

The sermons always took the longest part of the whole service and were interrupted by collective singing many times. This part of the service was also constantly interrupted by 'prophets' cries and screams. The 'prophets' were mostly women who fell into a state of religious ecstasy and after having called out an

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<sup>93</sup> *Lifela tsa Sione* hymnbook is in Sesotho using Sesotho orthography which differs from Sepedi or Sesotho sa Leboa. Thus lifela in Sesotho, pronounced as difela, is written difela in Sepedi or Sesotho sa Leboa. As the original source of the hymns is in Sesotho, I use the Sesotho orthography. Singular of lifela is sefela in both Sesotho and Sepedi.

individual from among their fellow members (priests included), and accompanied by a witness, went outside to prophesize to the chosen ones. After some 15 or 20 minutes all three returned. (They prophesized to the person they chose – they came to him or her, they bowed and clapped their hands towards the person, then one witness was needed, they all went out where all three kneeled down and heads towards each other and the prophet prophesized – in my experience, quite a schematic set of prophecies.) When the service finished and people left the church/classroom there was no more singing outside. People then waited in a row in order to get their ‘holy tea’ or other items blessed by the priests or to get a special blessing themselves (see Figure 61). They slowly disbanded, either walking away to their houses in the farm area, or driving their cars and giving lift to others. Everybody was gone within not even an hour after the service.

My understanding of the music performed on this occasion grew very slowly as I was rather confused by its diversity and yet strange familiarity (of the same kind I experienced with Samuel’s photographs) in the beginning. I was inhibited by lack of recordings and by my inability to understand the language (though the whole worship was being simultaneously interpreted for me into English. I gradually acquired partial understanding based on repeated detailed ethnographic observations of other services, careful listening and watching of audio and video recordings which turned to be available on commercial CDs and DVDs, studying the ZCC hymnbook and, most importantly, spending hours discussing the musical and wider cultural ZCC practices with Samuel and a few other people.

Only in 2008 did I realize that many of the hymns sung in the church actually come from *Lifela tsa Sione*. Originally conceived by French missionaries of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society in Lesotho in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first edition was published in Morija, Lesotho in 1844, and it has been reprinted almost every year since, going through many different editions right up to the present day. There was a special version of the hymnbook for the purposes of the ZCC printed by Morija Sesuto Book Depot in Lesotho (see Figure 1). The edition I have got is bound in a green cloth with a silver star and writing on the front page, both green and silver being important symbolic colours of the ZCC (see Kiernan 1991). It contains lyrics in Lesotho Sesotho orthography only (not South African Sesotho) and it is identical with the Lesotho Evangelical Church’s *Lifela tsa Sione* as far as actual songs included is concerned, as well as their order. There are alphabetically and thematically structured lists of the

songs, and the Ten Commandments, a Christian Creed, the so-called Greatest Commandments (Matthew 22: 37-40), and the Lord's Prayer are added at the end. These might not, however, be included in non-ZCC version of the hymnbook. Everything is written in Sesotho, which is easily understandable to Pedi members of the Church despite the slightly different orthography, as both belong to the Sotho-Tswana language group.

Although the hymnbook could have been easily bought in ZCC centres and special shops owned by the Church and was quite affordable (mine bought in 2008 was R56,80), I have never seen any member holding the hymnbook during worship. It poses a question about the nature of its actual use. Samuel indicated that about 55 of the 449 hymns were sung in the ZCC, and given his musical competence and knowledge as an old and active Church member and a priest I imagine this number to be rather accurate. But even these 55 songs were not sung the way they were written. As I am still going to show, the lyrics were more likely to be kept than melodies, which were constantly reformed. But even the lyrics underwent changes in the actual performances. This disconnect between the written fixed text – published scrupulously in the same hymnbook from year to year and sung in other churches, such as the LEC in Lesotho more or less 'verbatim' – and the actual performance is very interesting, pointing to creative transformations of the original. I believe that the materiality of the hymnbook as an object played a rather symbolic role, partly based on the presence of the word 'Sione' or Zion in its title, more than a practical one, within the overall ethos of the ZCC.<sup>94</sup> (This would be a theme for further research, though.)

It was not easy to buy the hymnbook, for me as a non-member. When visiting a special ZCC shop called 'Kgotso Family Store' (in Sepedi kgôtsô means peace but is also often used as a form of greeting among ZCC members in Van Der Walt Street (today Lilian Ngoyi Street) in Pretoria in 2008, with Samuel, I was not allowed to buy it as a non-member and Samuel was not either, as his membership was still temporarily suspended at the time. Someone else finally bought it for me a couple of weeks later. It demonstrates the line Zionists draw between members and non-members (Kiernan

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<sup>94</sup> To make a comparison, the same or similar hymnbooks, often containing tonic sol-fa notation, were widely used by Catholic church goers in Lesotho between 2005 and 2011. I attended services in Maseru Cathedral and in Semonkong Catholic Church several times and I could see the hymnbooks being actively used for singing. It naturally is the overall ethos of both churches what led its members to opposite practices, not the African origin of the members as someone might tend to claim.

1974). Of course, *Lifela tsa Sione* constituted just one part, albeit ritually a very important one, of the repertory, but as it was the only part of the repertory which was, at least hypothetically, textually fixed it was important to get it. It became an invaluable referential source during my research as I could always check whether particular song belonged to the hymnbook or not and compare the printed and the actual version of the text and of the music. It helped me to identify the songs which were being sung in course of the worship and which could well exceed thirty during a night vigil, for example. It helped me to recognize a distinct style of performances of *lifela* or hymns comparatively to other hymns which were not *lifela*, and to choruses.

There were many stall-holders selling pirate CDs and DVDs along Van Der Walt Street, including a lot of ZCC music, there to attract members of the Church who flocked to the ZCC 'Kgotso Family Store' in large numbers. I found ZCC commercial recordings in regular shops, too but they were not part of the usual offer. The prices of the CDs and DVDs were fairly low on the street – about R35 for a CD and R50 for a DVD. In regular shops the CDs were often sold as for about R50 or even R100 for three items. The sellers clearly accommodated their prices to the limited possibilities of the potential buyers.<sup>95</sup> There were several series of ZCC recordings but most of them maintained a distinctive and unified ZCC design, which points to the notion of ZCC as a commercial brand. Though it must have been a very profitable industry, no performers were ever indicated on the recordings so I am not sure who benefited from performing royalties, or if anyone did. (Based on my preliminary observations ZCC musical industries could be another topic for further research, with a potential to reach far beyond the usual market surveys.)

I bought virtually all ZCC titles available on the market at the time in order to get the broad a picture of the repertory as possible. Later I went through the CDs and DVDs with Samuel discussing all the songs one by one. Interestingly, Samuel knew many of the recordings and he was often able to identify the choirs, even though they were not indicated on the cover, showed that the recordings were widely circulating among ZCC members, and although they may have not owned the CDs or DVDs

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<sup>95</sup> According to my observations, an average new commercial CD of a contemporary popular South African musicians could have been sold between R100 and R120 at the time. New CDs of not so popular musicians could be bought for about R70, while the proved stars were sold for as high prices as R180 or even exceeding R200. The prices decreased between 2006 and 2011 considerably, though.

themselves, they knew them quite well.<sup>96</sup> I could notice that this kind of music was often being played or screened when I visited people's houses in Mamelodi and elsewhere. It suggests a similar pattern to the ZCC hymnbook. Though not many people actually hold the material physical print or recording, they all know it, as its contents are part of the live culture of the Church.

Different kinds of Church non-liturgical gatherings or 'makgotla' were pointed out by Samuel in 2009 as an example of the live culture of the Church, serving as a platform for the exchange of new musical ideas. One of them was the so-called 'lekgotla masogana le makgarebe' (in Sepedi, gathering of young men and maidens). Besides other things, it was a large gathering of choirs from different congregations falling under the Mamelodi headquarters from Soshanguve, Atteridgeville, Mabopane and elsewhere, which took place a couple of times a year. Though the choirs' performances had to follow certain rules and must not, for example exceed the number of songs prescribed by the priests during their performances in the Mamelodi main church, Samuel denied that the gathering would have constituted a competition. The choirs always tried to surprise with new arrangements of the old songs, he said, or with new compositions based on Biblical or other verses, and that their achievements were rewarded by, for example their inclusion on recordings. Thus a further transformation of the repertory and a higher quality of performance was encouraged. Samuel attended these events and he mentioned that he knew the choirs from there. His ability to remember the distinct style of the choir or an arrangement of a popular song helped him to identify the performers on the recordings then. It is possible that other members were capable of the same too.

Questions of musical exchange and the distribution of musical knowledge arise here, and it is clear that the ZCC with its various functions also served as a powerful platform for this exchange and distribution, analogous to secular choral gatherings and competitions elsewhere in African society. Comparatively to the secular school and adult choir competitions, however there naturally was no problem with Eurocentric standards and prescribed repertory, which have been so contested in the secular context (Ndlovu 1995 and 1997).

In this chapter have I tried to provide an ethnographically based outline of concrete contexts within which ZCC music may be performed, distributed, and

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<sup>96</sup> Brett Pyper described similar practice for a context of jazz 'stokvels' in Mamelodi (Pyper 2014).

transmitted, as I observed them and as I discussed them with Samuel. Hazeldean congregation was an ideal research site because of its moderate size and because it was a congregation Samuel belonged to at the time of the research. I could observe how the most prominent ZCC genres fit into a context of a religious service in a particular congregation. Besides local congregations, the ZCC's various functions encouraged exchange across congregations and regions. This exchange was further enhanced by commercially distributed recordings, though their ownership, similarly to the ownership of the printed hymnbook, was rather limited among ordinary members. These observations cannot be pursued here but pose questions for further research.

## **Performing *Lifela* Slowly and Fast in Lefiswane**

It took three years before I finally got a chance of shooting a video of ZCC worship. It was an unexpected opportunity and it came at a time when I had given up hope of doing so. It was not a regular ZCC service but a private family ceremony of unveiling family tombstones, to which I was invited thanks to Samuel. The actual video shooting was part of the invitation, which gave me an unlimited access to shoot and record just everything I desired.<sup>97</sup> The event took place in Lefiswane in Mpumalanga, a small town about two hours drive from Mamelodi, to which we travelled with a group of 13 other ZCC men and women from Mamelodi on the evening on Saturday 8 August 2009 in a hired minibus-taxi. The event consisted of a night ZCC vigil held in a tent in front of the house and an early morning ceremony in the local cemetery where four tombstones were unveiled and where our group participated along with the family and other local people. The vigil and the ceremony were lead by one main and two other local priests. A cow was slaughtered by the family the day before and the meat was boiled in several huge pots overnight. After the ceremony in the cemetery the meal was served and our group left for Mamelodi.

Apart from the fact that it was a one of the most intense experiences for me, it was a significant research event with regard to Samuel's participation in it. Samuel's roles as a solo singer and accordion player and as a member of ZCC unexpectedly overlapped, so that I could observe and later analyze the nature of his individual musical creativity within a collective and ritually structured performance. It was a moment of a

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<sup>97</sup> The family got the DVD with my video the following week.

direct intersection, in other words, between individual agency and collective normativity. I argue that the situation need not be approached as a clash of opposite interests but rather as a space of negotiation for a mutually favourable relationship, and this is the way I analyze Samuel's musical involvement in the event.

While Samuel's subjectivity had for years been co-created by his membership in the ZCC which, as I argued above, resulted in interiorization and embodiment of the Church values and practices, partly via musical performance, the ZCC ritual as I witnessed it in Lefiswane, turned out to be flexible enough to allow an individual musician to perform the Church songs within a liturgical context. Such a situation would have been out of question in the context of a public ZCC service in Mamelodi or Hazeldean and could probably only have occurred in a private religious ceremony, because of its irregularity.<sup>98</sup> This raises wider questions about the role and possibilities of an individual musician in a collective normatively structured musical practice, and the flexibility of ZCC congregations.

The event as I captured it is extremely complex. Simply put, there is so much happening at every moment that it is impossible to try to represent it chronologically here. Instead of giving a superficial description of the whole event, I focus on two moments only, the two (repeated) performances of three prominent songs. Two of them are meant for healing, within the context of the collective night singing and the context of the ceremony of the unveiling tombstones in the cemetery in the morning, where Samuel played these songs on his accordion accompanying the whole congregation. Through the performances of these two healing songs I would like to show the nature of Samuel's individual involvement in the wider ritual performance setting of the ZCC worship.

As noted above, two healing songs occurred in the context of the regular Sunday ZCC service in Hazeldean, where they marked the climax of the service before it finished: *Lifela tsa Sione* 111 (*Ke na le molisa*) and 446 (*Utloa sefelo sa moea*). Besides these two, another sefela, number 291 *Ke tla tseba joang hoba ke tšoaretsoe* (How will I

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<sup>98</sup> The notion of private could be criticised as a problematic term here. Though the event was organized by the family, it was an open event structured in many ways as a conventional ZCC service. So by the term private I try to express the initial motivation and the overall setting of the ceremony for unveiling tombstones of deceased family members. From another perspective, we can see the ZCC structures flexibly accommodating to the private needs of a family ceremony, moreover marking a kind of ritual traditionally associated with ancestor worship.



know I am forgiven) is considered a prominent and powerful ZCC song, though not directly a healing one. All three songs are among the most popular and widely sung and re-arranged songs in the ZCC, and far beyond. Many versions of them can be found on the Internet performed by ZCC and non-ZCC choirs and solo singers alike both from South Africa and elsewhere.<sup>99</sup>

I am going to describe the way these songs were sung during the night vigil and during the ceremony in the cemetery and the immediate ritual context within which they were performed. I included performances of *Ke tla tseba joang hoba ke tšoaretsoe* too as it is relevant to the very last chapter of the text serving as an introduction to it.

The night vigil started in the large tent, which was erected on the left-hand side when facing the house, as in a usual service. But after about 40 minutes the whole group of Mamelodi ZCC members in ZCC khaki uniforms and local people in normal clothes went outside and first continued singing *lifela* and then switched to *mpoho* for roughly 40 minutes. They were singing and dancing in the yard in front of the house. Then *lifela* were initiated again and the whole group slowly entered the tent singing, just as a regularly structured service as I outlined it for Hazeldean started, taking almost three hours. There were chairs on the right for the women who were sitting on them wrapped up in blankets against the cold of the winter night or standing and moderately dancing in front of them during the service. There were fewer chairs on the left side for the men who were mostly standing or dancing in a *mokhukhu* style along with the collective singing of a long series of hymns and choruses, alternately initiated by women, men, or priests. There was a table in front, behind which the priests were standing or sitting. A powerful light bulb was brought in and put in front of the table so the space was not completely dark. The service took over three hours. Then there was a break for refreshment, after which some continued singing and dancing and others relaxed. I spent the rest of the night in a nearby enclosure made of tin and wood where meat was boiled on a fire so that I could warm myself up. A short morning service was summoned before 6 o'clock in the morning, after which the whole group of people got in minibuses and cars and went to the cemetery.

My position was clear and I was well accepted. Consequently, I felt very comfortable there. About two hours into the service Samuel made a speech. He introduced me, talking about my research and about me promoting ZCC music abroad

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<sup>99</sup> The songs are freely available on youtube.com or elsewhere on the Internet.

where they never heard of the Church, and about making a DVD for them. About half an hour later I was called in front by the main priest to introduce myself and explain my presence there. I discussed my research interest in the music of the people and my gratefulness to be there. It was followed by a thankful hymn *Molimo re boka wêna* (We thank you, God), suggesting a positive feeling of the congregation towards me.

The proceeding was structurally similar to the Hazeldean but there was much more of the singing and dancing and less reading and preaching. Unlike Hazeldean hand clapping was part of most of the songs and one of the women wore shakers on her legs producing a rhythmical sound as she danced during the songs. The songs were initiated by individual singers. They were sung in a call-and-response structure. The call was always sung fast, while the choir which followed up the call sang much more slowly. It generally applied that *lifela* were sung rather slowly while choruses were faster and accompanied by hand clapping. There were different ways of interaction between the lead singer and the congregation. When the lead singer made a mistake in the order of verses, for example, the congregation followed him, thus the call-and-response bond proved stronger than the 'correct' text. That did not necessarily mean that a notion of mistake did not exist. It happened once that a leader was not certain enough about the melody or words and the song finished in a dead end. Verses were often repeated or shortened, switched or omitted. The same applied to whole strophes. Songs were cut into shorter parts and distributed in between parts of the sermon, for example.

There were also moments when someone tried to teach others an unknown song so that it was possible to listen to the actual learning process in the course of performance. Though I noticed a limited number of extraordinary singers and leaders, Samuel among them, the singers alternated, allowing the less skilled and gifted to initiate and lead the songs too. Besides, there was an intimate interaction between the congregation and the priests who sometimes initiated or suggested a song too.

The fact that some songs were considered to be healing songs does not mean that they were sung during the healing only. They were initiated almost from the beginning of the service and their function simply was to call the 'spirit' or 'môya' to the congregation, in fact their singing heralds arrival of the 'spirit'. It generally applied that the longer part of the song was sung and the more slowly, the more likely it was that someone fell into religious ecstasy believed to mark the presence of the 'spirit' in the congregation. *Ke na le molisa* (sefela 111) was initiated for the first time about 30 minutes into the service by *mokhukhu* man. He sang the first verse fast and then the

congregation followed in an extremely slow tempo. The leader basically limited himself to initiating every second verse and to not so prominent melodic ornaments against the slow and flow of the mixed choir singing in a partly improvised multipart style. Two of the seven strophes were sung only before the priest interrupted with his speech. No one fell into ecstasy yet.

*Ke na le molisa* is a hymn based on Psalm 23 and as such it is a popular hymn expressing the deep hope of the believer that God will never leave him or her even in the most difficult situation. The text<sup>100</sup> was carefully followed during the performances. The music, on the other hand, completely differed from both versions written in the notated *Lifela tsa Sione* hymnbook. Interestingly, the song was sung in a triple meter. The complete Sesotho text and its English translation together with particular pages from the ZCC hymnbook can be found in the Appendix B. The video can be found on the accompanying DVD. For a particular track see Appendix A.

About 40 minutes into the service Samuel initiated sefela number 291 *Ke tla tseba joang hoba ke tšoaretsoe* (How will I know I am forgiven).<sup>101</sup> However, he did not start with the first strophe but initiated a chorus based on a phrase, “a wa Morena” (you Lord) which was not even part of the text and musically differed from the hymnbook too. Only after two cycles of the chorus sung in a call-and-response style Samuel started to sing the first strophe against the background of the humming choir, pronouncing some words at the end of the phrases only. After the first strophe two cycles of the chorus followed and then he sang the second strophe the same way as the first one. After the next chorus the priest interrupted the song with his speech. After two minutes of the short speech Samuel started singing the chorus again, but was once more

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<sup>100</sup> The Sesotho text was written by a French missionary of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society in Lesotho, Samuel Rolland (1801-1873). There are two musical versions of the hymn printed in the *Lifela tsa Sione* hymnbook with tonic sol-fa notation. An American church music composer and a music educator Lowell Mason (1792-1872) is author of the first version and a Swiss music educator and a composer Hans Georg Nägeli or Naegeli (1773-1836) is author of the second one, according to the notated hymnbook. However, none of them is followed by the various arrangements of ZCC choirs and congregations and none of them is used in other popular arrangements either.

<sup>101</sup> Author of the Sesotho text was a French missionary of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society in Lesotho Adolphe Mabile (1836-1894). A. G. Gordon is indicated as an author of the original music in the hymnbook. However, the middle initial is probably wrong and the author is most likely an American preacher and a composer Adoniram Judson Gordon (1836-1895) whose songs can be found in other hymnbooks in South Africa of the time.

interrupted by a short priest's speech before Samuel followed up again, continuing with the third strophe and a chorus. Another priest's speech interrupted and then Samuel followed up with the fourth strophe, chorus, the last fifth strophe, chorus, the fourth strophe again and two choruses, after which another song immediately followed.

During this last sung part the congregation was slowly walking out of the tent and had assumed a position in front of the house for about 40 minutes singing mostly *mpoho*. This whole process provides a clear example of the way the original music could be transformed while remaining recognizable, and the way text accommodated to the actual needs of the liturgical moment. An intimate cooperative relationship between the priest and the song leader or the congregation, respectively must be established, in the moment. We can see and hear Samuel as a leader as cooperating very well with the priest here. According to Samuel and my observations too, it generally applied that when the congregation was not satisfied with the priests' performance during his sermon someone just started to sing a song. It was a kind of critique. It gave the priest time to reflect upon what he had said and then he could start anew. Or when a priest got lost in his sermon he or the congregation could have just started a song so that he could settle his mind in the meantime. As James Kiernan noted among Zulu Zionists (Kiernan 1990), the musical performance become an expression of the state of the power relationship between the priest and the congregation. The power is expressed through the control over the overall sound of the congregational meeting by the congregation, and of the particular content of it.

The song's performance shows the way the original hymns were re-arranged. The chorus was simply made up of the musical material of the strophes as no chorus was part of the original song. The call-and-response structure completely transformed the pace of the original song too. Samuel was a skilled and self-confident lead singer and the choir only assisted him during the strophes. This way of singing the strophes when the lead singer sang the text while the choir was just humming the harmonies applied to other songs too. However, I would argue that Samuel's impressive performance as a lead singer in this song could have been influenced by my presence or the presence of the camera. On other occasions I noticed that he was always well aware of the camera and wanted to present himself in the best light. This song as a well known and a popular one, was sung with much certainty by all participants, unlike some other songs. There were even moments during the service when I could recognize that the gathering was made up of two different congregations, one local and the other from

Mamelodi, which were used to slightly different repertory and arrangements. But such discrepancies always got smoothed out admirably fast.

It is possible to see the men dancing in a *mokhukhu* style in the video, though they were not in a circle but stood in a row along the tent's wall. Some of them wore *mokhukhu* uniform, some normal clothes. Note the beginnings and ends of the singing too, and the rising pitch in the course of the performance. I made the whole thing about nine minutes long as part of the service on the DVD so that the continuity between song performances and priest's speeches can be seen and heard. Samuel prominently featured in this song, whose lyrics are about one's anxiety and uncertainty, whether one's sins are forgiven or not, and other unresolved questions. The complete Sesotho text and its English translation together with particular pages from the ZCC hymnbook can be found in the Appendix B. The video can be found on the accompanying DVD. For a particular track see Appendix A.

My speech was followed by a continuous block of songs without any interruption lasting for more than 30 minutes. The service was nearing its climax marked by the healing ritual. It was started by a short informative speech of the priest instructing the congregation that they should gather by the entrance to the tent and make a circle and indicating that *Ke na le molisa* and *Utloa sefefe sa moea* should be sung. He announced that after this part the service would be finished. It was about three hours into the service when the ritual began. The ritual which took about 10 minutes and its video is included on the accompanying DVD. For a particular track see Appendix A.

*Ke na le molisa* was started by one of the *mokhukhu* men as the instructions of the priest were still finishing. It was the same man who initiated this song in the beginning of the service, and was sung in the same style as in the beginning of the service. The congregation's very slow pace of singing was more prominent than the solo voice of the lead singer. Samuel participated as an ordinary member of the congregation this time. They sang the first strophe, and in the middle of the second verse of the second strophe they were interrupted by the priest. During the song the whole congregation was slowly moving towards the entrance to assume a position facing the entrance and with their back to the front of the tent/church. Their formation was meant as a circle but given the limitation of space it was rather a crowd with a space left for the priest and for the 'patient' closer to the entrance. Though I was shooting a video of the whole part, I stayed out of the circle so as not to disturb the most intense event of the service, and so I did not see what was happening inside the circle,

neither could I film it. I suppose that if I had, I would have been stopped, and found my position appropriate as an outsider and a non-member.

The priest spoke briefly interrupted by loud reactions. When he finished the same *mokhukhu* man started to sing *Ke na le molisa* again and the actual healing ritual started. The priests and the family members were inside the circle around the patient and the congregation formed an outer circle creating a safe ritual space. First, second, third, fifth and sixth strophes were sung very slowly, accompanied by slow hand clapping marking the first beat of the triple meter. Pitch was rising during the five minutes long performance of this song. Four minutes into the song one of the *mokhukhu* man who was the lead singer of the song fell into religious ecstasy. It confirmed the presence of the 'spirit' in the congregation but he could not hold the leading voice any longer. The choir adapted to the situation quite smoothly, though. It finished the sixth strophe, omitted the seventh (the last one) and one of the woman in khaki from Mamelodi took the lead initiating a new song. Falling into ecstasy was not seen as a problem and no one was concerned about the man's behaviour: on the contrary, it was understood as a mark that everything was as it should be.<sup>102</sup> For me it was an opportunity to see the extraordinary ability to adapt to the situation in both a musical as well as a ritual sense.

The woman then started to sing sefela number 446 *Ultoa sefefe sa moea* (in Sesotho Hear the wind of the spirit).<sup>103</sup> The complete Sesotho text and its English translation together with particular pages from the ZCC hymnbook can be found in the Appendix B. The singing covered up the disturbing exclamations and cries of the *mokhukhu* man in ecstasy and also the sounds of the healing ritual. Its text refers to the New Testament story (Mark 4: 35-41) about Jesus sleeping in the midst of a sea storm and about the hopelessness of his apostles trying to wake him up. While *Ke na le molisa* was used to call the 'spirit' onto the congregation, *Ultoa sefefe sa moea* was sung in the midst of the religious ecstasy to 'manage' the power of the 'spirit' which was symbolized as the gale in the storm from the Biblical story (for more on the theological concept of the 'spirit' see Anderson 1991 and 2000).

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<sup>102</sup> Interestingly, though religious ecstasy happened to several people during the service, there was no prophecizing, unlike at the regular Sunday services.

<sup>103</sup> An author of the Sesotho lyrics is a missionary of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society in Lesotho H. Marzolff (1854-1912). An American composer Horatio Richmond Palmer (1834-1907) is indicated as an author of the original music.

There is a metaphorical relationship between the ‘spirit’, the gale of the sea storm the song sang about and the religious ecstasy seen as an expression of the presence of the ‘spirit’. The spirit swung the body of the afflicted as in a storm. Thus choosing of the ‘calming’ song was neither a coincidence nor a whim of the female lead singer, but a conscious, albeit predictable act, reacting to the situation, a situation that is perhaps not uncommon in such a context.

The female lead singer sang the words of the strophes of *Ultoa sefelo sa moea* alone against the background of mixed choir humming the harmonies. The others joined in with the words for the choruses only. The first strophe was followed by the chorus repeating the first four verses of the six verses long chorus strophe, then the woman took the lead again for the second strophe and the chorus followed, sung in the same way as the first one. The song was finished by singing the second strophe again. Then the priest instructed the congregation to sing *sefela 195 E, joale ke tla oroaha* which basically marked the end of the healing ritual. The whole service finished within 10 minutes. The complete Sesotho text of the last song and its English translation together with particular pages from the ZCC hymnbook can be found in the Appendix B. Because of my position out of this circle I cannot say what exactly was happening inside but the practicalities of the actual healing proceeding are not so important for my argumentation here. The essential ethnomusicological observation would be that the singing of a single hymn covered the whole process. Leaving no space for speaking, it was 10 minutes of continuous choral singing. The congregational singing was thus an inherent and essential part of the ritual process and not just a sonic dimension of it – creating a sense of mutuality mediated multisensorily through the collective musical activity. Pronouncing words based on one of the religiously strongest texts of the Bible (Psalm 23) it helped to create the ritual space for the healing. Moreover, I would argue that while controlling the overall pace of the ritual the singing framed it in time, giving it a particular rhythm and a dynamic.

I as an observer felt a curious tension between the intense excitement and religious arousal of the moment, visibly and audibly represented by people falling into religious ecstasy and the drama of the healing (which is clearly present on the video, though it is not pictured explicitly) on the one hand, and the unbearably slow and inhibiting pace of the songs sung fervently but as if detached from the rest, on the other. It felt as if there were two or more parallel realities or performance frames, each marked by its own kind of expression, not matching with each other and creating a constant

tension. I find the slowness of the singing to be actually an essential quality of the musical performance. The more dramatic the moment was, the more slowly the congregation sang, as if trying to keep managing a balance. The tempo was an extremely meaningful quality of the performance, in other words.

David Dargie wrote about the missionary approach to African traditional ritual music of this kind as so hostile that it resulted in an extremely destructive self-evaluation among the African missionary followers, who denied their historical ritual musical practices as pure evil, especially their use of drums, hand-clapping and dancing (Dargie 1997). When I visited him in Munich in February 2009 he demonstrated it with an example of a small congregation of AmaZioni or Zionists in Eastern Cape who were running in a circle in their long church gowns instead of dancing during the religious ritual as dancing had such a bad name within the Christian circles.<sup>104</sup> Though the ZCC could by no mean be blamed for ignoring African tradition, singing of hymns, especially from the *Lifela tsa Sione* hymnbook, represented a special part of the repertory. Unlike the so-called choruses understood as evident markers of the African identity (sung rather fast in a call-and-response style, using a short repeated verse or two, accompanied by hand-clapping marking every beat of the music etc.), the hymns or *lifela* were sung rather slowly in a dignified style and clearly pointed to another, more orthodox ‘mission’ tradition. But I would argue that the slow execution of the *lifela* functioned as a meaningful quality in itself – as an expression of continuity with the missionary tradition regardless of the otherwise transformed context. As such, it shows yet another element of continuity between the old and the new use beyond the simple notion of repertory understood usually as simply a set of scores or songs. As it is in the case of other ZCC genres such as *brass band* or *mpoho*, bearers of the important cultural elements, of continuities or discontinuities, are often not parts of the score. Moreover, while the original musical structure is changed there are other elements such as timbre, tempo or other performance variables which help to constitute the cultural meanings and thus become sites of (ZCC) culture.

In the performance I have described I could observe the particular contexts of performances of three important church hymns derived from the missionary tradition, yet used quite independently and in accordance with the needs of the moment within the

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<sup>104</sup> The video was shot by one of Dargie’s colleagues in 1986 (personal communication 18 February 2009).



context of ZCC religious service. One can note, too the role of individuals in these performances either as lead singers or priests. The relatively smooth mutual interaction was enabled by the rules of well established, interiorized and embodied musical structures constituting the relationship between the lead singers and the congregation functioning as a choir, on the one hand, and by the rules of the religious service within which the music played a specific role as a mediator of particular cultural values. The alternating lead singers were relatively free to influence the atmosphere of the performance by their individual input.

It could be noted too, that both performances of *Ke na le molisa* in the beginning and at the end of the service were initiated by the same male *mokhukhu* singer and that he was the one who fell into ecstasy during the healing ritual. I would thus confirm Kiernan's observation which he made among Zulu Zionists in the 1980s that the members of the congregation had their favourite songs which they liked to initiate, basically waiting for the occasion to sing them. The emergency entry of the woman taking over as a lead singer and initiating the second song of the healing ritual could be understood in the same way, though I cannot confirm that *Utloa sefefe sa moea* was "her" song.

I can, however, confirm that *Ke tla tseba joang hoba ke tšoaretsoe* was Samuel's favourite song: not only that he initiated this song in the beginning of the night service but he also started it the next morning during the ceremony in the cemetery; and it was also this song which he played and sang on the suburban train between Mamelodi and Pretoria a couple of weeks earlier.

The nature of the improvised multipart harmony allowed for individual input by other people, men and women, singing in a choir. Various improvised parallelisms – parallel pitches or intervals – could be noted within the basic harmonic structures. Neutral intervals especially thirds and sevenths could be heard allowing for unexpected harmonic interpretations within the seemingly 'overall' harmonic structure. Individual entries of short phrases contributed to the dense and rich texture of the musical flow.

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After a half-hour long early morning service in the tent attended by other people and priests who were not present at night, the whole group got into cars and minibuses and went to the cemetery, situated about 10 minutes' drive from the house. Samuel took out his accordion and led a singing and dancing procession from the house to the gate and

to the cars, playing and singing an improvised song inspired by the momentous situation, inserting exclamations about the wonderful Zionists from Mamelodi and Pretoria who came to Lefiswane. The repeated harmonic structure was simple and other people joined him as a responding choir, improvising harmonies and literally dancing in the cars and minibuses (see Figure 62). He continued to sing and play in the minibus.

It was clear that his presence as a solo musician would be more prominent that day than during the relatively regular night service. He decisively influenced the sound of the ceremony in the cemetery with his accordion and partly also the choice of the songs sung. On a general level we can see that his musical input gave the event festive and celebratory atmosphere. On the more detailed musical level we can see also substantial transformation in performances of the *lifela* given his individual musical style and especially the introduction of the accordion. I would not think that the festive atmosphere *per se* was generated by my presence – it was a festive event anyway. On the other hand, as my presence definitely inspired Samuel who consequently wanted to be heard and seen on the video, it most certainly enhanced the festivity of the event through Samuel's enthusiastic musical input.

The event that I have been describing here in such detail, the unveiling of the tombstones of four family members who passed away years ago, was not an event for mourning but a celebration of the deceased. (This kind of event is not restricted to the ZCC, either.) It provided an opportunity to re-create a sense of the family unity too. Through the short ritual of children sitting on the graves the potential mourning moments were reframed as a promise of the family continuity in the future. Besides, it was a mark of the family's economic achievement, as the tombstones, made of polished stone in the Western style were quite expensive. There were family members from children to the elders and other visitors, including the ZCC group from Mamelodi so it became an affirmation of the ZCC community as well as one particular family.<sup>105</sup>

Samuel began to play immediately we all got out of the cars and minibuses. A rather informal procession was formed in the parking place by the entrance to the cemetery with a group of singers around him (see Figure 63 and Figure 64). He played his own version of *Utloa sefefe sa moea*, the second song of the night healing ritual.

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<sup>105</sup> One of the old men attending the night service and the ceremony in the cemetery was a retired priest who was born 1924 and who went to school with Edward Lekganyane, the second bishop of the ZCC, son of the Church founder Enganas Lekganyane and father of the current bishop Barnabas Lekganyane.

Having played the cycle of chords several times the Mamelodi women began joining him. The text sung was less faithful to the original than at night. The song began by a chorus practically using just the first verse of the original chorus, “A khalemela leoatle”. Then a strophe followed during which Samuel played and partly sang selected harmonies. Though the Mamelodi women in khaki can be heard singing silently all eight verses of the strophe, no clear lead voice can be heard. A chorus was sung using the first verse only again and more people joined in this time. A strophe followed but no words could be heard this time, only Samuel’s chords and the others’ hummed harmonies. In order to sing the harmonic accompaniment the people must have, nonetheless, imagined the solo part in their minds. Though there was no singer singing the strophe’s lyrics all phrases of the strophe are played and sung, as if there had been one. Creatively improvised, often parallel harmonies sung by the Mamelodi ZCC women in khaki can be heard during some strophes. The video of the whole procession from the cars to the cemetery can be found on the accompanying DVD. For a particular track see Appendix A.

I am going to discuss some important musical aspects of this performance that more or less apply to other performances during the ceremony in the cemetery. An interesting harmonic tension was created by two ‘clashing’ harmonic concepts that occurred during the course of an often-repeated 4-bar cycle. The accordion chord progression was I–V–ii–V while the choir simultaneously sang IV–V–V–I. Not only were there two overlapping concepts I(IV)–V(V)–ii(V)–V(I) at play here. There were also two concepts of tuning. Natural intervals – intervals generated by the harmonic series – played a role in the singing, while the pre-tuned accordion, clearly incapable of changing its tuning to suit the pitch inflections of the voices, used pre-selected notes. Thus certain notes, especially the natural third and seventh, which are at a slightly different pitch from the third and seventh of the tempered (keyboard) scale, constituted an essential quality of the choral *a cappella* singing. As it can be clearly heard in the video, the tension was most strongly felt in the third bar (or chord) of the four-bar cycle, where two or possibly three tuning/harmonic concepts clashed and continued to do so throughout the whole performance.

(1) Samuel played a *minor third* as part of minor second degree at that point and he could not do anything about it because of the accordion tuning. He interestingly preferred a minor chord to a major one here, which could be conceptualized as the fifth degree or dominant and thus possibly matched the choir’s conceptualization of the

harmonic progression. (2) The singers, who conceptualized the third bar of the harmonic chorus cycle as the dominant with a *natural third*, tended to sing the third a little *higher* than Samuel played it but (3) *not as high as a major third*, which the dominant chord would suggest in a Western sense. The overall wonderful confusion is quite clearly audible in the video, and what is amazing and wonderful to observe, looking at the video, is how relentlessly the two tuning systems remained in parallel, never meeting. At no point did the singers adapt the tuning they naturally chose for themselves to fit the tuning system of the accordion ‘accompaniment’. This suggests that they did not see it as an ‘accompaniment’ (in the Western sense) but as another part of the texture of sound. The procession of performers was constantly passing in front of the camera so different people were emphasizing different harmonic conceptualizations more or less prominently at different moments of the collective harmonic sound. The overall feeling is that of a *conscious* and deliberate instability and ambivalence. The accordion as a pre-tuned and rather loud instrument seemingly controlled the musical situation but the individual singers competed with its sound quite successfully.

Aside from harmony, there was another new musical aspect of the morning *lifela* performance, that is, tempo, its pace and regularity. While the night performance of the *lifela* was much more flexible in terms of temporal pace and rhythmic regularity, the introduction of the accordion and Samuel’s style of playing completely changed this. I emphasized the sometimes extremely slow pace of the *lifela* sung during the night performance. Though hand clapping was present, it marked the first beats of the meter only allowing even for minor slow downs at some moments. As the hand clapping was done by one person only it was easy to accommodate to the slowing down choir. The situation was different in the cemetery. Though these were the very same healing *lifela*, their performance substantially speeded up and their beat became much regular and basically danceable given the pacing accordion played by Samuel dancing to the music himself. While people were standing still during the night performance, they were walk-dancing in the morning in the procession.

It was the new context, presumably, that allowed for these apparently small but actually quite substantial performance transformations. The flexibility of the morning worship was marked by allowing Samuel to take out his instrument and play. His accordion playing changed various essential musical aspects of the *lifela* performance, generating a feeling of harmonic tension and ambivalence, speeding up the pace of the performance and introducing more regular rhythm for the performing of choruses, on

the one hand, and for Samuel's dance songs, on the other. While the people adapted to the tempo Samuel set, however, they did not adapt to his tuning, and the constant harmonic ambivalence of the performance remained present throughout the whole ceremony.

These musical changes can be interpreted as changes in cultural meaning. The notes from the natural harmonic series and the slowness of the *lifela*'s execution were essential, culturally meaningful qualities or even 'sites' for the performance of ZCC culture, in the immediate context of the church service as powerful ritual songs. We can say that these qualities became relativized by the introduction of Samuel's performance style and by the introduction of the Western-tuned instrument. Consequently, though the song's identity was still clearly recognized because of the text of the song, its meaning changed. This seemed to have an effect on everyone: no one fell into ecstasy during the performance in the cemetery, for example.

As we shall see in the next chapter Samuel's way of playing the religious songs did not much differ from playing of his solo songs, be they secular or gospel. So we could not only interpret his performance in *Lefiswane* as 'corrupting' the ideal or diverting from the ZCC norm but, rather the opposite, as enhancing it on some levels. And we can see, too that the ZCC music deeply impacted on his musical creativity, beyond the immediate musical engagement during events such as this. We should understand his position, I suggest, in line with the notion of a coherent ambivalence, as I mentioned above, the sound of Samuel playing the *lifela* on his accordion becoming a sound metaphor representing his wider, complex cultural position.

Besides these musical-cultural consequences of the changed performance contexts (the night service and the ceremony in the cemetery), there were social aspects too. Compared to the night performance and in contrast with it, it is clear from the videos that the main priest, the same one who led the night service before, and Samuel as and an accordion player and a singer, together constituted the main axis of performance, creating the basic frame of the event. Unlike the night service where Samuel played the role of an ordinary ZCC member, he presented himself as a solo musician in the morning. Presenting himself as such his prominence grew, and in this new position he even partly overshadowed the direct relationship between the priest and the congregation, becoming the one who partly controlled the sound of the event and the musical execution of the songs. It can be noted in the video that the priest skilfully suppressed Samuel's attempts to change the event into a solo performance, and it must

also be noted that Samuel's soloistic approach may have been motivated by my presence with a camera. I noticed that although the priest, who was a high school teacher (a useful match to his ZCC priestly occupation), acknowledged and used Samuel's musical competence, giving him an opportunity to perform quite a lot, he carefully controlled the length and volume of Samuel's performances in order not to let him to become too prominent. Their relationship could be seen as a negotiation of power over what is acceptable and what is not. The priest used various tools in order to achieve this, from simple interruptions of the performances, to making various funny but not ridiculing remarks towards Samuel like for example: "We thank you, Pretoria" – revealing a perception of Samuel in rural Lefiswane as a city man – when Samuel finally stopped playing. .

Before I move on I shall first briefly mention other *lifela* performances at the cemetery that further illustrate the above aspects, choosing three examples representative of Samuel's involvement in the ceremony. The first one is of Samuel playing and singing his favourite sefela 291, *Ke tla tseba joang hoba ke tšoaretsoe*, which he already sang at night before the unveiling of the first tombstone. He began with the same chorus as he did at night (there is no chorus in the original printed version) made of four harmonic cycles. Interestingly he used exactly the same harmonic progression as he did when playing sefela 446 *Utloa sefefe sa moea* during the procession a while before. The same harmonic tensions occurred. The people, especially the Mamelodi ZCC women, immediately joined him. Then he sang rather silently the first strophe against the background of his own accompaniment and the people humming or singing aloud the harmonies. Two cycles of the chorus music followed, then second strophe sung the same way as the first one, then a chorus and the beginning of the third strophe which was interrupted by the priest. It shows Samuel as perfectly integrated into the worship proceeding cooperating with the priest. The video of the performance can be found on the accompanying DVD. For a particular track see Appendix A.

Four tombstones were to be unveiled. There was a series of prayers, sermons and speeches accompanying every unveiling, and the second example is of Samuel playing and singing sefela 446 *Utloa sefefe sa moea* again during the transfer from the second to the third grave, following a speech by the oldest woman in the family. The atmosphere was very cheerful. The last example is of Samuel playing and singing sefela 111 *Ke na le molisa* when the unveiling of the all four tombstones was finished, the priest gave all

final benediction and the whole group slowly walked back to the parking place. The song's performance was chosen by the priest. Like *Utloa sefefo sa moea* Samuel's version of the song greatly differed from its performance at night. He sang it much faster and in a regular rhythm. The most striking thing, however, was Samuel's duple-meter rhythmical accordion accompaniment played against the triple meter of the song creating an interesting metrical tension within the musical structure and also if matched against the imagined idea of the song as it is conventionally performed. The whole song was basically sung by him only. No one joined him to sing the lead voice and there was almost no humming. Though it is a song meant for calling the 'spirit' and for healing, no one seemed to care and no one fell into ecstasy.

I would argue that it was the way the particular song was performed that decisively influenced its meaning and effect. As in the case of *Utloa sefefo sa moea*, which was performed much faster, without lyrics except for the first verse of the chorus, and consequently without a lead singer in the cemetery, Samuel's fast version of *Ke na le molisa* was 'safe' and in this sense too differed from the ritual one at night. Perhaps this was why the choir did not join him: it became a 'different' song. Samuel's own observations in the last chapter seem to support this explanation, that the manner of performance may matter more than the actual 'content'. Thus one and the same song may be performed in different ways in different contexts with completely different meanings and effects. Video of both performances can be found on the accompanying DVD. For a particular track see Appendix A.

Throughout the whole night service and morning ceremony in Lefiswane we could see Samuel participating in different ways in performance of one particular kind of ZCC repertory – the hymns or *lifela* as healing songs. He engaged with the repertory in different ways according to the two contexts, he sang as a lead singer as well as ordinary choir member, and he presented himself as a solo musician accompanying the religious worship in the cemetery. Unlike his ordinary presence at the night service, he became an extraordinary figure during the ceremony in the cemetery, making his status that of an individual musician. While he enjoyed much attention in this role (and perhaps because of this) his position had to be constantly negotiated in order to fit the rules controlled by the main priest. I would argue that it was the semi-formal structure of the ceremony in the cemetery that allowed for this kind of creative but mediated involvement in the worship, otherwise unimaginable during a regular ZCC service. I would suggest that the private nature of the event, its rural environment far from the

eyes of ZCC headquarters contributed to relative flexibility of the otherwise rather stiff structures as I experienced them in Hazeldean, and about which I also heard from Samuel and which I could watch on videos of services in the main headquarter in the Zion City in Moria in Polokwane.

Lefiswane 2009 was the first time I heard Samuel singing and playing ZCC songs on his accordion. Till then I only saw him performing his solo songs. So it took me by surprise that he took out his accordion in Lefiswane the second day morning and joined the worship with it. I cannot say for sure, but I would suggest that he did not play like that very often. There were very few similar opportunities to this one, as the Church did not encourage individual performance and preferred collective choral participation. On the other hand, as I know Samuel, he must have known about the opportunity to play solo there before he left Pretoria, otherwise he would not have carried the heavy and bulky instrument in the packed minibus. Banal and sentimental as this may sound, it shows how much Samuel really loved music making, the excitement of the performance process, and the feeling of being the one at the centre of people's attention. The ZCC ritual in Lefiswane allowed the opportunity, and Samuel used it. Nonetheless, he did not play a single song of his own composition there, and in the next chapter it is this segment of his musical world that I focus on.



# **To Entertain and Educate: Samuel as a Songwriter and a Song Singer**

## **“The Song Is Just Only If You Are Knowing the Words”: Inspiration**

We have seen Samuel as an active member of the ZCC who loved performing ZCC songs and who acknowledged that the Church substantially ‘increased [his] knowledge’ of music. At the end of the previous chapter I introduced Samuel performing the Church songs during ZCC worship on his accordion. In this chapter I would like to introduce him as an individual musician and a composer of his own songs. I hope to show him as a creative artist who, as I have already indicated above in the biographical chapter, thought carefully about what he was doing and why.

It would be wrong to suppose that the sphere of the Church and that of his solo compositions and performances were separate areas, because as I shall show there is a continuum between Samuel as a member of the ZCC and as a solo musician and clear continuities on various levels, just as there are continuities with his Pedi musical tradition too. In this chapter and the two following chapters I try to understand the complex structure of his subjectivity as expressed through his songs, through his thinking about them and about music in general, and through his thinking about the world as he expressed it in his songs. I begin with his conceptualization of creative inspiration and where it comes from.

In 2008 we were busy discussing the contents of ZCC songs included on ZCC CDs and DVDs, which I bought that year in large numbers. We discussed the songs one by one, CD after CD so I was quite surprised when Samuel decided to discuss one particular song all of the sudden. It is unimportant what song it was but his arguments about the decision started a new discussion about the notion of inspiration.

*VZ: Why did you chose this song... now... for today? Why did you choose to translate this one?*

LSK: *You see, the time I have told you: somebody come, the Holy Spirit... Holy Spirit come... You see, ne?*

*Yes?*

*Because, if we talking, you are supposed to talk with this... And then something is coming nearer to my heart: 'Say, talk this.'*

*Aha.*

*You see? It is why all the time I need the 'holy tea'.*

*I see.*

*Because the holy tea it washing my... You see? So... I am the kind of an other person. I need myself to be alone. You see? Because other people they... And all the time I want to sing... because if I am a singer and then my ancestors is coming nearer to me and then I... the God can help me. Sometimes I can discuss the... the things. I see when I am going to the meetings... just from the gathering to the people here in Mamelodi sometimes... and whenever I talk the people... All the people they listen... they listen... I do not know why. I do not know why... and the people they end all supporting me. They say: 'This is true, then we do not go further.' You see?*

*Hm.*

*That is all right. It is that I only...*

*This is interesting.*

*Me, I do not know why. God always want me to do peace. You see? You know...*

*OK. So...*

*You see, whenever I be with the people I want to sing. You see?*

(31 August 2008)

This is a complex passage, where several concepts merge. Samuel appears here as a musician and artist who needed 'to be alone', to calm down in order to concentrate so that the Holy Spirit could come and bring inspiration. Drinking the ZCC-recommended 'holy tea' – ordinary tea like *Joko* made of blessed water and blessed tea leaves or teabags – as a medium of the Holy Spirit helped to ensure that inspiration came. The Holy Spirit and the water of which the tea was made were related, as explained in the previous chapter. Besides inspiration, he mentions the ancestors' presence. He saw music making as a positive thing, bringing his ancestors 'nearer' and making God help him. This mix of talking about God and ancestors in one phrase perfectly fits the ZCC world view as Samuel explained it with regard to his dream-inspired calling to the Church, quoted in the biographical chapter. In addition to the realm of music he saw the effects of the Holy Spirit's inspiration and presence in his eloquence and persuasiveness and his ability to bring peace to quarrelling gatherings of people (he specifically referred to ZCC gatherings in Mamelodi here). We can thus

speak about a relationship between Holy Spirit inspiration and speech, words, talking, eloquence, and handling language in general.

A couple of minutes later he returned to the matter of inspiration and the Holy Spirit again, this time in the context of our discussion about composition and the arrangements of new ZCC songs in church choirs. He admitted that there usually was one person as a leader of the choir who invented new songs and arrangements of the old one and then taught them the rest of the choir members. Though the following quote still begins in the realm of the ZCC, it represents Samuel's view of inspiration for his own compositional process too. In contrary to what he may seem to talk about, he did not have the music but the lyrics of the songs in mind. It is the lyrics that are Holy Spirit-inspired. The music does not seem to matter here.

*LSK: You see... You know the Holy Spirit...*

*VZ: Hm.*

*Do you know the Holy Spirit?*

*Yes.*

*Somebody who is singing with the Holy Spirit when he is sleeping... or when she is sleeping... something come inside her heart or... just thinking, thinking... he is thinking just like this. When he wake up he still remember the dream... still remember the dream and he took the paper... or the song and then he can write it. And then he go to other people, just like you... You see, on the music... or in the music it is other people who can write... who can write the song but they never perform, they never sing, just write. And other people they can do the lyrics or melodies. But they cannot sing. And somebody can listen the lyrics and say: 'I can put the voices.'*

(31 August 2008)

This time the Holy Spirit is inspiring people in dreams – as the ancestors were in Samuel's case when they called him to the Church in 1985 – or in times of concentration. He mentions a division of labour in the musical process too, and puts me into the group of those who think and write but do not perform, which interestingly expresses his perception of me. He talked about writing the lyrics down in this section of the interview, as an important moment, and clearly he wrote a lot himself. He basically wrote all his lyrics down (under inspiration) before he sang them or recorded them. When he could sing the song from memory, he usually threw the writing away, and it got lost. This was why he always showed me only the new songs (just) written down, and when I asked him for the written lyrics of the songs on *Mmamona* he had to write them down again. We continued:

VZ: *Yes, OK. You always say somebody, someone, he or she. Who? I want to know. I mean like, woman or man? Man or woman from the choir? Or somebody else? Or, you know... You know what I mean. So... who has got the dream? Somebody from the choir?*

LSK: *Somebody from the choir who got...*

*OK. What is in the dream? Is there the melody, or is there...*

*The voices.*

*What voices means? Does it mean the words?*

*Ja, the words.*

*Like what is written, like this?*

*Yes.*

*Words. But the melody is not there?*

*No.*

*There is no melody in the voice... in the dream?*

*Yes, there is no melody.*

*No melody, only the words.*

*No, only the words.*

*It is interesting. And then... the person gets up in the morning, put it down, write it down...?*

*Yes.*

*Do they write it down or do they just remember?*

*Ye, the... the nice... the nice wise... or the wise... you are supposed to write down...*

*Hm.*

*...so that you never forget because there is coming another...*

*I see.*

*You see me, all the time I uses to have the paper.*

*Yes, I do.*

*The piece of paper.*

*Yes.*

*You can see, I can mention you something...*

*Hm, hm, hm...*

*...so that... I uses to do... (leaving to bring a notebook with his songs written down there, which he stored somewhere in the dressing room) You see, this is my... When I uses to working...*

*Hm.*

*When I uses to working up and down, whenever I am coming to... to listen... I uses to write this.*

*Hm! So this is the new song.*

*This is the new song that I want to... to sing about the 2010 [Soccer World Cup in South Africa].*

*Yes, I see.*

*Hm (laughing).*

*This is just perfect.*  
*And this one, and this one, and this one. You see, it is one, two, three, four... and I think it is new songs.*  
*Yes.*  
*So that they need the lyrics.*  
*I see...*  
*And then, you see, it is full of new songs.*  
*I see, I see...*  
*You see? It is somebody just like me who can dream... and one who can, when he is sitting down and then do something, there come the song. There come the song. Or inside the... the... the classrooms, you can go and then thinking about something... just like a song.*  
*I see.*

(31 August 2008)

Samuel continuously shifts from ZCC-related topics to his own experience of heavenly inspiration and to his practice of writing the songs down, inspiration having come in both cases either in a dream or at a moment of concentration. He emphasized the necessity of “sitting down”, that is, of calming down, and thinking. The rationale behind writing the momentous inspiration down, however was his anxiety of forgetting “because there is coming another” song. The inspiration was a prodigious tool, putting him under some pressure.

He often used old notebooks or personal organizers he got from someone or found at the University of Pretoria. In case of the notebook he showed me during the interview there were titles of songs not written yet and waiting for inspiration, next to the completed ones. It shows Samuel as working quite systematically, indeed he often worked with a frame of a whole album in mind. During the period of my research he prepared songs for two other albums but he did not manage to record them at the time. As I have already pointed out, the text made up the song, not the music, as any already existing music could be used. The music then ‘came along’ as he explains in the following passage. It was nothing to bother about too much, as the following parallel with a teacher teaching the class a new song shows.

*LSK: Like when you are a teacher... who teaches the children, you can thinking about the... the... the song, the new song and then you can say: ‘If it is fifty people there, if three can... can manage this lyrics and then the whole of the... the class.’ They are gonna going to know... because this. And then when you say: (humming the melody). Others they sing (humming the same melody as*

*an echo, as it is sung by the class). And this one they listen. You see? The song is just only a... if you are knowing the words.*

*VZ: This is very... OK.*

*If you can know the words.*

*OK. And the tune... Where the tune comes from?*

*The tune, you can took the old one, if you are not perfect. You see?*

*And if you are perfect?*

*If you are perfect, then sometimes you can tune the melodies your own.*

*Perfect.*

*But if you are new to the music, you must follow the old people. But not the same with the words.*

*Yes.*

*Because the words is... is different. The words is difficult.*

*I see.*

*You see?*

*I see.*

*You can change the word... the only song by too many difference.*

*Hm.*

*They say there is too many ways to kill the cat.*

*Hm.*

*(laughing)*

*And?*

*As long as you can kill the cat.*

*(laughing)*

*(laughing) If... as long as you can kill the cat. This cat is killed.*

*Yes.*

*No matter what... you boil in the water, no matter what you uses to kill this.*

*Yes.*

*Yes. It is why. It is too many... too many ways to do the song.*

*(laughing) I love this...*

*But only... But do not... do not... do not do the same lyrics or words. The words is different. And you can be sued... They can sue you with the words because you talk something just like that. Then you can change the lyrics. You chose Ka na le molisa: (reciting the first two verses of the hymn), you say (singing new words to the melody of Ke na le modisa): 'I am happy to be here in South Africa...' , just like that.*

*You use the old melody but you change the words.*

*And then... you change the words.*

*I see!*

*And the people they can enjoy it and then: 'This man he can create the words'.*

*So this actually means to make a new song!*

(21 August 2008)

The easiness of learning a melody is stressed here: the teacher just hummed the melody and the children followed. It was more difficult to teach them the lyrics but only when the lyrics were learned we could talk about ‘a song’. There is no song, then, until all the lyrics are present. Samuel distinguished, in this way, between composition of lyrics and that of music. A beginner may use music which already exists: he actually recommended it. But not even a beginner should use somebody else’s lyrics. He interestingly brought a copyright issue in here with regard to the lyrics (“they can sue you”) and used a saying to illustrate his point.<sup>106</sup> He gave me a clear example combining the very popular sefela 111 *Ke na le molisa*, about which I wrote in the previous chapter, and a verse he just made up at the moment, calling it a new song.

While the text was seen as the true original essence of the song, the music was of secondary importance or, rather, as something already existing and at anyone’s disposal, ready-made to be taken and used. This idea relies on an existing tradition of collectively known musical knowledge. I have already indicated the use of existing musical and cultural structures by the ZCC including the missionary choral tradition, which functioned as a common knowledge for a large number of South Africans, and in the case of the Pedi tradition as a source of cultural identity-based knowledge shared by Pedi members of the Church. For Samuel’s solo songs there was also the huge repository of popular musical culture shared in common, which he referred to as something he had listened to since he was growing up and since he bought his first radio.

To sum up: Samuel conceptualized his musical inspiration in religious and traditional terms of the Holy Spirit accompanied by the presence of the ancestors. Practicing the religious ritual of drinking of ‘holy tea’ he regularly predisposed himself for the spiritual inspiration. The inspiration came suddenly in dreams or moments of concentration. In order not to forget the lyrics, he considered their textual fixation an important act and structured the songs into the larger shape of an album already. The divine inspiration, nonetheless, did not concern music, but enhanced Samuel’s competence with handling the language, speaking persuasively and of creating a good song. His conceptualization of music used the idea of a pre-existing repository. The

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<sup>106</sup> I might not be as clear to the reader as it is to me but a considerable development in Samuel’s eloquence and English language fluency may be observed between 2006 and 2011.

flow of passages above, taken chronologically from one interview, also shows how a theme may gradually and unexpectedly unfold during an interview.

## **“Do Not Be Afraid, Play Just Like That, You Got It.”: Learning to Play**

Samuel learned music since early childhood. He became competent in local Pedi musical tradition around Maralaleng in Ga-Mphahlele and sang in various school choirs where he learned a substantial portion of choral religious songs. He also learned how to use and sing in tonic sol-fa notation (check the Appendix A and the CD). When he became a member of the ZCC it is clear that he became even more musically active, and as a member of *mokhukhu choir* actively participated in ZCC musical practice. But he did not think about making music himself, as a solo musician, until the 1990s. And even then it took a long time from getting the idea to acquiring a musical instrument and then to learning to play it and master it.

In the biographical chapter I demonstrated that the 1990s were a time when Samuel seized a number of new opportunities and became more enterprising, and perhaps this is why this period brought another innovation in Samuel’s life, the challenge of individual musical expression. He had been a member of various musical bodies/groups before but he now wanted to express himself in a new way. He did not explicitly say what the cause of this new preoccupation was, but I would suggest that it fits well with the new opportunities and entrepreneurship as well as the time of settling in a ‘proper’ house (not hired and even built by himself) and the growth of a family. He achieved a certain social status as a married man living in his own house, having a paying job and a respected position in the ZCC. He had ‘made it’ in the city and, moreover, he was living in a (newly) free country. As I demonstrated in the biographical part, this rosy picture had a number of cracks in it, but these certainly were decisive moments for him.

I was actually taken by surprise when Samuel told me in 2007 that he learned to play the accordion rather recently. Having seen him with the instrument since our first meetings in 2006 in our student house I somehow assumed he had played since time immemorial – I rather stereotypically fell into a trap of the ethnographer thinking in the



imagined ethnographic presence. Everything I saw seemed to me as having been there for a long time. Historicity within a single person's life escaped me as a newcomer. Thus the process of understanding Samuel's life was a process of acquiring a sense of history, and it was interesting how the history of Samuel's career as a solo musician was unfolding before me in the course of our interviews. The following passages, which I quote in full, are revealing of both of us, in this sense, speaking eloquently to the stereotype of Africans as 'born musicians', even though I knew studies of other individual South African musicians' experience of learning to play a musical instrument (for example Kruger 1996 and 2001 and Muller 1999: 223).

VZ: *When did you start to make music?*

LSK: *Just 1990.*

*1990, not before?*

*Before I was trying to sing but I never knew I can do the CD or something...*

*I see.*

*But I was really serious in 1995.*

*1995.*

*Yes, I was very serious, I was very serious to do music. Because I bought my accordion. 1995.*

*I see, so you started to play it.*

*I never know to play it.*

*So who did teach you? Or how did you learn to play it?*

*I just go around the corners... Ej... I think one day I go to the journey to Ga Mphahlele, there was a wedding there. I go with my accordion but I never play it. It was a very nice time.*

*So you went with the accordion but you did not play it.*

*Ja, I never know to play. It was like a picture, like a play thing [toy]. But I tried very hard. Somebody... in 1997 at Dilankulu [the street in Mamelodi where Samuel lived at the time]. I was standing at the corner there, I used to sell some sweets and the popcorns there. Somebody says: 'Let give me... Let I try, I know to play.' Can I recognize so that I can play again. I saw him... his finger, and then I saw he touch this and touch this. Oh, and I look... I look carefully what he do. I see he move that side, he moves that side. He said to me... I never remember his name. But somebody... He said to me: 'If you play this thing, you must sing! You must sing, if you want to play this. You must sing. Never play when you are quiet. You do never know this... Because you can play the thing that you do not know what it really mean. You can just play and... You can hear the lyrics but you never... If somebody say: 'What is the name of this song?', you never know what you say. You just enjoy to play.'*

*So he told you this. And you met him only once.*

*Yes, I meet him only once.*

*And nobody else ever taught you how to play... Only him.*

*Only him.*

*OK, it is unbelievable.*

(25 September 2007)

The fact that in the beginning Samuel used the accordion used it as almost a decorative accessory, pretending he is a musician shows his perception of the prestige that came with being a self-accompanying solo musician. And as Muller has put it with regard to the Zulu *maskanda* musician Thami “Chakide” Vilikazi there may be a difference in status between playing instruments in different stages of male life. While the guitar is associated with youth, the accordion and concertina are played by married men and mark a social progress, and are valued accordingly (Muller 1999: 221). Samuel used the instrument in its materiality as a marker of social status rather than a musical instrument for couple of years.

It took two years before he met someone who demonstrated the basics to him, and learned by observing the fingers – i.e. the finger movement – of the more experienced musician. In another interview in 2006 he had briefly mentioned that the most important thing he learned was to skip one key in between the two other tones, and demonstrated it by playing thirds (which he preferred to seconds) in order to make it “sound easily and nice” (30 March 2006).

The instruction the unknown man gave to Samuel is quite important not only for making Samuel think about singing and composing his own songs but because it emphasized again the decisive role of lyrics for an identification of ‘song’. Samuel’s his further musical development was marked by the presence of second person, another man.

LSK: (laughing) *From that time come my friend... come my friend at home. Other friend is Phuda, it is Mr. Phuda. He was my friend. He enjoyed to sit with me enjoying the holy tea that time. Then he come to me. And when we are together we are two of us, we just sing the songs. And when I go and he say... Just like when I say to you... You say: ‘I never play well.’ But I say: ‘No, you play well.’ Just like that... ‘Keep on playing that thing. You say’ ‘Nie... I never play it well.’ I say: ‘Play just like this.’ You see? ‘Do not be afraid, play just like that, you got it.’ But you, you are afraid yourself but he give you power to do this. If you got somebody to give you the power, you can know something. This man give me power. We sing every song, then he says: ‘Carry on this. It is nice.’ Then he uses to dance so he gave me more power to do this.*

(25 September 2007)

Since he began to learn he played in a private setting before going to show his skills publicly. The home setting of the performances was of the two men drinking the ZCC 'holy tea' and singing religious songs, so presumably the other man was a ZCC member too which speaks about the nature of relationships among the members beyond the immediate context of the worship.

Samuel talked here about need for encouragement, which he conceptualized as 'power'. He needed someone else to listen to him and to tell him that his attempts were worth trying. Acknowledging this social dimension of his learning process he emphasized the role of encouragement in his musical development, and the last sentence points to his perception of the relationship between an instrumental musician and a dancer as mutually encouraging. And there is another point. When performing, Samuel was often dancing himself, and not making only moderate steps but rotating along his own axis and sometimes stamping quite heavily (the stamping was part of *mokhukhu* genre too), as it can be seen on some of the videos. It helped him to keep the pace and it gave him the right encouraging momentum too. Furthermore, the regular movement enveloped him in a space within which he could concentrate on what he was doing, less disturbed by outside distractions. I would argue that these might have been the reasons for adopting dance as part of his solo performances later. We then turned to repertory.

VZ: *So did you play... What kind of songs did you play that time?*

LSK: *I played gospel.*

*Do I know any of them? Do you still play any of them?*

*No, I changed everything. And the way I changed the things is the studio man who made me to change from gospel.*

*When was it?*

*2004.*

*So you went to studio in 2004.*

*Ja.*

*Where?*

*In Mamelodi in 2004.*

*And they just listened... or what did they tell you?*

*This man say: 'You must do the African music. Do not do the gospel because gospel is plenty...'*

*Yes, it is everywhere.*

*'So, please, if you know jazz music, please, give me then.'* Then I promoted Senwamadi. This man he likes it too much, very much. But he never do the instrument... nice instruments for this song. The instruments is not good. It was not good instruments for me because I uses to play

*accordion and he must follow me with keyboard or something but he never know how to do. I found somebody who play the keyboard, Mr. Given, do you know Mr. Given?*

*Yes. He is very good.*

*I meet Mr. Given*

*When did you meet him?*

*I meet him in 2004, before I go to studio. We went together and he sings his own song and then I also.*

(25 September 2007)

Clearly, changes in Samuel's musical repertory and style occurred throughout this period and were influenced to a large extent by the demand of the studio. A concept of 'African music' also appeared here. Not that gospel would perhaps be regarded by Samuel as an African music, but there was a clear demand for something more distinctively African. Whatever the idea of jazz was, it functioned as African music for him. Here and later Samuel obviously referred to South African jazz as it has developed there into a distinctive style and, unlike American and other traditions, into a popular musical genre (see for example Coplan 2008/1985, Ballantine 2012a/1993 et al.). It is quite interesting that he referred to his own music as jazz here and it shows the broad concept of jazz in South African popular culture.

Samuel successfully offered the studio man one of his 'African' songs called *Senwamadi* (in Sepedi, The one who drinks blood), which later appeared on *Mmamona*, and I am going to return to this song in detail later. It shows Samuel as someone who had quite a definite idea of how the music should sound.

The musician he mentioned later collaborated with him on his album. I still managed to meet him in Mamelodi in 2006 before he moved back home somewhere in Limpopo where he had his girlfriend and a child (see Figure 65). He appeared in the discussion of my first visit to Mamelodi in the biographical chapter on Mamelodi part of Samuel's life. The event is pertinent here as it basically was one of the rehearsals for the future album.

The interview shifted yet again, this time to the topics Samuel sang about in 2004, before my arrival.

*VZ: But he used to play gospel I think.*

*LSK: Yes, but I teach him the jazz music. Given he likes Senwamadi. I used to sing the thing about George Bush. I sing about George Bush.*

*Really? And do you still sing it?*

*I never put it on CD. He say [the studio man] that we can come again.*

*What was the song about?*

*We sing about the way... what he do to other people in Iraq. That it is not good because that God can punish him, because he killed the innocent people. He killed the innocent people. So the message I say: 'Chief Mandela, please, go to Iraq and tell them that we South Africans need peace.' You see?*

*And what other songs did you sing that time?*

*Gospel...*

*What were the topics you sang about?*

*About the Arch, the arch of Noah from the Bible... I was singing about Noah's arch. I say: 'South Africa is just like Noah's arch... because so many people... they come here to hide in South Africa, just like from Zimbabwe..., the Zimbabweans, the Mozambicans, the Nigerians are all coming to hide here.*

*To hide here?*

*Yes. They come here because there are place they got hunger... everything there... they have violence and war... I sing about that. I sang: 'God chose Mandela so that he can rebuild this whole. So many people are here because of Mandela. So I am singing just like that. You see?*

*I see.*

*It is a nice message, very nice and I can repeat it when I release another CD of me. I have got more, more, more music inside my heart, my mind. So it is only just the start of the things now. If I can find a nice promoter, I can do a nice music.*

(25 September 2007)

This passage wonderfully demonstrates not only Samuel's but a certainly wider popular reflection of world events, as well as the cult-like view of Nelson Mandela. It shows Samuel as an engaged citizen who is aware of the world's troubles and as a musician ready to express his opinion to raise public awareness, as many musicians in South Africa do.

The other song discussed is a good example of the way Samuel composed gospel texts. As he explained in another interview he never used direct quotes from the Bible but he creatively played with its stories and symbols. As an experienced ZCC member and a preacher he felt well prepared to do that: "It is me who is thinking about what can I sing [...] because every people are singing with Bible but they choose verses, but I do not chose the same like that, I think how I can mix them" (30 March 2006). He used the Biblical image and filled it with contemporary political content. This was still well before the xenophobic violence in the townships, and so he presented his image of a state of affairs where he saw South Africa as a Noah Ark-like refuge for people from

suffering African countries. (Later, in 2008 he expressed the same kind of resentments towards immigrants that were widely shared among poorer black South Africans at the time, namely that immigrants steal jobs from South Africans and that they bring crime in – especially Nigerians - and so on.)

He expressed his hope to include the song on another CD but this did not materialize during my research. However, I asked him whether he already prepared the lyrics for it. It was important for me of research purposes. If the texts were already written we could discuss them and I would have something to rely on. My research interests were quite stuck in my mind at the moment of the interview as it can be indicated in the beginning of the following passage.

*VZ: Did you already write down some of the lyrics which are for this CD?*

*LSK: (laughing) Never, never.*

*Can you do it?*

*I can...*

*You always say I can but...*

*Yes, I forget... When I got to Phase 1 [Castro Street in Mamelodi] there was darkness there, and then the job is only 1 o'clock [takes an hour]. I can never do it. End weekends I go to jobs and everything...*

*Yes, so you do not have time...*

*I do not have enough time. If I have light of electricity there, I can try to do the things. Because that Phase 1 there... is only candles. And then, if they cook there and do everything, it is busy and then I say: 'Please lend me... so that I can write...' they say: 'Leave it, because I need to finish here...' You see? It is not good. So when we finish to eat we just accept to sleep because we are going to job tomorrow.*

*Early. I see. End what time do you finish the job here?*

*Four o'clock.*

*Do you think you can stay here longer sometimes..., I can bring something to eat..., and to write it down?\*

*Yes, I think so.*

(25 September 2007)

This passage reveals a lot about the nature of our research relationship, how data was transmitted, and Samuel's personal engagement in the research. I intervened into Samuel's daily routines in order to get what I needed, sometimes, and if the situation allowed for it, he always agreed to my suggestions. It shows how he cared about the research and how he felt part of it. Not only did he try to accommodate his programme

to the ‘needs’ of the research, but he often came with ideas as to what I should see or where we could go so that I could learn about something new.

First and foremost this passage unravels the daily routines and difficulties which Samuel – and hundreds of thousands of other working people living in townships – face every day. I visited the house in Castro Street in 2011 where he stayed at that time with his fourth “wife” (see Figure 59). It was a two-room shack under one of the mountains in Mamelodi. He managed to grow some ‘mealie’ (South African word for maize) on its slopes behind the house, which was quite extraordinarily in Mamelodi. There was a great view of the whole Mamelodi from the top of the mountain, which Samuel liked. He brought me there in 2011 and asked me to shoot a short video of him there talking and introducing a ‘traditional drama’ he created and which he intended to perform and record with children from the Phase 1 and Lusaka parts of Mamelodi. He meant it as an introduction to a DVD I was supposed to shoot, but which did not materialize during my stay because of organizational problems. The introductory video is included on the accompanying DVD. For a particular track see Appendix A (his house can be seen about 00:30 in the front in the middle).

In any case, Samuel agreed to stay in Pretoria (Hatfield) where the interviews were conducted and where he worked at the University longer that day, after finishing his work. He finally did not write any new songs but he started to write down all the songs recorded on his *Mmamona* album that afternoon and he continued and finished two days later, during our last interview that year. To my great delight, he wrote them all in my research diary and while he was writing them, he commented upon them. A scan of his handwritten songs’ lyrics appearing on *Mmamona* album can be found in Appendix C. The recordings became an invaluable source of information for the following chapter where I discuss the songs’ texts. Before I move to a thorough and detailed discussion of all the songs included on the album I would like to briefly sketch out sources of Samuel’s inspiration for his solo songs’ compositions.

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Samuel’s solo songs discussed a number of topics. Though the decisive inspiration must have come in a moment of heavenly enlightenment, the material used for it was of the every day. Samuel was first of all an attentive observer of people and everyday life. The next passage illustrates his approach to the topics he sang about.

LSK: *If you want to see nice music you must know the lifestyle of the people and you must read.*

VZ: *And what to read... like history?*

*To the story, to the books or the newspaper and you listen the media, the radios and everything, and then you look to the television, everything, and then you hear what the people are talking, because the things they can, they can make a nice music. You see. Ye, you can see the lifestyle of the people and then you..., from there you must do the record with these people, to show the people what is the life, and then you read in the Bible or somewhere because nowadays the gospel singers they read inside the Bible and then they talk just like the reality. You see. Yes, because they do the... they took two..., two words from the Bible, they choose to nowadays life and then they...*

*So do you read a lot?*

*Yes I read the... You see always I read the newspaper. I can be... I can be on the time. Yes. I can be on the time...*

*Up to date.*

*Up to date, yes. Up to date with the newspaper and then what is going on about the world, all over the world and just going on in South Africa or everywhere. You see. Because I'm a singer. If I am going to sing, I can sing about the thing that I know. Not the proposing [making up?].... I must think about the things that I know. When you told me Czechs you are living just like this and I can do the music by Czech. You say Czech people, please be aware of what, what... About the wind, or about the rain, about the things. You see. Very nice. Intelligent. Intelligent mind.*

*Definitely.*

*You must have an intelligent mind and you must love the people because from the people you can find something.*

(11 September 2007)

I often saw Samuel reading newspapers when I met him for interviews during his lunch break, always the local tabloids, *Sowetan* and *Daily Sun*. I never saw him reading any other newspapers. He did not buy them but read newspapers from the previous day left by other people. His curiosity was very strong. In this regard, it was no coincidence that I started to collaborate with him. I could even say that it was his curiosity that drew him to collaborate with me, that he chose me (rather than me choosing him). To my knowledge he was the only one of all the gardeners who so actively communicated with the international students. He saw it as his duty as a singer to sing about real life and about things which happened around him, and engage. He was a documentarian of daily life, of the people he came into touch with. But his main interest was never just to document, his intention not to describe reality for its own sake. He wanted to educate and teach. He sewed entertaining texts from daily stories together in order to make a moral point.



Once he touched the same topic from a different perspective emphasizing precisely this agenda and further pointing to one part of his activities.

*LSK: Music is just like... you eat it, you sleep music, you walk music, you listening music, all the time... You listen to somebody talking there... oooo... the people... gossip... you go to do the music. And you never saw that but you can do music about that people they are fighting. 'They are fighting in the street', you say, you must say, you must relieving to fight the other people... Between the children... What do you teach the children when you are fighting? Because when you are fighting all the children are looking at you. What do you teach the children? Because the children they always adopt the things they saw in the house or in the family... The children think that is life, they see their father all the time fighting with their mother, they say: 'It is all right, it is life.' They are gonna going to kick other children outside there, all the time when they are playing.*

(13 July 2009)

Thinking about songs was a full-time business for Samuel, and by taking up a topic he tried to point to a particular issue or a problem. Here he mentioned the destructive effect of adults' behaviour on children, but his interests were much broader, as can be seen on his *Mmamona* album. Samuel's concern about children was not abstract. He tried to engage children from his neighbourhood in Mamelodi and occasionally also in Maralaleng in Ga-Mphahlele, as I briefly described in the opening passage of the biographical part about Ga-Mphahlele, in musical and even theatrical activities. (I do not include a detailed discussion of this part of his activities in this dissertation as it is a topic deserving special attention.) I mention his collaboration with children throughout the text where it is relevant, though. A couple of these performances where Samuel performed his songs or danced on them with various groups of children can be seen on the accompanying DVD. For particular tracks see Appendix A.

## ***Mmamona: An African Album***

One of the first things Samuel told me about when we met after my arrival in South Africa in 2007 was his new album. According to the information on the CD he recorded it in one of Mamelodi's studios. Four other artists and one group are credited on the cover. Given Kekana, whom I already mentioned in the opening section of the biographical discussion of Samuel's life in Mamelodi (see Figure 65), played the

keyboard, which he skilfully used to replace acoustic instruments not financially affordable by Samuel. The keyboard decisively influenced the overall sound of the album: even the sound of Samuel's accordion was suppressed and used just as a flavour in most of the songs. Samuel sang the lead voice in all songs. Backing vocals were sung by Sonya Mathe and Racheal Ramahlo, "with help of Queen Ramanya". The name Samuel "Happy" Maroga is also mentioned on the album, without an indication of his role. None of these other musicians I met. The whole album was "recorded, programmed, mixed & mastered at Andy's Studio Mams".

The cover of the CD is made up of a colour photograph of Samuel wearing grey suit and a straw hat, holding his accordion in his left hand and making an all-right sign with his right hand. The picture was taken in front of the international student house where I used to stay in Pretoria with a blossoming *strelicia reginae* behind him. In order to fit the CD format the maker of the cover expanded the picture so that Samuel looks as if he was almost obese, which he has never been (see Figure 66). The right scale of the photograph can be seen on the promotional poster, which I saw in Samuel's mother's house in Maralaleng in Ga-Mphahlele (see Figure 48). Samuel's name and a surname are written top down along the left and right side of the picture. The CD's name appears at the bottom. The writing is in a red rose colour. There is a list of the tracks and the same photograph at the back of the CD (see Figure 68). There are thanks and credits along with a list of the tracks and a small picture of an accordion inside the box (see Figure 67). When I visited his mother's house in Maralaleng he asked me to make a series of promotional pictures, which I did (see Figure 53) along with a several videos of him dancing with local children on several songs from the album (watch the accompanying DVD, for a particular track see Appendix A).

Aside from the complexity of putting all that I have described together into a CD case, the recording of the album cost Samuel a fortune, proportionally to his humble income. The first day I met him in 2007 he told me that he took out a loan of R8700 from a bank in order to be able to pay the expenses of the recording and making of 45 CDs and 70 cassettes. Out of his monthly salary of R1200 he paid R900 every month as an instalment. Having paid his train month fare slightly over R200 remained, so he basically lived on the substantial support of one of his "wives". He miraculously managed to repay the loan. He wanted to sell the album at R50 for a CD and R30 for a cassette. However, he kept a package for himself and carefully used it for his promotion.

He carried the CD with him all the time and gave it to taxi drivers to play it in local taxis, he brought it to the Mams FM community radio, and he carried it with him wherever he travelled. He used every opportunity to promote it. He asked DJs at weddings to play it, he formed choirs of children and adults to dance on it, he distributed promotional posters, he performed the songs from the album live every day when he travelled from and to Mamelodi on the suburban train etc. Besides all that, he used an opportunity to have me there to shoot videos of his performances. I gave him all the videos I shot in a number of copies on DVDs every year.<sup>107</sup>

I gave an example of Samuel's 'promotional behaviour' in the opening part of the biographical chapter about Ga-Mphahlele. Though he had indisputable success in terms of getting to be known in certain quarters of Mamelodi, he did not achieved the kind of popularity from which he could benefit financially. The main problem was that the kind of audience his music attracted was close to his own economic status. Nevertheless, I could observe that the social status he gradually built up was considerable within his social strata in Mamelodi.

Samuel had prepared songs for the *Mmamona* album for a long time. The song *Senwamadi*, for example, was ready to be recorded as early as in 2004. When I met Samuel in 2006 he already played all the songs that later appeared on the album. Our very first interviews were shaped around performances of these songs. Samuel played and sang and I tried to accompany him on my *djembe* drum. He appreciated our playing together and he even wanted me to go to the studio with him. Had I not left before the recording actually took place, I would most likely have been there. In any case, I asked my first questions about the songs and his music during these interviews/performances. I recorded our playing and his explanations on minidisc in order to give the recordings to him as demos later. *Tate Mogolo* (in Sepedi An old man), one of the songs he later recorded in Mamelodi studio, is included on the accompanying CD as we play it together.

There are ten songs included on *Mmamona*. Most of them are Samuel's own topical songs except for the last two which are Pedi traditional. I provide the complete lyrics of the songs below together with their English translations, and in order to make it

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<sup>107</sup> Last time I sent him a parcel full of DVDs with his performances from Prague in August 2013. As he did not have any reliable address in Mamelodi I sent it to someone at the University of Pretoria from whom Samuel collected it. It successfully reached him.

as clear as possible I put the English translation after every line, in italics. The Sepedi text is based on Samuel's handwritten lyrics – it is not a transcription from the CD – and the translations draw partly on his own translations and explanations as he gave them during our interviews and partly on my (later) translations which completed what was missing.

As I mentioned at the end of the last chapter, the songs were written down, translated, and discussed during two interview sessions 25 and 27 September 2007. I did not try to correct Samuel's Sepedi or Afrikaans orthography in any way, in order to keep the texts authentic. I put the songs here in the same order as they appeared on the CD, adding information Samuel gave to the song when writing them down or on other occasions. (Samuel's original manuscript of all the songs can be seen in Appendix C.)

Looking at the songs' texts and going through his further comments and explanation gives us a unique perspective of Samuel's social and cultural position. Every song can be understood as an insight into a specific domain, serving as a platform for expressing Samuel's opinion on a particular topic. Though there are only ten songs on the album, and though Samuel composed and performed a number of other songs in subsequent years, this selection can be seen as representative of his compositional style and especially of his world view at the time of the research. The studio recording of all these songs' is included on the accompanying CD. For particular tracks see Appendix A. Videos of live performances of some of the songs are included on the accompanying DVD. For particular tracks see Appendix A.

The first song is about the fleetingness of popularity, and about illness. As in many other Samuel's songs he spoke from a male perspective about a young man, an urban boy, who used to be popular among friends in Pretoria but who got sick and everybody turned away from him. The illness is not specified in the song and Samuel was no more concrete in the interview. I did not ask. It could be HIV/AIDS but Samuel never spoke about HIV/AIDS, which is important to mention, given his interest in various social issues. He thus did not deviate from the norm of silence around the disease across South African society and among ZCC members specifically (see Oxlund 2014 on this point). The moral point to be learned here was to respect one's parents, because "when days are dark friends are few".

## Senwamadi (The One Who Drinks Blood)

Senwamadi ngwana molome e tla o nkgothatše.

*Senwamadi, my uncle's child, come to advise me.*

Ke be ke le mamoratoa wa Petoria.

*I was a lover of Pretoria.*

Ke be ke na le bakgotse ba bangata.

*I had too many friends.*

Lehono nna ke a lwala ba ntšhabetše.

*Today I am sick, they are running away from me.*

Joo nan jo ke tla ya kae.

*Joo, where can I go.*

Ke bitša go wena Modimo waka.

*I am calling to you, my Lord.*

When days are dark friends are few.

*When days are dark friends are few.*

chorus:

Ngwanešo ke a ratwa ea tshwenya.

*My brother (or my sister), to be loved is very scarce.*

Ngwanešo o hlomphe batswadi o phetle ga monate.

*My brother (or my sister), respect your parents so that your life can be nice.*

The overall diction of the song tacitly suggests that the boy was somehow guilty of his situation, which would allow for an HIV/AIDS interpretation: if he respected his parents, if he thought about God, that is practiced a religious life, he might not end up the way he did, the text seems to suggest, and Samuel's further explanation seems to confirm it. The fatality of the "what can he do?" and the expression of social isolation "they are running away from me" would also suggest such a reading. But it is possible too that Samuel deliberately wanted to leave the interpretation open in order not to drive his potential audience away and be unable to deliver the message at all. As he put it:

*It is talking about the sick people, he was loved all over Pretoria, he was a lover boy, who got too many friends. So now, when he is sick they are all running way from him. So what can he do? He is thinking about God now: 'I am calling too you my Lord!'*

(28 March 2006)

The boy's cousin is poetically called his uncle's child, which is not an unusual poetic address in Sepedi. This could be because maternal uncles (malome means maternal

uncle in Sepedi) have important ritual roles in one's life (similarly to paternal aunts). The name Senwamadi is a personal name meaning, The one who drinks blood. Samuel did not mention any specific meaning related to it, though. Having written down this song, he moved to another one.

The next song, the 'title song' of the album, is autobiographical and refers to Samuel's oldest daughter. He targeted jealousy and gossip in this song about people who spread gossip, going from house to house in the neighbourhood pretending that they come to borrow sugar but in fact just gossiping and defaming his daughter, blaming her because she "loves street", implying she is like a prostitute with no prospect of marriage. Now, Samuel rejoices, the gossip is over, because his daughter has married and even had a 'white wedding', a much valued wedding in a European style.

### **Mmamona (Jealousy)**

Ke kgale o bolela o kgopela ditee, o kgopela diswikiri,

*Long time you are talking, requesting tea, requesting sugar,*

Ka leina la ngwana waka,

*With my child's name, you say,*

Ore ngwanaka a ka se nyalwe o rata seterata.

*She is never going to marry because she loves the street.*

Lehono o wa nyalwa,

*Today she is married,*

O nyalwa ka lešira,

*She is married in a white gown,*

Lešira le lelomo,

*A white gown with flower,*

Dipolelo di fedile.

*Topics are finished.*

chorus:

Mmamona tloga tseleng.

*Jealousy, away from the road.*

Mmamona tloga tseleng ngwanaka o wa nyalwa.

*Jealousy, away from the road, my child is married.*

There is a spoken oral poetry in the middle of the song, which is not transcribed here. Samuel explained that he inserted it there because the song is about a wedding and

poetry is recited at weddings. He changed the poetry from time to time, either warning against old men marrying young women or adding praises of his father Maritagane, or just inserting “halala” or a wedding ululation, or something else.

The next song is about the impact of modern technologies on the experience of relationships. There is the “old love” associated with the older generation, of which Samuel saw himself to be part of, which did not use mobile phones (referred to as cell phones in South Africa) there is and “the love of the young people” who use mobile phones for dating and keeping in touch with each other.

### **Dicellula (Cell Phone)**

Ke lerato la baswa leo, ga le swane le larena batala.

*This is the love of the young people, it is not the same with the old people.*

Lerato larena batala re be re šomiša Mangwalo,

*Love of the old people used letters,*

Lerato la baswa ba šomiša dicellula.

*Love of the young people uses cell phones.*

chorus:

Batlo bolela ka dicellula.

*They are talking with cell phones.*

Dicellula ba bolela ka tšona.

*They are communicating with each other via cell phones.*

He mentioned that he found 3 + 2 verses enough: “This is the main message I want to talk about. But I put it in short. Then I repeat it again and again and again.” (25 September 2007) In 2006 he commented on the song:

*This one is simple. You know, technology is there so the young people they are talking with cell phones about love. So the old love... like us... we used letters. So it is simple like that. We are talking about love. I say the old love is not the same like the love nowadays. The old love you write letters so it was wasted time because you are waiting a long time. You are waiting for answer.*

(29 March 2006)

Samuel saw technologies positively as saving time – you are not ‘waiting for answer’ – and that we should be grateful to those who invented it. (This seemingly contradicts his opinion expressed in a commentary on *Tate Mogolo*, a song that I discuss later in this

chapter.) The lyrics compare the old and the new with a surprising objectivity. There is neither a judgement nor even a feeling of nostalgia in it. From today's point of view it is quite a visionary song considering that he sang it already in 2005 when there had been neither smart phones nor fully developed virtual social networks yet. Samuel himself has used a mobile phone since I have known him but he never used Internet, not even e-mail. Thanks to his phone I could keep in touch with him from the beginning of the research, even from Prague via occasional text messages. Unlike most of my friends from Mamelodi he used the same number for the past nine years so it has always been easy to contact him.

The following song is one of the songs dealing with gender relations though its main theme is male reliability and truthfulness in relationships and the fate of children growing up in single-parent families.

### **Lerato la maaka (False Love)**

1/

Watseba ga ona tšhelete,

*You know you got no money,*

O tshephiša mosadi terene.

*You promise the woman a train.*

2/

Watseba o dula mo mokhukhung,

*You know you live in a shack,*

O tshephiša mosadi big house.

*You promise the woman a big house.*

3/

Watseba o sepela ka bicycle,

*You know that you ride a bicycle,*

O tshephiša mosadi Pajero.

*You promise the woman a Pajero [a 4x4 expensive car].*

chorus:

Aowa, Aowa botšang basadi di nnete.

*No, no, tell the women truth.*

Bana ba bangata ba fetoga ditsotsi.

*Too many children become tsotsis [gangsters].*

Bana ba bangata ba fetoga distreet kids.

*Too many children become street kids.*



This is a good example of Samuel's poetic strategy. While entertaining the audience with all the funny contradictions, he delivers a critical message. It could be argued that he targeted himself in the song too although he did not talk about this and I think did not intend it. Though he had children with three women and due to his precarious financial situation could not support them very much or sometimes at all, he never abandoned the families and tried to look after them as much as he could. He described the positive reactions to the song by audiences, praising himself for its message.

*They are laughing when I am singing this song. Every people inside the train they are laughing. They know exactly what they say to the women. And they say this man knows about life. They [men] are liars.*

(25 September 2007)

It could be noted that he unmarkedly spoke about men here. He further expounded on the lyrics with a typical situation as illustration.

*Too many children are turning to be gangsters... because of what? Of the false love. They [parents] are going to divorce. Because when the woman knows truth, she says: 'I never accept your love because you are lying for me.' Sometimes he has got two children with her but now he wants to quit the wedding. And the children turn to be street kids.*

(25 September 2007)

*Too many children are suffering because of false love, men always promise the women but he has got no money.*

(29 March 2009)

He saw male income as important to maintaining a household and the presence of man as essential for raising children, conceptualized the situation in a traditional way as a matter of individual responsibility, which he ascribed to the men. Women were in a position of rather passive victims of male misbehaviour, in the song, which is a strongly male perspective on the situation. This state of affairs is a common situation when couples had children but were not married because men did not have money to pay the bride wealth or 'lobola'. Such couples were more likely to break up, which had consequences for the children too. The probability of such a scenario was further enhanced by migrancy. However, Samuel did not give the audience these excusing

social and cultural contexts and, instead, simply appealed to individual responsibility in his poetic shortcuts.

Though the next song was not originally conceived as autobiographical, it turned out to become so in the course of time. It is about the devastating impact of unemployment on relationships inside the family, both between husband and wife and between father and children. Again he used a male perspective, his own in this case, emphasizing loss of respect as the worst consequence of unemployment.

### **Mahlalela (Lazybones/Unemployed)**

1/

O bona ke sa šomi,

*You see, I am not working,*

O thuba motse waka,

*You break my family/my house,*

Le bana baka ba a fiwa tše monate.

*My children are given the sweets.*

2/

Ga ke re ke a bolela ore homola,

*If I am talking, you say, keep quite,*

O bolela eng ole Mahlalela.

*What are you talking, you Mahlalela/lazybones/unemployed.*

3/

Go maketa ke lekile,

*I try to search the job,*

Mešomo ga ke o hwetše.

*But I never find the job.*

4/

Ga ke fihla go bo ra mešomo,

*When I arrive to employer,*

Ba ntomiša ka di mpša.

*They chase me with dogs.*

Ga ke fihla gae lapeng,

*When I arrive home*

Ba mpitša Mahlalele.

*They call me Mahlalela/lazybones/ unemployed..*

5/

Joo nana jona ke tla ya kae?

*Oh, where can I go?*

Ga o sa šome bophelo bo boima.

*If you do not work, life is difficult.*

Ga o sa bereke bophelo bo boima.

*If you can not buy, life is difficult.*

Samuel offered an autobiographical reading of this song: though he had performed the song for a long time having other people in mind, it began to be relevant even for him at the time I met him.

*To break is to separate, just like divorce or something just like that. You see somebody coming inside your house. This thing I sing before my wife wanted to divorce me. So other people are saying: 'You are singing about yourself.' But I am thinking this is not going to happen to me. I say: 'I guide other people.' But they turn to me, it is like... It is exactly what she has done to me. It is the way she has done to me in that song.*

(25 September 2007)

I asked him about the person who gave his children the sweets.

*It is another man, I am singing about the one who wants to break my family, from outside. He goes first with my wife, but I want to tell him: 'Do not break my life by giving my children sweets.'*

(25 September 2007)

He spoke about a difficult situation in his life mirroring the experience of thousands of other South African men who are frustrated by the inability to provide for their families. It is all the more difficult for them because of the ruling traditional conservative gender order, often demanding the impossible of them in the context of high unemployment. This causes a symbolic violence resulting in frustration, depression, and the underestimation of themselves among men who are not able to meet society's demands. Actual violence may become the result (see for example Richter and Morrell 2006). As with the previous song, the social system, the real culprit, is not mentioned.

*This thing is very nice, it is a very good message and a nice one. This one is very very tough to sing about because life is very difficult....*

[...]

*You know, if you do not work, every time you want to eat, nothing, you got no money, nothing. You see? And when you are talking, they say: 'Keep quite, because you never work.' Sometimes*

*you see woman when she cooks kentucky or chicken, something just like that. If you say: 'Where this chicken comes from?' They say: 'Nee, keep quite because you are Mahlalela'.*

(25 September 2007)

Samuel also demonstrated the way he performed the song, using theatrical gestures to illustrate it and make the serious topic funny, almost bordering on parody.

*You are tired and want to rest in your house because you are tired of the dogs. And then the wife comes and: (parodying the wife as if she was barking like the dogs) and you picture the way you are running from the dogs. (laughing) You saved your life. And when you want to rest somebody: (parodying the grumbling wife again). Somebody makes a lot of noise... Mahlalela... What can you do? You picture all the things. You say: 'Oh Lord, thank you Lord.' You are saved from the dogs. You see? It is a laughing stuff. (laughing) Sometimes you want to talk to your wife: 'I am running from the dogs, I was nearly bitten by the dogs.' And she says: (parodying her grumbling). 'Do not talk about this thing because you never want to work.' Life of man is very very difficult. To be a man you must try very hard. (laughing) You picture the day you were nearly bitten by the dogs [...] Some tried to kill themselves because of this.*

(25 September 2007)

This was the last song we discussed that first afternoon, in the garden of the student house where I used to stay in 2005 and 2006. We finished about 5.30 pm disturbed by a white (it is significant here) woman from the personnel department who managed the student accommodation and whom I remembered from the time I lived in the student house. She was not his superior but she started to shout at Samuel, What he is doing there *after* his working hours (he had an access there, he had keys as it was part of his workplace and there was storage for the gardeners in the backyard house behind the house). His crime was that he was not supposed to be there *at that time*. She did not know what to think about me, as she obviously did not know about my return to South Africa and our research relationship. We gave her some quickly made up explanation of our presence there and walked out. Samuel was very nervous about it and I felt uncomfortable and guilty as we both knew that his position at work was vulnerable. Luckily, no consequences followed. It is a good illustration, though, of the difficulties we often had when trying to find a place where we could sit and talk undisturbed, and it demonstrates Samuel's difficult position face to face with the white staff at the workplace, which seemed to be habitually stuck deep in the past.

The other day we met was in a closet used by cleaning ladies in one of the mixed students' residences, because it was cold and windy outside. As all the cleaning ladies were from Mamelodi and used the same commuter train as Samuel did, they all knew him well, and some of them remembered me, too from the time I stayed in the student house across the street, which they cleaned. They made us a cup of tea and we spent there a productive time transcribing Samuel's songs and discussing their meanings. From time to time the cleaning ladies who were spending part of the time there too joined in the discussion with minor comments and notes.

Samuel began with the song dealing with gender relations as its main theme. The point of the song is that while gender equality is a desired state of affairs, when it comes to job interviews corruption decides either in the form of financial or sexual bribery. In his comments Samuel's view turned out to be more conservative than it seems from the song's text.

## **50/50 (Fifty, Fifty)**

1/

South Africa e thabile e thabetše ditokelo

*South Africa is happy because of the gender equality [literally: rejoice over the rights]*

2/

Bomme ba ba golo rutang wa na basoa ditokelo

*The old woman teaches the young woman the human rights.*

3/

Sehlano ka mo, sehlano ka mo, tekano ya bong.

*Fifty, fifty, gender equality.*

Monna ke lephodisa, mosadi ke lephodisa.

*Man is a policeman, woman is a police woman.*

Monna ke Nurse, mosadi ke nurse.

*The man is a nurse, the woman is a nurse.*

4/

Bophelo bja ka jeno ke mahlomola,

*My life is that of mahlomola [unemployed],*

Mešomo efedile, go setše ya go rekišwa.

*There is no jobs, the job is to be bought only.*

Ge ole monna ba kopa tšotšo,

*If you are a man, you give a bribe,*

Ge ole mosadi ba kopa lerato.

*If you are a woman you pay by love.*

Fifty, fifty, gender equality.

*Fifty, fifty, gender equality.*

Mona o reita Terene, mosadi o reita Terene.

*Man can drive a train, woman can drive a train.*

Fifty, fifty, gender equality.

*Fifty, fifty, gender equality.*

Mona ke lephodisa mosadi ke lephodisa.

*Man is a policeman, woman is a police woman.*

Monna ke Nurse, mosadi ke nurse.

*The man is a nurse, the woman is a nurse.*

He gave a thorough explanation of his understanding of the situation. Some professions are open to equal sharing, but he expressed his conservative opinion about others, basing his idea of gender order on God's will as represented by the framework of a Christian world view. He would never sing about certain professions as open to equal sharing, but rather saw the roles of men and women as God-given. Moreover, he discussed the need of men to be praised or sung by women in order to succeed. This view corresponded well to his opinion expressed with regard to the initiation school and traditional institutions, which I described in the biographical part dealing with his life in Ga-Mphahlele.

*It is very nice to understand what I mean. [...] Because of 50/50, because of gender equality, we share just like this. I want to give exactly what it mean. Because of what? An there is another thing that is not going to happen if you do 50/50. Because I want to show only what it costs. Inside the job you can do the 50/50 but others, just like a priest, or pastor, you never go 50/50 there. You don't because God do not love the woman to teach the man. You see? This thing I can never sing about because it is impossible. This is impossible. But people they force it that it really happen. You see, it is the woman who burry the child, it is not the man who burry the child. You see, it is impossible. But the people need the 50/50, 50 percent, 50 percent. This is impossible. [There are things] it's possible and other things it's not possible. If you go to teach... The woman can be a teacher, and man can be a teacher. This is possible. You see? We share. And here on the top, he can be a leader. And the woman can be a leader. It's possible. Very, very possible. But not inside the church. You see? Because the church is the image of God. You teach people. Because the Jesus when he come, he only choose the man, not choose the women. The woman come after us. Then they are singing the songs for us. So that we must be very, very, very, very, very, very powerful. Because if they come after you, then you become very, very powerful. Because they praise you. You see? You see to the football. If someone give you power, you got more power to do that. It is woman who praise men so that they can do the job nice. [...] It is the way I want to talk in this song.*

(27 September 2007)

Here Samuel basically outlined his vision of gender order but in the next passage he returned to the situation of looking for a job and the related corruption. While we can say that his view was fairly conservative he appeared to be very sensitive to corruption and sexual abuse at the workplace, which he completely condemned. In the beginning, too, he uncovered his strategies for composing the text, and at the end he pointed out a not all that obvious but important aspect of such a corrupt system, which cannot work effectively as a consequence of the methods used.

*I catch only the points. I never try to hide them. These things I do it straight and this is a message. If you can listen it and then you can listen it. Very nice... what the men say. Ba kopa tšotšo [pay a bribe], you know exactly what it mean about this. And it's corruption. If we cannot face corruption, we never be successful. Because you know, this lady... This lady got children inside her home, so the children are crying, so she go to search some job. [...] You do not know the problem of this woman, she never come here to search sex or something just like that. She come to search some money to support her children. So you, you need the love before you give her a job. This is corruption. [...] Because this woman need job with all her tears and. [...] And another who come to do the same like this one. You see, there is a lot of people who hire them with this method. And this is corruption. This is corruption and it is no good. And there is one who is going to love you... from that five person. And this thing is not going to work well. Because if you remember, you give this man money, all the time you know. If you never want to work you say: 'I can tell them, I can put out the secret.' So every time you are oppressed and abused you see, this is the way. I want to give people light. This is finished, ne? You are covered? Can I go forward?*

(27 September 2007)

Samuel's Christian world view functioned complementarily with the traditional African one but played a more prominent role here.

Samuel continued writing down the song *Bana ba Pedi* (Children of Pedi) in this session. Here he positioned himself in the role of a wise Pedi chief telling his people what they should do in order to make the modern state work. In turn the people praise him as a chief following the traditional genre of oral poetry, of chief praises. Children were engaged in the song's performances, representing Pedi people praising the chief "Kadiaka". While mixing traditional institutions like chieftainship with the demands of the modern state and its apparatus, he poetically used Afrikaans and Sepedi together, confirming the argument I put forward in the biographical chapter, about Samuel's perception of urban geographies. It is one of the most fascinating songs with regard to

my interest in understanding Samuel's position within the world he inhabited. He commented upon this song in a great detail stopping at almost every verse explaining what he meant. I first present the whole song with a translation and then his comments.

## **Bana ba Bapedi (Children of Bapedi)**

1/

Nna re bana ba Bapedi. Nna re bušwa ke Kadiaka.

*We are the children of Bapedi. We are ruled/governed by Kadiaka.*

2/

Nna re bina sethuthulele.

*We are dancing sethuthulele.*

Set jou skouer aan die wiel.

*Put your shoulder on the wheel.*

a/

Poliese, poliese. Set jou skouer aan die wiel.

*Police, police. Put your shoulder on the wheel.*

b/

Soldate, soldate. Set jou skouer aan die wiel.

*Soldier, soldier. Put your shoulder on the wheel.*

c/

Nurse in die Hospitaale. Set jou skouer aan die wiel.

*Nurse in a hospital. Put your shoulder on the wheel.*

d/

Onderweiseres in die Skoole. Set jou skouer aan die wiel.

*Teacher at school. Put your shoulder on the wheel.*

e/

Trafike offeseer. Set jou skouer aan die wiel.

*Traffic officer. Put your shoulder on the wheel.*

f/

Alle mense los misdade.

*All people, leave crime/wrong doing.*

Werk mense, werk.

*Work, people, work.*

chorus:

Nna re bana ba Bapedi, Nna re bušwa ke Kadiaka.

*We are the children of Bapedi. We are ruled by Kadiaka.*



Samuel began his explanation as follows:

*This song I am singing about myself. I am singing with the children so the children they praise me. They praise me, so they are children of Bapedi. 'Our chief is Mr. Kadiaka.' [...] We are the children of Papedi. 'Nna re beršwa ke Kadiaka.' They praise the ruler, or the leader of them. You say re bana ba ANC [African National Congress], just like a government, re bana ba ANC [we are children of ANC], this is bana ba ANC, re beršwa ke Madiba, this is Mandela, he is our leader, and then 'nna re bina sethuthulele.' Sethuthulele is another kind of dancing. It is sethuthulele, just like toyi-toyi [South African protest dance], just like kwassa-kwassa [popular dance of D. R. Congo origin], like something. I uses to say sethuthulele, this is kind of dancing that we are doing.*

(27 September 2007)

Samuel builds an arch here between the traditional institution of chieftainship and the modern state framing the current political order in traditional terms: South African citizens are children of the ruling party African National Congress and they are ruled by Nelson Mandela, called here by his traditional clan name Madiba, which further enhances the traditional framework, as a chief. The people/*nation* as children of Pedi/*children of ANC* are dancing a praising Pedi sethuthulele dance/*toyi-toyi dance*<sup>108</sup> to their chief Kadiaka/*Madiba*. It is an expression of parallel conceptualization of the traditional framework of chieftom and chieftaincy, on the one hand, and of the modern state, on the other.

At the same, it must be emphasized, it was a completely imaginary situation. Samuel was not a traditional rural chief but a rather poor township urban dweller. A strong nostalgia over the imaginary ideal traditional past can be sensed here. Samuel's musical and theatrical activities with children from his neighbourhood in Mamelodi were clear pronouncements of his attempts to re-create an imaginary traditional world within the context of Mamelodi in order to teach the children the 'traditional values' which he found missing in the urban environment. Playing and singing this song was one of the opportunities where the imagined social order could be performed. The children literally praised Samuel as a chief in the course of performances in Mamelodi or in his rural home in Maralaleng in Ga-Mphahlele.

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<sup>108</sup> *Toyi-toyi* considered here as a national South African dance. Given the tradition of the common anti-apartheid struggle of the past it is understood as creating a sense of common South African identity here.

Clear overlaps may be found between his conservative view of gender order based on values understood as Christian, as he gave it in the previously discussed song, and his other ideas about society and state based partly on an image of traditional social order and partly on an image of a modern state. His idea of a working modern state is expressed in the rest of the song with real enthusiasm.

VZ: *So what is the meaning of this sentence?*

LSK: *Put your shoulder on the wheel. It is to work... [...] Yes, start to work. So now. This is a message to the people. I want to give the message to the people from me. I am the ruler of this people. I must give the message to the people. Because I am a ruler, or I am a leader. This is message that I want to give to the policemen. I say 'Set jou skouer aan die wiel.' 'Put your shoulder on the wheel.' I mention, that is... I mention. 'Poliese, Poliese.' Police, police. They must work. Ja, if I can say, this is the message to the policemen... and policewomen, so that they can work, work, work, work... Set jou skouer aan die wiel. The police must work. And then Soldate, it is soldiers. They must work. [...] So it is something like 'Start to work, soldiers!' 'Soldiers, begin to work now.' It is just like a leader. If you are a leader then you guide the people what they must do now. And then you say you give the light to them. [...] An this is: 'Alle mense los misdate'. All people leave corruption, leave crime. Crime is misdate. 'Work, people, work'*

(27 September 2007)

Interestingly, Samuel intuitively mentioned important pillars of the modern state apparatus. He began with repressive apparatus – police and soldiers – and continued to ‘softer’ professions like medical workers and teachers finishing with traffic officers probably given the urgency of the extreme numbers of road accidents in South Africa. He finished with a call to all to leave crime and corruption and to build up the country.

*I just mention the great jobs, only these. Because each and every department they must understand their situation. Because this one is a great position, who carry the entire nation. These are the most important. From hospital... You can be injured and then you go straight to hospital. Then police... Somebody can took your cell phone here, you go straight to the police people. They must act. And now you say: 'Hey, hey... somebody carry my thing...' Never say when, they must act from now. If traffic officer do not take tšotšo [bribe]. Somebody can hit your car, by mistake, and they must help you. Because if they are not helping, they are gonna going to fight. Somebody can be fighting for you. 'Why you hit my car?' Just like this. And then you begin to fight. But if traffic... they are here, and do not took the side. Somebody can cool up. They must do the job exactly what they [are supposed to do]. Don't face the person because he got money. If you got no money then they say we can talk. Or if you are crossing the red light or robot, they*

*call you and say, if you got fifty cents or fifty Rand we can mend it. And this is corruption and we do not need it. And in hospitals, you see, if you got no money, they leave you in the chairs, you can stay the whole day. Somebody come after you, they say 'Come here', because they now his father or her father...*

(27 September 2007)

I asked about the focus on the Afrikaans language. Samuel spoke Afrikaans better than English and the use of idioms such as “set jou skouer aan die wiel” confirm it. His Afrikaans orthography did not follow the rules, though, and his experience of the spoken language over the written one is clear. It appeared that Samuel used Afrikaans because he liked the sound of the language and also because he wanted to be understood in the quarters concerned in the song and which, he believed, were still mostly populated by Afrikaans speakers. He also argued that Afrikaners are still in power and the song is dedicated to them. I was, may be naively, quite surprised that Samuel showed absolutely no resentment towards the language given the burden of its historical role in the apartheid oppression.

*VZ: Why did you make it in Afrikaans and not in Sepedi or in English?*

*LSK: Nee, Afrikaans... I like Afrikaans. Because Afrikaans song. Always when you do the gospel, you see, and you uses Afrikaans word and it is very, very, nice.*

*So you use it because it sounds nice, the language sounds nice.*

*It sounds nicely to the songs.*

*...and only because of the sound?*

*Only because of the sound.*

*No other reason?*

*Because people who are in the power is Afrikaner on this world. You see? The policemen, policewomen... and the hospitals is Afrikaner, you see, university... So I want to get this forward so that they can listen. If this thing can go to the media or go television, this thing... everybody is gonna going to understand.*

(27 September 2007)

The following song was one of the most popularly performed by Samuel and his various occasional musical groups. It is partly autobiographical and deals with a socially widely resonating topic of weddings and divorces, relationships and breakups. Samuel addressed men in this song again, comforting men who suffered a divorce or a breakup, telling that there are enough (other) women to choose from. The song is also meant to prevent these men from turning their feelings into socially destructive behaviour.

## Thula (Quiet)

1/

O boletše moekelesia are tšohle di na le nako.

*As Preacher [Bible, Ecclesiastes] said, everything got its own time.*

2/

Go nyalana gona le nako, go hlalana go na le nako.

*To marry has its own time, to divorce got its own time.*

3/

Re a tseba obe o mo rata feela o go hladile.

*We know you are in love with her but she divorces you.*

4/

Tlogela go epolaya basadi ba tletše lefase lena.

*Do not kill yourself, the world is full of women.*

5/

Thula ngwana mama. Thula.

*Quiet mother's child. Quiet.*

6/

Re a tseba o swanetše a nyale wena, tlog feela o nyetše mokgotse wa gago.

*We know you were supposed to marry her but your brother/close friend has married her.*

7/

Tlogela, go senya lenyalo, le wena ngwanešo o tla nyalwa.

*Do not destroy the wedding. You, my brother, can marry soon too.*

8/

Homola, homola, ngwana mama, homola.

*Quiet, quiet, mother's child, quiet.*

It is not quite clear here whether Samuel talked about divorce or just a breakup before marriage, most likely about both. In any case, the lyrics demonstrate his liberal opinion on divorce. Interestingly, he introduced the whole discussion using a Biblical quote (Ecclesiastes 3: 1) as if trying to legitimize divorce within Christian context through the rhythm of the poetic Biblical text. This benevolence could be seen as related to the African traditional view rather than to the Christian one, though. Samuel explained that he addressed men specifically in this song:

*You see? This is nice music, so that I can give the people who are divorced something for himself or herself. So, I want to face the man because I am talking about men. We know you are loving her but she divorced you. [...] I want to console you..., 'ngwana Mama, ngwana Mama thula'. Ja,*

*mother's child. You see, when you see... you cool up, do not worry my mother's child, do not worry, everything can be alright. You see, I want to put this straight.*

(27 September 2007)

Samuel liked this song and he reminded me of his performance of the song with a group of young men and children in Maralaleng where we visited earlier that month. He liked it because it was fast and gave the group an opportunity to 'do actions', that is to dance creatively.

*I used to sing this song and other children they loved this song and they can perform very nice with this song. You see the lot from the video. We are uses to sing this song. It is because it is fast and you can shake the body the way you can shake the body. And I got the message. It is a nice music. I like it because it is fast and we can do the actions and we can do everything. You see?*

(27 September 2007)

The next song, *Tate Mogolo* (Old man or Grandfather) is different from all the previous songs. It was not composed by Samuel but it is a traditional Pedi school song he used to sing as a boy. He consciously talked about his performance and recording of the song as about restoration. He deliberately took the song to restore it in a new arrangement attractive for a contemporary young audience. The idea behind was to bring the issue of old people to children and young people. The usual strategy of delivering the message using an entertaining song as its medium is used here again. Samuel knew I liked the song as its performance was always accompanied by various funny movements which the children performers enjoyed doing (we even played the song together already in 2006 and I recorded the song few weeks later during my first visit there, check the Appendix A for particular tracks on the accompanying CD). He introduced the song as follows.

LSK: *It is your favourite song, I know.*

VZ: *It is very funny.*

*Ja, it is very funny, this Tate Moholo. This is an old song. This is an old song from the schools. When we are young people we uses these to teach us how to sing. And this is a restoration, it is about restoration. But now...*

*About what?*

*Restoration... to teach the young children, about old people, old grandfather or... So if old people talk with you do not hurry, do not hurry, because the old people can show you: 'I am sick*

*here, I am sick here...’ You must just be patient for the old people. You see, sometimes you see my mother... [she wants to] talk with you..., other people want to talk, just you be patient to old people. Yes. This song, it shows you exactly what the old people uses to say. If you are nurse or you are sister or you are doctor, you must be patient to the old people. Because you can say what is your sickness? They say here. If you say you want to... let us say shoulder, they say yes, you look at the shoulder, they say loins.*

(27 September 2007)

## **Tate Mogolo (Old man/Grandfather)**

1/

Tate mogolo otšwa kae ka jeno?

*Old father, where do you come from today?*

Ketšwa ke sepettele godimo ga dithaba.

*I come from hospital on the top of mountains.*

2/

O bolawa ke eng?

*What is your sickness?*

Ke hlogo, magetta, sehuba le matheka, mangoele le menwana.

*My head, shoulders, chest and loins, knees and toes.*

3/

Dingaka le manurse nke lere thuše

*Doctor and nurse, please help*

Le fadiše batšafadi.

*To heal the old people.*

Le rena re a ba rata.

*We love them.*

Samuel’s explanation unraveled his reasons for restoring the song. It was meant to raise awareness about the old age and to reestablish respect for the old people. Not only did Samuel mean the song to entertain children, he wanted to address doctors and people working in hospitals. The reason, which he began to reveal and develop in the course of the interview, was quite unexpected for me.

*This is a message to the doctors and... Always I want to give a short message to other people. You see? Always the doctors are the same people who can help our elders. Because if you go to the hospitals, the old people, they never look [at] her, or they never look [at] him. [They] say: ‘Eee, this one... Why he do not want to die because there is no partner of him, there is no other people than him. Ja, she is supposed to die. Because she is old.’ Why? Because these people are our dictionaries.*

VZ: *They are what?*

*Our dictionaries.*

*Diction...*

*Dictionaries. Somebody. If you do not know something, you just have a...*

*Oh, dictionary!*

*Dictionary. It is our dictionary. Because they never forget the old or the past. If you are wondering, then you go to the elders. You see.*

*This is what you mean... Yes, they know.*

*Yes, they know everything but they do not use to write but they...*

*They remember.*

*They remember... and what time, and you can find the whole story... about that. You see. This is our dictionaries and they never forget everything. So if you want to build... the nice government, you must use the elders. You see. And then you can put these together and then so... It is so... Because if you use the young people they are gonna destroy, they are gonna destroy everything. Because they say: 'I know, I know... about how to write in computers.' So they say. The other places are just like this. They use their computer rather than they use their knowledge. Hm... And if the computer talk lies... lie, they say computer..., because computer done by the people. Now, I am gonna go to finish because...*

(27 September 2007)

Samuel's points about the treatment of older people in hospitals and the behaviour of medical workers towards them in general, put the song into quite another light. It was an expression of deeper traditional and conservative world views in opposition towards some contemporary trends. To treat older people with respect was necessary for the good of the whole society not of the ethical reasons only but of practical reasons. The old people were seen as repositories of reliable knowledge and therefore they should have a say in important decisions on various levels of state apparatus. Samuel was not gender specific here but based on the usage of pronouns in the first paragraph and his views I already discussed it is likely that he had men and women in his mind alike here. Compared to his embrace of new technologies when discussing mobile phones, his seeming distrust towards computers could be seen as quite surprising. What he pointed out here, however, was not a criticism of new technologies *per se* but rather of the excessive dependence of their inexperienced users on them. He saw this situation as related to the practice of putting the older people aside and setting them outside of decision-making processes. The restoration and performance of this traditional song can be seen as an expression of Samuel's traditional view of the matter and as an attempt to raise awareness about the issue of an old age.

The last song of the album *Selepe* (axe) was a traditional poetic Pedi song. Unlike the previous one it draws on deeper cultural layers and as such is not easy to decipher. Moreover, it is not a topical song but an allegorical one. The song appeared to be important for Samuel because it related him to his rural home. As an introduction to the discussion of this song he explained the song's role in his memories.

*This thing we uses to sing inside the bus when we come to Pretoria, or when we go home. Yes, because we are going home. So the other people..., they uses [to sing it] but they never put inside the records. But I uses to do it with record. Because it is old song. It was old song. Because I love it too much. When I am raise up, when I was a childhood, I hear older people singing this song. They say: Monna o nkile selepe...*

(27 September 2007)

It is the only song on the album with no numbered strophes, which further confirms its traditional origin.

## **Selepe (Axe)**

Monna o nkile selepe a nyologela thabeng.

*Once a man took an axe and climbed up a mountain.*

Ayo go rema sefate, sefate sa matšatši ohle.

*He chopped a tree, a tree of all days.*

Sefate sa tšhoša leeba, Leeba la tšhoša phukubye,

*The [falling] tree frightens a dove, the dove frightens a jackal,*

Phukubje ya tšhoša Nare, Nare ya bolaya motho,

*The jackal frightens a buffalo, the buffalo kills the man.*

Nare ya boloya. Nare ya bolaya, Nare ya bolaya, Nare ya bolaya, bolaya motho.

*The buffalo kills the man, the buffalo kills the man, the buffalo kills the man, the buffalo kills the man.*

Banna se remeng difate. Difate ke bohwa bja naga.

*Men, do not chop trees. Trees are our heritage/culture.*

Samuel did not give me sufficient explanation of the song during the interview, partly because it was getting late and he had to go back to work and partly because of his insufficient English and my insufficient Sepedi. As it was our last meeting that year, we did not have time to return to it. Nevertheless, I studied the song later, finished the translation and finally understood its meaning, at least on the basic level.



The allegorical meaning of the song's poetic expression is quite clear. It is a call to look after one's cultural heritage. It relates culture to the very existence of human beings and existence of the world as a human world. The key to the understanding is the word 'sefate', translated by Samuel as tree. One of the possible meanings of the word 'sefate' is a short "peg in hut wall or a forked stick planted upright (on which maize or 'mealie' cobs are stacked)"<sup>109</sup>. In this sense the tree, as an allegory of heritage and culture, supporting the notion, indeed the very existence, of the world as a cultural world. Human existence rests on it and when the tree is chopped down the whole world as a human cultural world collapses. It happens as a series of consequences allegorized by the chain of the animals one frightening another with the final and definite consequence of the buffalo killing the man, as a personification of people as a whole.

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In this chapter I tried to demonstrate the breadth of Samuel's interests and wider opinions as expressed in his songs appearing on his *Mmamona* album, which he recorded and released in 2007. The songs constituted a core of his repertory for a long time. He basically played all of them for the whole time of my research. I dealt with the songs' texts in detail in order to show how they expressed Samuel's opinions on a broad range of issues, offering a what I would call musical mapping of individual experience: every single song gave us a deep insight into some aspect of Samuel's social and cultural position in the world he lived in. Though his various opinions may seem rather heterogeneous or even conflicting at times when taken out of the broader context of his other opinions, it can be claimed that they are an example of a complexly structured but perfectly coherent and sensible whole based on long and deep experience of particular living conditions. It is important to look at these songs as a whole because only that way do they allow us to see the particular structuring and variously intersecting frameworks as parts of this whole experienced as coherent. Samuel's songs' lyrics and discussions of their meanings are one of the most efficient keys to understanding his complexly structured subjectivity. This is the practical application of what I mean by mapping the individual experience musically.

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<sup>109</sup> *Sesotho sa Leboa (Northern Sotho) – English Dictionary*, <http://africanlanguages.com/sdp/> (accessed 15 March 2015).

In this chapter I have tried to keep emphasizing the continuity between Samuel as a member of the ZCC and as a solo musician on various levels. There is a clear overlap on the level of inspiration. ‘Holy tea’ and Holy Spirit remained a strong source of compositional creativity even within the domain of ‘secular’ musical performance. His church-inspired opinion appeared strongest during the discussions on gender issues. By the same token, the educational ethos of Samuel’s performances bordered on religious preaching sometimes. His rootedness in Pedi culture – enhanced and maintained in the urban environment by his ZCC membership – and in the African traditional imagination, showed up in various moments too. Besides the last song being a testimony of his cultural belonging, it was further fleshed out in discussions about the position of old people or in his Pedi-Afrikaans song about the state’s employers. Issues related to modern society and a modern way of life were important, and in most of the songs Samuel dwelled in all these worlds.

In the last part of the dissertation I map one of the important environments where Samuel made music, as a solo musician as well as a choral singer. It is perhaps one of the best possible examples of this complex social and cultural negotiation. Quite characteristically, it is happening on the move – on the train.

# Samuel on the Stage of the Suburban Train

## Public Transport and Musical Performance

Train has carried a powerful meaning in South African imagination already since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and to a lesser extent has done minibus-taxi since more recently. Both have entered deep into cultural, social and personal experience of migrating and commuting black South African and other Southern African nationals. Samuel himself extensively used various means of transport since he left his rural home in Ga-Mphahlele in 1982. The topic often came out during our interviews. This wider social and personal experience is richly reflected in various local poetic genres of oral literature, songs and their performances as well as scholarly literature (see for example Coplan 1994, Mokitimi 1998 et al.). I am not, however, going to discuss these means of transport as topoi of poetic expression as it has been discussed elsewhere. Instead, I focus on a specific phenomenon of regular and occasional music performances taking place on suburban commuter trains operating between Mamelodi and Pretoria and, partly, also in long-distance minibus-taxis operating between the township and its dwellers' rural homes. Based on interviews with Samuel and partly on my own observations I try to understand the inner cultural logic of these performances and provide an explanation of their various possible meanings for the commuters. I try to interpret the related social practices such as founding of choirs as products of *temporary socialities* among the commuters in situations of commonly felt discomfort and anxiety in wider context of the capitalist economy where these people as mostly unskilled or semi-skilled workers still find themselves in a disadvantaged position. At the same time, I try not to lose sight of Samuel's involvement in it either as a performer of his own educative as well as entertaining songs or as a participator in performance of a widely shared repertory of church choral music.

Most of Samuel's songs were performed on the suburban train as well as during long-distance travelling in minibus-taxis during the time of my research. I took part in

some of the journeys along with him. This topic is especially enlightening here as both Samuel's creativity as an independent songwriter and performer, on the one hand, and his musical membership in the ZCC, on the other, interestingly overlap here. The 'sacred' and 'profane' meet each other here – as in his all musical practices – without making any artificial distinctions. Samuel's experience of being a commuter between Mamelodi and Pretoria for almost thirty years and that of being an active train musician and a train choir organizer and a member of a partly train-derived 'social club' (or a 'stokvel' using a common South African term for it) for many years too provides a good opportunity to explore these environments and to map his musical involvement in them. These already more or less formal social groups as, in this case, products of the temporary train socialities have been among the most prominent features of social formation among black South Africans' emergent communities of migrants, especially in townships. For an ethnomusicologist it is important that these social groups are fully or partly realized on the framework of choirs. As we could see in the chapter on ZCC, we could easily interpret the very existence of ZCC branch in Mamelodi too as such an emergent musical community of migrants where the cultural concepts and practices of a choir and a church are mutually constitutive. Musical performances become constitutive of the very existence of various social groups.

In his article 'Public Transport and Private Risk: Zionism and the Black Commuter in South Africa' an anthropologist James Kiernan wrote about strategies of what he called 'management of risk' by holding religious services on commuter trains in Durban area by local Zionist groups (Kiernan 1976b). Although I partly draw on his ethnographic findings from 1970s, I focus on the music performances in general and not necessarily related to Zionist or any particular religious groups. Kiernan's data might seem old to be used today, but as the social practice of commuting between townships and cities or city centres has witnessed no profound changes throughout all the political changes – in fact, its patterns remain remarkably stable – and as there are, to my knowledge, no more recent ethnographic findings on the topic available I find his observations as a useful starting point. Dealing with the actual musically mediated experience of public transport commuters within the urban space of Pretoria or Tshwane area still structured mostly by its inherited apartheid geographies today I also hope to contribute to the debate about life in contemporary African cities here.

There are basically two kinds of musical performances Samuel took part in, first, his solo performances and, second, choral church music collective performances. I

begin with the solo performances here. I approach Samuel's solo performances from the post-structuralist perspective used widely by scholars of oral African literature since the late 1980s (see for example Barber 1999). In this view, Samuel was not the conventional literary or musical author in the traditional Western sense but rather an initiator who gave the audiences an opportunity to get involved in creation of the meaning of the song. He thus performed as if playing *the* audience's imagination. His songs were not just texts in literary sense (this literary approach the oral scholars started to criticize first) and music but were inseparably related to the actual performance context, in this case the commuter train situation of the township dwellers' daily journeys to and from work. The final meaning was the result of the common cultural and social consciousness shared by the audience and the performer and the particular context of the performance situation. While the audiences of Samuel's solo performances may seem passive, that is not musically participating in the conventional sense, they were, in fact, active participators in creation of the performance's meaning. Interestingly, Samuel himself recognized his role and role of his songs like that too.

My approach of collective singing of choral church repertory is via experience of performance participation and of 'flow'. I suggest it is, first, the *participatory quality* (Turino 2008, 23-65) of the train performances of the commonly known and collectively performed old missionary as well as more recent church choral repertory and, second, the *experience of flow* (Csikszentmihalyi 1990) felt in the course of performance, which both enable the commuters to overcome the unpleasant feelings of and about the train environment experienced as hostile and often physically dangerous and, at the same time, establish a strong sense of mutuality and mutual solidarity. In this case I speak of the multisensorial bodily participation in choral performance, often involving bodily movements. As I have already indicated, this experience of the musically enhanced temporary sociality may outlive the actual travel time and in some cases give an impetus for formation and maintenance of various kinds of relationships and social groups at home in the township as well as in the work place in the city, namely regular choirs and 'social clubs' or 'stokvels'.

I suppose that both kinds – solo and collective – of these suburban commuter train performances could also be usefully conceptualized in Turner's terms 'liminality' and 'communitas'. Liminal situation of being not any more at home and not yet at work (and vice versa), moreover, mediated through musical performances of various kinds of participation, constituted a moment of relative stillness – paradoxically, while on the

move and in the course of performance – and an experience of stability, social equality, mutual solidarity and personal security, which is sometimes difficult to achieve either at one's home in the township or at the workplace with its power relations and enforced hierarchies. It was Turner himself who related his term 'communitas' to Csikszentmihalyi's 'flow' in one of his studies, although he clearly distinguished them from each other understanding 'flow' as a more individual experience than 'communitas' (Turner 1974, 89).

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Migrancy between rural villages and urban labour centres in South Africa has already been studied for decades by dozens of scholars focused usually on social change (see for example Hunter 2009/1936, Mayer 1961 and 1980, Murray 1981, Bienart and Bundy 1987 et al.). The daily movement between townships and the actual cities, or city centres, has entertained much less attention as it might have possibly escaped the rural-urban theoretical framework (for notable studies in this area see for example Wilson and Mafeje 1963, Ramphela 1993, Coplan 2008, Nuttall and Mbembe 2008). Townships have vaguely been seen as already parts of cities and in some contrast to rural areas. Though they certainly are parts of an urban environment, it is difficult to classify townships solely in terms of either the urban or the rural, given the fact that its physical structures as well as social and cultural dynamics belong to both. In their introduction to *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis* Sarah Nuttall and Achille Mbembe suggest that when thinking about African cities we must move beyond the inherited modernist understandings and frameworks as well as images of 'Africa' where city is simply "impossible". Adopting the term 'Afropolis', meaning African metropolis, and drawing on other studies from elsewhere in Africa the authors describe the African city in terms such as informality, invisibility of structures, constant destruction and regeneration, constant movement etc. (Nuttall and Mbembe 2008: 1-36). All these views seem pertinent to both physical as well as social urban structures.

To make it more complex, South African towns and cities inherited persistent, uncomfortable, and omnipresent apartheid geographies which continue to structure their urban spaces. Notably, even the new urban constructions and infrastructures tend to perpetuate these old geographies (for example the problematic RDP housing), though on economic rather than ethnic or 'cultural' bases. On the one hand, old townships

continue to grow<sup>110</sup> and new ones emerge<sup>111</sup> in far off places from people's work place, on the other hand, rich suburbs grow out of cities, their walls rise and roads become more and more jammed by mostly private cars. Generally speaking, this is not an environment where an exchange between these different worlds may easily occur on a daily basis, except in a few carefully controlled situations; in fact, it is prevented.

Again and again it reproduces the old apartheid patterns just slightly redefined, demonstrating thus the intersectional character of our imagination when conceptualizing race, ethnicity, culture and class. On the whole, it is quite clear where the current government stands, if we only make a simple comparison between the old Metrorail commuter train and the new high-speed Gautrain (=Golden train) in Gauteng constructed on the eve of the soccer world championship in 2010. The literal parallelism of its rail tracks and its passengers alike without a single intersection is striking and much telling. It is an image for contemplation the current state of affairs (see Figure 69). Thus even today the unreliable and dangerous Metrorail trains remain the most widely used mean of public transport for township dwellers, next to the overpriced minibus-taxis (overpriced for its potential users). The quality of services provided by and on these trains and in related facilities has still been quite poor. Comparatively to the Gautrain the Metrorail system continues to be notoriously underfinanced.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> I could observe Mamelodi's huge growth between 2006 and 2011, especially in Mahube and "RDP" area but also in Lusaka's squatter camps, for example.

<sup>111</sup> See for example Anton Harber's journalistic report about the post-apartheid township Diepsloot situated between Pretoria and Johannesburg (Harber 2011). His writing about the township roughly complies with my understanding of the situation in Mamelodi. It was one of a few recent unscholarly texts on 'township' which I tend to agree with, in fact, one of a very few on the topic at all to my knowledge. Its quality rests in the author's active involvement in the township daily life. Its journalism borders the best ethnographic description at times.

<sup>112</sup> An eloquent version of the most prominent commuters' complaints about the quality of Metrorail services is available in this blog by Koketso Moeti on *Thought Leader* blog website related to *Mail & Guardian* here <http://www.thoughtleader.co.za/koketsomoeti/2013/03/28/the-disaster-that-is-metrorail/> and here <http://www.thoughtleader.co.za/koketsomoeti/2013/09/03/prasa-stop-treating-us-like-cattle/> (accessed March 1, 2015).

## **“People Are Listening Inside My Coach”: Samuel’s Songs on the Train**

A lot of people prefer train to taxi for financial reasons as the train tickets, especially month fares, are considerably cheaper. A train month fare cost Samuel R88 out of his total income of R1200 a month in 2007, for example, which was much cheaper compared to a minibus-taxi charging R9 for a single journey at the time. The train commuters consist of employers working in the city within fixed hours during the day, or students. Those whose working hours are not regular or those who work till late at night usually prefer minibus-taxis or otherwise privately organized transport. As I observed and discussed with a number of people, it generally applies that one does not use Metrorail, if one may afford more convenient kinds of transport. Issues of safety, reliability, and comfort play the main role. The social prestige of using Metrorail (and trains in South Africa generally, even the new Gautrain) is rather low too and there is a surprising agreement across the South African population about it. The aspirations of owning a private car have been widely shared. In one of his songs composed in 2011, Samuel, for example, suggested that people of honourable professions such as policemen, nurses or teachers should not use the train, in order to keep the right social distance from the commoners.

During an interview which took place in the University of South Africa’s South Campus in Pretoria Sunnyside 31 August 2011 Samuel told me about his train performance a day before. Having seen a policeman on the train among his fellow commuters, he started to sing a new song. He described the situation as follows:

*LSK: I am talking about our government – our government is not doing well. Because of our lovely policemen... Because they are supposed to have the bus, our policemen, so that they are protected inside the bus rather [than] to come and then climb inside the loaded train. You see, the train is full, full, full... And what about, if you arrest a thief? You arrest a thief and then magistrate give him a bail or free bail and then he [the thief] go to the train [again], because it is cheap transport. And then he s[ees] you, you are a policeman, inside the train. He says: ‘Ho, this man, he is here.’ And he can hurt you. You see? Now, I sing about this and the policeman [was] very interested. The policemen listen and he is laughing and then he say: ‘This man, he is talking nice.’ Because they are supposed to have a bus for these policemen, and the nurses, so that they can stay nice and then be fresh in their work, not the public [transport] like a train.*

(31 August 2011)



He continued by suggesting that these people should have month fares too for the bus to have it cheaper. They should be treated as “*honourable people, not [to be] mix[ed] with other people*” otherwise they have no respect, he said. Next time, he told me, he will sing a song about teachers and pupils. Like policemen and nurses, if the teachers travel by train with their pupils, they cannot expect any respect from them in the classroom, he said.

It shows Samuel as a skilled poet and a musician always ready to compose a timely topical song appropriate to the situation. As in his other songs, he appeared as an eloquent social commentator here delivering a serious message packaged in a humorous cover. The medium of a song transformed the social criticism targeted at the state, personified here by the government, into a kind of public entertainment. Be it mediated by a song in the course of performance, in a private interview or even in public preaching, Samuel might have been critical about various social issues, but I never noticed he would be bitter. Sharp jokes he made, but never an open offence. Irony or sarcasm also had no place in his songs. The quoted passage confirms too that he really perceived the train environment as dangerous, undignified, and unworthy of some people but, significantly, not himself. It revealed his perception of his own social position too. Despite his implicit criticism, he sees himself as fitting into the environment unlike others for whom he wishes better. He seemed to have accepted his position. Nonetheless, it does not mean he did not fight for better.

It reveals too his essentially modern civic view of social hierarchy corresponding well with contemporary ideals of material well being in the new South Africa. Trying to ascribe his view simply to the ‘white’ or ‘black’ tradition of the common public opinion does not make much sense, though, because, in my experience, both tend to share this modern materially marked hierarchical view of social order today.<sup>113</sup> It might seem that the modern capitalist vision of material wealth and physical separation of different social classes operates in alliance with an older concept of status-derived respect. But even respect – as justified by one’s belonging to a professional group or as gained through a group professional identity – is understood in a modern way here. Ultimately,

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<sup>113</sup> I am aware the term ‘modern’ has a blurred meaning. I understand it in contrast to the so-called post-materialist liberal world view in some parts of Europe, for example, where a usage of public transport has recently become an imperative even in some well-off and political circles, simply, where status markers such as cars have been used more carefully or have been replaced by more sophisticated status markers.

as in his other songs, it shows Samuel's engaged concern, as a good citizen of the new South Africa, about the public good of the society he lives in.

Samuel and thousands of his fellow commuters regularly used the Metrorail suburban train between Mamelodi and Pretoria every day during the week. He usually got in at Mamelodi Gardens and got out at Rissik in Hatfield or at Mearsstraat in Muckleneuk, a distance which takes 23 minutes or 31 minutes respectively according to the current schedule although long delays were quite common.<sup>114</sup> I return below to Samuel's involvement in solving one such delay musically. The point here is that the Metrorail trains have served almost exclusively the commuting to and from work (or possibly school) and that there have been almost no connections for days of leisure. The trains still seem to be well integrated into the system of capitalist economy as it was established during apartheid. They continue to serve first of all as a mean of cheap transport for township dwellers *as* workers and labourers, not as people asking for decent and available public transport regardless of working days. The distances between places of living and working still remain too long and the journeys time- and energy-consuming.<sup>115</sup> Persistent predicaments of the apartheid geographies and of the socio-economic complex seem to cast long and unexpected shadows.

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The crowd of the daily travellers was a mix of people from Mamelodi's different parts working in different parts of Pretoria and around. It came as a surprise to me that people tended to create more or less formal groups defined by various criteria right on the train. Formation of these groups may have been influenced by various factors. The people may have lived or worked in the same area and thus use the same train stops, or they

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<sup>114</sup> The morning rush starts very early for those travelling to work by train. According to the schedule the first trains leave Mamelodi at about 3:30 am and then go in approximately 30 minutes intervals till 5:30 am when the interval shortens to approximately 20 minutes till 8:30 am. Between 8:30 am and 3 pm the trains leave in hour long intervals only. During the afternoon rush between 3 pm and 6 pm the trains leave from Pretoria every 20 minutes or so. Then the intervals lengthen to approximately 30 minutes till 7:30 pm and, finally, an hour till 8:30 pm when the last train leaves Pretoria station. There are no trains operating between 9 pm and 3.30 am. The trains operate on Saturdays with fewer connections and on Sundays with yet fewer. The whole journey from Mamelodi (Pienaarspoort) to Pretoria (main station) takes 44 minutes according to the current schedule. For more details see 'Gauteng Timetables, Pretoria – Pienaarspoort' at <http://www.metrorail.co.za/Timetables.html> (accessed 23 Feb 2015).

<sup>115</sup> This is confirmed by a number of studies (see for example Simpson, McKay and Patel 2011).

may have even been employed by the same employer. If their working hours overlapped, they may have used the same train connections and so on. Though not quite, particular church affiliation, kinship or (rural) place of belonging may have played a role too. In contrary to what one may presume when seeing the mass of commuters, these people were by no means an example of social atomization. In fact, they formed and belonged to many different smaller or larger and often overlapping groups each united by some kind of shared common interest. Several kinds 'non-train' identities might have overlapped in these emergent communities growing out of the temporary train-based sociality.

At the time of the research Samuel carried his accordion almost every day to work in a huge plastic bag not to put it on public display to avoid robbery. He sometimes even left it in gardeners' rest room masked under covers of old newspapers and used plastic bags. On the train he took it out of the sack, played and sang. When performing in public Samuel always played standing, accompanying the music by rhythmical steps and step dancing, sometimes including rotational movements of the whole body and stamping the ground with his feet, movements quite admirable considering the weight of the instrument and the fact he sang and played along. It was once more admirable considering the fact that his performances actually took place as early as between 6 and 7 o'clock in the morning and between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon after the whole day of running up and down the campus as a gardener and standing on his feet.

Samuel performed his often autobiographically inspired and topical songs dealing with a number of pressing and timely topics on the train. If I take songs on his CD *Mmamona*, for example, a number of various topics could be discussed, all connected by Samuel's perception of their urgency, such as street children (critique of unfaithful men and husbands who always promise but never fulfil), gender equality (as proclaimed but not real: a woman pays by her body at the end), jealousy and slander (about spreading bad gossip in the neighbourhood), family relationships (the importance of paying respect to parents and elders), sickness (when one gets sick all friends turn away), cell phones and technology (how cell phones changed dating and the experience of being in love), unemployment (how unemployment ruins family relationships by changing family traditional power structures) or peace (how to channel a political anger into a ZCC dance) and so on. Since recording his *Mmamona* album in 2007 Samuel composed a number of other songs till 2011 when I had the last opportunity to listen to

him so far. As I have already mentioned elsewhere, newspapers-tabloids such as *Sowetan* and *Daily Sun*, daily conversations with people or his own observations and personal experience were his main inspiration. He often reminded me that people love his songs because they are about their lives and problems so they can easily relate to them.

It was not before 2008, however, that I got interested in Samuel's train performances more seriously. Only then I realized that the train was one the most prominent performance environments for him. In 2009 he told me that he performs there every day both ways from and to Mamelodi. In the morning he usually travelled with the same group of people, in the afternoon the group of travellers became more diverse. Still, he always travelled in one particular coach so that people knew where to go, if they wanted to listen to him. When he performed his own songs he usually played just himself (sometimes together with his friend "Giani"). People usually just listened to him and participated musically only sometimes. This was unlike the church songs performances when people sang collectively forming a regular choir on the train. He did not move inside the train as it was usually packed and because not everyone wanted to listen to his music. The ones who did knew where to go. This applied especially to the afternoon journeys as he explained: "[...] other people they do not accept music. And other people they enjoy music. There is a lot of different people who enjoy music." (13 July 2009).

According to Samuel, the train he commuted by early morning and in the afternoon might have been conceptualized as several performance stages in one – each carriage or its section as a performance stage. When he talked about the different kinds of performances taking place on the train in 2006 he first situated himself and his individual performance in the centre and then moved on as an imagined observer to describe the situation in other coaches only to arrive back and point out his own interest and agenda. While evaluating the train audience's affection for his satirical song *50/50* about gender equality in today's South Africa he told me:

LSK: [...] *people are listening [to me] inside my coach. In a different coach they are talking about Jesus... In other couches there are politicians [people discussing politics]; they are singing the politicians' songs... Other people are talking jokes, so that people can laugh... They know me from end to end so they will buy all over [the CD he had just recorded]. I do not do another man's music... It is me who composed the songs.*

(28 March, 2006)

It later turned out that his optimism about selling his CD was rather exaggerated but he reached certain limited popularity. He had his CD played in several minibus-taxis and some of the songs were even aired on Mams FM, Mamelodi community radio. He was even invited as a guest to the Sunday morning programme to the radio in 2011 at the time of my research, for example, and it was not for the first time, he told me. As for the authorship mentioned here it concerned rather lyrics than tunes and harmonies which were more versatile and in case of church hymns and choruses widely shared. He was right that people knew him as a musician on the train, even those who did not know him by name. I had a couple of conversations with women working as domestic workers in Pretoria, who came by the same train with him and they all knew him. It was further confirmed in our interview in 2009.

*LSK: It is why I use one carriage because they can enjoy my stuff. They can know me. If you go... if you enter this, you [know] you are going to find accordion. You climb on, you know. If you do not like it, you go [to another one]. But if you like it, then come. You see? These people, they feel I am with them all the time. They enjoy it and they know me all the time, when I am travelling at Mamelodi. They say sometimes: 'Where is your accordion? Can you sing for us today?' I s[aw] my next door neighbour there... in RDP [part of Mamelodi]. Yesterday, I was singing with them. They say: 'We know you from the train', but I never saw them. But they know me. Because when I am singing I do not recognize other people. But they can recognize me. You see, on Saturday, I was there to other station, somebody told other guy: 'This man is the priest who uses to sing with accordion inside the train.' You see? I just hear them. Because that time I got no accordion, I go to the piece job [small jobs done on Saturdays to earn some extra money].*

(13 July 2009)

To my question whether he feels safe on the train, he said: "Yes, people respect other people... [It is] very nice to be together inside the train. There are just jokes and [people] are laughing all the time." (13 July 2009). It seemingly contradicts other statements about the train environment but it should be remembered that he talked about the social relationships among commuters here. Though he may have idealized them, they certainly worked as a buffer to the uncomfortable environment. To my question whether there are any friends of him among his fellow travellers, except the people who just like to listen to his music but do not know him closer, he answered: "[Some people,] they do not know me... my name... or everything... Just that I am a priest... Other, they knowing me. Other they knowing me, they call me with a name... Because

they are close with me, because all the time we are together.” (13 July 2009). It was about ten people, he said later, and three of them were members of their ‘social club’ in Mamelodi.

The same day he talked about new songs prepared for his second album (which was not recorded until 2011, however), *Sunbrella saka* (in Pedi, Sunbrella bag) among them. It basically was a humorous love song with a moralizing undertone and a practical advice arrived at the end. It showed yet again Samuel’s ability to mix catchy topics, good entertainment, and education. In the interview he revealed his understanding and conceptualization of the compositional structure of the song (common to many others too). Repeated choruses – the ‘meat’, as he said – were left to “Giani”, who he often performed with on the train, and other back up singers and the ‘spices’ or ‘zig zags’ and the actual narration of the story were up to Samuel as the main singer/narrator. The value and quality of the song rest in these ‘spices’ and they are the subject of the ‘authorship’ Samuel mentioned earlier first of all. He basically starts by telling a love story situated at the banks of the Moretele River in Mamelodi, which is, however, told in a humorous way, and ends up like moral and practical advice. A funny image of lovers washing and scratching each other’s back by the river is contrasted by an image of suffocating person because of smoke from a badly maintained improvised heating inside a shack. The development of the lyrics is quite unexpected and the moments of surprise cause the audience to laugh. This is how Samuel described performance of the brand new song as he tried it out on his train audiences before planning to record it.

LSK: *And now... me... I put the spices... [It is like ] when you put the spices in the meat [...]: ‘I am thinking [of] the time when we are meeting at the river, the river of Moretele. It was a great day that time. She uses to...’ You see... When you wash somebody this side (pointing to his back)... ‘You can wash me [...] so that I can feel nice, [...] feel better... scratch my back...’ So the people [the audience], they are laughing... And Giani just... (Samuel imitates his friend Giani and other vocalists who repeat the same text and melody again and again) and other people say just like that [the audience may join in the repeated melody]. Me, I put... like the crossing... and nobody can say what I do because I do the zigzag..., zigzag... I take there, I take there... and I meet [connect] it together You see? And then I say: ‘You, you are not married [...], it is trouble now, because it is cold today. What can you going to do? Do not sleep with mpaola [old tin used as a heater] because mpaola it can kill you!’ Do you know mpaola? The tin..., you put the fire inside, with the coal... You see? Yes, they are laughing because I tell them... I guide them... But they think I am [just] playing because they are laughing. But I make them to be careful about that. Smoke of the coal is not good. [...] So they are laughing about my stuff. Before you are*

*going back home I must release that one. Yes, I must release that one so that you can enjoy it and you can laugh... It is laughing stuff. [...] And mpaola... they can show them on the DVD, you can show them there. Somebody, just like when you are dying, he say (laughing): 'I slept inside the shack...' and so so...*

(13 July 2009)

He added in the interview that it often happens that someone suffocates because of imperfect burning of the improvised home made heaters such as 'mpaola' recalling an article about one such a unfortunate case in *Daily Sun* published a week ago.

The passage is interesting in a number of ways. Besides explaining the very content of the song, it reveals Samuel's compositional process and performance practice from his point of view, especially conceptualizing his part as 'spices' and the choir's as 'meat'. It shows him as a skilled manipulator of people's emotions, who consciously construct the story in a way to reach the desired appeal. His view was that while the people think they are just being entertained, he teaches them in the meantime, in fact. He used well known images of the Moretele River in Mamelodi as a dating or romantic place for young couples along with scary images of personal disasters from local tabloids. The river banks are familiar to Samuel himself. He showed me stylized photographs of his first wife posing there in her best, which he made in the 1980s. Besides the practical advice, the underlying moralizing appeal of the song is that (presumably) a man should not stay single otherwise a misfortune may find him. While talking about the DVD for me (which did not materialize) he referred to visual part of the song which should have been played by a group of young men he tried to organize around him at the time and shot by a video camera, probably mine as I helped him with shooting simple narrative video clips to his songs from time to time. However, immediately in the following section, he problematized his optimistic prospect revealing to me his troubles with attracting young people to perform with him, especially complaining about their appetite for money, which he cannot offer them. He opposed their view giving himself as an example and emphasizing his selfless passion for performing music.

*LSK: Because now, I got some other guys, other boys... Because people do not come to me, because I got no money. They just need money! They are not interested to sing, They just need money! The quick bugs! You see, nowadays people are not in love of music, they are in love of money... so that they can make the quick bugs. They do not come to you and then enjoy the*

*music. When you [perform] together and sometimes you [get] five cents or so... they do not need so [are not satisfied]... At once they want ten thousand. If you say: 'Guys, let us go to Denneboom [the main minibus-taxi rank and a market and business area in Mamelodi] so that we can sing [for] free for the people.' They do not [go]. You see now? Other people, when I am travelling inside the train with my accordion, they say: 'Why the people do not pay for that?' I say to them: 'No, it is my time to preach to these people. If I preach just like that, the God can honour me. He can reward me.' Because other people they got stressed... everything... So if I am singing there, they are enjoying music, they are laughing... then they forget the things [problems]. And then they are [...] going to... go back... They can find their minds, they refresh their mind. And when they are [at home] they are singing, they are singing... You see, when the mother come from the job the children see she is laughing. 'Why are you laughing?', they say. 'Other guy inside the train say mpaola, mpaola... Esh... If he says mapola, think about that... that man...' [...] (laughing).*

(13 July 2009)

Samuel was critical of the young generation because of its affection for money. In contrary to the current materialism, he argued, his own motivation for music making lied in his religious conviction. He suggested that, first of all, he liked what he did and did not see point in asking the audience for money. This posture would seem to stand in contrast to his constant attempts to record and release his songs on CDs or DVDs and to 'promote' them etc. However, it would be wrong to see him simply as a failed case in the field of music industry. Though, as he repeated to me many times, he certainly aspired to make some success with his songs so that it would earn him at least a moderate extra income, he saw himself more as a kind of people's musician in a traditional sense whose main capital was symbolic – to be respected and listened to. Therefore I would not say earning money had ever been his primary goal.

Samuel thought of his music as a kind public free education but equally so as an entertainment and a cure for the daily stress the commuting workers experienced daily at home, at work and on the way in between. He believed his songs worked as a remedy and as a media of therapy. He tried to turn people's stress into laugh by his songs. One should have been given an opportunity to settle one's mind during the song *on the way*. I think the concept of 'liminality' would be useful here. The daily performance on the way between the two worlds, two situations of home and work with their different duties and stress, may function as a regular rite of passage where the music plays a role of its medium. It helps the workers to cross the bridge between the two worlds so that one does not carry problems of one into another. It could be conceived as a kind of



secular purification.<sup>116</sup> In this light Samuel's concept of music and musical performance seems to rest on a highly functional traditional African concept of music making understood as an important recreational social activity and a media to reach social and personal equilibrium.

In their already classic book on oral literature in Southern Africa Landeg White and Leroy Vail wrote about social criticism present in much of the oral and orally-derived literature, about a powerful social critique, which could have never been spoken publicly but as a poetic genre it became acceptable (Vail and White 1991, especially 112-154). People not only did not get offended, they enjoyed the witty comments as part of a poetic form. I believe that it is the poetic genre of song what made Samuel's performances not only digestible but much more. It helped to constitute a collective feeling of shared experience and possibly even that of the 'fellowship of the flawed' and 'cultural intimacy' as so well described by Michael Herzfeld in a different context (Herzfeld 2005).

If we are to understand the inner workings of this experience, it is useful to remember the post-structuralist interpretation of cultural objects. It pays much closer attention to the reception, reading or listening, than to the supposedly original authors' intentions and the works (of arts) themselves. Seen from this perspective the ultimate meaning is never encompassed by a song as such. It is only when performed that the song activates the audience's imagination and common experience, the meanings may constitute in people's minds (and bodies) and the song starts to make (cultural) sense. This interpretation of the actual performance situation has been fruitfully elaborated by scholars of African oral literature (see for example Barber 1999). In my view, this is what happens during Samuel's songs' performance. It is not him who is the ultimate author in the conventional Eurocentric sense, it is the audience who equally takes part in constituting the actual meaning of the song and of the whole performance in particular context. We must think of participation and 'participatory performance' on a different level here. The whole shared cultural, social and historical experience activated by the performance in the particular context becomes a source and a field for playful poetic

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<sup>116</sup> Complex rituals related to labour migration were described, for example, by Patrick A. McAllester in his study of Gcaleka (McAllester 1980). Though he wrote about long-term stays of migrants out of their rural home, the principal that there is a fundamental and complex discrepancy between the world of work and that of home is present in both cases. And it remains so, even if we think of the township home as just a temporary one (as rural home functions as the 'real' home for many even today).

imagination, which makes the performance work on yet another level, different from, albeit connected to, the actual musical participation.

## **“Praying for the Difficulty We Find at Works”: Choral Train Performances**

Besides topical songs Samuel sings what he calls ‘gospel’ music on the train (see Figure 70 and Figure 71). It does not differ in musical style, in fact it is hardly distinguishable, but its lyrics are always derived from some or another Biblical (usually Old Testament) story. According to his description the story should never be told as a whole but only “touched upon” and left to the listeners to “fill in the gaps”. It should keep them attentive and activate their imagination and creativity. Its goal was similarly didactic. As a member of the ZCC he regularly performed the Church’s songs too, either hymns from *Lifela tsa Sione* hymnbook or church choruses. His simple arrangements, like in case of his ‘gospel’ songs, however, made them often audibly undistinguishable from his other topical songs. The original melodic line was usually kept but its rhythm somewhat flattened and tempo changed too. The timbre was that of Samuel’s voice and of the voices which joined in and of the accordion. The overall sound was quite similar to all his other songs, especially because of the prominent timbre of the accordion and its typically simple chord accompaniment not always respecting the original harmonies. Only the original hymn lyrics usually remain intact, though some strophes or phrases may be left out or repeated.

One afternoon in 2008 we were busy paging through *Lifela tsa Sione* as I wanted to know which of the 449 songs are actively used in the ZCC according to Samuel’s knowledge. Shortly after we started to go through the hymnbook in an alphabetical order he stopped at ‘sefela’ number 45 *Bonang, ho hlahile marung* (in Sesotho, roughly Behold who is in the clouds) and started to talk about its performance on the train that day. I used the situation to learn more about train choral performance practices and Samuel’s involvement in them. Our discussion yet again confirmed the central position of the 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary Sesotho hymnbook *Lifela tsa Sione* in contemporary choral practice and its importance for general musical competence, especially among religiously active Sepedi speakers across confessional borders.

LSK: *Today when I am coming at work I was singing this one. I was singing this Bonang, ho hlahile marung [sefela 45 of Lifela tsa Sione]. I was singing it with my choir... inside the train.*

VZ: *Today? On the train?*

Yes. [...] *Sometimes, if you can... [...] Or when I am coming back home you can climb here so that you can hear us when we are singing inside the train. And then you can take the message and everything, because we are mixed.*

[...]

*So you meet here at the station...*

Yes.

*Every day?*

Yes.

*And when you go there [to Mamelodi], on the way you sing?*

Yes. *They come from... Sometimes they come from town.*

*But you always meet on the train?*

Yes. *It is a carriage number... number two.*

*How many people?*

*It is a lot of people.*

*How big is the choir? 20, 30?*

70.

*70?! I see and... Do you meet also during other times, like when you do not go to work?*

*Or do you meet only on the train?*

*We meet only to the train.*

*Only when going to work?*

*The purpose is when we go home and then when we [go] to [work]. We are praying for the difficulty th[at] we... we find at works.*

*I see.*

*You see.... You [saw] part of them... [...] you hear[d] them when we [went] to Dennilton [a town in Limpopo province where we attended a wedding the year before]. It was part of our choir. Because that women...*

*They are from the train?*

*Yes, we are meeting at the train. And the songs that you hear[d] when we [were] singing inside the taxi, it is the way we are singing in the train.*

[...]

*All these songs are from the hymnbook?*

[Some] *are mentioned here, [some are] a chorus... from other churches.*

*What churches?*

*You see... Not ZCC [the Zion Christian Church].*

*Which ones?*

*Other churches... Apostolic... other... because we are mixed. Zion[ists] took the Zion songs and then Apostolic[s] took Apostolic songs.*

*And you know all of them?*

*Yes.*

*Do not you mind that you sing other [churches'] songs?*

*No, it is not mind [I do not mind].*

*[...]*

*You can join them?*

*Hm.*

*No problem? You know the songs?*

*Hm.*

*And are these songs from this book?*

*Ja, they are mentioned [there].*

*They are there?*

*Hm.*

*Even though you do not use them... in ZCC?*

*Yes. Other churches, they practice [them].*

*They also use this book?*

*Yes.*

*So what churches? Apostolic..., then...?*

*[...]*

*Apostolic... Apostolic and Lutheran... And Roman church.*

*Roman catholic?*

*Roman catholic church.*

*Yes.*

*Other... like... It is a new... new people who call themselves the Christians...*

*I see.*

*[...] This people... they criticize other churches. [...] It [has] no name... It is only for inside the train, and there they criticize other churches. They say: 'This one it is not working. Come to us. We know about Jesus. We saw Jesus and Jesus... we can heal with Jesus name.'*

*So in the choir in the train, there are many people from different churches.*

*Yes.*

*But you all sing together.*

*Yes.*

*Are all these songs from this book?*

*Often they use it but...*

*It is not all of them?*

*Not all of them...*

*[...]*

*Because these [are] blessing songs.*

*And the other ones [sung by other churches], they are not?  
They are not. No. They... they adopted them [from] this [hymnbook]. [...] I think with our belief,  
we are thinking these songs inside this [hymnbook are] the blessing songs.*

(31 July 2008)

We can see that Samuel and the people he sang with always travelled in the same carriage where they met, even though some of them got in and out at different train stops. In the beginning he interestingly talked about “his” choir. He invited me to go with them sometimes to “take the message” and later reminded me of a year old experience of travelling to a wedding in Dennilton by a minibus taxi along with eight women from the choir. They sang various church songs and choruses and clapped their hands during the whole, over two hours long journey between Mamelodi and Dennilton. Samuel’s denial of meeting together out of the train environment must be taken carefully because already his recollection of the journey to Dennilton a year ago and my other observations contradict it. It is nonetheless true that the choir’s main purpose was first and foremost to create a singing/praying community, an occasional musical body while travelling to and from work. “[We are] *praying for the difficulty th[at] we... we find at works*” (31 July 2008). The whole choir never met out of this environment but smaller parts of it did. Samuel regularly tried to attract some of them to collaborate with him on his musical projects. As I mentioned above, given its temporary character, Turner’s concepts of ‘liminality’ and ‘communitas’ could be productively used here again. It also complies with Kiernan’s interpretation of a similar ‘train behaviour’ of KwaMashu Zionists in 1970s as a ‘management of risk’.

But there is also a break with what Kiernan described at this point. While he studied a religiously bounded community of a particular Zionist group, in our case we can see a diverse and religiously heterogeneous group of people, though all of them were Christians. I would argue here that it is the commonly shared repertory of church songs what constituted the basic framework of the train performances and what, consequently, enabled the people to identify not along confessional borders but as *people who know what to sing*, who know a particular set of appropriate songs to be sung in moments of anxiety and discomfort experienced by this group of vulnerable subjects to the system of capitalist economy. “[We are] *praying for the difficulty th[at] we... we find at works*’ (31 July 2008). They were all united by the situation they found themselves in. Confessional identification lost its primary appeal here. Uniting

themselves into a singing body could have become a coping strategy. Interestingly, it was the old 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary musical tradition along with more recent choruses (and the rest of the ‘common church repertory’) that made it happen.

I would suggest that the missionary tradition mediated through songs of the old Sesotho hymnbook constituted a kind of modern universal Christian identification, in this case, at least, among Sesotho-speaking population who could have performed the songs most readily. Modern identity of the commuting suburban workers was expressed in performances of these songs in the very midst of the capitalist machine – during the train transportation to and from work. This modern workers’ identity was backed up here by the missionary tradition implicitly perceived as a kind of common heritage, as a repository of the modern cultural identity traceable back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and, ultimately, as a source of universal Christian dignity.

It interestingly resonates with older uses of choral music as a ‘civilizing’ tool and as a medium of social and cultural upliftment as it was perceived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by missionaries and during the period of raising black aspirations and emancipation at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century by black South Africans themselves (see Olwage 2003 and 2008, Erlmann 1991, Coplan 2008/1985 et al.). This interpretation of the meaning of this train version of contemporary choral performance is not quite revolutionary and complies well with older findings. For example, the transformation in social life of a song by Enoch Sontonga from a church hymn to a liberation song and finally to a national anthem has been described (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2005). And there are other similar cases discussed in literature (see for example Bohlman 1997). It is a kind of micro-scale focus of this grassroots ethnographic project what enables the unexpected insights.

It is important now to look at what actually makes these performances working. The knowledge of the repertory alone, however essential, would not suffice. The main aspects of its success lie in the way the performances are realized, in their *open inclusive participatory quality* and in the multisensorial bodily experience it produces. As such the participatory performance is capable of creating or enhancing collective identities. In this case, it helps to establish temporary micro-level social formations. Here, we can fully apply the basic ethnomusicological approach towards music as an integral part of social life, its structuring force and as one of its important mediators. In this view music is not considered epiphenomenal but central to social action, functioning at its core and as its mediator.

In his book *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* an ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino distinguishes two fundamentally different kinds of music performance: ‘participatory’ and ‘presentational’ (Turino 2008, 23-65). He takes these spheres of music life as different, though not wholly separate, social fields driven by different social dynamics and values. It is important here that this distinction enables us to study *all* music making without the usual discriminatory apparatus based on problematic silent ethnocentric assumptions such as class, genre, ethnicity etc. Thus it becomes a useful analytical tool for studying musical performance from a different perspective. I use these categories here as rather ideal types though. The commuter train music performances by and large belong to the participatory kind.

As it was mentioned in the quotation from an interview and interpreted above, many of the religious songs are shared by other churches, both the so-called AIC and the imported. It means that not only ZCC members are able to join in by singing additional voices and clapping, but virtually everyone may do so. Moreover, there is a plenty of possibilities to participate and join in at different levels of advancement with regard to the degree of one’s knowledge of the particular song and individual musical abilities. These are the most essential qualities of the choral performances. These are the qualities, which enable and even welcome wide collective participation and, ultimately, may lead to establishing a choir, for example. No wonder then that Samuel described founding a choir on the train as an easy thing to do and one of his choirs he referred to as “my choir” in 2008 had about 70 members according to him.

When discussing the participatory musical performance Thomas Turino uses a psychological concept of ‘flow’ or ‘optimal experience’ developed by a psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. ‘Flow’ may be generally described as a state of balance between the difficulty of a task and our abilities or skills to successfully accomplish it. If the demands are too high we tend to lose motivation and become frustrated, if they are too low, we get bored. In the state of flow or optimal experience we are ideally concentrated and tend to lose sense of time, place and even of our own body. One of typical activities often given as an example of a situation generating the state of flow is music making (Turino 2008, 23-65).

It is generally accepted in ethnomusicology that collective music making such as dancing or choral singing reinforces the sense of mutuality and is able to enhance different kinds of social identities (Stokes 1994, 1-28). When we interconnect the concept of participatory music performance with the concept of flow, we are able to

better explain how this is made possible. In order to successfully motivate people to participate in any musical activity adequate challenges must be offered and, if needed, adjusted to people's individual abilities. In many musical performances in Sub-Saharan Africa this condition is usually met by openness of musical forms in most aspects, which invite different individual contributions at various levels of accomplishment at the same time. These performances are generally very much socially inclusive. In other words, the power of such a performance does not lie in the participatory or collective performance only, but it is concurrently enhanced by the sense of enjoyment derived from the individual experience of flow in the course of performance and partly also from the creative participation in common understanding to the song's texts and contexts. In my opinion, this is the case of Samuel Kadiaka's train musical performances be it his solo songs or choral church songs performances.

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It has become clear that a commuter train is far from being just a mean of transport. It is useful to think of it as a place and a space on more than one level. It works as a social space, in which different agendas are played out within broader context of the capitalist economy of today's South Africa still based on migrant and commuter labour system. As we have seen, this system is largely experienced as dangerous and potentially harmful among its subjects. The train is also an actual physically and sensually experienced place (in terms of the anthropology of the senses, see for example Herzfeld 2001, 240-253, Howes 2003, 3-58 et al.) where various kinds of performances take place. As truly cultural performances they are meaningfully attached to the actual sensual experience of the train's physical environment and its symbolic meaning. Thus the performances may meaningfully work as Kiernan's 'risk management' of situations, which we would refer to the least as too unpleasant or uneasy to stand still (Kiernan 1976b).

In the course of music performances a possibility for negotiation and for playing out various collective and individual agendas opens up. The performances thus play an important role in constructing and maintaining the participants' social selves as well as their collective social relationships in that these are actually mediated through and brought about by these performances. The people are making (cultural) sense of the situation, in which they involuntarily find themselves. The sense of shared experience, mutuality and solidarity is generated and mediated at different levels of performance –



its collective participatory nature, the individual bodily experience of flow/optimal experience during the performance, the shared cultural understanding to the poetic language of songs and certainly on other levels too.

I offered here some possibilities how to analyse and conceptualize Samuel's involvement in the regular commuter train performances. They give us interesting insights not only into one of the prominent Samuel's musical activities but also into some aspects of the micro-level social formations and into the experience of train commuting as mediated through a music performance in general. The potential of thinking about South African commuter train as a place and space generating various kinds of individual, social and cultural experiences thought of as mutually interconnected has definitely not been exhausted here, though.

## **“You Must Sing Before This Train Can Go”: Power of ZCC Song**

Samuel generally avoided performing ZCC church songs out of their immediate religious context among his other solo songs. In this chapter I am going to analyze a situation of a train performance where he, as an exception, did play and sing two essential ZCC hymns both from the beginning to the end with unexpected consequences. The analysis and interpretation are mostly based on his description of the situation he gave me during our interview the day after but draws heavily on my observations of ZCC religious practices and ideologies as well as other sources. I believe that as a kind of ‘cultural accident’ the event has a rich potential for further interpretation. Before proceeding to its description it is necessary to clarify a couple of related issues. Samuel began to talk about it immediately following his discussion of ownership of ZCC songs and their commercial use by individuals setting up its context as relevant to him. Therefore I try to make first a brief overview of these issues, which I base on my and Samuel's observations. Another issue emerges from the actual situation as told by Samuel and concerns hierarchy of ZCC hymns in relation to particular occasions during which they are performed. Here I draw on my observations of ZCC services.

In according with the ethos of the Church all songs performed there are considered as belonging to it, the personified Church – most visibly in the person of the

bishop – as being their owner. This approach was applied even to the songs' commodified form on ZCC CDs and DVDs where, consequently, no performers – choirs of particular congregations, let alone solo performers – were ever mentioned. Despite application of this conceptual framework euphemizing the conventional economical relations (see for example Bourdieu 1998: 92-126), which is so typical for religious organizations at large, Samuel often clearly recognized which choir of which congregation performs a particular song. Even though the songs' actual arrangements and the whole musical compositions were recognizably created by particular choirs and solo singers could be heard in many songs, they were never mentioned by name and remained anonymous. Neither authors of the original texts – usually the only part of the original missionary or other church song, which remained intact or recognizable, at least – were ever credited on ZCC CDs and DVDs.

There were few exceptions to the rule. Perhaps the most visible of them was the well-known and commercially quite successful singer Solly Moholo who basically built up his career performing ZCC songs and releasing them under his own name regardless of their origin or the ZCC economical and cultural ideology of their collective ownership. According to Samuel, the church was not happy about Moholo's activities and tried to stop him, unsuccessfully.<sup>117</sup> As a member of the Church he was not allowed to wear the Church badge during performances and on music videos, according to Samuel. But his performances and music videos clearly indicated his affiliation to the Church anyway. Wearing khaki uniform of ZCC *mokhukhu choir*, using back up singers and dancers dressed up the same way and doing the same kind of steps and leaps typical for the ZCC *mokhukhu choir* all made his identity as a performer quite distinctively ZCC. It, consequently, guaranteed the large body of ZCC members as his potential audience. Samuel saw Moholo's activities as stealing and he criticized him several times during our interviews. He described Moholo's practice as follows in 2009.

LSK: *I go to mokhukhu... they perform new song... I hear this one is unique to the church. I take [record] them first, I burn it [on CD] inside my burner. You see? This is not right. Because all the people..., they got the sleepless night performing the nice songs [referring to the whole night-vigils] and then me... I am gonna go there with a tape recorder... just something like that. [...] He go there... when they [ZCC mokhukhu choir] perform there. He is listening. Day after that he go*

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<sup>117</sup> A similar situation was analyzed in detail by Carol Muller in the case of Nathoya Mbatha's commercial recordings of religious songs of the Nazareth Baptist Church (Muller 2002).

to the studio. He say: 'Hey guys, listen [to] this. It is a new song, this mokhukhu leader perform this.' And then he bring this [and puts it on CD]. And when you hear him singing that song you think it is he who perform that song.

(23 July 2009)

As I mentioned earlier, Samuel identified about 55 hymns out of 449 contained in the 19<sup>th</sup> century *Lifela tsa Sione* missionary hymnbook as being actively performed in the ZCC. Besides, there were a lot of choruses and many songs or arrangements either original to the ZCC composed by its many choirs or shared with other churches. Observing the Church's services and studying official CDs and DVDs of the ZCC I found out there is a clear hierarchy in the repertory. There are, for example, songs reserved to the bishop and to his *brass band*. Among the most sacred songs are a couple of hymns for healing. While it is possible to perform most of the songs in almost any occasion, with some reservations, the healing songs are not that case. They are considered especially powerful and intended for specific occasions. They are performed quite often, in fact, but never randomly or out of the appropriate religious context. Notably, all these healing songs come from *Lifela tsa Sione*, though there are circulating in different arrangements and versions within the Church.

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To my knowledge Samuel sang ZCC songs accompanying himself on the accordion only during Church-related occasions and generally quite rarely. Music making is always collective during regular Church services, though individual members may stand out as choir leaders or as especially skilled or even entertaining performers. I saw Samuel performing ZCC songs on the accordion only once in the six years. It was during a private ZCC family ceremony of unveiling tombstones in Lefiswane in 2009. There he basically accompanied collective choral singing, once leading a procession and another time filling out gaps between the priest's speeches.

In July 2009 we discussed a selection of songs for his second album. He said that after making the 'African music' album *Mmamona* he wanted to make a gospel one. Nevertheless, he did not plan to include ZCC songs on it. Following up the above mentioned discussion of Solly Moholo's recording activities he expressed an opinion that such practices are unfair to the people of the ZCC. Moreover, as the following examples demonstrates, he newly found performing ZCC songs out of the original

religious context problematic and even dangerous. His reasoning for general exclusion of ZCC songs from his solo repertory was illustrated by his fresh experience from the previous day. It happened, he told me, that his rather accidental performance of two ZCC healing songs on the train caused an unexpected disorder. He retrospectively saw his decision to play the songs as unfortunate and regrettable. The whole story reveals much about construction of cultural meaning in ZCC music by its members and non-members as well as about the train as a specific performance environment. As a kind of 'cultural accident' generating conflicts and contradictions between different world views of the participants the event has a significant potential to highlight a number of important issues.

I first quote Samuel's narrative of the event in full length, then I try to sum up and explain its most significant moments and, finally, I analyze it and offer an interpretation of wider cultural meanings of the event as I see them based on Samuel's description.

*LSK: Like yesterday, when I was playing songs of the Church, especially ZCC. There was môya [spirit] and other people, who are not ZCC members, got môya and I could see it is not very nice to perform these [songs]. I am not going to perform them any more. Because the people they can fall down and then what can I do? You see? What can I do? Because sometimes they can hear me about something I am not knowing. [They can hear something in my performing I do not know about]. But I saw yesterday.*

*So what happened yesterday?*

*Eh, other guy got môya, esh..., just like... when somebody got the prophecy. You see? And [he] is not a ZCC member or otherwise he leave the emblem to home. You see? They can fall down during my performance.*

*[Because] of the church songs?*

*Yes.*

*Did it happen before?*

*Nie. I do not every time singing this song. I just touch up there and there, not... so much, but yesterday I performed three songs... and deeply. Yes. And some other guy who got the nice voice. This voice of him... make the people... [...] that it can be entering inside your heart.*

*So you were two singing.*

*Yes.*

*And you were playing.*

*He was performing with me, he was singing with me. You see, Gianni and me always are... It is boring music. It is not going deep inside the heart. [...]*

*So what songs did you perform?*

[They normally perform:] *Just the wedding songs, just songs for other churches.*

*And yesterday?*

*No. Yesterday I was singing the ZCC song.*

*Which one?*

[From] *Lifela* [tsa Sione]. *Utloa sefelo sa moea.* [sefela number 446 of *Lifela tsa Sione*, in Sesotho Hear a hymn of the spirit] *When you sing this song it is when you are healing the people. You see. When you are healing the people. They are gathering and then you sing this sefela.*

*Why did you decide to choose this one?*

*I just chose this one because the train it... was not traveling very nice. There was... All the time there was standing, standing... they go further there and then they are standing. Yes, I chose to sing this song... so that the trouble must go out, so that we can go... and reach the home easily... or early. You see? Then I started to perform that song. And it helped. Because the train moves. Like early in the morning yesterday. The train is always there and there standing... and then I said to other guy: 'Eh, man, you must sing before this train can go.' This man is singing, singing but the train is not going. I saw that I must... took my accordion... and then I sing with my accordion. I sing that sefela again... and then the train begin to work. You see? All the people are wandering what is happening about that. And then it is no more standing there... just go... and the road is smooth.*

*What other songs did you sing yesterday?*

*This one and another sefela. Ke tla tseba joang hoba ke tšoaretsoe* [sefela number 291 of *Lifela tsa Sione*, in Sesotho How will I know I am forgiven]. *How can I know that they forget me [my] sins... from my childhood. This one is sefela again, of ZCC.*

*Is it for any particular event or is it just a song, which can be sung any time?*

*No. This one... when you are healing the people... you can sing this. You see?*

*And the third one?*

*The third one... [We sang] just two of them... And then I quit them. I saw all the people... I was just looking... just around... I saw all the people, they are hard inside their heart. They are beginning to shake, shake... I say, no, I just quit this. And I saw other people who are working together [with me] they are there. They told me today: 'No, do not sing again this song. Do you see? Do you saw yesterday what is happening? You are gonna going to kill the people there.'*

*So the music is powerful.*

*It is powerful, I do not know why... and I do not uses to perform ZCC songs inside the train. I know, if they are members of ZCC, who got the prophecy, they can fall down. And then what can I do? I am just singing the songs from the other churches... Baptist church... It is not the quality as ZCC. And you choose. If you play this, it is nice. And when you play this deeply... and then you can cause the trouble. You see?*

*So you play other churches' songs.*

*Yes*

*And what about the members of these churches? Do they listen to your songs? Do they enjoy?*

*They enjoy the music because they sing it everywhere.*

*[...]*

*Inside the train... [...] I do not allow this. Because I know exactly what [I] can... expect from these people. They listening me, all of them, they listening me and they enjoy my music. But yesterday it was something. Me, I know it was something... So that I can show these people... what ZCC are.*

*Did the other people know that you are singing ZCC music?*

*They know.*

*They know.*

*They know exactly.*

*How do they know?*

*They know ZCC music... especially for the ZCC.*

*How do they know? Because I think these songs are sung in other churches also or not?*

*The lifela are in other churches too.*

*They got to [them in] other churches but they selected their lifela, they selected... But the [ones being sung] by the ZCC, they do not sing. They touch up, touch up, they do not sing.*

(23 July 2009)

Samuel started his narrative by summarizing the whole event. He played ZCC church songs yesterday on the train, which caused that some people got 'môya' or 'spirit'. They fell or were about to fall into the state of religious ecstasy. In my experience, it is quite a usual situation during ZCC services where it is then expressed by 'prophesizing' to individually chosen other Church members or even guests (I was being prophesied too during Sunday services a couple of times). It is a controlled and routinely handled situation. Samuel was apparently confused at what he saw happening, especially because he was not sure whether the people were ZCC members or not. He did not understand why it happened and suggested that the people might have heard something in his music he did not hear himself, which scared him. He expressed his helplessness to face the situation several times during the interview. Later he admitted that the man who "got the prophecy" might have just forgotten his ZCC emblem (a small five-tip star silver badge with capital letters Z. C. C. in the middle on a piece of green fabric) at home and, in fact, be a ZCC member. It seems quite a likely explanation to me and Samuel later confirmed the he primarily had ZCC members in mind. As I suggest below, it is essential for my interpretation of the whole situation. Had not the person(s) been ZCC member(s), I must admit I would not know how to approach it.

As a notable feature of the performance Samuel mentioned another man who sang the songs along with him. Samuel was praising this man's "nice voice" emphasizing it was capable of touching people's hearts. He valued the current performance compared namely to their occasional performances with "Giani" and apparently saw this man's "nice voice" as one of the causes of the songs' unexpected effect. Further he pointed out the difference between his usual performances and the yesterday one in terms of repertory. While normally he sang 'wedding songs'<sup>118</sup> and other churches' songs, including hymns from *Lifela tsa Sione* (other than the ones sung in the ZCC), they performed two well known ZCC hymns meant for healing during the Church services. As I wrote above, healing songs are considered especially powerful and occupy an important position in the musical hierarchy of ZCC musical repertory. Interestingly, both songs were taken from *Lifela tsa Sione*.

As a motivation for choosing particularly these songs he gave the delay of the train. He initially believed he could get the train moving by performing the ZCC healing songs, thinking basically in terms of 'heal the train'. He hoped to heighten the effect of the performance by engaging another man with a "nice voice" to sing along with him. Because the train did not move, he decided to add an accordion in order to make the sound more powerful, and sang the song again. It implies that they were singing *a cappella* before, possibly clapping their hands along, as it is common in the Church context. This time it worked and Samuel mentioned people's surprised reaction. Nonetheless, he decided to play another song and then he started to see that it began to affect the people around him. He did not indicate whether they were ZCC members or not but they most likely were as well as the people whom he worked with and who later told him to stop such performances. Further he confirmed that the effect of the songs primarily applied to the ZCC members. This was why he finally decided to play other churches' songs only, following this incident.

These songs he saw as much less powerful in ritual sense than the ZCC ones. Still, he liked to perform them because people knew them and they enjoyed his playing, as he said. These songs could be from *Lifela tsa Sione* too as it is a widely shared hymnbook among South African Christian churches. However, he emphasized that they sing other songs than ZCC in other churches. Though he regretted his decision to play

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<sup>118</sup> A specific genre of popular 'happy' songs performed or played at weddings but also other happy occasions such as birthdays.

the ZCC healing songs on the train, he felt kind of proud of “his” ZCC musical repertory because of its “quality” and “power” he could thus demonstrate publicly. I did not ask him and I will probably never know why he decided to perform these songs this particular day as the trains were often delayed so a motivation for such a performance would be there every day. In any case, it was such a deep experience for him that he repeated and promised many times during the interview not to perform these songs any more.

Samuel used the phrase “touch up” several times to express that he may have used parts or short quotations of the songs only not causing any problem. He distinguished between this kind of way of using them as short quotations and references, on the one hand, and singing them “deeply” which could cause trouble, on the other. Similarly, he used “touch up” when describing performances of ZCC songs by other churches. They may have “touched them up” but they did not sing them properly, he said. It indicates that the songs’ ritual power depended on the way they were performed. In order to make the songs work they were supposed to be performed “deeply” and in full length or in substantial parts, at least. In my experience, performances of songs were often divided during ZCC services, used to fill in the gaps between preaching, for example. The healing songs, however, were much less likely to be divided and if so, longer parts were usually sung. Some strophes may have been even repeated to follow up properly after an intermission. Though both songs are available in tonic sol-fa notation, the actual performance practice often differs from the original version, as I demonstrated in the chapter on ZCC music. There is no way to find out how the songs were actually performed this time but I can estimate from their other performances.

Based on my participant observations of ZCC religious services, as I described them in one of the previous chapters, interviews with Samuel and available literature I try to offer an interpretation of the whole performance situation as mediated in Samuel’s narrative in the rest of this chapter. Though I base my analysis on Samuel’s narrative only as I was not present there at the moment of the actual performance and therefore cannot rely on my own observations, I believe I can still offer a plausible interpretation making sense in the immediate as well as wider local and theoretical context.

In the beginning I would like to point out a seeming contradiction. On the one hand, the situation confirms the decisive influence of the particular context for generating particular cultural meaning but, at the same time, it shows ‘transportability’



or 'mobility' of specific cultural meaning across different performance contexts and environments. According to my observations of a number of ZCC worships, performance of these healing songs within the proper context of a Church service always was a much appreciated event and in many ways a climax of the actual worship, usually taking place towards the end of the ritual or marking other important moments. The ritual context gave such performances the right framework and provided the worshipers who got into the state of religious ecstasy with the much needed ritual and practical security. Samuel's performance of the very same healing songs generated the highly problematic reception exactly because they were *not* performed in the proper setting and within the *sacred* 'chronotopos' of the ZCC worship where the affected worshippers would have been shielded from all kinds of evil in the ritual and practical sense but, instead, in a secular situation on the commuter train during the week, that is in a completely *worldly* 'chronotopos' where the affected ZCC members became vulnerable to any kind of ritual as well as 'real' harm. By falling into the state of religious ecstasy in this improper situation on the train they became exposed and vulnerable in the ritual sense as there was no ritual space around them to shield them. Such a situation simply should not have happened at all. Therefore Samuel's fellow commuters, other Church members, openly expressed their disapproval of Samuel's choice. The resulting social, religious and ritual disorder confirmed the decisive role and the importance of the particular context for creating cultural meaning of the particular performance and on understanding to the whole performance situation by its participants and audiences.

The songs were endowed with cultural meaning they received in the ZCC religious context. This meaning was enhanced and made powerful by their repeated performances in this context. In the course of years the members literally *embodied* these meanings through hundreds and thousands of their performances. As especially ethnomusicologists studying dance showed (following 'anthropologists of the senses', see for example Hahn 2007), body may become an important 'cultural place'. Produced by voice and body movements (step dance, clapping and so on) and accompanied by specific bodily feelings, specific religious meanings had become *inscribed* not only into the 'rational' consciousness but also into the 'bodily' consciousness of the Church members, to use the old Cartesian division of which the 'anthropology of the senses' tries to get rid of as an analytically unproductive ethnocentrism (Herzfeld 2001: 240-253, Howes 2005 et al.). As, for example, Tomie

Hahn showed in her study of Japanese 'nihon buyo' dance, it is the disciplined dancing body which is capable of embodying the very core of Japanese culture. She writes about culture *flowing*<sup>119</sup> through the body (Hahn 2007: 1-15). These findings well correspond to the research done in the field of feminist critique too. All in all, the human body is capable of interiorizing culture to the point when one comes to sense it as part of one's subjectivity, without realizing any division between the felt and the desired. The body becomes cultured to the point culture is perceived and sensed as completely natural. Let's take it as an ideal state of affairs, at least, for now.

And here comes the second half of the above mentioned contradictory argument about the importance of the performance context for production of cultural meaning, on the one hand, and about 'transportability' or 'mobility' of cultural meaning *across* contexts, on the other. As I demonstrated in the previous paragraph the power of the ZCC healing songs had rested in their constant performance reproduction in the religious context. Hence, the cultural meaning of these songs had been inscribed into the performing bodies to the point it had become naturalized. The songs' performances had thus become the true expressions of the religious meanings and, consequently, the songs had turned into healing ritual religious objects *per se*. Their power had become inherent and perceived and sensed as immanent. The historical process of construction of the cultural meaning of these songs and the process of naturalization of the meaning had been erased and become invisible, as if it never existed. This process of naturalization can be seen as a perfect example of culture at work. Only the songs as powerful ritual objects *per se* remained. When Samuel and his friend started to perform them they activated the learned and deeply interiorized reaction resulting in people "getting prophecies and falling down", that is in a state of religious ecstasy which normally occur during ZCC religious services. They reacted 'as usual' in a sense, as if they were in the church. The main problem was that it happened in the wrong place and at the wrong time.

It is interesting too that, according to Samuel, the songs were perceived and sensed like that not only by the church members who kind of 'must' have reacted like that given the level of interiorization of the songs' cultural meaning, but also non-members who, again, according to Samuel, knew well what songs "are ZCC". The train,

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<sup>119</sup> This should not be confused with the psychological concept of 'flow' which I use elsewhere in my text.

in this case, became a crossroad where various cultural concepts about music met and, ultimately, got into conflict. Both perspectives, however, seem to have their share in the same imagination. Samuel's and even some other people's 'secular' perspective and interest to make the train moving participated in the ZCC religious ideology and ritual believing that the songs '*inherent*' or '*immanent*' power may help this goal. On the other hand, the pious members of the Church saw performance of the songs as absolutely inappropriate exactly because they believed in the same '*inherent*' or '*immanent*' ritual power of the very same songs. There, however, was a serious and fundamental conflict between these perspectives.

While Samuel basically decided to play the songs as *magic*, with an ultimate goal to force something to happen using the ZCC healing songs as magical, albeit immaterial, objects (and, at the same time, foolishly underplaying their potential effect on ZCC members travelling along with him), the other Church members defended a strictly *religious use* of the songs as the only appropriate way of using them. Only the controlled and limiting context of the religious ritual legitimized use of their 'supernatural' power and was capable of protecting and shielding the affected people who became ritually exposed as well as physically vulnerable for the time of their religious ecstasy, from evil or a physical injury.

It is important to distinguish the religious and magical use of the songs, which I suggested above, before going any further. The difference between magic and religion is conventionally<sup>120</sup> drawn along the way goals are being achieved.<sup>121</sup> In the conventional religious context, *God* is *prayed to* or *worshipped* in order to do or not to do something and the final decision is left up to him (in the traditional context of the three 'religions of the Book') as he is believed to be the ultimate Providence knowing best what to do. Magic, on the other hand, works as a mean how to *directly* achieve something decided upon by human being, often via using magical objects which are to *guarantee* the desired success. My interpretation of the described situation would be

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<sup>120</sup> I am aware of the problematic term 'conventional', however, I find it acceptable here. The 'conventional' here I see as common to the main religious branches such as Christianity, Islam or Judaism, for example.

<sup>121</sup> In contrary to popular belief the ZCC sharply distances itself from traditional African magical practices. On the other hand, some of its own practices could be seen as balancing on the edge between religion as it is conventionally understood in the above mentioned sense and magic. The rainmaking activities of its bishop would be the case in point here, for example (see Müller 2008).

that Samuel used the songs as such magical objects rather than just means of worship. He wanted to make the train move *directly* by the very performance of these songs and he even called someone else with a good voice to sing along to help him. He tried to cut the long and ‘unreliable’ religious way short by using the songs as magic, bypassing God, to use the religious conceptualization.

I believe that this was another reason for the other ZCC members’ criticism of the performance, albeit not explicitly formulated and maybe not even rationally conceptualized at the moment. Something went just profoundly wrong and all knew it. It may have been enough to call Samuel to stop for the present moment. Interestingly, Samuel adopted the view of his fellow ZCC members immediately as he saw what his performance had caused, classifying his idea to play these songs as utterly wrong and deciding never to play them again *this way* a day later. It apparently was a powerful experience for him. I can hardly remember him so excited as he was that day when telling me the story.

It also and once again reveals Samuel’s ‘ambiguous’ position between secular, religious and magical world views, that is, basically, between three different cultural concepts. By secular I mean his aim to make the train moving in order to get to work in time and, consequently, not to get into trouble at the workplace, a motivation rooted in the context of the *capitalist economy*. By religious I mean the ethos of the missionary tradition of the Western imported churches partly inherited by the ZCC and here represented by the *hymns* performed. By magical I mean the African pre-Christian ethos and the long history of practicing magic, a tradition still alive in contemporary black South African society, pronounced here in Samuel’s decision to use the songs like *magical objects*. In my theoretical interpretation the event as it happened is a particular expression of a conflict between these three cultural domains, which lies in the core of the resulting disorder. Therefore it makes sense to identify them as such. A series of questions would, however, arise. Did Samuel perceive his position heterogeneous in any sense? Did he perceive it as coherent? How can we know? Or can we find anything else in his behaviour and reasoning what would suggest a clue?

It was pointed out that there often is a contradiction between the postmodern anthropological discourse and the local discourse in that the former tends to see culture as ‘constructed’, ‘hybrid’, ‘mobile’ or otherwise ‘impure’ (ironically, after all the years of seeing it as exactly opposite), while the culture’s local subjects experience it as coherent and homogenous or at least try to do so (see for example Coplan 1994: 245).

Human being long for coherence and homogeneity, it seems. Why the anthropologists constantly do their subversive work, a popular opinion might ask. It is probably not possible to reconcile these contradictions but it has been suggested that a proper analytical place must be found for both of them and that to both we must pay proper attention. Local discourse should not be downplayed by the hegemony of the scholarly one.

I can identify a number of roots from which Samuel's 'musical behaviour' grew or the cultural and religious 'concepts'<sup>122</sup> it was fed by. On the other hand, he always seemed to me that he perceived or tried to perceive his musical behaviour as coherent, as if he did not have any problems with his own cultural identification. And he most likely did not. Both perspectives taken as relevant, it is nevertheless possible to see that while his musical behaviour was clearly not culturally coherent, otherwise it would have never caused such a disorder on the train, having realized the problem, he immediately tried to homogenize it, to make it culturally conform. His aim hardly was to cause a conflict of this sort. This is why he finally made a decision not to perform the ZCC healing songs on the train any more.

Here we can see Samuel's individual agency at work. Having (at least partly) understood cause of the problem, that is having gained a partial insight into the cultural structure, he could have begun to act. He tried to conform his musical behaviour within a single generally acceptable cultural framework, to homogenize his behaviour. But there were three such frameworks at hand. Which one of them did he finally choose exercising thus his agency? He gave up the Western capitalist logic as a viable motivation for his behaviour and, similarly, he abandoned the African traditional magical world view of reality. He, finally, embraced the religious imagination and ethos of the ZCC where he belonged to as its member after all. He decided to accept once again its cultural-religious logic to find peace and balance. This story which started as a 'crack' in homogenous cultural structure or as a 'cultural accident' allowing other cultural logics to win for a moment could be seen as an example of particular cultural negotiation where different cultural concepts were at play and of which one was actively chosen at the end by its main actor to reaffirm his cultural identity. We can see Samuel as a cultural negotiator moving between various cultural logics and as someone who struggled to culturally belong actively using his agency. The 'koan', the

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<sup>122</sup> I use the terms 'musical behaviour' and 'concept' in Merriam's sense here (Merriam 1964).

irresolvable anthropological predicament, seems to be solved. On another level it shows the ZCC as a powerful and viable player on South African playground of cultures and traditions.

## **CONCLUSION**

## Making a Difference? Benefits?

There is a widely shared belief in ethnomusicology, inherited from social and cultural anthropology, that we as ethnomusicologist make, or at least should aspire to make, some kind of positive difference. We hope to bring about some kind of change in the world by what we do on an immediate material or practical level and on a and wider political level. We hope we help something and/or somebody by what we do, and here I especially mean in ‘the field’. This belief is perhaps necessary as it provides us with sense of what we are doing, something we need both as scholars and as human beings.

As for my research and writing of the dissertation I see rather a little potential for helping anything or anyone materially or practically, except of, for example, supplying people, and especially Samuel with recordings, videos and photos that I recorded, and footage of them and with them at various occasions. I can do very little about anything I would desire to see happening in their lives regarding economic and other more tangible benefits, which could be summed up as a ‘quality of life’, of course, I must add, as I see it from my subjective perspective, trying not to become patronizing.

But this text has a political dimension too, not in a conventional sense of institutionalized politics but in its potential to raise antagonisms and controversies, first, within the field of ethnomusicology with regard to its common practices and, second, as an ethnomusicological text in the wider field of humanities and social sciences dealing with South Africa’s post-apartheid situation. A political opinion does not have to be explicitly addressed in the text, still its effect on the reader can be political and may move him or her to some kind of action, that is change of thinking and behaviour as human beings and as scholars.<sup>123</sup> And this would be the difference I would most aspire to make in writing this text.

I could talk about benefits on the level of the personal too. What difference has this project made *for* and *to* both Samuel and I? What have we become, as a result of it? I am well aware that I am by no mean able to discuss every possible aspect as I am neither able to realize it fully (yet) nor express it properly. As any ethnography does to a certain extent, this dissertation represents a kind of testimony. Two testimonies are

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<sup>123</sup> The distinction between politics and the political is drawn from a lecture of a cultural theorist Mieke Bal called ‘The Importance of Be(com)ing a (Moving) Image’ held in the National gallery in Prague February 20, 2015.



intertwined in the text, in fact. It is my testimony and it is a testimony of Lesiba Samuel Kadiaka revealed through my own testimony: I saw, I was shown, I heard, I was told, I experienced, I was made to witness; or we did together. The resulting text is a testimony about developments and setbacks in our relationship, the relationship of two human beings born into, brought up and living in two different and, perhaps more importantly, differently framed worlds, yet later consciously involved in a very particular kind of common activity – the research project. There was nothing inevitable in what we were doing, we were actively shaping our activities, we were the agents.

We have both changed during the research. Our identities, albeit stable on some levels, changed. Our long-term encounter implied change of our identities in the broadest sense. The space between us was constantly changing, filled in by our discussions and conversations and by our experience of common and individual activities during the research. We were moving around each other, constantly reshaping the space between us. The research as a process had a transformative quality for me and, I believe, for Samuel too. We found ourselves in a state of constant becoming.

With regard to the actual flow of the research, its time was experienced unevenly. We never reached any ultimate state of our identities in our relationship. This showed up especially clear from one year to another as the research extended in time. Though not being a focal point here, this experience of change and becoming is, as in so many other ethnographies, present in my text, sometimes explicitly revealed but often hidden in between the lines. I not only did not want to hide it, I wanted to encourage the reader to pay attention to these ‘traces of the process’, ‘seams in the narrative’ and all kinds of ‘disruptive elements’. They were as much part of the project as any other seemingly harder data. They constitute the ‘discourse’ as well as the shape the ‘story’, in a narratological sense.

The research would perhaps be best described as a project of two people, of me and of Lesiba Samuel Kadiaka. Indeed, there were other people around us who have become part of it (consciously and willingly or not) as relatives, friends or colleagues at some point in one or another way. Our mutual relationship during the research and the research results should best be understood and made meaningful on the axis between the first and the second person, *me* and *you*, me Vít and you Samuel. For purposes of the genre of the academic writing I, however, resorted to the first and the more formal third person in the presented text, to *I* and *he*, in order to create a descriptive framework and the more detached feeling common in ethnographic writing; indeed it is one of the

illusions of ethnographic writing. Therefore I recommend the reader to keep in mind this first/second person axis when contemplating the text.

I cannot speak for Samuel so easily, as I have never directly asked him about the importance of our research for him and it is doubtful what he would have told me anyway. However, there were clear signs that the research has become more and more important for him through the years. Our relationship developed from occasional lunch-time music making in our student house early in 2006 into serious research collaboration in the subsequent years. It included regular recorded interviews and attending to a number of social events in which Samuel actively participated as a musician and I took part as an observer and/or as a documenter. He took the research more and more seriously as we went along and there were moments, especially in later years, when it was him who encouraged me to carry on, negotiated new opportunities and diligently supplied me with (for example) written texts and translations of his songs. It clearly mattered to him. For all that, I am immensely glad and grateful. I dare to say, without him I would have given up many times. His commitment supplied me with positive energy and motivation at moments of hopelessness. Consequently, I feel a responsibility towards Samuel today, which I have tried to fulfil by writing up this text.

As for other possible benefits our collaboration and my presence clearly meant an enhanced social prestige for Samuel among his peers, either as a gardener in the university environment, in Mamelodi, or other places where we went together. It is difficult to say whether these effects were lasting or helpful in any significant way, but one and a half months before submitting the dissertation I received a text message on my mobile phone from Samuel. It was clearly formulated by someone else, probably a friend, and sent from a number other than Samuel's. It went as follows: "Morning, is Sam. I'm fine and I hope you doing well that side. I can't wait for my book to be finished. Have bless week:-)". It suggests that Samuel still used our collaboration and its planned results as a valuable social currency three and a half year after my last visit to South Africa. It could be discussed whether 'my book' could rather stand for 'book about me' (read Samuel) or whether he (or the one who formulated the text) meant it literally. In any case, it is a heartfelt expression of the strong conviction of his presence and centrality in 'the book', raising further questions about authorship.

At the same time, his close collaboration with me, getting to understand the musical performances of the extremely secretive ZCC might have potentially shaken his already difficult position inside the local church community. He took a risk in light of

the Church's secretiveness by supplying me with information on the topic, adopting, as a justification, the basically scholarly imperative of accumulating knowledge. It could be well understood as a true expression of his passion to teach (and preach), to educate and to raise awareness as he practiced it in his songs and other musical as well as non musical activities. I have been a mediator to pass this knowledge on. Again, I must have incorporated my involvement in this mediation too as I had become part of the story in the meantime.

There were just too many transgressions of local common sense and of unwritten rules (both 'black' and 'white') that one had to make daily when I as a white European researcher wanted to collaborate with a poor black township dweller on a daily basis, to enumerate them all. Our – sometimes full, sometimes just partial – awareness of these transgressions helped to establish a strong bond between us, which I consider a great benefit to the final shape that this document has taken.

## **Mapping the Individual Musical Experience**

I ethnographically followed an individual musician in this research. This 'following' was constituted of long-term ethnographic observations, interviews and various kinds of collaborations. Its aim has been to construct a plausible academic narrative drawing equally on the genre of ethnography and biography. The arguments are all ethnographically-based. The overall way of presenting them is framed as a biography given the individual focus of the project. The research produced different kinds of sources on which my arguments are based. Besides the data acquired via ethnographic observations such as field video and audio recordings of musical performances and interviews, ethnographic notes or transcriptions of songs' texts, historical sources such as Samuel's family photographs were used too.

Unlike collectively-focused research my perspective allowed for a close-up study of active individual cultural and social negotiations in a diachronic perspective. Understanding subjectivity as constructed allowed for generating ethnographic as well as historical evidences of broader than strictly individual currency.

These negotiations were studied on various levels: on the level of Samuel's narratives about past and presence concerning a wide range of topics, on the level of musical as well as non-musical behaviour as observed during the research or studied

from historical photographs, on the level of studying songs' texts, and on the level of studying musical performances and musical sound structures as cultural structures. Individual chapters were balanced in order to provide space for different kinds of sources and ways of approaching them. All these areas were understood as representing places of social and cultural negotiations and thus potentially offering rich sources for wider theoretical argumentation. Not all aspects studied were directly related to musical activities but they were complementary to them as parts of one whole of individual social and cultural negotiations mutually shedding light on each other.

Various music-related activities became the core of my argumentation. Based on the common ethnomusicological understanding of music as culturally embedded I studied Samuel's musical activities as being part of as well as producing particular cultural meanings. Thus music – Samuel's ideas about it, his musical behaviour and the musical sounds he produced (following Merriam 1964) – could become a prominent source of knowledge about the nature of musical performance as an expression of particular social and cultural position and as a specific way of social and cultural negotiation. Various music-related activities were studied as places of such negotiation, hence the term 'mapping' in the title of the dissertation. These findings were continuously confronted with and complemented by knowledge acquired via studying different areas of Samuel's life based on other sources.

Partial results were formulated in the course of the argumentation in particular chapters. As a result I am able to articulate some prominent features of Samuel's positioning in the world. Samuel's subjectivity was complexly historically structured participating in various social and cultural worldviews at the same time. All his belongings found expression in the music he composed, played and sang as a songwriter and song singer as well as in the religious choral musical performances he took part in actively as a performer or just "passively" as a listener or an observer as member of the Zion Christian Church. I tried to demonstrate how cultural meanings were produced, maintained or re-constructed in these repertoires in various ways based on various sources.

Using the potential of biographic ethnography to cross variously constructed borders and to capture continuities as well as discontinuities in a diachronic perspective I tried to highlight the continuities between various musical repertoires as expressions of parallel continuities in worldviews and social and cultural positions pronounced in other realms of life. I believe that the bio-ethnographic strategy helps to bypass the

usual anthropological dilemma of heterogeneity (as analyzed by the researchers) and coherence (as felt by the research subjects) by emphasizing the diachronically based construction of this coherent ambivalence. I offer it as one possible solution to the problem.

The study represents a contribution to a number of research areas. Within the context of South African music studies it introduces a completely new kind of project. Not that there would not be studies of individual musicians of comparable social status but none of them has designed its goal the way I did to my knowledge. It is a contribution to South African anthropology where individuals of Samuel's kind have been studied more often but, obviously, without the musical dimension of their existence. It contributes to township studies on more general level as it maps in great detail contemporary and past properties of daily life in the township and its social and cultural dynamics. On the level of the discipline it contributes to the growing body of ethnomusicological and anthropological literature on individuals as actors in social and cultural processes. At another level it exposes important details about musical structures in particular musical repertoires as well as about concepts (and conceptions) of music. It deals with the seemingly most obvious, everyday and most widely popular segments of South African music, but segments notoriously understudied, maybe precisely because of their commonsensical nature and popularity. And obviously, it overlaps with a number of other research areas, such as anthropology, literary studies, African languages, and sociology.

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Whatever 'biography' of Samuel this dissertation may seem momentarily to seize through elusive fragments or snapshots is always at the same time completely compromised and problematized by the unpredictable, shifting ethnographic lens. If biography is a fiction, there is nothing definitive about ethnography:

“Yes, am released three albums onei sing about Mandela one is Sepedi bacardi<sup>124</sup> music nne wedding songs they play them at local Radiostation and now I climb Putco Bus to go tn work I play acordianinside Bus when I go to work”

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<sup>124</sup> Bacardi, named after an alcoholic cocktail, is a kind of electronic dance music that has become popular in Mamelodi since my research ended. I have no idea how Samuel's music sounds today.

(text message from Samuel, 17 March 2015, 20:02:07)

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# Interviews

2 February 2006	1 August 2008
28 March 2006	18 August 2008
29 March 2006	20 August 2008
30 March 2006	21 August 2008
6 April 2006	25 August 2008
	26 August 2008
	28 August 2008
29 August 2007 (not recorded)	
31 August 2007 (not recorded)	
1 September 2007 (not recorded)	13 July 2009
10 September 2007 (not recorded)	20 July 2009
11 September 2007	22 July 2009
18 September 2007	23 July 2009
20 September 2007	28 July 2009
25 September 2007	3 August 2009
	4 August 2009
8 July 2008	18 August 2009
10 July 2008	19 August 2009
11 July 2008	
24 July 2008	31 August 2011
25 July 2008	2 September 2011
28 July 2008	15 September 2011
30 July 2008	16 September 2011
31 July 2008	18 September 2011



# **APPENDICES**

# Appendix A:

## Contents of the CD and the DVD

### CD compilation

The accompanying CD contains folders with the following mp3 files.

Mmamona album – all tracks in the order they were discussed in the text.

Samuel demonstrating his ability to use tonic sol-fa notation.

Samuel and I playing together Tate Mogolo in my student house in Pretoria in 2006.

Complete sound recording of the night ZCC service in Lefiswane.

### DVD compilation

Samuel along with local girls from his parents' village Maralaleng, Ga-Mphahlele, Limpopo and two young men from Mamelodi performing his songs inside a minibus-taxi on the way from Maralaleng to a wedding in nearby Lebowakgomo, Limpopo (22 September 2007).

Samuel promoting his CD *Mmamona* by dancing to the songs along with a group of local girls and two Mamelodi young men at a wedding in Lebowakgomo, Limpopo (22 September 2007).

Samuel dancing along with a group of local girls and two Mamelodi young men in the yard in front of his mother's neighbours' house in Maralaleng, Ga-Mphahlele, Limpopo (23 September 2007).

Samuel singing ZCC church songs and dancing on them along with a group of ZCC Mamelodi and local members during a private family vigil service and a ceremony, marking an important family occasion of unveiling tombstones of the deceased family members in Lefiswane, Limpopo Saturday night (8 August 2009).

A cut of Samuel performing ZCC church songs and accompanying the departure from the house to the cars and minibuses early in the morning, performing inside the minibus, leading a procession on arrival to a nearby cemetery, filling in the intermissions between the ZCC priest's reading and preaching and, finally, accompanying the departure of the crowd from the cemetery during the unveiling of tombstones private family ceremony in Lefiswane Sunday morning (9 August 2009).

# Appendix B:

## *Lifela tsa Sione* Hymnbooks

### Translations of *Lifela tsa Sione*

#### **Ke na le molisa (sefela 111)**

1/

Ke na le modisa,  
Ke tla be ke hloka'ng?  
Ke ea ipitsang Jehova,  
Modimo o phelang.

2/

O nkisa botaleng,  
Lijong tse mphelisang;  
O nkalosa linōkaneng,  
Metsing a nkholisang.

3/

He ke lahlehile,  
O nkhutlisetsa hae;  
O nkisa tseleng ea 'nnete  
Ka lerato la hae.

4/

Ha ke se ke feta  
Khohlong e lefifi,  
Ha nka ke ka tšhotha tsela  
E chehiloeng lifi.

#### **I have a shepherd (hymn 111)**

1/

I have a shepherd,  
What more will I want?  
He calls himself Jehova,  
The living God.

2/

He leads me to green pastures,  
Food for my soul;  
He leads me beside peaceful streams;  
To water that fills my soul

3/

When I am lost,  
He leads me back home;  
He leads me to the right paths  
With his love.

4/

Even when I walk  
Through the dark valley of death,  
I shall fear no evil  
For you are with me.

5/

Ke tšepa molisa,  
Ea lisang ka lesoi;  
Ke eena ea tla ntšelisa  
Ka mohau oa hae.

6/

Lira li ka ntlhoea,  
Ke sa ja monono;  
Mohope wa khaphatseha,  
Ke lutse ka thabo.

7/

O sa tla mpaballa  
Le bophelong bona;  
'Me ke tla hlola ka mehla  
Ka tlung ea Morena.

5/

I trust the shepherd,  
That herd with a rod;  
For he is the one to comfort me  
With his mercy.

6/

My enemies can hate me,  
I am resting in the happiness of the Lord;  
You have anointed my head with oil,  
Blessings and gladness shall follow me.

7/

You will protect me  
Even in this lifetime;  
Then I will always stay  
In the Lord's house forever.

(translated by Sebitiea Makutla)

**Ke tla tseba joang hoba ke tšoaretsoe  
(sefela 291)**

1/

Ke tla tseba joang hoba ke tšoaretsoe  
Be tohle tsa ka le tsa bonyenyane?  
Ho 'na ke phahlo e boima hampe  
Li kaa ka lehlabathe la leoatle.

2/

Ke tla tseba joang hoba ke lumetse  
Ka tumelo e phelang, ea sebele?  
Satan'o ntšela ka lipelaelo,  
O re ha ke na ho phema timelo.

3/

Ke tla tseba joang ha Moea o ntsoetse  
Ke tsoalo ea bobeli, ke nchafetse,  
Ha ke sa fumana pelo ea nama  
E rata ka mehla ho 'na e mpusa?

4/

Ke tla tseba joang hoba bitso la ka  
Le ngoliloe ka bukeng ea bophelo,  
Hore ke baloe har'a majalefa  
A tla ja bophelo ba leholimo?

5/

U ka tseba hantle, ngoan'a Morena,  
Ha u rata Jesu le bana beno.  
Ho tsohle lerato ke ntho e kholo,  
Lerato ka mehla, lerato feela.

**How will I know I am forgiven  
(hymn 291)**

1/

How will I know I am forgiven,  
All my sins even from when I was a child?  
To me, it's a heavy burden,  
They (sins) are like oceans' sand.

2/

How will I know That I am a believer,  
With a strong faith?  
Satan fills me with doubts;  
He says I won't escape death.

3/

How will I know when the Spirit has risen against me  
With being born again,  
I am renewed,  
Ways of the flesh controls me daily?

4/

How will I know when my name  
Is written in the book of life,  
For me to be slain among the heirs of heaven  
So that they inherit heaven life?

5/

You will know well child of God,  
If you love Jesus and your brethren.  
Above all love is the greatest,  
Love always, only love.

(translated by Sebitiea Makutla)

### Utloa sefefa sa moea (seflea 446)

1/

Utloa sefefa sa moea.  
Le ho luma ha sona!  
Tsoha, re se re timela;  
Re pholosa, Morena!  
Jo, lillo ha lo mo tsose;  
O sa ntse a robetse,  
'Me sekepe se tebile;  
Jesu, utloa thapelo!

A khalamela leoatle  
Khutsa hle!  
Sefefa sa ba sa thola.  
Khothalang!  
Ruri, Jesu ke Morena,  
Khothalang!

2/

Morena, metsi a matla  
A meleko a luma,  
A petela pelo ea ka;  
Ke tebela ho 'ona.  
Mahlomoleng a makalo  
Ke tla hoeletsa ho mang?  
Ke bitsa ho uena, Jesu,  
Uena thuso ea ba llang.

3/

Ahe, maru a qhalane!  
Letsatsi le chabile,  
'Me pelo ea ka e bone  
Pholoso ea Morena.  
Ke bea bophelo ba ka  
Matsohong a hao, Jesu;  
U mphelehetse ka mehla  
Le ka tsatsi la lefu.

### Hear the wind of the spirit (hymn 446)

1/

Hear the wind of the spirit,  
And its rhythm!  
Wake up so that we don't perish,  
Save us Lord.  
Cries don't wake him up,  
He is still asleep;  
And the ship has sunk.  
Jesus, hear our prayer!

He (Jesus) calmed the sea,  
Said "Quiet! Be still!"!,  
The storm got quieter.  
Be encouraged!  
Oh, Jesus is King,  
Be encouraged!

2/

Lord, the water is strong,  
It's devious and thundering,  
It's turning my heart,  
I am sinking.  
In such sad melancholy,  
Who will I call upon?  
I call upon you Jesus,  
You, the comforter of those who mourn.

3/

Ahe, clouds are scattered,  
The sun has risen,  
And my heart has seen  
God's salvation.  
I put my hands  
Unto you, Jesus;  
Accompany me always  
Even to my death.

(translated by Sebitiea Makutla)

**E, joale ke tla oroha (sefela 195)**

1/

E, joale ke tla oroha  
Ka la Simeone;  
Ke tšepile ho pholoha  
Motseng oa Sione.

2/

O ne a kene tempeleng:  
A fihlela Jesu  
Ea baletsoeg batho mehleng  
Ke Molim'a rona.

3/

Jesu ka sebele-bele,  
Seli la lichaba,  
Tlotlo la Iseraele,  
Hloho ea litaba.

4/

Le 'na ke 'mone 'Moloki,  
Ea ntefetseng libe;  
Kese ke le mopholohi,  
Ngoana oa Sione.

**Yes, then I leave (hymn 195)**

1/

Yes, then I leave  
in Simon's way;  
in pursuit of my freedom  
To Zion's village.

2/

He was in the temple:  
And He found Jesus  
The one [who has been] given to the people  
By our Lord.

3/

Jesus in sovereignty,  
Light of the world,  
The treasure of Israel,  
Head of nations.

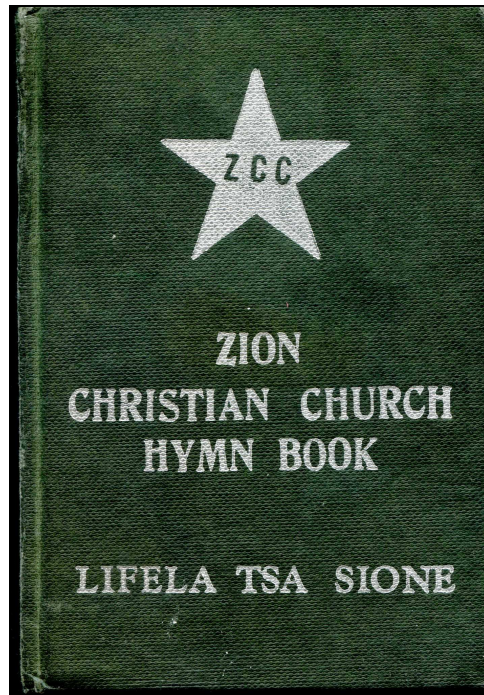
4/

I have also seen the Messiah,  
Who has paid for all my sins;  
I am therefore born again,  
The child of Zion.

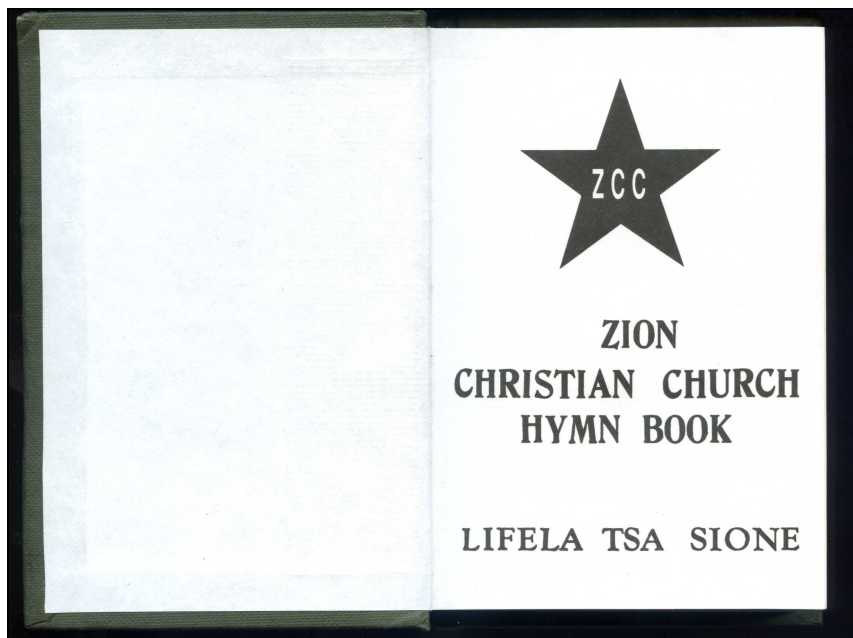
(translated by Sebitiea Makutla)



***Zion Christian Church Hymn Book: Lifela tsa Sione***



**Figure 1:** *Zion Christian Church Hymn Book. Lifela tsa Sione. Morija (Lesotho): Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 2004.*



**Figure 2:** *Zion Christian Church Hymn Book. Lifela tsa Sione. Morija (Lesotho): Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 2004.*

- 3 Leha u re, ke lesane – Le ba ratoang ho fetisa,  
Le moo, ke sa leka ho re: – Ho lokile!
- 4 Leha lefu le bohale – Le khaola tšiu tsa ka,  
Ke sa ntse ke leka ho re: – Ho lokile!
- 5 Feela, ha ke na le uena, – Bohlokong le lihlorisong,  
Hohle, Ntate, ke ntse ke re: – Ho lokile!

**111** *S. Rolland*

- 1 Ke na le molisa, – Ke tla be ke hloka'ng?  
Ke ea ipitsang Jehova, – Molimo o phelang.
- 2 O nkisa botaleng, – Lijong tse mphelisang;  
O nkalosa linōkaneng, – Metsing a nkholisang.
- 3 Ha ke lalehile, – O nkhutlisetsa hae;  
O nkisa tseleng ea 'nete – Ka lerato la hae.
- 4 Ha ke se ke feta – Khohlong e lefifi,  
Ha nka ke ka tšoha tsela – E chehiloeng lifi.
- 5 Ke tšepa molisa, – Ea lisang ka lesoi;  
Ke eena ea tla ntšelisa – Ka mohau oa hae.
- 6 Lira li ka nthoea, – Ke sa ja monono;  
Mohope oa khaphatseha, – Ke lutse ka thabo.
- 7 U sa tla mpaballa – Le bophelong bona;  
'Me ke tla hlola ka mehla – Ka tlung ea Morena.

**112** *S. Rolland*

- 1 Lefatše lena – Le ka 'nea'ng?  
Ke oa Morena, – Ke sa hloka'ng?  
Ke na le Mong – Leholimong  
Le lefatšeng, – Ea nchoeletseng;

92

Figure 3: Sefela (hymn) 111 Ke na le molisa (I have a shepherd). *Zion Christian Church Hymn Book. Lifela tsa Sione. Morija (Lesotho): Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 2004.*

<p>Le leholo, lea tšabeha, La ho tla nka borena. U itse u tla lekisa Sholu la bosiu; Ke eona nako ea hao ea ho tla, E sa tsejoeng ke motho. Raohang, bakreste, le lebelle Morena; Matheka a lōna a tlangoe, Lampi tsa lōna li tuka, li khanye; Le emise lihloho tsa lōna. Le lelalle holimo, holimo! Topollo ea lōna ke ena: Nyakallang, lebohlang! E phethehile ntoea ea lōna. Alleluya!</p> <p>2 Ikhetheng ho ba litšila, Le tsoeng ka har'a bona; Baballang aparō tsa lōna, Li hloke le letheba. Tšabang, esere mohlomong Tsatsi la tlokotsi La le oela le sa le borokong, Libe li le imetse. Raohang, bakreste, le lebelle, ...</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>291</b> <i>A. Mabile</i></p> <p>1 Ke tla tseba joang hoba ke tšoaretsoe Be tsohle tsa ka le tsa bonyenyane?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">238</p>	<p>Ho 'na ke phahlo e boima hampe Li kaa ka lehlabathe la leoatle.</p> <p>2 Ke tla tseba joang hoba ke lumetse Ka tumelo e phelang, ea sebele? Satan'o ntšela ka lipelaelo, O re ha ke na ho phema timelo.</p> <p>3 Ke tla tseba joang ha Moea o ntsoetse Ka tsoalo ea bobeli, ke nchafetse, Ha ke sa fumana pelo ea nama E rata ka mehla ho 'na e mpusa?</p> <p>4 Ke tla tseba joang hoba bitso la ka Le ngoliloe ka bukeng ea bophelo, Hore ke baloe har'a majalefa A tla ja bophelo ba leholimo?</p> <p>5 U ka tseba hantle, ngoan'a Morena, Ha u rata Jesu le bana beno, Ho tsohle lerato ke ntho e kholo, Lerato ka mehla, lerato feela.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>292</b> <i>A. Mabile</i></p> <p>1 Ho phela ho Morena oa ka, lekunutung la hae, Ho rutoa ke eena Jesu ke le maotong a hae, Ha ho lehlohonolo le kang leo, ha ke bona, Le ho utloa hoba Jesu ke lintho tsohle ho 'na.</p> <p>2 Moe'a ka ha o tepeletse ke lipelaelo, Ke khathalitsoe ke ntoea e sa khaotseng ea tumelo Ke mo utloa a nkhothatsa, tsebeng a 'nyenyeletsa Tse ntšepisang, tse monate, tse se nang ho boleloa.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">239</p>
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Figure 4: Sefela (hymn) 291 Ke tla tseba joang hoba ke tšoaretsoe (How will I know I am forgiven). *Zion Christian Church Hymn Book. Lifela tsa Sione. Morija (Lesotho): Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 2004.*

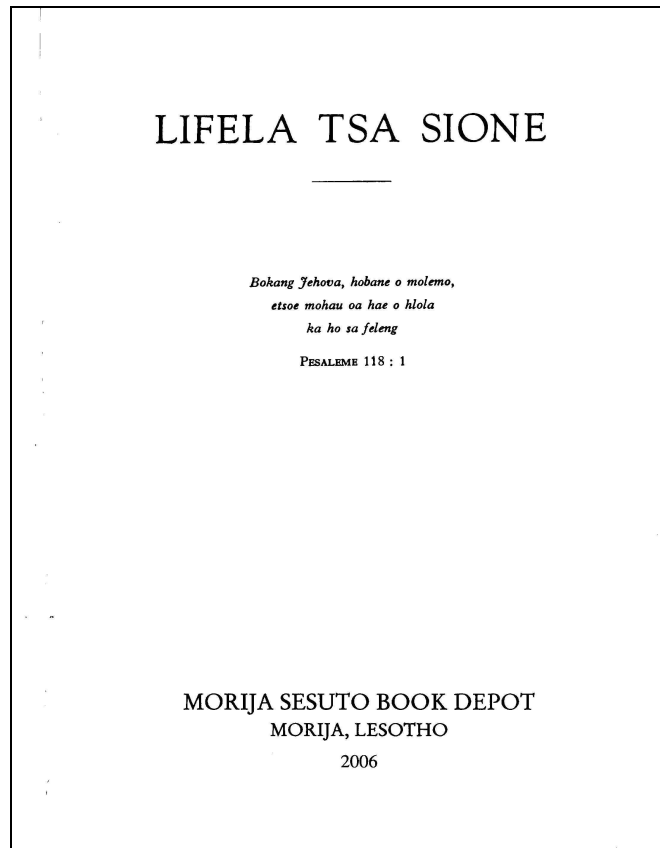
<p>Le ho re nenesa ka letsoho Ho isa lefung! ...</p> <p>4 Moea oa hao, Jesu, o halaletse, O kopanye lipelo tsa rōna, Lintoeng tsa hao tsa ho hlōla lefatše, Sebe, lefu le matla a tsona. Ho isa lefung! ...</p> <p><b>445</b> J.P. Mohapeloa</p> <p>Molimo ke moea, 'Me ba o rapelang Ba ke ba o rapele Ka moea le ka 'nete. Molimo ke moea, 'Me ba o rapelang ba o rapele Ka moea le ka 'nete. Hoba Ntate o batla bao, (<i>bis</i>) O batla bao hore ba mo rapele Ka moea le ka 'nete. Molimo ke moea, 'Me ba o rapelang Ba o rapele ka moea Le ka 'nete.</p> <p><b>446</b> H. Marzolff</p> <p>1 Utloa sefelo sa moea, Le ho luma ha sona! Tsoha, re se re timela; Re pholose, Morena!</p> <p>408</p>	<p>Jo, lillo ha li mo tsose; O sa ntse a robetse, 'Me sekepe se tebile; Jesu, utloa thapelo! A khalemela leoatle Khutsa hle! Sefefo sa ba sa thōla. Khothalang! (<i>bis</i>) Ruri, Jesu ke Morena, Khothalang!</p> <p>2 Morena, metsi a matla A meleko a luma, A patela pelo ea ka; Ke tebela ho 'ona. Mahlomoleng a makalo Ke tla hoeletsa ho mang? Ke bitsa ho uena, Jesu, Uena thuso ea ba llang. A khalemela leoatle, ...</p> <p>3 Ahe, maru a qhalane! Letsatsi le chabile, 'Me pelo ea ka e bone Pholoso ea Morena. Ke bea bophelo ba ka Matsohong a hao, Jesu; U mphelehetse ka mehla Le ka tsatsi la lefu. A khalemela leoatle, ...</p> <p>409</p>
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Figure 5: Sefela (hymn) 446 Utloa, sefelo sa moea (Hear the wind of the spirit). *Zion Christian Church Hymn Book. Lifela tsa Sione. Morija (Lesotho): Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 2004.*

<p>Moea, u tle, u li nosetse, Peō e tsebe ho mela!</p> <p>4 Bohle re ne re khelohetse 'Tseleng e isang tahlehong; U re hule, re u latele 'Tseleng e lebang bophelong!</p> <p>5 Satane, tau e bohale, O rata ho re timetsa; Ak'u re sitse ka bohlale, A se hlōle a re thetsa!</p> <p><b>195</b> T. Arbousset</p> <p>1 E, joale ke tla oroha Ka la Simeone; Ke tšepile ho pholoha Motseng oa Sione.</p> <p>2 O ne a kene tempeleng: A fihlela Jesu Ea baletsoeng batho mehleng Ke Molim'a rōna.</p> <p>3 Jesu ka sebele-bele, Seli la lichaba, Tlotlo la Iseraele, Hloho ea litaba.</p> <p>4 Le 'na ke 'mone 'Moloki, Ea ntefetseng libe; Ke se ke le mopholohi, Ngoana oa Sione.</p> <p>164</p>
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Figure 6: Sefela (hymn) 195 E, joale ke tla oroha (Yes, then I leave). *Zion Christian Church Hymn Book. Lifela tsa Sione. Morija (Lesotho): Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 2004.*

# *Lifela tsa Sione* Hymnbook Using Sol-Fa Notation



**Figure 7:** *Lifela tsa Sione* (24th edition revised, 47th printing). Morija (Lesotho): Morija Sesuto Book Depot, 2006.

## Appendix C:

### Samuel's Handwritten *Mmamona* Lyrics

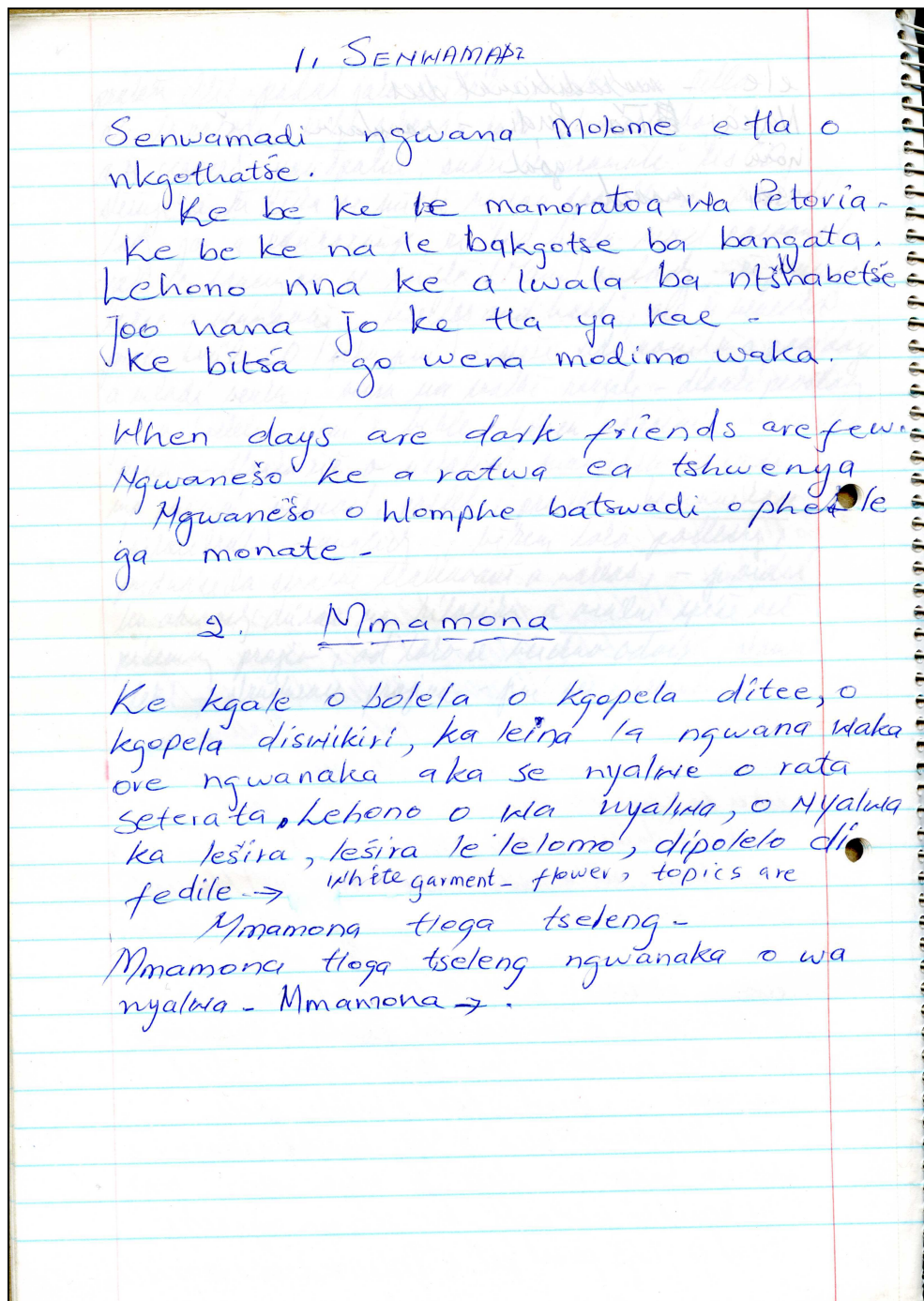


Figure 8: Lyrics of *Mmamona* album as Samuel wrote them in my diary 25 and 27 September 2007.



### 3 Dicellula

Ke lerato la baswa leo, ga le swane  
le larena batala. Lerato la vena batala  
re be re somisa Mangwalo, Lerato la baswa  
ba somisa dicellula.

Batlo bolela ka dicellula -

Dicellula ba bolela ka tšona -

### 4 Lerato la maaka {false love}

1. Watseba ga ona tšhelete o tšhephisa Mosadi  
terene - You know you got no money you  
promise Woman train -

2. Watseba o dula mo mokhukung o tšhephisa  
mosadi big house -  
You know you live in shack you promise  
Woman big house -

3. Watseba o sepela ka bicycle o tšhephisa  
mosadi Pajero -  
You know you ride bicycle but you promise  
Woman Pajero -

4. Aowa, Aowa batsang basadi di nnete.  
Bana, ba bangata ba fetoga ditsozi  
Bana ba bangata ba fetoga distreet kids  
No, No, tell women truth, too many  
children turn to be gangsters (Criminals)

Figure 9: Lyrics of Mmamona album as Samuel wrote them in my diary 25 and 27 September 2007.

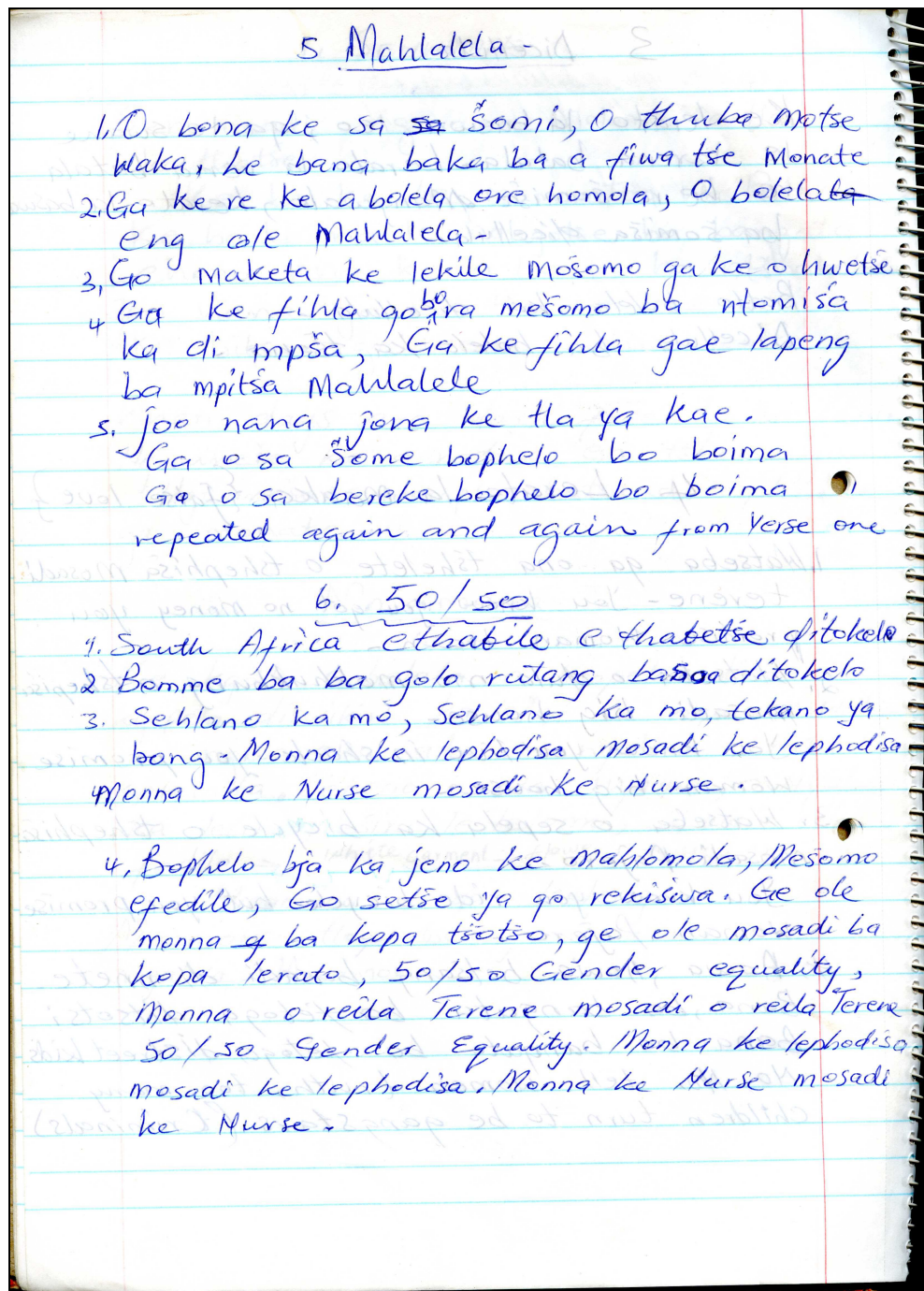


Figure 10: Lyrics of *Mmamona* album as Samuel wrote them in my diary 25 and 27 September 2007.



7 Bana ba Bapedi (Bapedi children)

1. Nna re bana ba Bapedi, Nna re buswa ke Kadiaka.

2. Nna re bina sethuthulele - Nna re bina sethuthulele - Put your shoulder on the wheel. sit jou skouer aan die wiel.

(a) Poliese, Poliese, Police, Police.  
Set jou skouer aan die wiel.

(b) Soldate - Soldiers -  
Set jou skouer aan die wiel.

(c) Nurse in die Hospitaale - Nurse in the schools  
Set jou skouer aan die wiel.

(d) Onderwysers in die skole - Teachers in schools  
Set jou skouer aan die wiel.

(e) Trafike offeser = Traffic officer -  
Set jou skouer aan die wiel.

(f) Alle mense los misdade - All people leave Crime  
werk mense. werk. Work people work.  
Nna re bana ba Bapedi, Nna re buswa ke Kadiaka.

8. Ttula

1. O boletse mokekesia are tshle di na  
le nako. 2. Go nyalana gona le nako go hlalana  
go na le nako. 3. Re a tseba o o mo rata  
feela o go hlalile. 4. Tlogela. go epokya basadi  
ba tletsile lefase lena.

5. Ttula, Ttula, Ttula ngwana, Mama Ttula.  
Ttula - 6. Re a tseba o swanetse a nyale wena  
Tlog feela o nyetse mokgotse wa gago. 7. Tlogela,  
go senya lenyalo le wena ngwanano o tla

8. nyalwa. Homola. Homola ngwana mama homola.  
Keep quiet, keep quiet, mothers child.

Figure 11: Lyrics of Mmamona album as Samuel wrote them in my diary 25 and 27 September 2007.



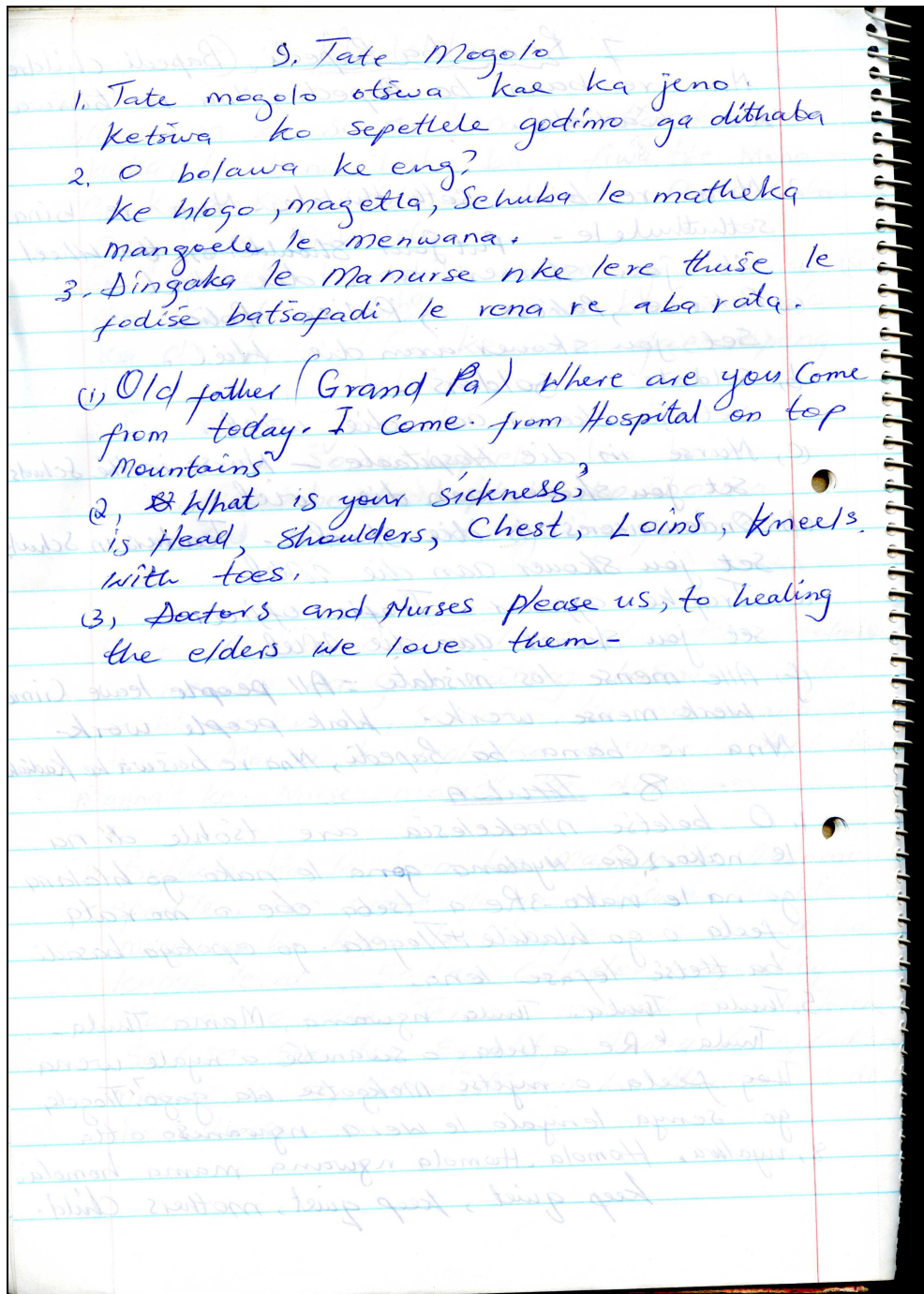


Figure 12: Lyrics of Mmamona album as Samuel wrote them in my diary 25 and 27 September 2007.

10 Selepe -  
 Monna o nkile selepe a nyologela thabeng  
 Ayo go rema sefate, sefate sa matsatsi  
 ohle. Sefate sa tshosa leeba, leeba ka tshosa  
 phukubje, Phukubje ya tshosa Nare, Nare  
 ya bolaya motho. Nare ya bolaya, Nare  
 ya bolaya, Nare ya bolaya, Nare ya bolaya  
 bolaya motho.

Banna se remeng difate, Difate ke  
 bohwa <sup>culture</sup> bja naga.

Man took chop going to mountain  
 He gone to chop the tree - Tree of <sup>every day</sup> all days  
 The tree chase dove, the dove chase  
 wolf, Wolf chase Buffalo - Buffalo kill man  
 Buffalo, Buffalo kill, Buffalo kill man.

Men dont chop the trees because the  
 trees is our heritage (culture) of our Nation

Figure 13: Lyrics of Mmamona album as Samuel wrote them in my diary 25 and 27 September 2007.