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Apartheid Revolutionary Poem-Songs. The Cases of Roger Lucey and Mzwakhe Mbuli

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ABSTRACT

When a system of segregation tries to oppress individuals and peoples, struggle becomes an important part in order to have social and civil rights back. Revolutionary poem-songs are to be considered as part of that struggle. This dissertation aims at offering an overview on how South African poet-songwriters, in particular the white Roger Lucey and the black Mzwakhe Mbuli, composed poem-songs to fight against apartheid. A secondary purpose of this study is to show how, despite the different ethnicities of these poet-songwriters, similar themes are to be found in their literary works. In order to investigate this topic deeply, an interview with Roger Lucey was recorded and transcribed in September 2014. This work will first take into consideration poem-songs as part of a broader topic called 'oral literature'. Secondly, it will focus on what revolutionary poem-songs are and it will report examples of poem-songs from the South African apartheid regime (1950s to 1990s). Its third part will explore both the personal and musical background of the two songwriters. Part four, then, will thematically analyse Roger Lucey and Mzwakhe Mbuli's lyrics composed in that particular moment of history. Finally, an epilogue will show how the two songwriters' perspectives have evolved in the post-apartheid era.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	4
CHAPTER 1: The poem-song.....	6
1.1 Oral and written literature.....	6
1.2 Songs and poems: do they differ?.....	8
1.3 The elements of oral literature.....	12
1.3.1 Voice.....	12
1.3.2 Breathing.....	14
1.3.3 Performance.....	15
1.4 The different functions of a poem- song.....	18
1.5 The role of a poet-songwriter.....	24
CHAPTER 2: Apartheid revolutionary poem-songs.....	28
2.1 Revolutionary poem-songs.....	28
2.2 Examples of apartheid revolutionary poem-songs.....	29
2.2.1 The '50s.....	31
2.2.2 The '60s.....	35
2.2.3 The '70s.....	38
2.2.4 The '80s.....	42
2.2.5 The '90s.....	49
CHAPTER 3: Roger Lucey and Mzwakhe Mbuli.....	52
3.1 Roger Lucey.....	52
3.1.1 Roger Lucey's apartheid biography.....	52
3.1.2 Roger Lucey's influences.....	58
3.1.3 Roger Lucey's music style.....	60
3.2 Mzwakhe Mbuli.....	62
3.2.1 Mzwakhe Mbuli's apartheid biography.....	62

3.2.2 Mzwakhe Mbuli’s influences.....	65
3.2.3 Mzwakhe Mbuli’s music style.....	67
CHAPTER 4: Roger Lucey and Mzwakhe Mbuli’s poem-songs. A thematic analysis	71
4.1 Roger Lucey’s poem-songs.....	71
4.1.1 The road.....	71
4.1.2 The line.....	78
4.1.3 Home.....	84
4.2 Mzwakhe Mbuli’s poem-songs.....	87
4.2.1 Second World War.....	87
4.2.2 Role as a prophet.....	91
4.2.3 Religion.....	97
4.3 Roger Lucey and Mzwakhe Mbuli’s common themes.....	100
4.3.1 Children.....	101
4.3.2 Action.....	105
5. EPILOGUE.....	110
5.1 Post-apartheid historical background.....	110
5.2 Roger Lucey’s post-apartheid biography and poem songs.....	114
5.3 Mzwakhe Mbuli’s post-apartheid biography and poem-songs.....	119
CONCLUSION.....	125
REFERENCES.....	127
APPENDIX.....	161

INTRODUCTION

Apartheid, despite what one might expect, was not just a legalized system of segregation that only black people fought against. That system of injustice was also denounced by some of the white people who, though facing the chance of prison and censorship, opposed against it. The struggle towards liberation was not only fought through protest with military weapons, as the MK did in response to the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 or as the riots of the Soweto Uprising in 1976 and of later rebellion. Throughout almost fifty years of apartheid followed a parallel line of resistance that was mainly represented by artistic expression. This dissertation will explore how both Roger Lucey, a white South African poet-songwriter, and Mzwakhe Mbuli, a black South African belonging to the Zulu ethnicity, represented a symbol of protest with their revolutionary poem-songs during the period 1970s-1990s. Chapter one will first briefly describe similarities and differences between oral and written literature. It will also take into consideration the elements of oral literature such as voice, breathing and performance. A further aspect chapter one will describe is the different functions of a poem-song and the role of a poet-songwriter. As one of the functions of the engaged poem-song is to protest against a government or a situation in history, chapter two will go through the different revolutionary poem-songs which reflected the historical background in which they developed, going from the '50s to the '90s. Another point that was worth considering for this present work was the need to collect the information regarding the poet-songwriters' life, influence and style as to show where the source of their art started. Moreover, importance has been given to them as in the country in which the present work was written, their reception is not so popular. Chapter three will

explore these aspects. Chapter four will instead deal with the thematic analysis of Lucey's poem-songs during apartheid and therefore will consider the elements of the road, the line and home. Moreover, it will also explore the different themes Mbuli used in his poem-songs in that period of time: the Second World War, his role as a prophet and religion. Although the different music styles and life paths of both songwriters seem very different, chapter four will also focus on the common themes explored by them: children and action. Finally, the epilogue will describe how these poet-songwriters' lives carried on during post-apartheid and consequently how the themes of their poem-songs have changed. As for the term 'revolutionary', it is to be seen as an opposition to the term 'protest', which was used for the more commercial American poem-songs of the Vietnam War. As for what concerns the term 'poem-song', I have underlined how a song can be considered as a double poem: one given by the melody, the other one given by the lyrics it conveys. Another aspect worth considering is that in the black oral tradition a poem is often accompanied by humming or by hand clapping in order to involve the audience, which will represent part of that poetry. However, this work presents limitations: only the philological approach of the lyrics will be analysed and not the one concerned with melodic analysis.

CHAPTER 1: The poem-song

1.1 Oral and written literature

Every artistic production exists because it is a means for people to try to find a place in the world. Among these artistic productions oral literature is to be found as it “encompass[es] legends, myths, stories, proverbs, and songs, as well as other types of oral traditions” (Blauman 2008:134). Its term was born with Paul Sébillot in 1881 and refers to the natural characteristic, inside the human being, of telling stories and of expressing one’s voice by digging it from the soul. When talking about orality, Devatine (2009:11) defines it as a sensorial experience which “is perceived by the soul and manifested through what is sketched, painted, penciled, sculpted, tattooed” and also sung. Hence, oral poetry is that art which comes from the inside, which at the same time might be fearful and unknown, but whose final purpose is its explosion to the outside. In relation to the fearful and the unknown, oral poetry might be used as it tries to create a connection with a divine that is timeless. However, despite this timeless connection, however, three temporal dimensions are to be identified within oral poetry: the first one deals with the past and it is now a topic of research and studies; the second dimension happens in the present but it is not caught by the ears of the listeners and finally, the last dimension deals with the present. To reach the status of continuity in the present, oral literature implies a great effort of memorization where “the material (...) from oral traditions in every age and in every language” is recorded (Bynum 2012). Recording is also a process which is employed in written literature, that, from Eigenbrod’s point of view

(Eigenbrod:91) represents the continuation of 'orature'. In the passage from oral to written forms, though, difficulties have been found. In *Achimoona* Campbell (1985:x) points out: "It was hard, we had to change from telling a story to a group of people to being alone and telling the story to the paper". Following the same concept, Eigenbrod talks about a circular communication, the one of the oral process, which then changed into a linear one, typical of the written process (Eigenbrod:92). Notwithstanding these writers' ideas of a continuation between oral and written literature, one might see them as two parallel lines as both models coexist but, at the same time, differences are to be found. For instance, when analysing differences between oral and written poetry, Zumthor argues:

From its initial outburst poetry aspires, like an ideal term, to purify itself from semantic constraints, to get outside language, ahead of a fullness where everything that is not simple presence would be abolished. Writing occults or represses this aspiration. Oral poetry, in contrast, welcomes its phantasms and tries to give them form; whence the universal processes that disrupt discourse: absurd phrases, repetitions accumulated to the point that meaning is exhausted, nonlexical phonic sequences, pure vocalism" (Zumthor 1990:128).

Hence, oral poetry allows itself more freedom than the written model as it goes beyond the limits and beyond those which are perceived as bondages. According to Eigenbrod (Eigenbrod:96): "in an oral culture, the technology of survival consists of an intimate knowledge of one's environment and respect for all beings, of 'accepting' and 'understanding' each other. This is achieved by 'becoming the other'". This role might have been fulfilled in archaic societies with the example of the storyteller, who was considered to be the master of ceremonies (Okpewho 1979:202). Nowadays, however, this role might be fulfilled by a poet-songwriter. Hence, the message conveyed by her/him is likely to create a wave of repetition and

of expansion for those who listen to it. Another difference worth considering between the two literatures is that oral literature could easily be made by blind people in the past and can be created as well in present times. Blindness is seen as a constant even in the archaic regime; the same name “Homer”, in fact, was interpreted by the Greeks to mean “the blind one”. Around 1940-50s, blindness and oral poetry also represented a union among singers and musicians such as Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder. As for what concerns both the oral and the written model, there is the chance for them to create harmonic fusion. For instance, a written form might be at a later stage spoken or performed as in theatre, whereas a spoken form might be performed and later postponed in space and time in the written model. A concrete example of contamination between the oral and the written might perhaps be found in poem-songs. A poem-song might be created at the moment of a live performance through improvisation but it can also be written first and performed only afterwards.¹

1.2 Songs and poems: do they differ?

After having briefly discussed the similarities and differences between oral and written literature, let us now consider where the boundary between poems and songs lies. As Zumthor (1990:141) affirms: “poetic performances have always been sung; and in today’s world, song, despite its debasement in the commercial sector, constitutes the only veritable mass poetry” whose most complex genre is the blues

¹ Except for what is specifically stated by other authors, the rest of the section “On oral and written literature” is to be considered a paraphrase of Zumthor, P., 1990. *Oral poetry: an introduction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. In particular, references are taken from pages: 25, 27, 36, 38, 43, 60, 106, 128, 175, 176, 188, 211.

(Zumthor 1990:151). He also claims that songs are a “subgroup of popular poetry” (Zumthor 1990:15). Furthermore, in a similar way, Fenton (2003:10) maintains that that poetry begins where the voice is raised and one could see that this principle applies both to poems and songs, where there is a sense of being there, of having the courage to express oneself, of raising one’s voice against a certain topic, to approve it or just to say something. Another comparison between a poem and a song is made by Fenton (2003:115) when he states: “I have already said that in song the same rule applies as in dramatic verse: the meaning must yield itself, or yield itself sufficiently to arouse the attention and interest, in real time”. The element of being direct, then, appears to be part of both, as a way of engaging the audience towards what the poet-songwriter has performed. Petrobelli (1986:229) states: “la poesia si unisce al canto con estrema naturalezza, quasi una logica conclusione nel momento in cui le due arti si manifestano contemporaneamente, nella loro simbiosi (...)”. This union also refers back to its origins. As Zumthor (1990:143) affirms: “for the Native Americans of the mountains, song is a sonorous dream: it opens a passage toward the world from where it comes”. Both the poem and the song are, therefore, a subtle flow that creates connection between the present and the past root that originated them. As a consequence of this, they might be the key to understand firstly, the origins of the self and of one’s emotions and secondly, the origins of the world. That song, composed by melody and words, represents an individual’s moment of enjoyment, of solitude, of happiness and by being expression, it frees her/him. Tzvia Back argues that if among poetry there is the characteristic of “awakening a social conscience, for political activism and protest”, the same characteristic is applied in the union of melody and meaningful words. Furthermore,

according to Miller (2013:37), writing lyrics for musical performances is among the disciplines of poetry, which “has embraced a multitude of theatrical and religious functions, each of which has required its own prosodic adaptation”. Nonetheless, a debate on the lyrics should be mentioned. If, on the one hand, Zumthor (1990:229) considers that “song is a poetic cry, a step ahead of the ready-made banal phrases”, on the other hand, Fenton (Fenton 2003:116) points out that “great music can be set to the most banal words” and develops this topic further by stating that the song on its complexity still results great (Fenton 2003:117). Still, Zumthor (1990:143) asserts: “in the most inconsequential of our songs there still shines an extremely ancient incantatory fire, the echo of rituals in which the shaman evokes his “trips” (...)”. Another difference Fenton (2003:118) mentions between a poem and a song, is that whereas with the former he wants his poetry to be published so that anyone can read it and remains his own poetry, with the latter he has to start thinking about collaboration, something that can belong to someone else. In a similar way, Zumthor maintains that “a song rarely belongs to the exclusive repertory of a singer: one of the roles is the, in fact, mobile”, a concept which is applied also to the oral poetry of traditional societies (Zumthor 1990: 168). Another point of view is given by Fazzini (2012:14) ², according to whom even if melody is not present, a poem already offers musicality. One may therefore think that in the presence of musical accompaniment and words a double poem is created, one poem being expressed thanks to the lyrics, the other one being expressed through instruments or musical arrangement. One could argue that these two little spheres communicate by giving way to a bigger poem, which is the poem-song. So

² This sentence is to be considered a paraphrase of the Italian book: Fazzini, M. ed. *Canto un mondo libero: poesia-canzone per la libertà*. Pisa: ETS, 2012.

through this wide poem, every person might find either a moment for her/his own or a moment to share with other people. That poem-song is space, that poem-song is place. As Zumthor (1990:126) affirms: “every poetic word rises out of an uncertain interior space, one named by metaphors: source, foundation, ego, life, and so on (...)”. Hence, the poet-singer is sharing her/his uncertainty with the world or with specific individuals and wants this dilemma to be known, or at least, to be diffused. Perhaps the same might occur when words are left outside a poem-song, when the musical instruments and the talents of those who play them join together in the same poem. Moreover, this poem might be completed with the help of a listener, whose words might be created thoughts as she/he closes her/his eyes and let herself/himself be part of that dream. Songs traps that precise moment but at the same time give different moments of space for the mixed feelings of those people who listen to it. Zumthor (1990:183) argues that: “poetry (...) is what is received; but its reception is a unique, fleeting, irreversible act, and an individual one, for it is doubtful that the same performance is experienced in an identical matter (...) by any two audience members”. The listener then, through receiving poetry, creates her/his own poem. The same could be stated for songs since they can be considered as a universal art as well as “a component of total action” (Zumthor 1990: 150), which might be perceived through different feelings within each culture, or better, within each person who lives in a certain culture. As Zumthor (1990:100) states: “the capacity for enjoyment is itself culturally conditioned. This may be the reason that members of a community embellish their traditional poetry with a special beauty (but one that for others is often questionable)”. A clear example of this

situation is described by the poet Fenton (2003:14)³, who took part in an international poetry festival. In particular, he focused his attention on the differences between an American poet, who ‘wrote for the page’ and an African one who, together with his musical instruments, was singing, playing and sometimes stopping to interact with his audience. The American poet accused the African one because “he got the audience into a mood that was prejudicial against the type of poetry he himself had to offer”. The answer made by the African poet was that in the African villages he went to, he was continuously interrupted by the audience and had to work hard to tell his own story. Therefore, the African poet was, on the one side, joining the two poems of melody and words and, on the other, he was interacting with his audience. In conclusion, the point of view which will be taken into consideration in this present work is that a song is represented through two poems; one being represented by its lyrics, one being represented by its melody. As a consequence of this, one might notice how in African traditional societies, the melody might be given from the audience itself. Thus, from now on the term ‘poem-song’ will be used. When the word ‘poem’ or ‘song’ appear in a direct quotation, the reader should consider them as ‘poem-song’.

1.3 The elements of oral literature

1.3.1 Voice

Human beings have a power which is sometimes undervalued. They have a voice to express their opinions, to communicate with others, a voice which is again

³ The example described by Fenton follows the reference Fenton (2003:14) for page 7 and 8.

individual and might show one's true self. The climax of this voice, as Zumthor (1990:ix) claims, "is not merely any use of language, but song". Singers' deepest feelings should constitute the input for the poem-song to be created. Therefore, singing or reading poetry, is not just a matter of uttering words, it is an experience of living what each word is saying, it is to go back into life and visualize, live again the moments that poem-song is referring to. As Lethem (2010) claims: "summoned through belly, hammered into form by the throat, given propulsion by bellows of lungs, teased into final form by tongue and lips, a vocal is a kind of audible kiss, a blurted confession, a soul-burp you really can't keep from issuing (...)". As voices express the intimate emotions of the poet-singer, they should not be criticized. In fact, criticizing them would mean to destroy a work of pure art. As Zumthor (1990:202) states: "what the voice of the poet reveals to me in effect is - doubly so - an identity, one afforded by that presence within a common space, one in which looks are exchanged; one also that results from the convergence of knowledge and from the ancient and universal evidence of meanings". Thus, the inward element of the poet-singer emerges and it is interpreted by the person who listens to it. As Lethem (Lethem 2010) claims: "the beauty of the singer's voice touches us in a place that's as personal as the place from which that voice has issued". Moreover, voice could also be seen as a symbol of existence; as Zumthor underlines: "voice is the desire to say what you mean as much as a desire to exist" (Zumthor 1990:5). Furthermore, thanks to its strength, voice is also about communication and about attaining communication (Zumthor 1990:21). As poem-songs establish place and space, voice as well establishes "the manner in which we situate ourselves in the world and with respect to others (Zumthor 1990:21).

1.3.2 Breathing

One might think that in oral poetry voice is there and so is the physical presence of the one who brings it. Nonetheless, there are further aspects that are to be taken into consideration during a performance. First of all, there is breathing, one's first way to feel and to say that she/he is alive, no matter the bad situations she/he is going through. The discipline of Iyengar Yoga emphasizes the importance of breathing, the so-called art of Pranayama (Yogapoint). If one can breathe deeply she/he will manage to complete the exercise and the same deep breathing might also become one's weapon of defence during stressed situations; it can keep the individual concentrated and centred in what she/he is doing. According to Osho, "every change that is going to happen is going to happen through the change in your breathing" and if breathing is not done properly, that means that something in you is being pulled back (Osho b). There is also a singing technique, the Invoice Breathing, invented by the singer, songwriter and vocal coach Annabella Fusco, which through meditations, breathing and singing brings an introspective approach on the singer and opens her/his way to the exploration of the self and the world of possibilities (Fusco). When this passage connects, creation as well as feelings emerge in a united emotional flow. According to Finnegan (1970:178-83), in the language of the Inuit one word meant both 'to compose a song' and 'to breathe', thus, implying an association between two natural creations that will be in a future addressed to an audience, the former being more evident, the latter being more hidden.

1.3.3 Performance

After having described how important both breathing and voice are, let us now move on to discuss a field of oral literature in which they combine: the performance. If on the one hand a poem-song can be heard and lived, on the other hand it can also be seen and lived in its totality. Through performance the listener, or better said, the viewer, has the magic role of being there while her/his favourite poet-singer is performing at that moment of time. That is why Zumthor (1990:43) claims that “performance is present”. It is to use one’s own body and create poetry, it is to move on the stage and speaking to the audience, jumping, creating contact with it (sometimes through physical contact as well) and those people who are on stage. It is living, it represents vibration, it is freedom to be who you are. Performance is to put together “the integration of our corporeal relativity within the cosmic harmony signified by voice; the integration of the multiplicity of semantic changes within the unity of a presence” (Zumthor 1990:119). Body is very important as it can dance, either with schematized movements or by allowing the unconscious to speak; two ways which can be considered poetry. In support of this statement, Zumthor (1990:159) claims that dancing “exposes what is elsewhere occulted; reveals the repressed”. One should, for example, focus on James Brown performances who on stage brought “the passion of black communities in his native Georgia: twenty musicians, dancers, a chorus, actors, however contaminated as one may claim, the James Brown Revue explodes like a universal celebration” (Zumthor 1990:214). A practical example of this might be seen in the live performance T.A.M.I. in 1964 where body gives a message and expresses the performer’s nature as a whole (Brown J. 1964). As Zumthor (1990:7) claims: “A

body is there, one that speaks: the body is represented by a voice emanating from within; it is the most supple and least restricted part of the body because it goes beyond the body by its variable and playful acoustics”. Body, therefore, serves as the channel of expression. According to Jakobson (1970:185) there are six components for a communicative act:

- | | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1) Speaker | 2) Referent | 6) Listener |
| | 3) Message | |
| | 4) Channel | |
| | 5) Code | |

The performer is the speaker who has a message to convey to the listeners, who represent the audience. She/he does so with a linguistic code and through a channel which might be represented both by the microphone and by the body. The channel embodies the way through which communication is given (Jakobson 1970:185).

For each of these components Jakobson gives a linguistic function, which is:

- | | | |
|------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1) Emotive | 2) Referential | 6) Conative |
| | 3) Poetic | |
| | 4) Phatic | |
| | 5) Metalinguistic | |

The phatic function, related to the channel, is in fact used to check the act of communication (Jakobson 1970:191) and the performer does so through gestures. First of all, “gestural savoir-faire is an art that no culture (not even anticulture) lacks” (Zumthor 1990:155). Gestures of the poet-singer during the performance are

fundamental as they might call for a response of the audience. By asking the audience to clap their hands at a certain rhythm, or by jumping and asking the audience to do the same, as, for instance, Manu Chao does in his gigs, or by throwing themselves to the audience, performers are asking the audience to be part of the show, part of that double poem. This can be referred to as the breaking of the fourth wall, as happens in theatres when the performer “might confide in the audience by letting you in on a joke, or sharing a piece of knowledge that the other characters don’t have” (Pesner 2012). In these ways, the audience itself might create a new performance. As Zumthor (1990:183) states: “the spectator becomes, in turn, interpreter, and on his lips, in his gesture, the poem is modified perhaps radically”. In order to describe the importance of the audience in a poem-song, Fenton reports his visit to an international poetry festival (Fenton 2003:14). Here, the African audience is described as hard to accomplish as it interrupts the poet with questions and if he does not “work hard they will take over the story and tell it among themselves” (Fenton 2003:14). Zumthor (1990:186) adds that the African audience “controls the singer, calls him back to order if he strays or lets his fancy wander too much, requires him to go back if he has passed too quickly over an episode they consider important”. In Asia, on the other hand, the performer chooses the poems according to the audience’s attitudes (Zumthor 1990:187). Gestures are also important for poet-singers as they can communicate with the band. By a lifting of the hand they can ask the band to repeat the chorus again or to pause for the presentation of the band itself. Memory, but also the lack of memory are important aspects for a performance. The performer’s loss of memory might, in fact, give way to a creative episode. As Zumthor (Zumthor 1990:181) claims: “traditional cultures,

by inventing the ‘formulaic style’, had integrated uncertainties of living memory into their poetic art. Finally, in a performance an important role is also acquired by clothes, which express a feature of the performer’s identity. Everybody will, for example, remember The Beatles for their white shirts with ties and also their hair cut. Clothes, then, might create a fashion even in the fans’ identities who try to become more similar to the stars they admire. Even accessories might be important and perceived as a characterization of a certain band or performer. Within the rock scene of the 1970s, for instance, the hard rock band called *The Kiss* even wore masks during their performances and could still express truth in their gigs. According to Zumthor (1990:157), “in traditional civilizations, the figurations of the mask introduce the wearer and its spectators at once into the mythical universe to which they aspire, for example, masked dances duplicating certain Tibetan rites”.

1.4. The different functions of a poem-song

A poem-song is a refuge for the different types of emotions: of happiness, of sadness, of freedom, sometimes of those emotions that one has fear to unfold and release. It can be a private shelter where any individual finds her/his own space or a public one where people can share emotions with friends or lovers. Thus, the poem-songs provide space for the people to whom they are addressed to. From a general perspective, according to Cook (1998a:3), in fact: “music acquires meaning through its mediation of society. Or again, we can oscillate between these two viewpoints, on the assumption that meaning arises from the mutual mediation of music and society”. Hence, if the space of poem-songs is widespread, they might

situate at the heart of the culture. Zumthor (1990:143) affirms that among culture acts forming the social group, poem-song is the one which is absolutely universal, it is “vital to the society in question” (1990:143) and it raises the hope “that one day a word will tell all and symbolically fulfills” that hope (Zumthor 1990: 210). According to Cook (1998b:394)⁴, poem-songs can also define parts of a society such as the ‘youthquake’, a 1960s European and American youth movement whose genre was rhythm’n’blues as well as rock’n’roll and whose objective was to go against parents’ values and lifestyles. Zumthor (1990:71) goes on to explain that for the oral genre it is the identification with a social group, which, later, makes it possible for it to survive. This principle, he argues, is the same one one can find behind hit songs (Zumthor 1990:71). What is more, by following the principle of identification with a social group, a poem-song might also have the function of uniting the world, of uniting different cultures. According to him, in fact, for Europeans a song “gives form to a power about which we know only one thing: that it is going to reconcile oppositions and master time” (Zumthor 1990:143). A clear example of this, can be found in John Lennon’s *Imagine*, where he evokes “a brotherhood of men” who together share the world in peaceful harmony leaving no place for greed or hunger. Or when, in 1969 the song *War is Over – If you want it* was released and “the Lennons simply hired billboards in major international cities to carry the message” of peace to the whole world (Lynskey 2010:137). At the same time, though, a poem-song has the power to claim cultural differences. Cook (1998b:2061) maintains: “at best it might be seen as a vantage point for becoming better aware of cultural difference; after all, differences stand out best against a

⁴ For this book the Kindle version has been used. As only positions and not pages are to be found in this version, what is referenced here is the number of the position.

background of similarity” (1998b:2061). A further role of poem-songs might be seen in their association with softening, at least at an inward level, hard working conditions. As Zumthor (1990:66) states: “the majority of cultures have or have had an oral poetry (usually songs) meant to sustain some type of work as an accompaniment, especially if it is group work”. Moreover, “it disalienates the worker, who by singing reconciles him-or herself to the work and can thereby appropriate it” (Zumthor 1990:66). As to cite an example of musical genre, blues was born out in the late 19th century from the need of African people who were working in the cotton fields of the Deep South America. Blues poem-songs were therefore given birth to provide “a temporary distraction from their harsh environment” (Capone 2009:12-13). Also, Cook (1998b:418) claims, “the blues were seen as the authentic expression of an oppressed race, a music that came from the heart (...)” in contrast to other types of music such as opera and concerts, which “had been imported from Europe” (Cook 1998b:418). Moreover, a poem-song seems to be a constant element in commercials. After seeing an advertisement on television or after listening to it on the radio, a powerful poem-song related to a certain product might tempt the buyer to have it. The person might trust the poet-singer’s voice, the band or the poem-song and try out what can be a new product or an old one which she/he has not tried yet. One might find an example of the latter case in a 1996 ad which put together Etta James’ *I just wanna make love to you* and Diet Coke (Schwarz 2012) in which women at work took a break in order to watch a man who himself was having a break drinking Diet Coke. Either one buys the product or not, if the potential buyer sees or hears the ads, a connection between that poem-song and the product remains in her/his mind. On a more general level,

Cook (1998a:8) goes on to say that if on the one hand, “music gives meaning to the images, then equally the images give meaning to the music” and this happens in a silent way (Cook 1998b:20). While discussing the different functions of a poem-song, music therapy is another field to be taken into consideration. Music therapy is a practice which developed around World War II “in part because the Works Progress Administration (WPA) program started bringing musicians into veteran’s hospitals. Doctors and nurses observed that people who seemed to be totally unresponsive would come to life when music was played” (Medscape 2012). Music therapy is therefore used in areas such as rehabilitation (American Music Therapy Association) or with children affected of autism who, thanks to it, practice “motor coordination and personal expression”. Outcomes can also be traced in language development and social skills enhancement (Chilla 2014). Thus, music therapy creates an approach in which “clients' abilities are strengthened and transferred to other areas of their lives. Music therapy also provides avenues for communication that can be helpful to those who find it difficult to express themselves in words” (American Music Therapy Association). Medscape (2012) maintains that one of the exercises consists in giving the patient a Beatles’ song without a few words that the patient tries to find through the use of memory. In particular, according to Frandsen (2012) the Beatles’ song *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds* might be a powerful song for children with autism as they are used to take things literally. Thus, they might see themselves in an imaginary world by hearing the words: “Picture yourself in a boat on a river, with tangerine trees and marmalade sky” (The Beatles 1967) and this might enhance their cognitive skills. Hence, one of the purposes of a poem-song is: “to illumine the walls of mystery, the inscrutable, the unsayable” (Burt et.

al 2006). A poem-song, in fact, is powerful also for children who are not yet born. Studies show that while they are in the womb, if the mother is relaxing and listening to a particular song, also the newborn baby will find comfort with the same tune (Babycentre). Moreover, when children grow up poem-songs are powerful as they can be seen as a tool for their games. Counting rhymes are an example of this and they are “used to designate the player(s) and the role(s)” (Zumthor 1990:70). As they continue to grow, songs might be important for their education. Balboni (2013:111, 112, 113)⁵ describes its importance when learning a foreign language as a way to become participants in the culture of that language. If, on the one hand, students experience the process of observing and hearing slangs and sentences which might sound ungrammatical, on the other hand, this process facilitates the memorization of the new words the student might face. Hence, the poem-song becomes part of what is called playful education: by enjoying the activities the students make, motivation increases and emotional barriers diminish. A further role in which songs are involved is the one that creates contacts with a supposed divine presence (Zumthor 1990:211). It follows that religious songs are what “seeks to express and arouse pious and religious feelings which, consequently, greatly aid the religion” (Damone 2013) and according to Zumthor (1990:66): “in the dramatic relationship that confronts the *homo religious* with the sacred element, a radicalized voice intervenes as both power and truth”. An example of this are Gospel songs, whose roots are traced back in 1619 when the first Africans were “brought to the British colony of Jamestown as indentured servants” (USC Digital Library) and whose elements were “call and response, improvisation, polyrhythms, and

⁵ These sentences are to be considered a paraphrase of the Italian book: Balboni, P. *Fare Educazione linguistica: Insegnare italiano, lingue straniere e lingue classiche*. Torino: Utet, 2013.

percussive affinities” (USC Digital Library), that lore which came from their lost motherland (Finnegan 1970: 91, 167-86, 282). Regarding modern gospel songs, one has also to bear in mind that “the soul music performers of the ‘60s and the ‘70s were former members of choirs” (Tanner). This included singers and musicians such as Aretha Franklin, James Brown, Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding and Algreen (Tanner). In a different period and in a different area, that is, during the 1980s in South Africa, the so-called people’s poet Mzwakhe Mbuli even performed his poem-songs at political funerals under a regime which dictated oppression (Brown 1998:213). An example of this is to be found at the funeral of Chris Hani, the leader of the South African Communist Party (Brown 1998:239). Another field in which poem-songs play a key role is their association with belonging to a country or to a specific region. As Cook (1998b:388) states: “èmigré communities sometimes cling tenaciously to their traditional music in order to preserve their identity in a foreign country”. Examples might be seen in national anthems; even if citizens move to another country, their national anthems will be brought with them as a symbol of identity. Poem-songs can also be a passage toward interiority, “toward listening to the primordial voices to which European thought seemed to have become deaf” (Zumthor 1990:227). The interiority path is, for instance, explored with the German singer Deva Premal and her partner Miten (Andy Desmond) by joining mantras and melodies into a single unit (Brachfeld 2013). A further aspect worth considering is that poem-songs might also serve as a way of protesting against the government or a particular historical event. For example, in 1939 Billie Holiday recorded *Strange Fruit*, a 1939 protest poem-song whose words “blood on the leaves and blood at the root” described the lynching of African-Americans” (Vitale 2010). As Lynskey

(2010:5) states: *Strange Fruit* was not by any means the first protest song, but it was the first to shoulder an explicit political message into the arena of entertainment. Just prior to this, U.S. protest songs had nothing to do with mainstream popular music”. Talking about the Canadian musician Neil Young, he wrote a protest song against the murder of four students at Kent State University, a murder committed by the hands of a group of Guardsmen in 1970 (Lynskey 2010:167-170). The students at that time were protesting against “Nixon’s announcement of plans to expand military operations into Cambodia to knock out enemy sanctuaries” and their voices of freedom were killed (Lynskey 2010:167). In South Africa during the apartheid regime Mzwakhe Mbuli, known as ‘the People’s poet’ was to be silenced in various ways but managed to let his voice heard by the protesters. Another South African protest poet-songwriter is Roger Lucey, a white man that denounced the life conditions of that system of segregation. His career as a musician was stopped because of the censorship during apartheid and freed only after it. The protest poem-song in the South African context will be discussed further in detail in the second chapter of this present work and will be referred to as ‘revolutionary’.

1.5. The role of a poet-songwriter

After having discussed the roles of poem-songs, one has to bear in mind that a poet-songwriter is not always responsible for composing the lyrics. Nonetheless, Zumthor (1990:167) describes how both the role of the singer who writes them and

of the singer who does not write them can express poetry: “poet subsumes several roles, depending on whether it is a matter of composing the text or speaking it”. On the other hand, when the two figures comes to one, there are other levels one has to take into consideration. It, in fact, has also to do with the personality of the songwriter, the moment through which she/he is going while writing the song, the physic and interior place where she/he is and finally the cultural background she/he has breathed. Notwithstanding these diversities, a common attitude might be perceived among songwriters. As Pete Seeger during Zollo’s interview stated: “all songwriters are links in a chain” (Zollo 2014). Zollo goes on to say: “and all songwriters build on that which came before, so that Woody’s stream of brilliance triggered Pete’s tuneful poetry, which in turn greatly influenced Bob Dylan, whose work impacted Lennon and the Beatles, and so on. It is all connected, and it’s a connection that continues forever (...) (Zollo 2014). Bearing this in mind, let us now move on to report a few songwriters’ opinions on their roles. Truth, Zollo claims, was one of the aims of songwriters like Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie (Zollo 2014). In fact, in 1991 when asked about his role as a songwriter Dylan stated: “For me it’s always been more con-fessional than pro-fessional,” and he goes on to say: “my songs aren’t written on schedule” (Zollo 2003: 71). At the same time though, Dylan does not see himself as a guide to his audience. He states:

It’s bad luck to look for life’s guidance to popular entertainers. It’s bad luck to do that. No one should do that. Popular entertainers are fine, there’s nothing the matter with that, but as long as you know where you’re standing and what ground you’re on, many of them, they don’t know what they’re doing either” (Zollo 2003:74).

A perspective on songwriting is then given by John Lennon in a 1968 interview with Rolling Stone. He states that what the Beatles were looking for was something pure, “like abstract art”, in the sense that everyone could get her/his own message of the song or could try to read different meanings from the one of the author (Cott 1968). So his role as a songwriter might have been the one of letting people’s opinions free on that principle that diversity stands at the base of creation. Another perspective on songwriting is given at a 1990 interview from a Canadian songwriter who states: “Songwriters are detrimental to expressing themselves if they don’t. If they’re waiting for somebody to tell them what to write, then they’re the cause of the problem” (Zollo 2003:356). He is Neil Young and he is very creative, going from a genre to a different one without caring about the audience’s tastes, just following his true self and how he feels in that particular moment (Zollo 2003:355). Again, one might think that by doing this, he is also suggesting his audience to do the same, to not to be influenced by anyone and to go ahead with what they feel. The same Zollo points out in his preface that songwriting is “a conscious attempt to connect with the unconscious; a reaching beyond ordinary perceptions to grasp images that resonate like dreams, and melodies that haunt and spur the heart” (Zollo 2003 preface). In a 2000 interview with Paul Zollo, Alanis Morissette, the Canadian girl who with *Jagged Little Pill* received many awards (including Best Rock Album), stated: “There’s divinity in all of us,” (...) but sometimes people just need to be reminded of it. And that’s why there are songwriters. To remind everyone. That’s our job” (Zollo 2003:655). She therefore plays the role of sustaining people through her poem-songs by encouraging her audience to believe in their abilities and discover their, often undervalued, uniqueness. Moving to the South African

context, when asked what his role as a songwriter during the apartheid was, Roger Lucey replied:

My role was, I wasn't trying to speak to black people. You know, through my music, I was lucky enough to be able to play at concerts, to trade union gatherings, and my songs always have done very well. I've always thought my primary role was to educate young white people about what was going on because we had had such a propagandistic upbringing. If you went to a public school as a white South African, the stuff you were taught in the country was such awful propaganda and there was nothing to encounter it, there was nothing to say "that is not how it is" (Lucey 2014).

Therefore, the role of education was and still is considered of primary importance in Lucey's songs. During apartheid, though, he found himself not completely being able to fulfill this role. He claims:

So I don't know what my role was. After my stuff was banned I thought that my role had been completely useless and I was very disillusioned and disappointed. As the years have gone by I constantly bumped into people, find people, people contact me who tell me how much my songs have made to them, you know then, and it's not only white people but black people as well. That's a very meaningful thing to me. And I continue to have that position that one needs to be principled about what is not right, what is not just. (Lucey 2014).

His efforts in expressing his voice during the apartheid era, had not therefore been vain. Despite Lucey thought his role was useless, his audience recognized his importance during the apartheid struggle. Another poet-songwriter who was very much appreciated for his struggle against that system of segregation is Mzwakhe Mbuli. When talking about his own role, he maintains:

It is easy to internalize the enemy and it's easy for external influences to influence a person who is courageously committed to a particular path. In my case, I was nearly diverted from my cause. Fortunately, I was not prepared to betray the mission of my existence, which is the mission of telling truth through poetry (Makgabutlane 1990:27).

CHAPTER 2: Apartheid revolutionary poem-songs

In chapter 1 it has been observed that one of the functions of songs is to protest against a government, a situation or a time in history. This chapter will first briefly discuss why the term ‘revolutionary’ has been applied in relation to the songs which will be here considered. Secondly, it will report examples of revolutionary poem-songs of the apartheid period, from the ‘50s to the ‘90s.

2.1 Revolutionary poem-songs

Lynskey (2010:541) states: “the history of protest singing at the dawn of the twentieth century was understood rather than studied: a melting pot of topical ballads, labor songs, parodies, spirituals, and hymns”. Although many songwriters see the term ‘protest song’ as “a box in which they might find themselves trapped” (Lynskey 2010:xiv), the point of view which will be considered here will be the same as Lynskey’s, that is “to describe a song which addresses a political issue in a way which aligns itself with the underdog” (Lynskey 2010:xiv). However, In describing the values of a protest song, the Chilean songwriter Victor Jara believed that “the term ‘protest song’ is [was] no longer valid because it is [was] ambiguous and has [had] been misused” (Lynskey 2010:216-217). Thus, he preferred the term ‘revolutionary song’ as it represented a contrast with the commercialization of US songs (Lynskey 2010:216-217). He, in fact, believed that the US authorities had “taken certain measures: first, the commercialization of so-called ‘protest music’; second, the creation of ‘idols’ of protest music who obey[ed] the same rules and suffer[ed] from the same constraints as the other idols of the consumer music

industry” (Lynskey 2010:216-217). In a similar way, as the South African poem-songs which will be considered in this present work did not follow the purpose of commercialization, the term “revolutionary” will be used.

2.2 Examples of apartheid revolutionary poem-songs

First of all, in describing the different approaches to freedom songs Gilbert maintains that if US freedom poem-songs were used for civil rights, labour and abolitionist movements, South African poem-songs referred “to a distinct local repertoire associated with the struggle for racial equality in the twentieth century, preceding as well as during apartheid” (Gilbert 2008:160-161). Let us now move on to discuss what apartheid was and to report some examples of revolutionary poem-songs during that moment of time, that is to say during the period 1950s-1990s. It is to be remembered, however, that apartheid was imposed after a segregation which started three hundred years before it (Mandela 2008:pos 186)⁶. Mandela goes on to state that “the premise of apartheid was that whites were superior to Africans, Coloureds, and Indians, and the function of it was to entrench white supremacy forever” (Mandela 2008:pos 186). Moreover, according to Derrida (1986:331), the word *apartheid* has never been translated “as if all the languages of the world were defending themselves, shutting their mouths against a sinister incorporation of the thing by means of the word”. Derrida then goes on to report its definition:

APARTHEID: by itself the word occupies the terrain like a concentration camp. System of partition, barbed wire, crowds of mapped out solitude... the glaring harshness of abstract essence (heid) seems to speculate in another regime of

⁶ As the Kindle version has been used for this quote, positions and not pages are shown.

abstraction, that of confined separation. The word concentrates separation, raises it to another power and sets separation itself *apart*: ‘apartitionality’, something like that (Derrida 1986:331).

Nonetheless, one might affirm that even those white people who denounced the government for the most basic principles of human justice were not free to express what they felt, as this present work will attempt to show with the concrete example of Roger Lucey. What one needs to remember, however, is that poem-songs played an important part in the struggle over more than forty years of apartheid (*Amandla!* 2002: 00.25’-58) as they were used as a means of protest, of freedom, of hope for a better future and, during the ‘80s, as a military weapon (as the reader shall see with *Toyi Toyi*). Moreover, especially regarding the black African tradition, poem-songs were and are seen as an undeniable way of expression. In particular, as the playwright and historian Duma Ka Ndlovu suggests:

We were raised in families and homes where our parents would break into songs at the slightest provocations. When your mother couldn’t figure out what to feed you for the night because she didn’t have any money, she came back from looking for a job and she would break into a dirge that would be expressing how she felt (*Amandla!* 2002:00.23’.40’’).

Furthermore, Gilbert maintains that the origins of South African freedom songs are to be found in *makwaya* (choir), a genre that combined both Christian hymnody and African singing traditions used in a call-and-response style (Gilbert 2008:160- 161). As South Africa is a country full of different ethnicities, this chapter will attempt to provide only a small overview of the different revolutionary poem-songs.

2.2.1 The '50S

In 1953 South Africa entered “a decade of sustained growth that was the highest in the world – one that attracted huge international investment. The boom was based on the virtual slave-labour conditions of grand apartheid and the increasingly harsh repression of trade unions” (Hopkins 2006:43). During those years there was Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, who, as he maintained, thought that apartheid was just the right method for “a policy of good neighbourliness” (*Amandla!* 2002: 00.09'.12''). The application of this policy, then, resulted in the imposition of a passbook for blacks, a passbook they had to have if they wanted to move through South Africa. If they were not holding this document, it was to be considered illegal (*Amandla!* 2002:31.39). This consequently brought to resistance of black people in the streets (*Amandla!* 2002:31.39). Furthermore, the South African government introduced the Group Areas Act (1950) and the Prevention Of Illegal Squatting Act (1951) whose aims were to “demolish existing slums and stop new slums from growing, because such areas created the conditions for communist mobilization” (Louw 2004:59, Schumann 2008:24). In concrete, black communities areas like Sophiatown, which was “the heart of the jazz and marabi scene at the time”, were destroyed to leave space for the white community, who renamed it as ‘Triomf’ (Schumann 2008:24). Black people were instead forced to move to government-run townships like Meadowlands (*Amandla!* 2002 00.11'.03''). Part of the black resistance towards these historical events, was heard and sung in the poem-song *Meadowlands* which came out of the street with a mixture of Zulu, Sesotho and tsotsitaal languages (*Amandla!* 2002:00.13'.35''). *Meadowlands* was written by Strike Vilakazi in 1956 and stated.

Otlautlwa makgowa arei
Are yeng ko Meadowlands
Meadowland Meadowlands
Meadowlands sithando sam
Otlwa utlwa botsotsi bare
Ons dak ni ons pola hier
Pola hier pola hier
Pola hier sithando sam

You'll hear the white people saying
Let's move to Meadowlands,
Meadowlands, Meadowlands
Meadowlands, my love
You'll hear the tsotsis say
We're not moving, we're staying here
Stay here, stay here
Stay here, my love⁷

Despite the ironic meaning of the song, the government interpreted it as “supportive of their removal programme” (Schumann 2008:24). This poem-song would also be brought to international performances and sung by Miriam Makeba as to show how racial injustice was experienced in her homeland (Verschbow 2010). Among her poem-songs, Makeba composed *Sophiatown is gone*, a song that related to the sadness of the broken Sophiatown. The poem-song reports its bitter words as follows:

The streets look sad and dry
Old Sophia is gone forever
Sweet Sophia is broken forever

Furthermore, Sophiatown was also the place where revolutionary poem-songs were to be sung during ANC meetings. As Mandela states:

the ANC was then holding meetings every Sunday evening in Freedom Square, in the center of Sophiatown, to mobilize opposition to the removal. These were vibrant sessions, punctuated by repeated cries of “*Asihambi!*”(We are not moving!) and the singing of “Sophiatown likhaya lam asihambi” (Sophiatown is my home; we are not moving) (Mandela 2008: pos 2611)⁸.

⁷ The original lyrics and their English translations are taken from Samson, J.

⁸ As the Kindle version was used, the words preceding 2611 are to be considered as ‘position’.

Moreover, in this decade, a key poet-songwriter who went against apartheid through his voice was a black man called Vuyisile Mini. He was a political activist, considered to be the greatest composer of freedom songs in South African history and he was one of those men who were ready to fight with death for freedom (*Amandla!* 2002: 05'06''-6'39''). Mandela remembered him in his biography:

Every day, Vuyisile Mini (...) led the group in singing freedom songs. One of the most popular was: 'Nans'indod'emnyama Strijdom, Bhasobha nans' indod'emnyama Strijdom' ('Here's the black man, Strijdom, beware the black man, Strijdom'). We sang at the top of our lungs, and it kept our spirits high (Mandela 1994:287).

Vuyisile Mini was also the author of the revolutionary song *Pasopa Verwoerd* (*Watch out Verwoerd*), a poem-song which according to Hugh Masekela "sounds like a fun song. But is really like 'watch out Verwoerd, your days are over'" (*Amandla!* 2002: 1.10'.03''). The ex MK commander and poet Ronnie Kasrils states that Mini's songs message was: "Watch out, Verwoerd the black man will get you, watch out, the people have taken up this song, watch out Verwoerd, the world sings with Minnie" (*Amandla!* 2002:1.10'.03''). As Nkoala suggests, when this song was sung "the apartheid authorities could comprehend that a direct warning and challenge was being issued to them" (Nkoala:59). He also goes on to say that the lyrics of the song are simple because they were to be applied to a group context (Nkoala:59) and therefore words were easier to remember. However, his threatening words towards the Prime Minister, were the cause of his death: Mini, as a person, was hanged. Nonetheless, his resistance was to be seen in his own poem-songs as he went to the gallows singing (*Amandla!* 2002:1.08'.55''). Furthermore, what was not stopped was his voice: his poem-songs invited people to carry on with his struggle. There was another revolutionary poem-song which

represented a symbol of struggle during apartheid, a poem-song whose story goes well before 1950s. It was *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*. Its writer was Sontonga, who in 1897 wrote the first verse in isiXhosa at the young age of 24 and successively composed its music (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2008:186). He was a teacher and composed it “as part of a repertoire of songs prepared for the students in his school” (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2008:187). In 1919 this poem was already sung in street protest (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2008:187). Later, in 1925 when SANNK became ANC, *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* was taken as its official anthem and therefore sung at the end of every meeting (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2008:187). In 1927 the Xhosa poet Samuel EK Mqhayi published the other seven stanzas (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2008:187). Part of the Sontonga-Mqhayi lyrics reports:

Nkosi, sikelel'I Afrika
Malupakam'upondo lwayo
Yiva imitandazo yetu

Chorus:
Yihla Moya, yihla Moya
Yihla Moya Oyingcwele

Sikelela iNkosi zetu;
Zimkumbule umDali wazo;
Zimoyike zezimhlouele;
Azisikelele

Lord, bless Africa
May her horn rise high up
Hear Thou our prayers and bless us

Chorus:
Descend O Spirit,
Descend, O Holy Spirit

Bless our chiefs
May they remember their Creator.
Fear Him and revere Him,
That He may bless them⁹

Sothonga's first meaning of the song was to speak out of “the injustice of powerful men (specifically the white rulers of the then Transvaal) to the all-powerful blessing and judgment of God” (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2008:190). During the '50s,

⁹ The whole lyrics of the song can be found in Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2008:189.

though, it became the poem-song for struggle and union. Mandela reported that when in 1952 he and the other leader of the Action Committee Yusuf were taken to Marshall Square police station *Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrika* was sung by many demonstrators (Mandela 2008:pos 2217). According to Schumann, another revolutionary poem-song of the '50s to be taken into consideration is *Strydom*, which was to be found in the repertoire of women's songs against passes (Schumann 2008:23). The poem-song, possibly referred to the killer Barend Hendrik Strydom reported:

Hey, Strydom	Now that you have touched the
Wathint'a bafazi	women
Wayithint' imbodoko uzaKufa	You have struck a rock
	You have dislodged a boulder
	And you will be crushed
	Hey, Strydom ¹⁰

2.2.2 The '60s

The decade of the 60s in South Africa began with a cruel massacre to black people: the Sharpeville Massacre. According to Mandela (Mandela 1994:344), demonstrators gathered because of disagreement with the passbook laws in Sharpeville (a small town south of Johannesburg) and surrounded the police station. Mandela describes the moment with the following words:

No one heard warning shots or an order to shoot, but suddenly the police opened fire on the crowd and continued to shoot as the demonstrators turned and ran in fear. When the area had cleared, sixty-nine Africans lay dead, most of them shot in the back as they were fleeing. All told, more than seven hundred shots had been fired into the crowd, wounding more than four hundred people, including dozens of women and children (Mandela 1994:344).

¹⁰ The lyrics of this song and their translations are to be found in Schumann 2008:23.

The massacre was followed by protests and riots that forced the government to impose a State of Emergency and to ban the PAC and the ANC (Mandela 1994:344). The poem-song *Thina Sizwe* well expresses black people's feelings towards the Massacre:

We are crying for our land
Our land which has been taken
By the whites
We as the black nation
We are crying for our land

They must leave our land alone
They must leave our land alone

We the children of Africa
Are crying for Africa
That was taken by the white people¹¹

It was the rage for what had happened in the Sharpeville massacre that gave Mandela the input to move from a non-violent protest to an army protest whose name was Umkhonto we Sizwe (The Spear of the Nation), as known as MK (Mandela 1994:344). Verschbow (Verschbow 2010) points out that one of the poem-songs that was sung at the MK training was *Sobashiy' abazali* (We will leave our parents). As the lyrics report, MK training was seen as a way to freedom:

Sobashiy' abazal'ekhaya
Saphuma sangena kwamany' amazwe
Lapho kungazi khon'ubaba no mama
Silandel'inkululeko

We will leave our parents at home
we go in and out of foreign countries
to places our fathers and mothers
don't know
Following freedom we say goodbye,
goodbye, goodbye home

¹¹ The translation has been taken from *Amandla!* 2002.

Sithi salan, salan, salan'ekhaya
Sesingena kwamany'amazwe
Lapho kungazi khon'ubaba no mama
Silandel'inkululeko

We are going in to foreign countries
To places our fathers and mothers
don't know
Following freedom

Sobashiy'abafowethu
Saphuma sangena kwamany'amazwe
Lapho kungazi khon'ubaba no mama
Silandel'inkululeko

We will leave our siblings
We go in and out of foreign countries
To places our fathers and mothers
don't know
Following freedom¹²

Meanwhile, on 31 May 1961 South Africa became a Republic and left the Commonwealth (Hopkins 2006:42). Furthermore, the freedom fighter Mandela was put under arrest in 1962 (Lynskey 2010:388). This also brought to a crush in the domestic opposition, which was called by Mandela the 'Silent Sixties'. Despite the horror that was going on in the country, not even "international disgust did not translate into economic sanctions, the economy was booming" but rather brought to an economic boom (Lynskey 2010:388). Under the same apartheid regime, a white man that was censored was the British Jeremy Taylor, who went to South Africa in the late 1950s and worked there as an English teacher (Baines 2008:104). His single *The Ballad of the Southern Suburbs*, known as *Ag Pleez Deddy!*, mixed Afrikaans and English languages and just for this reason was banned (Baines 2008:104). This can be seen in the last verse of the poem-song:

Ag Pleez Deddy - VOETSEK!

Ag sis Deddy if we can't kraak to bioscope
Or go off to Durban, life's a heng of a bore
If you won't take us to the zoo

¹² The original lyrics and their translations have been taken from Gilbert 2008:169.

Then what the heck else can we do
But go on out and moere all the oukies next door

The '60s decade was also a time in which many artists left their home country. Now world famous South African musicians and singers such as Miriam Makeba, Abdullah Ibrahim and Vusi Mahlasela exiled during the '60s in order to get a better future and went back to South Africa only during the '90s (*Amandla!* 2002:00-37'.00'-39'.00'). If this could be seen as the jazz exile on the one hand (Schumann 2008:25), from the other hand, it brought to the globalization of South African music (Olwage 2008:7). Muller declares that, if the diaspora created by slavery might be seen as the Old diaspora, that of the '60s could be named as the 'New African diaspora'. Moreover, by relating to diaspora he maintains: "it is quite simply as a way of being in the world that inhabits two places simultaneously. The physical environment you currently live in on one hand, and the vivid memories of places you have been to previously (...)" (Muller 2008:148).

2.2.3 The '70s

During the '70s revolutionary poem-songs were also composed by the white Johnny Clegg who was born in Britain but who immersed himself in the South African culture. In particular, he decided to embrace the Zulu culture of the mines and of the inner city of Johannesburg, a fact that gave him the nickname of the 'White Zulu' (Baines 2008:106). In the '70s Clegg formed a band, the Juluka, with the Zulu musician Sipho Mchunu (Baines 2008:107) and together they played a "hybrid of Zulu *maskandi* (traditional styles played on Western instruments) with rock arrangements and both English and Zulu lyrics" (Baines 2008:107). The song *Woza*

Friday was their first release but it was later rejected by the SABC's Zulu radio station as the mix of the two languages resulted as an insult to Zulu people (Baines 2008:107). *Woza Friday*'s lyrics might express the need of being free from work and at the same time shows how work is seen as a burden to carry:

Webaba kunzima kulomhlaba	Goodbye I'm going now I'm going
Webaba lomsebenzi uvukile	Tomorrow monday
Webaba nemali ayingeni	Oh Father it is difficult upon this earth
Engathi leliviki lingaphela	Oh Father this work has awoken
Ngithi woza woza Friday my darling	Oh Father the money is not coming in
Woza Friday umsebenzi uvukile	It is as if this week could end
Woza woza Friday my sweetie	I say come, come Friday my darling
Woza Friday ilanga lingiqomile wena	Come Friday, work has awoken
	Come, Come Friday my sweetie
	Come Friday, the sun has chosen me ¹³

Clegg's involvement in the band implied an embrace with the Zulu culture and "challenged an apartheid taboo which regarded whiteness as an inviolable concept" (Baines 2008:107). Furthermore, as Baines maintains, "the band's resistance to the regime was coded: in the way band members dressed, moved, and the lyrics that they sang" (Baines 2008:107).¹⁴ As for what concerned the historical background, the end of the '70s decade was marked by the Soweto Uprising which happened in 1976. This was the answer to the government which attempted to make Afrikaans the imposed language in schools (*Amandla!* 2002: 40.42.23). Black people did not want to be forced to learn a language that did not belong to them and raised for their rights (*Amandla!* 2002:00.42'.23'). Students were also supported by Steve Biko's

¹³ The original lyrics and their translations have been found in <http://www.metrolyrics.com/woza-Friday-lyrics-johnny-clegg.html>

¹⁴ This was said by the same Johnny Clegg in an interview with Michael Drewett, Johannesburg, on 20 April 1998. See: Drewett, M., 2011. "The road from crisis to catharsis in the songs of Roger Lucey". *Irasm* 42 2. pp. 379-396.

Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). The protest, however, resulted in the killing of children (Lynskey 2010:389). The singer and activist Sophie Mgcina declares that in the Soweto Uprising “children were killed because of a language, Afrikaans” (*Amandla!* 2002:00.42’.23’’). During that period, there was also a poem-song in the mouth of everyone, a poem-song of only two sentences and it was *Senzenina, what have we done?* (*Amandla!* 2002:00.40’.34’’). In the documentary *Amandla!* it is stated: “*Senzenina* like *We shall Overcome* will take high right from place in society because at one time a mass body of people related to the song and touch each other’s heart using that song” (*Amandla!* 2002:00.42’.00’’). Abdullah Ibrahim (also known as Dollar Brand) states that his role at that moment was that he “focused on the mood of the people of that time” and used his piano improvisations to do that (*Amandla!* 2002:45.38). As it is reported in *Amandla!*, however, 1976 was also a key for the people of that generation as it showed “where the struggle was going” and therefore “the possibility of the fall of the apartheid regime” (*Amandla!* 2002:00.46’.12’’). This change in people’s reaction was also followed by a change in poem-songs, which started to describe people in a war situation (*Amandla!* 2002:47.01). In the MK trainings outside South Africa, in Angola and Mozambique, the Gorillas poem-song was sung as a response to June 16 1976. The poem-song evokes the importance of resistance and intensifies the struggle:

They are lying to themselves
Arresting us, killing us won’t work
We’ll still fight for our land ¹⁵

¹⁵ See: (*Amandla!* 2002:00.44’.40’’)

In the documentary *Amandla!* it is stated: “I think these songs expressed not just the mood but the political moment of the time. The more, I would say, radical the situation was becoming, the more militant men of those songs became” (*Amandla!* 2002:00.44’.53’’). An example of this can be found in a sentence of a revolutionary poem-song which translates as:

We will shoot them with our guns ¹⁶

Or still, another one, which sees struggle as the only possible way of segregation:

Let’s fight

The whites won’t negotiate with us, so let’s fight¹⁷

Once more, the government answered to this struggle again by using violence. In 1977 BCM leader Steve Biko was arrested and brutally beaten (Lynskey 2010:390). He died “after being driven naked in the back of a Land Rover for 1500 kilometres from Port Elizabeth to Pretoria” (Lucey 2012:118). Lynskey states: “No police officers were ever prosecuted for his murder” (Lynskey 2010:390). In the meantime, Oliver Tambo, the ANC leader-in-exile created a campaign called “Free Mandela”, which was widespread internationally (Lynskey 2010:390). What is more, there was even the Amandla Cultural Ensemble that was created during the ‘70s among ANC exiles which became “a popular ambassador for the ANC throughout Africa and further afield in Europe, South America, the Soviet Union and elsewhere” (Gilbert 2008:155). The ‘70s also saw the white protest songwriter Roger Lucey and his first album *The road is much longer*, which was released in

¹⁶ No title of the song could be found. The translation was found in *Amandla!* 2002:00.45’35’’.

¹⁷ *Amandla!* 2002:00.52’.40’’

1979. Lucey reports: “my songs were young and angry, and boisterously attacked the state. I began to attract the attention of the local press (...)” (2012:3). He goes on to state: “Naturally, the radio stations refused to play my songs. Radio was just another mouthpiece for the increasingly autocratic Nationalist government” (Lucey 2012:4). Lucey’s lyrics will be further dealt with in chapter 4.

2.2.4 The ‘80s

By the end of summer 1984 the tri-Cameral Parliament had been inaugurated (Schumann 2008:31). As it only represented whites, Indians and Coloureds and excluded black population, riots between youths and police were the answer (Schumann 2008:31). Consequently, the government moved troops into townships and declared a State of Emergency in 1985 (Schumann 2008:31). Nonetheless, as *Amandla!* (2002:1.13’.14’’) describes: “the ‘80s became the advent of what was called the people’s war” and the strategy was to “train people from within”, from the township and the city (*Amandla!* 2002:1.13’.14’’). According to Grundlingh (Grundlingh:2): “one of the salient features of the tumultuous eighties in South Africa was the cycle of on-going black protest orchestrated by the United Democratic Front and other extra-parliamentary anti-apartheid organizations and the declaration of successive states of emergencies by the predominantly Afrikaner National Party government”. Black people of South Africa in that moment answered with the *Toyi-Toyi*, a combination of songs and dance (*Amandla!* 2002:1.14’.16’’), “a militant dance that ANC exiles probably learned from Zimbabwean guerrillas when they joined forces with ZAPU in the late 1960s” (Gilbert 2008:155). As the activist Vincent Vena explains, the *Toyi Toyi* was a

weapon of war since the forces opposed to the government did not have neither any tear gases nor guns (*Amandla!* 2002:1.14'.34'') and it was used "to interfere on the enemy" (*Amandla!* 2002:1.15'.51''). The Oxford *Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles* describes it as:

A quasi-military dance-step characterized by high-stepping movements, performed either on the spot or while moving slowly forwards, usually by participants in (predominantly black) protest gatherings or marches, and accompanied by chanting, singing [of freedom songs], and the shouting of slogans (Silva 1996:730).

It was usually accompanied by the shouting of 'Amandla!' that meant "Power to the People!" (South African politics 2013). As a former riot police commander states in *Amandla!*: "most of the riot police who had to contain those marches were shit-scared of the chanting blacks confronting them. Here was an unarmed mob instilling fear just by their Toyi-Toyi!" (*Amandla!* 2002: 1.16'22''). Sung words that went together with the Toyi Toyi were for example:

The guerrillas are here
They have arrived in South Africa
We are here!¹⁸

Therefore, these words underlined action and with it asked for a change of the system. Another example was the Zulu song *Shona Malanga*, which was originally sung from domestic servants and at first referred to the word 'Thursday' (*Amandla!* 00.55'48''). As the Zulu could not pronounce it, it became Sheila's Day, the free day from plantation for domestic servants (*Amandla!* 00.55'48''). The poem-song was remembered and consequently accommodated to a different context. The

¹⁸ See *Amandla!* 1.19'.40''

antiapartheid activist Sifiso Ntuly maintains: “the song was adapted to the condition we found ourselves in, so as opposed to say “on Thursday we will meet, On Sheila’s day”, it became “We’ll meet where we would rather not meet, in the bushes with our bazookas” (*Amandla!* 00.55’48’”). Protest in the ‘80s was also made by some of the Afrikaans’ voices whose revolution was called ‘The Voëlvry movement’, which literally meant ‘free as a bird’ (Olwage 2008:108) and whose major artists were Johannes Kerkorrel and Koo Kumbuis (Grundlingh:5). Their protest echoed, in part, elements of the punk British culture of the ‘70s and the ‘80s as it mocked the society in an exaggerated manner, that is to say also by using offensive language on stage (Grundlingh: 15,16). Grundlingh maintains that the anti-war songs and protests against the Vietnam war in the ‘60s, echoed in South Africa’s Afrikaners during the ‘80s (Grundlingh:6-7). As for the causes of this delay, one might see that during the ‘60s, Afrikaners were promised a secure future and therefore this limited their chance to protest (Grundlingh:5). The aim of ‘The Voëlvry movement’ was to “challenge and ridicule a system that forced conscription on them” (Grundlingh:6) and one of the conscriptions was, for example, the compulsory military service. A secondary aim of the movement was to mock those popular Afrikaans poem-songs whose themes were seagulls and beaches and therefore “lulled Afrikaners into a false consciousness” (Grundlingh:10). Kerkorrel also believed in the power of the poem-songs as a weapon for a change: “we knew there was sh*t in the land and we felt that our music might just make a difference” (Grundlingh:13). Kerkorrel goes on to state: “Something was busy happening. And we were at the centre of it. And the power of the regime was suddenly not all that absolute” (Grundlingh:13). In support of this statement, Some of Kerkorrel’s verses *Donker Donker* state:

Die klein wit republic
Is in 'n droë wit seisoen
Die bome dra nie meer vrugte nie
Die damme het verdroog

The small white republic
Is in a dry white season
The trees no longer bear fruit
The dams have gone dry

Ult die vlaktes van die Groot Karoo
Kom 'n springkaanplaag
Wat ultstrek na die noorde
En die mielielande knaag

From the plains of the Great Karoo
Comes a plague of locusts
That stretches to the north
And razes the maize fields

En in die dorpe en die stede
Ly die mense honger
Kos is skaars en al het
Jy werk
Word you geld al minder werd

And in the towns and cities
People are starving
Food is scarce, and even if you have a
job
Your money still depreciates¹⁹

From 1978 to 1984 there was Prime Minister P.W. Botha, whose era was to be remembered for “the corruption that has [had] raged like a veldfire through his administration” (Hopkins 2006:66). Hopkins (2006:66) recounts: “Nearly every day we read of officials who are [were] bent or bribed; who abuse their senior positions for personal gain; of friends of those in high places embezzling millions; of parliamentarians and cabinet ministers who suddenly resign”. The Afrikaans press, which also became tired of the Botha government policies, did not stop from giving exposure to Voëlvry (Grundlingh:3). Attacks to the PW Botha era were also to be seen in Koos Kombuis (André Letoit) poem-song *Where do you go to PW?* whose one of the verses reports:

You're in between 70 and 80
A most undesirable age
And they say that when you retire
It will be on every front page
Yes it will, yes it will
Your money is hidden in Switzerland

¹⁹ The lyrics and the translations of *Donker Donker* are to be found in Hopkins 2006:20.

With the others of the jet set
Who sip their reformist cocktails
But they never get their lips wet
No they don't give a damn ²⁰

At the same time, though, as Grundlingh suggests:

While “Voëlvry” rejected a certain form of Afrikaner identity, at the core of what they represented was a broader formulation of Afrikaansness in line with the pressures of the time. Although they sought to recast Afrikaner identity in different mould, they were well aware that the very success of their enterprise depended on them being Afrikaans (Grundlingh:10).

In fact, even though some of the Voëlvry musicians went closer to black artists, still they came from middle class families and their target involved a young white audience (Grundlingh:4,9). However, Koos Kombuis reports that after 1990 “he met former Robben Island political prisoners who claimed that they had ‘cheered’ the movement on” (Grundlingh:18). As for what concerns other poem-songs of the ‘80s, the interracial band Juluka asked for Nelson Mandela’s release with the poem-song *Asimbonanga*:

Asimbonanga (we have not seen him)
Asimbonang' umandela thina (we have not seen Mandela)
Laph'ekhona (in the place where he is)
Laph'ehleli khona (in the place where he is kept)

Oh the sea is cold and the sky is grey
Look across the island into the bay
We are all islands till comes the day
We cross the burning water

²⁰ The lyrics of *Where do you go to PW?* are to be found in Hopkins 2006:62-63.

And at the same time this poem-song asked for justice by mentioning Steve Biko, Victoria Mxenge and the white Neil Aggett, who, after fighting against apartheid, were all three killed by their enemy in the period between the end of 1970s and the beginning of 1980s. The poem-song *Asimbonanga* goes with the following words:

Steve Biko, Victoria Mxenge
Neil Aggett
Asimbonanga
Asimbonang 'umfowethu thina (we have not seen our brother)
Laph'ekhona (in the place where he is)
Laph'wafela khona (in the place where he died)
Hey wena (hey you!)
Hey wena nawe (hey you and you as well)
Siyofika nini la' siyakhona (when will we arrive at our destination) ²¹

This decade also saw the release of the first Mzwakhe Mbuli's record, *Change is Pain* (1987) (The African music Encyclopedia). The poet and singer was one of those embodiments of those people who were born in Sophiatown and then forced by the government to move (The African music Encyclopedia). His poem-songs will be one of the focuses of chapter 4. However, the '80s were also those years in which poem-songs asked for Mandela's release, not only in South Africa but also from exiled South Africans and from non South Africans around the world. For instance, among the formers, South African musician Hugh Masekela took part in the freedom songs of that decade (*Amandla!* 1.23'00''). He states:

In 1983 I was in Botswana, it was my birthday and I got this birthday card from Mandela. He is a guy who has been in jail for 20 years but is writing to me giving me encouragement, hugging me. (...) it was like I was in jail. And this song just when I lay down, finished reading it, I shooked my head and tears were streaming down and the song just came up to me: *Bring back Nelson Mandela, bring him back home*. I didn't compose it, it just came up. (*Amandla!* 1.23'.00'').

²¹ The lyrics of *Asimbonanga* have been found in <http://www.metrolyrics.com/asimbonanga-lyrics-johnny-clegg-savuka.html>

His freedom poem-song of hope, which later depicted a reality, cried out:

Bring back Nelson Mandela,
Bring him back home to Soweto
I want to see him walking down the streets of South Africa Tomorrow!

Bring back Nelson Mandela,
Bring him back home to Soweto
I want to see him walking hand in hand with Winnie Mandela.

As for music over the world, the British band ‘The Special AKA’, released the song *Free Nelson Mandela* (Lynskey 2010:386). According to Lynskey that poem-song “raised awareness of his plight like nothing else and helped to make apartheid one of the defining causes of the 1980s, something the man himself acknowledged after his release in 1990” (Lynskey 2010:386). It became an international hit and the band’s singer, Dammers, was given letters of praise from the ANC and the UN (Lynskey 2010:392-393). One of *Free Mandela* lyrics’ verses states:

21 tears in captivity
You're so blind that you cannot see
You're so deaf that you cannot hear him
You're so dumb that you cannot speak

Finally, the British musician Labi Siffre released in 1987 his poem-song

Something Inside So Strong which refers to Mandela’s strength in his life struggle:

The higher you build your barriers the taller I become
The farther you take my rights away the faster I will run
You can deny me, you can decide to turn your face away
No matter 'cause there's

Something inside so strong
I know that I can make it
Though you're doing me wrong so wrong
You thought that my pride was gone

Oh, no, something inside so strong
there's something inside so strong

2.2.5 The '90s

The '90s were a turning point for South Africa as they brought with them Nelson Mandela's release on 11 February 1990 and will later lead to the death of apartheid. Together with this change in history, even the message inside the poem-songs changed. As the traditional song *Rolihlahla Mandela* states:

Rolihlahla Mandela
freedom is in your hand
Show us the way to freedom
In our land of Africa
Mandela says 'Freedom Now!'
And we say away with slavery in our land of Africa!

Or another one, *Usi Letela Uxdlo* which states:

You've been fighting for freedom for a
long time
Now we've got it
No one can change that
You brought us peace
Nelson Mandela²²

The happiness through which Mandela was acclaimed is also to be seen in *Black President*, a song sung by Brenda Fassie (Ma Brr). It recounts briefly Mandela's life and in its final part states:

²² The lyrics of this song and their translations have been found in *Amandla! A revolution in Four-Part-Harmony* (Hirsch 2002).

Now in 1990
The people's president
Came out from jail
Raised up his hand and said
"Viva, viva, my people"

He walked the long road
Back, back to freedom
Back to freedom
Freedom for my black president

Furthermore, in 1991, the reggae singer and songwriter Lucky Dube composed

House of Exile, whose last verse and chorus report:

All he dreams about is the freedom of the nation
When every man will be equal In the eyes of the law
As he closes his eyes
For the last time he said again
I'm still here in the house of exile
For the love of the nation

The song might have referred to Mandela's liberation but also emphasized that in 1991 he was still in exile in his own country. However, in 1994 even figurative exile would disappear. If, for example, the *Toyi-Toyi* of the 80s was a freedom dance which included war songs, after Mandela's release it started to be a freedom dance for celebration and joy, which he himself joined (South African Politics 2013). As for the *Voëlvry* movement, which already asked for a change in the government policies during the '80s, in the '90s accepted those changes (Grundlingh: 19). In fact, in 1990 Kerkorrel stated: "I have great faith in the abilities of both Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk. At least one gets the feeling these days that maybe we are not going to kill everybody" (Grundlingh:19). Grundlingh maintains: "the tragic circumstances of his suicide received

considerable media attention and he was widely hailed as a fine musician and anti-apartheid activist” (Grundlingh:20). As for *Nkosi Sikelel’iAfrika*, it continued to be sung. When, then, in 1994 Mandela won South Africa’s first multiracial elections, he stated:

The day was symbolized for me by the playing of our two national anthems, and the vision of whites singing “Nkosi Sikelel’iAfrika” and blacks singing “Die Stem”, the old anthem of the republic. Although that day, neither group knew the lyrics of the anthem they once despised, they would soon know the words by heart (Mandela 1994:pos 10414).

In fact, since 1997 South African national hymn has united isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, English and Afrikaans, as to symbolize the union of the Rainbow Nation (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2008:189, 201). According to Coplan and Jules-Rosette (2008:203) the poem-song does not only represent a symbol of struggle during apartheid and its following celebration of a new nation. It also “creates a network of significance and association with a common aspiration: the freeing of Africa from the clutches of a seemingly immortal, protean imperialism and the centrality of South Africa’s liberation and success to that historical process” (Coplan and Jules-Rosette 2008:203). Furthermore, Cook states that the poem-song:

(...) doesn’t just symbolize unity, it *enacts* it... Through its block-like harmonic construction and regular phrasing, ‘Nkosi Sikelel’iAfrika’ creates a sense of stability and mutual dependence, with no one vocal part predominating over the others (...) Enlisting music’s ability to shape personal identity, ‘Nkosi Sikelel’iAfrika’ actively contributes to the construction of the community that is the new South Africa. In this sense, singing it is a political act (Cook 1998:75-76).

CHAPTER 3: Roger Lucey and Mzwakhe Mbuli

3.1 Roger Lucey

3.1.1 Roger Lucey's apartheid biography

Roger Lucey was born in 1954 in Durban from a father called Dennis John, who came from a line of Irish peasants (Lucey 2012:9) and a mother called Auriol May Jonker (Lucey 2012:10). During his childhood, Lucey went through difficult times: when he was only eight, the same father who at home beat his mother, wanted him to work in his liquor store (Lucey 2012:19). Moreover, at the age of ten he was sexually abused by Uncle Cliff, one of his father's mates (Lucey 2012:25). Despite these misfortunes, however, Lucey's friendship with a Zulu boy named Jabula seems to have concretely opened up his view on the conditions black people were facing during apartheid (Drewett 2011:380). De Vries (2013:50) recounts: "Jabu was well-versed with the world of small-time crooks and criminals. Roger often joined him on his semi-legal expeditions in order to get to know that other world that stretched out beyond the white suburbs of Durban". His interest in music was made more concrete when at the age of 17 Lucey first started playing with a small group of boys in school Folk Masses (Lucey 2012:44) and with his guitar he "sailed into the first heady days of a vocation that would dominate my [his] life: song writing". Since the early days his songs were revolutionary, explosive against state, society and Church (Lucey 2012:74). Despite a few years on light duty military service, in 1975 Lucey was finally free from it and, with his cousin Leonard, Titch and Michael Green, he started a band named the Rancid Dwarf, who played around the university area and Durban (Lucey 2012:89). That was where Lucey also met

the singer and guitarist Steve Fataar (vocals and guitarist of the Durban band The Flames) who, he claimed, was a great influence to him. As his desire to explore the world suggested, in 1975 Lucey flew to London, a country which “was home to so much of the music that had inspired me [him]” (Lucey 2012:91) and was “the centre of the world for many young South Africans” (Lucey 2012:96). Here, he tried to realize his acting ambition but despite his very good performance he could not meet the requirements for the study visa as he had not finished high school (Lucey 2012:97). At the moment of 1976 Soweto Uprising Lucey was still in London and read in the news that his home country was in flames as the consequence of fierce battles between police and kids (Lucey 2012:99). The same year he decided to go back to South Africa and formulated the idea that South African songwriters should be singing about their own issues instead of singing about the Vietnam War and the atomic bomb (Lucey 2014). Bearing this in mind, during 1977 Lucey performed at political meetings at university and at gigs with Steve Fataar (Lucey 2012:117). In the same year, after attending a concert, he and a friend were wearing kikoyis “colourful east African sarongs – to project ourselves [themselves] as Africans, not Europeans in waiting” (Lucey 2012:123). A police van approached them and started violently beating them till blood came out because, as it turned out, they were “wearing tablecloths with nothing underneath” (Lucey 2012:123-124). By the end of the ‘70s Lucey was sure that he wanted to stay in South Africa to sing his songs as he had the idea that they “were an important way to raise consciousness among the country’s white youth, where it was most needed” (Lucey 2012:133). Thus, he decided to go to Johannesburg. There he kept performing for charities and political organisations, he kept doing gigs and managed to sing as support act at the Market

Theatre to the Radio Rats, a very popular band at that time (Lucey 2012:133-134). He performed regularly at Mangles and he even managed to perform as support act to Colin Shamley (Lucey 2012:134). In 1979 his protest album *The Road Is Much Longer* was released and saw the collaboration with Johnny Clegg, John Oakley-Smith, Alison William and Ken E. Henson (De Vries 2013:52). However, the album brought with it some problems as for example the SABC (South Africa Broadcasting Corporation) which liked it, could not play it because it “corrupted the morals of the youth” (Lucey 2012:136). However, despite radios refused to play the album, his poem-songs circulated in South Africa. Lucey remembers:

The first time I played in Pretoria I was very very surprised. When I went to a place, I actually stood there for a friend, who was sick and I started playing in his gigs and I started playing cover songs, it was a very conservative town, mainly Afrikaans people and at one point a man asked me: “Can you play some of your songs” and it turned out that they all knew my songs (Lucey 2014).

The album was not only not played through radio stations; it also got notoriety among the apartheid police, who confiscated its copies in record stores (Lucey 2012:137) and at one of Lucey’s performances at Mangles, they threw tear gas into the basement in order to stop his gig (Lucey 2012:140). Nonetheless, Lucey kept his dream going and wanted his voice to be heard outside his home country. Thus, in 1979 he and his wife at the time, Sue, flew to London where they met up with South Africans exiles and activists (Lucey 2012:144). There he contacted Warner Bros, which was involved in the possible distribution of *The Road Is Much Longer* in England but as his music didn’t play in South African radios and as cultural boycott was applied even to South African musicians abroad, he could not do a performance without having his union ticket (Lucey 2012:145). In the same period,

his music publisher David Marks contacted him as one of the major managers of the Warner Bros in New York, David Horowitz, had listened to *The Road Is Much Longer* and wanted to see him (Lucey 2012:147). So Lucey and Sue traveled to New York where Lucey was invited to record another album in his home country, taking into consideration the American audience that did not know how the situation in South Africa was (Lucey 2012:150-151). Therefore, he signed a record contract with WEA Records and booked the Market Theatre in March 1980 for the performance of his new songs (Lucey 2012:155). 1980 was also the year in which *Half a Live* was released: half of it was recorded during his gigs at the Market Theatre, the other half was recorded in a small studio (Lucey 2012:157). Still, the radio stations refused to play his new album even though its contents were less political than the first one (Lucey 2012:157). He kept doing solo gigs but he was even refused to play at Mangles, the venue for which he became known in Johannesburg (Lucey 2012:158). Distance towards Lucey was also taken by other managers of venues who had previously fixed his gigs: they called him to say that his concerts had been cancelled, without giving clear explanations (Lucey 2012:158). It was during 1980 that he was told that he was “under surveillance for ‘suspected communist activities’ and was heading for big troubles” (Lucey 2012:158). Nonetheless, he formed a new band called the Zub Zub Marauders, who by 1981 were “one of the most popular acts in Jo’burg” (Lucey 2012:166) and they started a Cape Town tour” (Lucey 2012:166). Still, even if the band played filling the venues in which they went, concerts started to get cancelled, again without any specific reason (Lucey 2012:169). Furthermore, the guys that worked at WEA Records decided not to have anything with him (Lucey 2012:169). Lucey reports:

Nobody knew what was happening except that I couldn't play anymore. Nobody would employ me, people would get threatened and everybody's busy with their lives so I just disappeared off the scene, I was there playing and doing it, doing it, doing it and suddenly I disappeared (Lucey 2014).

Wasted by drugs and with no money, he sold his guitar and his sax, the only things that were of any value to him (Lucey 2012:170). Police control on Lucey was kept also in 1982: in Johannesburg he was woken up at night, they were trying to find something inside his house, called him a communist and then they left (Lucey 2012:179-180). Terrified by how his life was going, he even tried to commit suicide (Lucey 2012:181). In the same year he read in the *Rand Daily Mail* that "possession and distribution of *The Road* had been banned" (Lucey 2012:183) and "the penalty for possession was five years' imprisonment, a ten thousand rand fine, or both. Selling the album could have got the seller ten years in prison. The banning order stated that the songs were 'dangerous for the safety of the state'" (Lucey 2012:183). When he appealed the ban in Pretoria at the Publications Appeal Board, he was answered that in some of the songs he had used the saxophone, an instrument which was "known for inciting blacks to violence" (Lucey 2012:184). In the meanwhile, in 1983 he was trained for the position of an assistant in the TV news business of the South African office of United Press International TV News (Lucey 2012:187). As he still believed in his music dream, he set up a new band in 1984 but when it came to be known that they were going to play, Lucey's house received nocturnal visits (Lucey 2012:195) and threatening calls with the words "Roger Lucey, this time you die" (Lucey 2012:195). Venue managers still refused to let him play and tired of the situation, Lucey left the band (Lucey 2012:195) and continued his life path as a cameraman in the television news section in South Africa, Zimbabwe,

Angola, Mozambique (Lucey 2012:206, 215). However, in 1990 his album *Running for Cover* was released, but, as Lucey states: “the bad smell that accompanied my name still stuck, and no-one would touch it” (Lucey 2012:224). He was invited to perform at the Splashy Fen Festival in April, he did solo gigs around Cape Town and Johannesburg (Lucey 2012:224). He kept receiving call-up letters from the South African Defence Force for a three-week camp but with the same insistence, he kept ignoring them (Lucey 2012:224). However, he still was “on the payroll at WTN” and was to go to Croatia to film the war in the states of the former Yugoslavia (Lucey 2012:225, 229). In 1993 he started writing his first play *The High Cost of Living* which would contain autobiographical elements such as “the pain and joy of being an artist” and received good reviews (Lucey 2012:238). He went to Russia in 1995 for work and kept seeing images of death and misery (Lucey 2012:244). In 1995 he also started writing his second play *Newsroom*. He also did a solo music revue *Turning Points*, a tv series about his life and songs, which did not get so much interest (Lucey 2012:256). It was only in that year that Paul Erasmus described how he managed to block Lucey’s career by raiding his house, intercepting his mail, threatening club owners that associating with Lucey “would implicate them in the terrorist activities I [he] was about to be arrested for, and even threatening Dave Marks with arrest if he had anything more to do with me [him]” (Lucey 2012:256). Lucey reports: “It was Erasmus and his colleagues who’d confiscated every copy of *The Road Is Much Longer* from the record stores. And everything was done covertly. He had orders that none of it must be traceable to the security police. They didn’t want to turn a common rock’n’roller into a martyr” (Lucey 2012:256).

3.1.2 Roger Lucey's influences

When asked what influenced him in his career as a poet/songwriter, Lucey replied that he was very much listening to the American folk rock tradition of which Bob Dylan was an example. He claims:

During the winter holidays in 1971, I watched the Woodstock movie three times. Here were people openly challenging the mighty US government over the war in Vietnam. But we had our own war, and boys of my age – seventeen – were already registered with the South African Defence Force. The songs of Bob Dylan, Richie Havens and many others that banged the drum for the peace movement resonated with our own growing rejection of what was happening on the border (Lucey 2012:44).

Another oversea influence that inspired Lucey in his early years of career was the songwriter Phil Ochs, which he saw as a formal political principle person and for this reason contributed to augment his ideas “of what songwriting was about” (Lucey 2014). Even Victor Jara, the Chilean poet-songwriter who fought for freedom till his murder in Estadio Chile during the Coup of Pinochet was a strong influence to him. He, in fact, was an example of an individual voice who fought with his death for what he believed in (Lucey 2014). Talking about the South African context, among the musicians that inspired him was the guitarist Steve Fataar of the popular band *The Flames*, a band who reached popularity even in the US and worked with the Beach Boys (Lucey 2012:60). Furthermore, what influenced Lucey was the lively musical circuit of Durban. He maintains:

There was like a folk music association that put on festivals and had weekly meetings where you could go and perform. There was a lot going on, so I just started getting more and more into it... it was the beginning of a whole series of musical collaborations and of a very creative period, and me discovering myself and what this whole thing was about, writing songs (Drewett 2011:381).

In the Durban of the '70s, as Lucey describes, every weekend Durban was the place in which “church halls, sports clubs and empty warehouses across the city were transformed into noisy destinations for teenagers” (Lucey 2012:60). Durban was, therefore, the place where teenagers covered the Beatles’s or the Beach Boys’ songs; on the other hand, it was also the city that hosted emerging bands (Lucey 2012:60). Especially after his return from London to South Africa, Johannesburg was another city that influenced Lucey as its scene “had been rapidly radicalized after the Soweto Uprising of 1976” (De Vries 2013:51). In particular, the suburb Crown Mines where he moved to, was characterized by “a heady mixture of artists, musicians and activists, including David Webster who would later be killed by the security forces” (De Vries 2013:51). Lucey also describes the importance of going to the gigs of local heroes such as John Oakley-Smith, Paul Clingman and Des Lindberg (De Vries 2013:51). He states: “They weren’t overly political, but on stage everyone would comment about South Africa and the government. So these gigs became a forum for this resistance – mild resistance” (De Vries 2013:51). Mild resistance was certainly not what Lucey was looking for, but at least by going to those concerts he could see the first glimmer of a protest which he could increase (De Vries 2013:51). As Lucey explains, however, it was not only the South African musical circuit that influenced him (Lucey 2014). His poem-songs came out “of a combination of a lot of what was going on in South Africa”, not only for what concerned music (Lucey 2014). For instance, he states that among the writers he looked up to there was a group of radical poets and playwrights in South Africa who were called the Sestiger, “an Afrikaan word meaning ‘those from the 60s’”

(Lucey 2014). Another influence worth considering in Lucey's life was the protest theatre whose home was the Market Theatre (Lucey 2014).

3.1.3 Roger Lucey's music style

After talking about Lucey's influences, let us now move on to report how his musical style was and is. First of all, he maintains that he did not take too much inspiration from traditional African music because, as it was done in large choral groups the individual would confuse himself among other people (Lucey 2014). Thus, under these circumstances, the person would not be identified as the single whole voice of expression he was instead looking for (Lucey 2014). That was why he looked up to individual voices from all around the world, from England, South America, America, because those songwriters "were making strong statements, they were expressing where they were in the world" (Lucey 2014). Those individual voices and the duration of their poem-songs might also be seen in Lucey's duration of poem-songs. In fact, if Dylan and Ochs were "the first to overstep the bounds – at the risk of being refused by radio stations" (Zumthor 1990:104), in a similar way, Lucey's duration of poem-songs last from 2'.30'' up to 4'.30''. At the same time, though, Lucey describes his style of playing as something which is neither American nor African, but rather a personalized one between the two (Lucey 2014). He states: "And when I play in America I know that I don't sound like an African but when I'm in Africa I don't sound like an American or English musician, I know that" (Lucey 2014). Furthermore, the vocabulary Lucey uses in his songs is direct and biting as his denounce was. As he maintains:

People would say to me ‘jeez, you’re so overt, you’re so in-your-face’ and I would say ‘well, that’s what it is, I mean, that’s what it gotta be. There’s no point in sort of disguising it.’ And that’s where I disagreed with the folkies who would. I would say ‘where’s the point of having an anti-fascist message and sort of like – I’ll take the high road and you take the low road and we’ll go and smell the daisies – type of song’. This is bullshit, you know, it meant nothing. So no I didn’t. I didn’t believe in that approach. I believed in in-your-face, you know, tell it like it is, the cops are out there, they’re fucking throwing people out of the window, and that is what it’s all about, and that’s what the song says. Simple. (Drewett 2011:381).

Not only the message Lucey conveyed through his poem-songs was clear and direct; the way he stated it, in fact, followed the same line. As Drewett (Drewett 2011:381) states, Lucey “placed emphasis on his lyrical delivery so that the words were clearly audible, allowing the listener easy access to the messages he was conveying” (Drewett 2011:381). Furthermore, his protest could be seen in his way of playing his guitar. He, in fact, states: “the only thing that made me a folk musician was that I played an acoustic guitar – but I played it like an AK-47” (De Vries 2013:51). With his Martin D-28 guitar he played hammering songs and he excelled at “hammering the strings” (De Vries 2013:51). Despite these hammering songs, though, he also composed slow songs “where he fingerpicks the strings and adds feelings of loss and love to the anger (De Vries 2013:50). As for the music genre he chose, he first began with folk and then, perhaps because of Fataar’s influence, he “developed more of a rock edge to his music, especially with his band Zub Zub Marauders (Drewett 2011:381). The rock genre was also emphasized in the way he presented himself on the stage. As De Vries (2013:52) argues: “with his long hair and intense stage presence, he felt like a rock god (...) all body hair and testosterone”. Lucey even reports that not only the songs he wrote included a strong message; his shows were as strident as them (De Vries 2013:53). He states:

I didn't just sing the songs, I also spoke about it: 'You gotta release Mandela, et cetera'. The interviews I did were all about creating a new identity as a non-racial society. And I was quite articulate about it. My interviews were not about jolling and music and stuff. I was very clear," he says, rubbing his hands. "Listen, once you break out and you start making a stand, you can't go back" (De Vries 2013:53).

3.2 Mzwakhe Mbuli

3.2.1 Mzwakhe Mbuli's apartheid biography

The poet and songwriter Mzwakhe Mbuli was born in Sophiatown in 1959 and, like the other black people who lived there, was forced to move with his family to a part of Soweto (Christgau 1998:343). He was born from the union of a Zulu father and a Xhosa mother and his upbringing was based on the Zulu tradition, which implied an immersion "in the tribe's choral tradition at the all-night mbube competition" (Christgau 1998:344). Mbube style is traditional harmonic singing (Brown 1998:213). Mbuli even went to school based Zulu dance and theatre (Frid). After the Soweto uprising of 1976, he joined a cultural group that followed the line of the Afrocentric education of those moments of strike where he started performing his poems orally (Christgau 1998:344). In 1979 he performed for the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) together with the group *Khuyhangano* (Frid) but his first major public achievement was in 1981 when he performed at the memorial concert for the preacher Castro Mayathula (Frid), an event which launched his career as a performer at funerals, union meetings, cultural days (Christgau 1998:344). There he performed *Ignorant* and *Sies*, his first poem-songs ever and was met by the humming of the audience (Brown 1998:214). In 1983 he even performed at the launch of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and as Christgau states: "in his cultural guerrilla days, of course, voice, body and words were all he had" (Christgau

1998:344). According to Brown, he even reached a crowd of 150000 people (Brown 1998:213) and “his success is remarkable testimony to the continuing power of oral forms, and their possibilities under oppressive social conditions” (Brown 1998:213). 1986 was the year in which he released *Change is Pain*, his first album with Shifty Records, an independent label that recorded on a sound truck on the run and tried to escape from censorship (Christgau 1998:345). *Change is Pain* included the poetry which he used to perform and which were memorized by his audience (Anthony). Although the tape was banned as, according to the Directorate of Publications, “its stirring music and dramatic presentation [would] have great influence among revolutionary groups in the RSA and at mass-meetings as well” (Brown 1998 Voicing:244), it became a clandestine hit in South Africa (Christgau 1998:345). As Pareles states, Mzwakhe was an activist who wrote and performed political poetry in unadvertised black township gatherings and for this reason “has led a fugitive’s existence since 1985” (Pareles 1988). Furthermore, in 1987 Mbuli performed at Bishop Desmond Tutu’s celebration for his Nobel Peace Prize (Brown 1998:214). In the beginning of 1988 he even spent half a year in prison, most of it in solitary confinement (Pareles 1988, Petersen 1991:69). However, in the same 1988 the album *Unbroken Spirit* was released and it “went gold with no help from the South African Broadcasting Corporation” (Christgau 1998:345). He wrote the album while he was in prison and memorized the songs in his head as he could not use neither paper nor pencil (Christgau 1998:343). In 1989 his poem book *Before Dawn*, which included many of the poems he used to perform and which were then part of his cassette *Change is Pain* and of his album *Unbroken Spirit* (Brown 1998:246), was published. Contrary to the banning of *Change is Pain*, however,

Before Dawn managed to escape from censorship (Brown 1998: 244, 246) and had sold more than 5,000 copies by late 1989 (Heunis 1999:118). *Before Dawn* also included a message sent by Mandela while he was still in prison. The message emphasizes the important role Mzwakhe had during the apartheid struggle in the whole South Africa. It stated: “Dear Mzwakhe and Nomsa, I would like you to know that you are loved and respected far beyond the borders of your home town. Fondest regards and best wishes. Your sincerely, Nelson Mandela” (Mbuli 1989:4). Troubles for Mbuli, however, did not stop: during the ‘80s the People’s Poet was refused a passport 39 times and arrested 8 times (Frid). This case, as the previous ones, showed how the regime wanted to cut his voice and to stop him from denouncing the reality South Africa was living (Petersen 1991:68). Later, in 1989 he was accused of having two grenades at home, a fake story invented by the police just because his voice represented a problem to the regime (Petersen 1991:68). In 1990 he opened up his international career and performed in Berlin with stars such as Youssou N’dour, Miriam Makeba and Thomas Mapfumo (Frid). During the ‘90s he even performed at “a rally marking the third anniversary of the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO)” (Brown 1998:213). His life kept being threatened as in 1991 a grenade was thrown into his house (Frid). He worked with the UDF (United Democratic Front) cultural desk and as he was its “most prominent policymaker” (Christgau 1998:343) he represented “the embodiment of cultural struggle” (Christgau 1998:343). However, also for his involvement in the UDF, he was criticized by South African left which considered him as a self-promoter, rogue and cultural commissar (Christgau 1998:345). As a proof that his voice could not sink, in 1992, his album *Resistance is Defence* which contained English, Zulu, Xhosa

and Venda language was released with a band called *The Equals* (Christgau 1998:346). 1993 was the year of release of the album *Afrika*, whose song *Peace in Our Land* served as a national anthem for the second anniversary of the National Peace Accord (Frid). In 1994, Mbuli's most important event was his participation to Mandela's victory after the general election (Noakes 2004). Mbuli remembered:

It took so many for us to reach where we are. People died having called the name of "Mandela," chanting the name of 'Mandela,' having not seen him, how he looked like, and people died for him. And 1994 was, yes, a turning point, yes for all of us that had last in his words "never, never again should you go through what we have gone through," it was really so uplifting (Frid).

In the same year Mbuli accompanied Mandela to events which promoted peace and the abolition of apartheid (Noakes 2004). Furthermore, the album *Izigi* was released in 1994.

3.2.2 Mzwakhe Mbuli's influences

Mzwakhe's style is influenced by poets such as Ingoapele Madingoane and Isaiah Shembe (Brown 1998:250), who used visionary impulse in their literary works in order to evocate an effective and simple way of expression. An example of such poetry can be found in Madingoane's poem *Africa my beginning, Africa my ending, which* denounces white imperialism over South Africa and sees the latter as both a place of beginning in which the poet was born and a place of ending as it represents the residence of his condemnation. Part of the poem-song recites:

Africa my Beginning
They came from the west
Sailing to the east
With hatred and disease flowing
From their flesh
And a burden to harden our lives

They claimed to be friends
When they found us friendly
And when foreigner met foreigner
They fought for the reign
Exploiters of Africa
Africa my beginning
And Africa my ending

In a similar way, as we shall see farther on, Mbuli uses powerful and clear images to get the reader's attention or the crowd's attention. Moreover, in his poem-songs he often refers to the whole Africa rather than to South Africa in order to express the anger of the nation against racial discrimination. Among the Soweto poets of the '70s who influenced Mbuli one might find Mongane Serote, Siphiso Sepamla, Oswald Joseph Mbuyiseni Mtshali, Christopher van Wyk, Mafika Gwala and Don Mattera whose poems used "graphic language designed to arouse the emotions of the listeners" and were performed at political rallies (South Africa.info). These poets were part of the Black Consciousness Movement, a combination of organizations which "filled the vacuum created by the government's suppression of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) after the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960" and which aimed at educating black people, especially youngsters (Black Consciousness Movement). A further aspect worth considering in discussing Mbuli's influences is that he was not indifferent to the Soweto poets' style and the izibongo, as he listened to them while moving with his father around the township hostels (Brown 1998:250). *Izibongo* might be explained as a vernacular 'praise poem' that ranges from complex themes and structures to "the short and simple praises of children and ordinary individuals" (Coullie 1999:61). Another influence on Mbuli's writing might be given to *Staffrider*

magazine (Brown 1998:250), a magazine which “established in 1978 as a literary magazine written primarily by and for blacks” (De Lange 1997:146) and which “provided a platform for writers after the banning of political and cultural organizations in the wake of the Soweto riots” (De Lange 1997:146).

3.2.3 Mzwakhe Mbuli’s music style

After considering Mbuli’s influences and affinities with other poets, it is appropriate to spend a few words on the style he uses in his poem-songs. The deep voice he uses conveys simple images and this might be seen as a characteristic throughout all his literary works. Petersen sustains:

Simplicity, and a message which carries anger, sorrow and defiance are the characteristics of Mzwakhe’s poetry. The vocabulary is mostly that of political slogans and clichés, a ready made kit of pop art images, carrying instant messages way beyond their literal meaning. These ‘signs’ are organized into long, formulaic, aggregative incantations which are delivered at high speed and in rhythmic fashion (Petersen 1991:65).

His poems are read/sung with a marked pause at the end of each line, which defines their rhythm (Brown 1998:246). As for the vocabulary he uses, one has to see sources in “African nationalism, Pan Africanism, Christianity, black consciousness, traditional mythology and Marxist analysis (Brown 1998:253). Hence, the message Mbuli expresses advocates “pan-African unity, trade unionism, cooperation and socialism; they praise African culture, denounce the ‘inhumanity’ of apartheid and conclude, ‘Fight side by side for a democratic South Africa’” (Pareles 1988). As in oral poetry the performer is considered “the newspapers for non-literate people” (Finnegan 1970:272), according to Brown (1998:252-253), especially during the

State of Emergency of the '80s, performance was essential as it conveyed “important information otherwise difficult to disseminate”. This simplicity, thus, represents a key element as the audience can better memorize his words and notions can arrive directly. Moreover, according to Brown (1998:250), “at key moments in many of his poems, he will move from the defamiliarizing to the familiar, from the metaphor to the slogan, thus establishing a sense of commonality with the audience, a commonality reinforced by the call-and-response mode”. In fact, as oral literature was what strengthened the struggle against discrimination, audience needed simple words in order to become the owners of those words of protest. Moreover, the crowd, who was living through the same system of repression, also responded by adding its own words. Sight, through the use of natural images, is therefore the sense which Mbuli wants to evocate in his audience (Brown 1998:248). Visual images are not only expressed through his voice; they are in fact also conveyed through his African dances and the African clothes he wears: dashiki, fez, kanzu,... (Brown 1998:246). As for what concerns reaching a wide audience, the use of the English language in his poem-songs, augments this possibility (Heunis 1999:116). Furthermore, the music backing he uses, have been seen by critics as “a radical re-invention of traditional, indigenous oral poetry and a radical appropriation and revision of English poetics” (Kozain 1994:20). However, the same Kozain maintains that this style is a re-invention only for the South African context as the dub poetry from Great Britain and Jamaica has a longer tradition (Kozain 1994:20). According to Brown (Brown 1998:247) parallelism and repetition are the main rhetorical devices used by Mbuli. These elements, in fact, strengthen his anger towards apartheid regime and the victims it brought (Brown 1998:247).

Furthermore, the importance of this strategy is emphasized by the poet-songwriter Benjamin Zephaniah, who states: “I certainly don’t think that Mzwakhe’s poetry is lessened because he takes a group of words and repeats them or he takes some words that may seem obvious and uses them because that’s the way it sticks in people’s minds” (Kane Lo 2009:115). Moreover, as for the music genre he uses, Mbuli does not define himself as a dub poet as his music embodies different varieties of styles (Petersen 1991:68), “from mbaqanga and isichatamyia to reggae and rap” (Brown 1998:239). The same Mbuli states:

Critics can tell that this is funk, that is rock, this is rap, but it is difficult to classify my music. I use many different types of arrangements. I have realized that my voice works well without instrumental backing, but it also works well with choral backing and with a cappella type arrangements. It works, too, with reggae beat, with traditional instruments, with percussion only, and the different arrangements work better when mixed with my poetry. (Petersen 1991:68).

He also goes on to state that his style is African because that is where his roots are (Petersen 1991:68). In discussing his style, Brown (1998:252) declares that it is easy to see rap music, while “Rastafarian ‘toasting’ is particularly evident in Mzwakhe’s diction, as the words often seem to be chosen as much for their rhythm and rhyme as for their ‘meaning’”. Mbaqanga, the music style which Mbuli seems to use more than the others, has a strong politic orientation and it stands as art as means of struggle (Kozain 1994:23). However, according to Kozain (1994:24), Mbuli does not exploit the “rhythmical sensibilities of mbaqanga in his rendition of the poems” (Kozain 1994:24). Kozain goes on to question the nickname “the people’s poet” by wondering how, as there is illiteracy in the English language among a wide number of black South Africans, Mbuli chose to mainly use Standard

English in his poem-songs (Kozain 1994:24). Thus, Kozain questions who are ‘the people’ he is supposed to address (Kozain 1994:24).

CHAPTER 4: Roger Lucey and Mzwakhe Mbuli's poem-songs. A thematic analysis.

4.1 Roger Lucey's poem-songs

This section will deal with the thematic analysis of Lucey's lyrics in the apartheid albums that were released. Therefore, selected songs from the albums *The Road Is Much Longer* (1979), *Half-A-Live* (1980) and *Running For Cover* (1990) will be discussed here. The song *My Son My Father And Me*, composed in 1994 and the song *The Night Harry J Went to War* composed around the 1990s will also be taken into consideration.

4.1.1 The Road

According to Webster (2004) the 'road' is a common theme in Dylan's poem-songs and represents the path towards reaching masculinity. An example of this might be found in the famous *Blowing In The Wind*, which recites:

How many roads must a man walk down
Before you call him a man?

As one of Lucey's influences in his former career was Dylan, one might think that, with the theme of the road, he could have taken inspiration from him. However, Lucey's vision of the road did not deal with his path towards masculinity. It was instead the metaphor for his life experience. As Lucey maintains:

And when I was younger, I was always on a journey, physically and metaphorically, of discovery for myself. I would hitchhike around the country with my guitar playing wherever I could play. I think when we were talking about freedom, I think that the road was like the essence of freedom, of being able to move (Lucey 2014).

This movement on the road might be seen in the poem-song *The Road Is Much Longer*, included in the album that has the same name. It is “based on Lucey’s experience repeatedly traversing the 550 km journey between Durban – his family base where he grew up – and Johannesburg – where his music career was based” (Drewett 2011:383). On the other hand, as the poem-song *The Road Is Much Longer* states, the road is also the metaphor of the essence of the opposite of freedom. That poem-song, according to Drewett (2011:383), in fact, depicts the road as a ‘prison’.

Part of it states:

The highway is just like a prison
From where I’m standing there’s no place that’s near
And the one thing only that’s certain
Is that the road is much longer than ever before

Here one might see how the highway, or better the road, represents also the simile for prison, a prison from which it is hard to see a near way out, a blocked way in the journey towards freedom. Not only Lucey sees that he is halted in that situation, but also that he feels isolated in his desperate attempt to run away. The prison, therefore, is the personification of the same Lucey. The frustration he feels is also given by the alliteration of the ‘r’ sound, which seems to emphasize the obstacles in his attempt to escape from his situation. A sense of frustration is also given by the guitar solo, which sounds like a frustrated speed running that cannot free him. This concept might as well be adapted to the first track of *The Road Is Much Longer*, *Windy Days*, part of which recites:

And they say that things are hard to stop
That must be a tough one to live with
But on the track things aren’t too good at
It seems harm instead

I got to run instead on home
I got to run on home
Got to run on home

Here again, the ‘track’ is used as a synonym for ‘road’, a ‘road’ that is too difficult to go through and whose only way to survive is escaping towards home. It therefore suggests how the easiest thing to do in South Africa at that time was to find a safe refuge instead of facing the responsibility that walking that road could project. One might see this as the criticism Lucey often makes in his lyrics against those who refused to face and denounce the reality they were living and the one they are living (Lucey 2014). He, in fact, claims:

There’s no point in just moaning and criticizing without being active, without saying. Criticism needs to be more constructive in order to see what’s good and not only what’s bad (Lucey 2014).

The way of defining the ‘road’ as a place of insecurity is also strengthened in the poem-song *Lungile Tabalaza*, which reports the story of a twenty year old black man who was accused of robbery and arson (Lucey 2012:135). While the apartheid police interrogated him he was thrown out of the window and died (Lucey 2012:135). Part of the poem-song recites:

There are cops on every corner
And they know what they don’t like
And if you’re ‘it’ then you know
That the street’s no place for you at night

Once more, the theme of alienation appears here. The street, which stands for ‘road’, is described as a place where one should not go if one wants to denounce that reality of segregation, of miseducation. The poem-song therefore might also

make reference to all the other people who died unjustly by the hands of the police and whose murders were hidden. As another part of the *Lungile Tabalaza* states:

The law has ways of keeping quiet
So that nothing at all will show

And:

This is not the first time
That men have gone in there and died

One might see how silence and death did not only appear in the subject of the poem-song, but also on the poem-song itself. As the track would have caused endless problems, its “official release became a watered-down affair with two minutes of silence instead of a song” (De Vries 2013:52). Furthermore, given the fact that the road is the metaphor of alienation, it is at the same time a place for common alienation. Thus, it is the place for homeless, and, on a larger scale, it is a potential battlefield where a worthless fight is consumed. These concepts are well represented in the song *Cape of Storms*:

And the homeless walk the streets with nothing left to lose
And when the streets become a battlefield in a battle all must lose
Then you know that there’s a cold front out of the Cape of Storms

Going back to the theme of the ‘road’, one might also find interesting that the squatter camp Lucey and his girlfriend Susan visited at the end of the ‘70s near Capetown was called ‘Crossroads’. In an interview Lucey states that many people from the homelands suffered the most brutal conditions: they were completely denuded, there was no food, no work and there was draughts (Lucey 2014). Those people then moved to Crossroads, a quarter camps which was illegal to

(...) look for work, some kind of means of survival, but their houses would get knocked down so they were stuck between nothing here and nothing there they just had one foot in the home, one toe in the town, just a toe, just trying desperately to get some means of survival and getting hammered the way they did. It's still like that (Lucey 2014).

Lucey goes on to say: "all around us people were in disarray, looking on helplessly or scrambling to salvage their meagre possessions. I'd read about these evictions, but the sight, smell and sound of this unspeakable brutality was overwhelming" (Lucey 2012:133). Therefore, one might argue that that 'road' was also a symbol of the cruelty of those years from which no way out seemed to be possible. The chorus of the poem-song *Crossroads* states:

It's come to Crossroads
Where they are gonna go now?
It's come to Crossroads
Where are they gonna go again?
It's come to Crossroads
Are you feeling a little perplexed?
Crossroads, where they gonna go the next?
...

But the authorities they don't give a damn about a family that you wanna try to save
And you got a one foot in the homeland, one toe in your town
And as you think yourself up again on the floor
They come in again they're gonna cut you down

In this verse Lucey is not only showing his anger, he is also wondering about the future, the future road which they will walk through. A few years after the poem-song was written, Crossroads required the status "as a legal place of settlement" so the government then decided to destroy the settlements that were built around it (Cape Town). The image of the road as a path full of obstacles in order to have

liberation, is repeated also in his third album *Running For Cover*, especially in the poem-song *No Easy Walk To Freedom*. Here one might even recall Mandela's biography title *Long Walk To Freedom*, a book that presents the road as a journey towards political freedom and specifically as "a journey along the road to democracy" (Drewett 2011:383). Lucey's poem-song, *No Easy Walk To Freedom*, was written "at the time of the Nationalist Government's declaration of a State of Emergency which placed the country under the rule of a virtual police state" (Drewett 2011:386-387). As to augment that oppressive force and the burdens citizens were to face, part of the poem-song states:

No easy walk to freedom
No easy way to carry the load
No easy walk to freedom
No easy way to the end of the road

Here one might see how 'walk' implies the symbol of the 'road' as it describes the means with which that road is hiked over. Thus, the 'walk' one might even see how the 'road' appears longer and yet more personalized as it is lived through one's legs and therefore through the individual's life. 'Road' is, in fact, reinforced in the last line of the verse and it rhymes with the second line word 'load', as if to emphasize not only the long walk to freedom but also the burden to carry during that journey. If in the poem-song *No Easy Walk To Freedom* the road might be seen as a tunnel whose, despite the difficulties, its end is perceptible, in the poem-song *The Line* the road is perceived as an obscure tunnel whose final trajectory is unknown. A few lines of the poem-song state:

Now you stand on the threshold of a path you can't see
You stand in the doorway of darkness

The word 'path' might here be seen as a synecdoche for the wide form 'road'. These lines might even suggest an impossibility to move on that road. As a consequence of this, the static nature of the road is moreover reinforced by the alliteration of the 'd' letter. This worthless fight and the 'road' as a place filled with dangers also emerge in the poem-song *The Night Harry J Went To War*, written in 1994. The poem-song talks about the story of Harry Joshua, whose wife was attacked by gangsters called The Hard Living Kids and the police did nothing to solve the case (Lucey 2014). Harry Joshua, therefore, took action himself by killing them (Lucey 2014). Lucey states: "I'm not advocating vigil anti action I'm just saying these are the kind of things that happened" and the song "tries to give a description of the desperation that people feel with gangsterism" (Lucey 2014). By reporting the dark side of the road of gangsters, here named 'street', some lines of the song state:

And the nights are longer than the knives of the wide boys
Hanging on the corner of the streets

What Lucey seems to suggest here is the sharp shape of both 'nights' and 'knives', a similarity which is also indicated with an almost rhyme of the two words. This concept given, Lucey might be suggesting an anticipation both of the murder committed by the Three Hard Living Kids to Harry's wife and, in turn, the murder committed by Joshua to the gangster band. Lucey, furthermore, reports how Harry Joshua himself appeared as part of that dark road as he lived in the same area where the gangsters lived. As *The Night Harry J Went To War* states:

Now Harry seemed no different
From any other man in the street
Softly spoken, unassuming, quiet and discreet
But he lived in the middle of the gangland
That was ruled by the scum of the street

Again, in another verse of the song Lucey talks about the road as a place in which even the cops were frightened to be at night. Thus, once more, he describes an impossibility of escaping from that situation with the words:

Now the cops they just seemed paralysed
Either dead scared or didn't have a care
And when the shit was going down in the street
The only place to be was not out there

4.1.2 The line

As apartheid itself put a line among South Africans by considering certain categories 'apart', the line is also a current theme which is to be found in Lucey's poem-songs. According to Lucey's words: "you were told that Black people were communists, they were dangerous, that they were going to drive all white people into the sea and that was how the country was, which of course wasn't true at all" (Lucey 2014). Another type of division was also felt in the response people gave to apartheid: there were people who, like Lucey, believed in the 'face-to-face' approach and there were people who, on the contrary, took no position in front of the laws imposed by their own country. In the already mentioned poem-song *Lungile Tabalaza*, Lucey's "most strident attack on the South African police force" (Lucey 2012:161), which accused them of murder, the line is put just between these two factions:

Some men take the hard line
Some take none at all
Some just want their freedom
And they wind up behind prison walls

One might argue that the formers, those who took the hard line, and the third ones, who wanted their freedom, shared a correspondence. Among these a reference might not only be given to the same Lucey, but also to heroes struggle like Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko. Lucey's anger screams out against those who even denied the most basic human rights. As Lucey explains:

But there was another part of that argument and it wasn't so much that white people were speaking for black people, it was that people, and it didn't matter if they were black or white, we were seeing that there was a great injustice going on in the country. And you either spoke against it or you didn't. That was the big debate at that time (Lucey 2014).

Furthermore, the word 'line' of the poem-song *Lungile Tabalaza* might anticipate the form of the jail gates, to which an allusion is made in the last line. This, then, constitutes also the separation between the person whose freedom is denied and the one who controls it. Even a few songs of his album *Half-A-Live* (1980) mentions the theme of the line, the line which determined people's living conditions. In the poem-song *Hanging Round The Middle*, for instance, one can read:

Hanging around in the middle
Oh you know that's not mine
You know that nothing really lasts too long here down
You're travelling safely
Quite safe from the winding storm
Over everyone is sad in the sad sand baby
It's a line oh you know that we've given you the same old line

The first lines of the verse clearly relate to Lucey's direct approach of denouncing injustice. They then are the anticipation of the storm he and his country were living. As for what concerns Lucey's personal storm, one might see how the banning of his first album and his addiction to drugs and alcohol were part of that (Lucey 2014). In the final part of the poem-song *Hanging Around The Middle*, once again Lucey clearly maintains his position of denounce and claims that it is the state that imposed the line of division, that same old line since the beginning of apartheid. He therefore implies a call to action, a call to rebellion and challenges those who do not get involved in the cause. The line of discrimination is also emphasized in Lucey's poem-song *The Other Side Of Town*, contained in the album *Half-A-Live*:

There's a river or a railway
That runs straight through your town
The one side you're a king or queen
The one side you're the clown
There's a sentry at the iron gate
And you have to show the stamp
Of how you rate in the class game
Are you up or down the ramp

The sentry which stands at the iron gate might be seen as the police who controlled if black people had their passbooks and could access certain areas of the country which were reserved to white people. It was therefore the skin colour which established "the rate in the class game" and determined if you were to have privileges or if you had to be subjugated to privileges by being derided. Furthermore, the weight of this situation is emphasized also in the words Lucey chose for the first second lines, as the alliteration of the 'r' sound shows. Lucey himself was divided in his "black-and-white view of the world" (Lucey 2012:161) and his friendship with the black Zulu Jabula Makhatini definitely has helped him

to have a wide and concrete perspective on how the system of injustice worked (Drewett 2011:380). Furthermore, in the album *Running For Cover* (1990) Lucey reports how the line was the symbol of a parameter that declared one's state of being alive or one's state of being death. The song *No Easy Walk To Freedom* reports:

There are lives on the line
There are kids in the field
There's more than one war
That's for certain

Contrary to what the foreign press often stated, what was going on in South Africa, in fact, was also a war among different ethnicities. Thus, the line Lucey was not only between black and white people, or between people who denounced apartheid and those who did not. Lucey maintains:

Then what sort of happened was that you started seeing different groups within the black society, conservative groups versus radical groups and then even within the radical groups there were conservative arms of it. Then there was the Afrikanists, then there was the stuff between coloured people and the white people and there was the stuff between black Zulu people and Indian people. The Zulu was gonna attack the Indians and you started to seeing the complexity. So what I'm saying is that it's a mistake to see South Africa a simple black and white thing, it's much more complicated than that and there's many wars and they continue (Lucey 2014).

He even reports how in 1976 there was a massive fight among black people, a fight encouraged by the state, as some of them were supporting the most conservative part (Lucey 2014). *The Line* is also the title of one of Lucey's poem-songs from the album *Running For Cover*. It emphasizes the sense of division, mainly by describing, on the one hand, the situation of poor people who were associated with winter, with the sense of being forgotten and whose lives seemed to be wasted. On

the other hand, it refers to the other 'faction': rich people who were appointed with images of a false glory, illusionary pride and corruption. The poem-song states:

And all of the speeches are all filled with glory
And victory and honor and pride and the prize
While the poor man still braces himself to the winter
Will he be forgotten when the battle cries run dry
When the rivers of rhetoric finally run dry
When the promises intentions are tested
Will corruption still be the handmaiden of power
Will the martyrs be lists of lives wasted

Here one might even see how Lucey uses images in which the stopping of the water which flows, embedded in both 'battle cries' and 'rivers', is the symbol of an ending which is unpredictable. According to Biedermann (1991:196) "il fiume è simbolo di un'acqua che, non ferma, come quella del mare, attraverso il fluire e le alluvioni influenza la dinamica e la scansione del tempo". However, here the drying out of 'the rivers of rhetoric' might be connected to an endless and peaceful life. As the first ancient cultures were born on the river shore (Biedermann 1991:196), Lucey might have chosen the word 'river' in order to express the place where he was born, but at the same time he shows the inevitability of being born in a place of false promises. Finally, a line is also expressed in Lucey's song *My Son My Father And Me* (1994). Here Lucey does not directly refer to the division created by the apartheid regime but instead look for this perspective in his personal life, especially in his father and in his son's figure. Thus, here one might see that there is an inevitable familiar line, connecting father and child. The poem-song maintains:

Here we stand
On a knife edge precarious between our lives
Here we stand
In a place where no history can help
Here we stand
Both stuck between boys and the men we despise
Here we stand
In a trial of our lives we both stand

At the same time, the line between the two is a line of division. Lucey's father, a very authoritative man who obliged him to work in his bottle store at the age of eight and who beat up his mother at home, was also a man who could not protect Lucey when he was young (Lucey 2012:26). This division, this line between the two seems also to be an obstacle for a full unconditional love between father and son, an obstacle which, as the same poem-song declares, is not facilitated by the historical context the two are facing. This statement is also reinforced in the verse:

There you stand
At the edge of the desert at the end of the war
There you stand
In a world I could never look into
There you stand
An old Don Quixote with your eyes on the floor
There you stand
In a bubble I tried to break into

Here one might see how isolation has been changed and at the same time enhanced through the choice of the personal pronoun, which in the first verse reported here was 'we'. The 'you' written in this verse implies therefore a sense of detachment which is later strengthened in its second line through the image of the edge and augmented through the image of the desert. The desert itself is the metaphor for isolation, an isolation that is enhanced by the historical context that stays behind it.

This line of division is also given by the ‘world’, another world where Lucey could not be part of. The same physical world itself is divided between its external surface and the personal worlds one sees and perceives with his own eyes. Thus, the image of the old Don Quijote might represent how Lucey’s father at that moment in life is brought back to reality, as Cervantes’ s main character of the second book does (Biedermann:159). At the same time, though, Lucey’s father seems to ask for isolation, which is strengthened by his look on the floor. Despite Lucey’s effort to embrace this man and accept him, his father continues to appeal to division by remaining in an unbreakable bubble.

4.1.3 Home

According to Biedermann (1991:46) home is the image of the mother’s breast, in which one can find refuge. Home, therefore, stands for protection and safety that embraces one even in the saddest moments of life. It is the peace that wraps one up wherever she/he is. Lucey maintains:

There’s also this idea of home, what is home, where is home? Where does one find it?
And I think you find it inside first, it’s not a roof and walls, it is a place in your life, a
place in your heart where you can finally find peace and where you can be contented.

One can well see how his concept applies to the already mentioned song *Windy*

Days, which states:

But on the track things aren’t too good
It seems harm instead
I got to run instead on home
I got to run on home
Got to run on home

The emphasis on 'home' is repeated three times by Lucey and this might represent the very necessity of finding refuge in peace. Bachelard (1994:7) maintains that without a home, man would be at a loss as it is the place that "maintains him through the storms of the heavens and through those of life". One, in fact, has to bear in mind that during those years Lucey's life was like a storm: the fact that he was engaged to marry Kate which awoke in him uncertainty and fear, the impossible reconciliation with Sheila (Lucey 2012:121). Furthermore, part of the storm was Kate's death because of "a massive dose of sleeping pills" (Lucey 2012:128). So Lucey felt the need to have his personal space, his personal home of which he was the only key owner. The theme of home is also presented in the song *The Road Is Much Longer* in the verse that claims:

Now the nights calling and I'm nearer to home
I hear you calling: Are you feeling alone?
It's up and down highways always returning
Somehow there just seems to be no escape

At the same time, one can see how in this verse his desire of going home is in a way impeded by another voice which interrupts him, as if he wanted to describe the difficulty that going back to his own intimate space implied. Lucey states: "Home, part of what the journey is is searching for home" (Lucey 2014), for, as Bachelard (Bachelard 1994:4) claims, "our house is our corner of the world. As has often been said, it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word". Not only the road seems infinite but also looking for home under those conditions was not easily accessible. Lucey's poem-song *You Only Need Say Nothing* describes how homeless also needed to find their home, both physically and inwardly. Lucey felt also that the homeless needed this interior space of peace, for (Bachelard

1994:4). Lucey therefore decided to address the song *You Only Need Say Nothing* of the album *The Road Is Much Longer*:

There's a beggar sitting legless
On a pavement in the town
Hoping just to catch your eye
Hoping that you'll look down
And he shifts his tired body
And counts the coppers that he's begged
And wonders will he get home first
Or will he first get mugged

From Lucey's point of view, apartheid atrocities are a theme which is necessary to talk about, reaching all those people that suffered in it. What he sees through his eyes is directly fixed in the page and in his voice. Unfortunately, this cost him the banning of his first album and the *Rand Daily Mail* of 1982 reported that this poem-song was "equally dangerous in that the police are [were] again shown in a very bad light" (Lucey 2012:183). An accusation to this poem-song was even made to the music he used as the words were accompanied "with the beat of African rhythm to enhance the impact of the words" and therefore the "song can incite people towards insurgency and violence" (Lucey 2012:183). The poem-song *The Night Harry J Went To War* Lucey also describes how in the suburb where Harry lived his home was all but a place where internal peace could be found:

And heartless are the streets you call your home

In these words one might see how even one's home sometimes was not the safest place to rely on. *The Night Harry J Went To War* also explores the doubt of what one's home was, of what one's home was and if that was really the home. As the

poem-song develops, one might see how Harry Joshua managed to find his home in taking himself revenge from those gangsters that killed his wife.

4.2 Mzwakhe Mbuli's poem-songs

This section will deal with the exploration of the themes Mbuli talks about in his apartheid poem-songs. For this analysis, selected poem-songs of the albums *Change Is Pain* (1986), *Resistance Is Defence* (1992), *Afrika* (1993) and *Izigi* (1994) will be taken into consideration.

4.2.1 Second World War

One of the themes Mbuli often repeats especially in his album *Change Is Pain* is the comparison between apartheid and the Second World War, sometimes by emphasizing its victim in the terrible tragedy of the holocaust, other times by underlining the two systems of dictatorship known as 'nazism' and 'fascism'. *Many Years Ago*, a poem-song that talks about how South Africa was once a happy land before the arrival of foreign cultures, mentions:

Personal ambition is holocaust;
When man wholesale man;
At the expense of his blood;²³

²³ The written arrangement reported here is the same Mbuli used in his poem book *Before Dawn*. According to Brown (1998:247) this use is inappropriate as he sees no balance between Mbuli's oral and print conventions. He claims: "there seems instead to be a conflict between the function of the semi-colon as rhythmical and grammatical marker" (Brown 1998:247).

Personal ambition is therefore first abolished as abolished is the person who wants to obtain it. Mbuli here might give the image of a commercial traffic of human beings, who in that act lost the very same concept of their existence. Peirette (2004:i) maintains that, however, even if both Germany and South Africa wanted to legitimize a superior status among the ethnicities, different systems were used in order to apply that concept. If, as she states, “in Germany the reasons given were the desire to preserve the pure Aryan volk and protect the volkisch culture”, the line that the South African government followed was that “each ‘ethnic’ group would best realise its full potential if it was encouraged to preserve its integrity and promote its own culture” (Peirette 2004:i). Nonetheless, both were deprived of their citizenship: “Jews were rendered stateless and expelled as far as possible from the Reich”, whereas black people of South Africa “were made citizens of ‘ethnic homelands’” (Peirette 2004:i). Depending on hypothetical division of ethnicities and languages, ten regional homelands were built for black people (Friedman 1996:86). However, the area that was given to them was too small to host them (Friedman 1996:86) and as the homelands were far from the economic centre of the country, so workers were not able to live there (Friedman 1996:86). Hence, under those conditions, despite those independent homelands, black people were forced to financially live under the apartheid government (Friedman 1996:86). Despite these considerations, in choosing the Second World War as a theme, Mbuli does not only sees black Africans in a similar position to Jews; he, in fact, compares the victims of apartheid to the Japanese of Hiroshima. Another verse of the song *Many Years Ago*, in fact, states:

This is how I lost my land;
Tragically the wagon of our culture was bombed;
Torpedoed beyond human cruelty;
Men murdered like men maimed in Hiroshima

The theme of holocaust appears once more in this verse as the word ‘wagon’ might be associated to the wagons that brought the Jews to concentration camps. The second line of the verse, therefore, might be an anticipation that will only be clarified in the last verse: the bombing of Hiroshima in which Mbuli sees identification. Furthermore, in the poem-song *Now is The Time*, which invites people to rebellion, as the liberation campaign of the ‘80s was doing, Mbuli reports once more how the society in which he was living was filled with the brutalities of discrimination, this time by taking into consideration ‘fascism’:

Now is the time;
To vomit the remains of fascism;
Back to the bucket of imperialism;
Now is the time.

Here ‘fascism’ seems to be the synonym for the already mentioned ‘nazism’ of the previous poem-song and rhymes with ‘imperialism’, two concepts imposed by the whites. Moreover, imperialism seems here to be the source of fascism, which has to be overcome. In this same poem-song *Now is The Time* there is also another line which states:

Now is the time;
To blot out pillars of Nazism;
Now is the time.

Again, here the word ‘nazism’ and the word ‘apartheid’ seem to be synonyms. However, one should bear in mind that, as Peirette suggests: “unlike Nazi

Germany's 'Final Solution', the goal of apartheid was not the extermination of 'blacks'" (Peirette 2004:6). She goes on to state: "Rather it was the establishment of a rigidly separated society wherein 'white' supremacy was entrenched with 'blacks' providing cheap labour and doing work that 'whites' found unacceptable" (Peirette 2004:6). As she continues to explain "the apartheid government never considered killing their labour force" (Peirette 2004:6). Still, Mbuli insists on that association, this time with 'fascism', which seems to be an interchangeable word with 'nazism'. Once more, the so called 'people's poet' believes in the hope for a change, of the triumph of a legitimized justice and peace over fascism. Through the image of the dawn, an image which will also be recalled in the title of his poems collection *Before Dawn*, the song *The Day Shall Dawn* recites:

However like a surprise the day shall dawn;
And the world shall mourn;
At the burial of fascism;
And a threat to world peace shall be no more.

One might even notice how Mbuli chose the word 'dawn' as to symbolize a new beginning with bright colours for his country in opposition to the word 'burial' with its dark colours that reminds one of both the present and past system in which Mbuli was living. Darkness might also have been referred to the State of Emergency of 1975 in which "575 people were killed in political violence – more than half killed by the police" (State of Emergency).

4.2.2 Role as a prophet

A theme that one often finds in Mbuli's poem-songs is how he charges himself of being the voice of the voiceless people, a voice of hope and of denounce. Kane Lo (2009:159) reports how according to her personal communication with the South African Kelwyn Sole, he considers Mbuli as even having "the timber of a preacher while performing on stage". Kane Lo (2009:159) furthermore suggests how his religious tone is perceived while he gives interviews. To explain this role, one should not forget the importance Mbuli attributes to his Christianity and furthermore, one should bear in mind that Mbuli's career started when at a preacher's funeral he recited his poem-songs (Christgau 1998:344). The poem-song *The Day Shall Dawn* is just one of the examples in which he considers himself as a prophet that will fight against apartheid crimes:

A new man is born;
Full of strength and agility,
To demonstrate conventional wisdom;
In defence of the fatherland;
Through cannons of criticism;
His dragon force and enthusiasm;
Shall perform and get into combat
Against fascism.

One might think that Mbuli's words were not only a form of sustain for the audience he addressed to but also that they were comforting words for himself, as if by stating them, he managed to find strength. The image he himself gives to his dragon force might be an example of that. As Durand (1963:89) states, the dragon is the symbol of night as it might be the beast of thunder, the fury of water, the one who recalls death and therefore might be seen as the animal who creates fear. Furthermore,

‘dragon’ derives from two different Greek words, “one that means a huge serpent or snake” and the other one who means ‘I see clearly’ (Living Arts Original). One might also see the dragon as an animal of strength which can breathe fire during the fight, a metaphor which is concretized in Mbuli’s struggle against segregation. Again one might see the word ‘cannon’ as another reference to the Second World War which seems to be a preponderant theme in Mbuli’s first album. As for what concerns Mbuli’s role as a prophet, the poem-song *The Drum Beats* describes how his South African voice of change and liberation wants to be listened to; that voice is claiming for attention and admiration. Its first verse states:

Admire me I am the beats;
From the conga drums of Thabazimbi;
I convey royal messages to the people;
Listen to the rhythm;
Listen to the beats;
From Congo river to the great ocean;
I am like a telex of culture;
Flowing messages through the beatings of the drums;
From frostland to cold land;
I am the beats from the conga drums of Thabazimbi

One might notice how the choice of the drums was fundamental in this poem-song as they stood (and still stand) for typical instrument of traditional African music. Therefore, not only national identity but continental identity is asking to be listened to. Moreover, in the second part of the verse, Mbuli’s words, embodied in the same beatings of the drums, touch water elements as they expand. He, in fact, even talks about the countries of Tanzania (also mentioning Dar-es-Salaam) by expressing his displeasure for exploited workers. Furthermore, he talks about Luanda (Angola)

and criticizes how people there do not even have enough to survive. Part of the final verse of *The Drum Beats*, then calls on the whole continent by claiming:

I am the drum beat of change in Africa;
Deafening the ears like the winds of change;
Get it from me;

The calling of the audience's attention is evoked by the familiar sound of the drum beats, which represents the poet's metamorphosis. Here one might notice how the poet's metamorphosis with the drum beats is amplified to the ears of the audience. The strength of the drum beat of change is therefore presented to the reader as the similitude of the 'winds of change', which might also be seen as the means through which this sound is propagated. The tone Mbuli uses as a prophet might also be explained with the message he had to convey, which did "not only apply to South Africa" (Petersen 1991:67) and was well received by his crowd. As the same Mbuli reports:

I got really conscious of the fact that the comrades, the foot soldiers, the young lions, they were crazy about my poetry. So there was a role I was playing, I was stirring the spirits of the comrades, I was like beating the drums....I belonged to the deep parts of Soweto. I was like a commander. People listened to me, they believed in me (Kane Lo 2009:94).

According to Brown (1999:252) the lines from *The Drum Beats* "could usefully be placed in a tradition of syncretic popular performance that stretches back, through Ingoapele Madingoane, to Isaiah Shembe and, before him, Ntsikana in the early nineteenth century". However, Kozain sees how Mbuli has "facile political generalisations" (1994:23) and he mentions this poem as part of this consideration. Furthermore Kozain claims that in this poem Mbuli's delivery "remains a monotone declamation that does not match the rhythm of the music" despite his statement of

a strong connection with African music (Kozain 1994:24). The theme of his role as a prophet is also enhanced in the song *Ndimbeleni* in the lines:

I and the truth never collide
My hidden mental resources explode
Never to bottle up the spirit of liberty

The identification of Mbuli with truth confirms once more his prophetic nature, which in particular relates to the notion of apocalypse. Thus, Mbuli would appear as a prophet whose voice will have brought freedom over the evil of apartheid. In support of this, Brown (1998:251) maintains that Mbuli's voice in his poem-songs creates "a visionary and prophetic 'speaker' somewhat distinct from Mzwakhe Mbuli the person, a view which is supported by Mzwakhe's tendency to refer to 'Mzwakhe' in the third person in interviews" (Brown 1998:251). It is as if Mbuli took distance from himself and raised to the role he had chosen. The origin of the declamatory persona might find its origin "in part from the influence of personal izibongo or 'boasts' which African people create for themselves, but it also suggests the influence of the performance arrogance of rap and dub artists" (Brown 1998:252). Furthermore, Brown (1998:251) argues that, from the one hand Mbuli describes what he sees as the poet-songwriter 'Mzwakhe'; at the same time, though, he describes collective experience. That is why in his poems the 'I' might be seen as 'we', that 'we' including all the people who suffered discrimination during apartheid. One could see that this concept applies as well to the song *Joyina* of the album *Resistance Is Defence*:

In solidarity I shall regroup the uprooted
In solidarity I shall regroup the exploited

When the shepherd is struck
The sheep scatter
And the gods of gold glamourize
Consistently upon human labour

Here one might see how the 'I' that follows the word 'solidarity' might well be substituted with 'we' as the term itself suggests unity among people. Moreover, the poem-song implies the need felt by the audience to emerge again, of being lifted together towards peace and freedom. Even in his 1993 album *Afrika* he continues to see himself as a guide whose voice is being widespread. This can be well seen in the poem-song *Kudala*:

I am the stone
When thrown into the river I create waves
I do make a difference
I speak poetry
And when I speak poetry I create waves

He renders explicit his personification with a stone: he is the stone whose poetry expands and vibrates to unknown distance. According to Jung (1980:217) stones had a high symbolic value for primitive society as they believed they were the house of divinities or spirits. One might think that, as Mbuli was very religious, he chose the stone as its connection to religion implied. As for the images of water, one has to bear in mind that water represents both the dichotomy of the source of life forms and it is an element of negativity because of its connection to drowning (Biedermann 1991:4). Rivers, though, reflects the positive image of water: they represent the normal life flow and are associated to long life (Biedermann 1994:4,8). Thus, the stone that creates waves might be seen as the rupture of normal life, which in fact the poet reports in the line "I do make a difference". However,

despite the rupture, the river is calm and therefore one might be brought to think that his words are nonviolent words of change. As if to suggest that he is the voice that breaks the routine in the river of regularity, another verse of the poem-song *Kudala* states:

I am the stone and you are the river
We are the waves, we are the oceans
To push these boats, to put these ships, these ferries to harmony

He and the river, that is to say, he and the people he awakened became part of the same flow of protest towards harmony and peace. This might be supported by the fact that Mbuli's performances with his group "have filled stadiums and large venues where gripping live shows have won ecstatic acclaim from audiences nationwide" (*Resistance Is Defence* cover album). Also, the group received international status as it toured to North America, Scandinavia and Europe in 1990-1991 (*Resistance is Defence* cover album). The response of the audience, might then have given Mbuli the right to continue the theme of prophecy and the visionary persona in his fifth album *Izigi* (1994). As one might see, the song *I Am A Cloud* reports:

I am the cloud in the sky
I'm the cloud
If you want to see me look up in the sky
I'm the cloud in the sky
I am made of water molecules
I cannot be touched
I am the symbol of innocence
I am the cloud in the sky
I provide the rain and the rainbow
I'm the blessing to nature
I'm putting news to the farmer
I am part of the sky universe family

Once more, one might notice how Mbuli is the personification of a natural element. The fact that he uses the sky as a place in which he is under the form of a cloud might confirm his role as a prophet as it shows his proximity to God and his universe. According to Biedermann (1991:335) clouds are in fact the means through which Jesus will come in glory. Moreover, the image of the cloud represented here is not the dark one that might initiate a storm and is a symbol of a catastrophe. The cloud is instead a symbol of good news for the farmer as it will provide benefits to his plantation.

4.2.3 Religion

As Kane Lo (2009:160) suggests, the importance of religion for Mbuli breathes also in his poem-song *Alone* of the album *Unbroken Spirit*, which he wrote in his 176 days of solitary confinement. In that poem-song he states: “Neither bishop nor Bible allowed in, alone, all alone”²⁴. The importance of religion for Mbuli and the images it conveys might also be found in *The Day Shall Dawn*, part of which reports:

The doors of hell are golden;
Possessed and displayed by Western powers;
Self interest is a vehicle to the graveyard;
Hidden worms shall come to exposure;
And collaborators like giant spiders;
Shall belong to the dustbin of history
All this shall take root before dawn

The image of hell as the place for sinners is therefore anticipated by its golden doors who belong to Western powers. Once more, here the attack is against imperialism and perhaps afrikaaners that made apartheid legal. Another religious reference one

²⁴ Even if the album *Unbroken Spirit* is not taken into consideration here as no cd could be found, this sentence found in Kane Lo work was considered appropriate.

might find in this verse is ‘the graveyard’, which here represents the punishment for personal power. Moreover, the attack on the apartheid government seems to be clear and Mbuli decided to use a simile of spiders to describe its collaborators. Once again, the religious element might be seen in the prelude of the apocalypse, whose forward moment of peace could be well seen in the word ‘dawn’. Kane Lo (2009:135) claims that “christianity is a cornerstone of black South African life” (this might be also seen in the Gospel tradition) and that “religiosity had also found its way into much of the *izibongo* of the 21st century”. *Izibongo* poem-songs identify people and object and consequently give substance and meaning to what or who is taken into consideration (Gunner and Gwala 1994:2). Furthermore, as Kresse (1998:172) maintains, *izibongo* are “central to the local language of politics” as they reflect and re influence “the current political atmosphere within Zulu communities” (Kresse 1998:172). Therefore, the author considers the element of critic and not only of praise as the focus of *izibongo* (Kresse 1998:172). One might see another example of *izibongo* in the poem-song *The Spear Has Fallen*, which also has “fierce percussion that picks up Mzwakhe’s oratorical rhythms” (Pareles 1988):

God has given life unto man;
And man has taken life from man;
Let me say no unto slavery and mutilation;
Let me say yes unto victory and harmony.

If on the one hand Mbuli here praises God for the blissful gift he gave to human kind, on the other hand he criticizes man, and here ‘man’ of the second line might be seen as the synecdoche for white South Africans or for the apartheid government in a more general way. Thus, the functions of the *izibongo* is here well

explained. At the same time, this poem-song has a double religious element as, according to Brown (1998:248), is modelled on the death oration of African society, “a form which Mzwakhe employs to great effect at political funerals”. At the same time, Mbuli criticizes the way in which Christianity is embodied; that is to say, he criticizes those who commit murders and crimes and under a false identity consider themselves Christians. The poem-song *Change Is Pain*, from the album with the same name, states:

I have been to Winterveld slums
And I have seen victims of deliberate policies
Man and beast dying of hunger alike
Falling apart under the dove of peace
All in the name of Christianity

If on the one hand in the second line Mbuli divides the victims and the policies that made them victims, in the third line he embodies them in the same entity and gives them the same ending, of ‘dying of hunger alike’. In the fourth line of this verse one might see ‘falling apart’ as a recall to the word ‘apartheid’, which is opposed to the dove of peace. The dove as well represents a symbol of religion as in the Bible brings the end of the Flood (Biedermann 1991:128-129). Furthermore, a dove is present during Jesus’ christening and the Holy Spirit is usually illustrated with a dove (Biedermann 1991:129). However, in another song of the album *Change Is Pain*, the poet seems not to agree with the God he adores. As if the poet wanted to take distance from God, *The Spear Has Fallen* claims:

God forgive I don’t;
For the heart of Africa is bleeding;
Bleeding from the wounds knifed hollow;
Brutally knifed alone in the night.

In this verse Mbuli uses the synecdoche ‘Africa’ for both South Africa and the whole nation. Furthermore, he uses the metaphor of the continent as a person who is bleeding from an injury made by a traitor in his own land. Nonetheless, the feeling that seems to appear in the verse is pain and not the empty left because of a murder. This might want to show how, despite its wounds, Africa survives and resists. Furthermore, as Kane Lo (2009:160) suggests, Mbuli’s detachment from God might be seen in the poem-song *Why Tricks Not Solutions in Before Dawn*:

If at all the god of liberation;
The god of the poor, deprived and oppressed cannot punish Pretoria;
Therefore my God owes a special apology;
To the ancient people of Babylon, Egypt, Sodom and Gomorra.

According to Kane Lo, here Mbuli is suggesting God “to punish those evil people behind the regime” (Kane Lo 2009:160).

4.3 Roger Lucey and Mzwakhe Mbuli’s common themes

In considering Lucey and Mbuli’s poem-songs, one might see that despite their different styles, their different life paths and their different ethnicities, the themes of ‘children’ and the theme of ‘action’ against apartheid are both taken into consideration by the two songwriters. The following paragraph shall provide an attempt of comparison between them.

4.3.1 Children

Children, the symbol of hope and future, are considered by both songwriters. In the poem-song *The Other Side Of Town*, Lucey describes the first part of the carefree life of children: they are sitting around the fire and might be having fun cooking parts of a chicken. Suddenly, their carefreeness is interrupted by the sound of a possible police car that awakens them back to reality:

In an empty lot some city kids
Are sitting around a fire
Roasting chicken heads and feet
Till the sound of screaming tires
Warns them that it's time to run

This verse might show how it is not only Lucey and the adult world that run on the road in search of an escape; runners of that long tiring road are also innocent children. Children's innocence is also explored in Lucey's personal life with his own son Tay in the poem-song *Thabane* where he wished Tay did not see the atrocities of apartheid. At the same time, Lucey knows this is just an illusion and even the innocents have to face their struggle with their voices, knowing there is something that will never die in their fight. A verse of *Thabane* reports:

Sunanana I hope you never feel the sickness
Now destroying
Your land that's still so fresh and new
But the pain has been rearing
Children prepared for battle
Children now all singing
"The body may die but not the spirit
It's now or never, we're going to make it".

Once again, in the poem-song he strongly hopes his present will be a forgotten story for his son. Another part of *Thabane* states:

I hope for you it's just history
This crisis we are living
You know we've taken so much
And we never thought of giving
And now I wonder will you ever see the freedom
And I hope for you that the war is dead and gone
I may be blind but I hope that it's over
I may be blind but I hope that it's dead and gone
Oh Oh, I hope that it's over

Moreover, both Lucey and Mbuli felt appropriate to talk about the innocent deprived children of Crossroads. In the poem-song *Crossroads* of the album *The Road Is Much Longer*, Lucey does not only describe how bad the conditions of that settlement were and the anger he had against the government which “embarked on a concerted effort of destroying informal settlements where black people lived” (Cape Town). Lucey’s worries regard the impotence those parents had in the protection of their children in that situation of segregation. A verse of the poem-song *Crossroads*:

When you hear the dogs bark
You know they're coming near
So you take your children into your arms
And you try to calm the fear
You pray to God for mercy
And you hope that you pull through
But as your door comes crashing down
There's nothing that you can do

This is perhaps the only poem-song in Lucey’s apartheid albums that mention ‘God’. Even if Lucey lived through the Church contest when he was young, as he grew up he rejected its ideas. Contrary to Mbuli’s view on the religion theme, in his biography Lucey states: “(...) I was deeply affected by the dogma of the church. It would take years to undo the shame and guilt imposed by that mighty institution for

simply having the feelings of a normal boy” (Lucey 2012:29). It also shows how neither black people’s praises to God were the key for salvation in that moment. Lucey’s words, the tone he uses in this poem-song and the concrete direct images he uses, strongly give his audience a deep sense of anger against the government and the police, referred to in the line ‘you know they’re comin near’. Another verse of the poem-song reinforces Lucey’s anger by saying:

And your baby is crying and your daughter tries to be brave
But the authorities they don’t give a damn about the family
That you wanna try to save

Mbuli as well composed a poem-song in which he denounced the brutalities people of the homelands were living. The poem-song is called *The Last Struggle*. Here again the focus of his attention is on children, but rather than talking about the impossibility of protecting them as Lucey did, Mbuli decided to associate them to the same suffering adults were facing, as if he wanted to claim that those children, deprived of their youth and of their dreams were already adults. Thus, one might see the ‘deprived land’ taken away from the Western powers, as Mbuli states in other songs of *Change Is Pain*, is not only a problem for adults but also for those ‘adult children’. A verse of *The Last Struggle* states:

Listen to the voices
The voices of the deprived children
Deprived their land of their birth
Listen to the cries
Cries of women in Crossroads and Capecity
Cries of women in Bahopa and
Cries as if they are humming a song

Furthermore, if on the one hand, Mbuli associates children with ‘voice’, on the other hand, when he talks of women he uses ‘cries’. Those ‘cries’ might not be seen as tears, but as screams of protest. In fact, when the police tried to destroy Crossroads, “women played important and leading roles in an intensive campaign of resistance to save” it (Cape Town). Together with men, they even formed a Joint Action Committee to defend Crossroads (Cape Town). The strength of this protest joins together with the same children. Another verse of *The Last Struggle*, in fact, states:

Children and mothers crying alike;
Alike dumped in homelands;
Alike sent to poverty stricken ghettos;
Alike sent to jails;
Ngizwa ingoma, ngizwa isikhalo.

Furthermore, children are also the symbol of future, of a new generation and both songwriters felt the need to express this concept in at least one of their poem-songs.

Mbuli’s *Behind The Bars* claims:

A meeting in mind took place;
Uncountable plans emerged;
Children my worry;
My sweetheart in mind;
Behind the bars.

Here Mbuli sees himself in prison and thinking about the future. This time he describes his sense of protection towards children and towards the tragic future they will face. On the other hand, Lucey in his song *No Easy Walk To Freedom*, a poem-song composed in 1984, seems to see a glimmer of hope in that long walk to freedom. He seems to suggest a new start and a new approach towards the future.

Part of the poem-song reports:

Now there are mothers and fathers
And children to raise
In a land for the living
In so many ways
And never again
By the powers that might be
Must we be led blindfolded
In a land that should be free

Mbuli sees this glimmer of hope for a new future, and therefore for children, only in 1994. With his poem-song *Reconcile* he maintains:

The time is now
Now is the time for children to benefit
Let them rip the fluss of justice
Teach them how to solve the seed of love
And later rip lasting peace
Let the children fuss no more
For knowledge and wisdom the time is now
Anthem for the mental equipment for the brighter future

Mbuli is therefore asking for children to have a proper education in the name of love and unity, by expressing that in a democratic South Africa this is possible. Their voices are not deprived anymore and seems to be free.

4.3.2 Action

Both Lucey and Mbuli were activist denouncing the system in which they were living through all their albums. This paragraph will only bring light to the poem-songs that explicitly call for action. As Lucey (2014) suggests: “there’s no point in just moaning and criticizing without being active, without saying, criticism needs to be more constructive in order to see what’s good and not only what’s bad”. An example of this statement might be seen in Lucey’s *You Only Need Say Nothing* where he sings:

And you know that it's so damn easy
To turn and look away
And you only need say nothing
To have nothing at all to say

Lucey here criticizes those who lived their lives under apartheid without opposing what they were facing, without looking at what was done to them. He continues:

There's teargas at the funeral of a boy gunned
Down by cops
They say that there are too many mourners
And this is where it stops
Then they bring on the boots and the batons
And the blood runs fear and cold
And the moral of the exercise
Is to do what you are told

The attack here is on the government and its police who did not oppose the violation of human rights, to those people who automatically destroyed human beings and their right to live. It is an attack to the indifference of all those who died, as if one's life was just a cold number which was not necessary to keep. There is another poem-song with which Lucey criticizes the passive reaction of certain people. *The Line* states:

Like sheep to the slaughter they stand in the line, the line

Indifferent men are therefore defined with the simile of sheep about to be slaughtered. Lucey here might suggest that cowardice was the position held by a

multitude of people who did not exit their comfort zone and false stability. The same concept is also expressed by Mbuli in his poem-song *Ignorant* which states:

I live in the world of fantasy;
My world consists of little that I see around me;
I accept everything without questioning;
I am satisfied with everything;
For I know nothing better;
I am ignorant
I am an ignorant
I am ignorant

That again is a criticism to superficiality and to the 'I do not want to see' attitude. The use of 'I' here is different from all the other uses that have been discussed previously. This time, it does not stand for a visionary persona that lifts himself but, on the contrary, it reduces itself to that part of coward people Mbuli does not deal with. Thus, it creates an opposition to the same Mbuli who recites these words and who calls for action. This strategy might be used as the poet-songwriter wants to awaken people for a reaction. Another poem-song that maintains the same concept is *Uyeyeni*. Its words puts Mbuli in the condition of a judge. Part of the poem-song claims:

Cowards, how long have you remained seated with hands folded?
What is it that you are doing that is so time consuming?
Damn cowards wake up, even the wicked have changed

At the same time, he refers to the 'you' in a less scolding way in the poem-song *The Day Shall Dawn* in which he also asks for Mandela's liberation and all the exiles:

Do something to facilitate change in Africa;

Do something to fling the doors of Pollsmor and Robben Island prison wide open;
Do something favourable for the exiles to return back home;
Oh! Africa let all this be done before dawn;
Oh! Peace loving South Africans let it be done before dawn.

As Brown states: “In interviews, Mzwakhe also points to the importance of his work in sustaining and comforting those engaged in political activity. This, he feels, is entirely consistent with a call to action, and he points out that the customary movement of many of his poems is from comfort to exhortation” (Brown 1998:248). Despite calling for action, he does not give concrete instructions to how that action might take place. Mbuli follows the same path in other poem-songs, in which he sets action as a slogan. For instance, in *Many Years Ago* he states:

The tradition of no surrender;
Is the name of the game;
To a people’s republic.

Furthermore, Sitas, in a personal communication with Kane Lo in 2006 claims Mbuli had the ability to “capture the spirit of defiance of the younger generations in the anti-apartheid movement, have a wonderful voice, a wonderful presence and say harsh words against the system which elevated him into a very, very important position” (Kane Lo 2009:111). The spirit of defiance he called upon might be seen in *Now Is The Time*, which maintains:

Now is the time,
To edify authentic action;
Against pre-conceived notions of prejudice;
Now is the time.

As the poet Mattera suggests in his personal communication with Kane Lo in 2006, Mbuli's voice had the function both of healing and of urging onto battle (Kane Lo 2009:110). According to Mattera, it was as if, through Mbuli's voice, people's suffering were alleviated, like "soft silk over the wound healing" or better, like 'poultice' as he describes:

We call it in English, old English, a poultice, p-o-u-l-t-i-c-e, a poultice, we all take green bread and we take some vinegar and we take a drop of camphor oil and we take another few leaves and make a paste and put it on the wound and that poultice sucks out the pain, the heat, the inflammation. That's Mzwakhe Mbuli's voice (Kane Lo 2009:110).

Finally, in his 1994 album, Mbuli reports words for a non-racial South Africa in the song *Arise and Shine* which states:

You may be black, you may be white
You may be young, you may be old
That is not important
What is important is for you to arise and shine
Arise and shine for a new dispensation and for a new order
For a new society

His message, as Mandela's one was, is that after democratic elections everyone should act in order to establish the basis for a new society that will not look at the different skin colours but who will act according to the respect of the all ethnicities of South Africa.

5. EPILOGUE

5.1 Post-apartheid historical background

After almost fifty years of apartheid, the 1994 Democratic Elections were won by President Nelson Mandela who on the 2nd May 1994 stated:

South Africa`s heroes are legend across the generations. But it is you, the people, who are our true heroes. This is one of the most important moments in the life of our country. I stand here before you filled with deep pride and joy: - pride in the ordinary, humble people of this country. You have shown such a calm, patient determination to reclaim this country as your own. - and from the rooftops [proclaim] -free at last! (ANC "Speech").

Furthermore, Mandela claimed that the atmosphere during the elections, which was calm and tolerant, "set the tone for the future" (ANC "Speech") He maintains: "we might have our differences, but we are one people with a common destiny in our rich variety of culture and traditions" (ANC "Speech"). It is thus the diversity of colours that created the 'Rainbow Nation' as to mention Archbishop Desmond Tutu's term (Boonzaier 1996:255)²⁵. At the same time, Mandela knows that the end of apartheid which brought to ANC victory, is just the beginning. On 10 May 1994 he claims: "We understand it still that there is no easy road to freedom/ We know it well that none of us acting alone can achieve success" (ANC "Statement"). Therefore, only through cooperation and through concrete acts such as "creating jobs, building houses, providing education and bringing peace and security for all"

²⁵ This sentence is to be considered a summary of the Italian original article "L'eredità del razzismo: la lezione dell'apartheid" (Boonzaier, E., 1996).

a new South Africa could start (ANC “Speech”). In 1996 Vivan stated that those who came back to South Africa after seeing it a few times during apartheid, could see a changed country filled with a strong sense of hope, resolution and diligence (Vivan 1996:x). In a similar way, in his foreword to Haupt (2012), Veit Erlmann suggests that post-apartheid culture seems to give space to “remembrance, nation-building and the celebration of a new-found diversity that follows its own logic in forging new identities and alliances, free from the constraints of entrenched racial, ethnic and gender categories” (Haupt 2012:viii). Hence, the spirit for a New South Africa started with an affirmation of the past through remembrance. One of its symbols, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission initiated by Desmond Tutu, felt the need to investigate those apartheid crimes that had been committed but had never been mentioned (Vivan 1996:x). Despite initial happiness for a new South Africa, however, in 1996 Vivan claimed that apartheid had not ended yet as it was still stuck in people’s mentality and in the organization and hegemony of bureaucratic and economic power (Vivan 1996:x)²⁶. More than a decade later, in his foreword to Haupt (2012), Erlmann maintains:

Even after two decades of democratic reform South Africans still struggle to free themselves from the shackles of a social order in which even the most mundane activities and the most casual encounters were governed by the language of race (Haupt 2012:vii).

²⁶ The ideas here reported are taken from the original text in Italian Vivan, I., ed., 1996 *Il Nuovo Sudafrica. Dalle Strette Dell’Apartheid Alle Complessità Della Democrazia*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia Editrice.

In addition to this, Erlmann claims that the moment South Africa is mainly living is one of stasis (Haupt 2012:ix). This idea is also shared by Lucey who states that there is still segregation in South Africa, especially for people of his generation (Lucey 2014). Furthermore, in an interview with Drewett, Lucey claims that there seemed to be an amnesia in the minds of South Africans concerning the fight towards democracy (Drewett 2011:391). One therefore might see how, even in the post-apartheid era, rich people are becoming richer at the expenses of poor people (Drewett 2011:391) so that “the poor are worse now than they have ever been in South Africa” (Lucey 2014). Lucey even talks about a possible act that the government is trying to set, the Secrets Act, which “basically it’s going back to the old apartheid type of censorship regulations. You can’t criticize the state and there are certain things you can’t talk about” (Lucey 2014). Also, he reports how the current president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, has been involved in corruption with his home in Nkandla (Lucey 2014). Other problems mentioned by Lucey are the disrespect that black people show against other black people “who are below them on the social ladder” (Lucey 2014). Furthermore, according to him, misogyny is another difficult issue in his home country and seems to be one of the themes that is promoted by the rap culture. Another problem is to be found in rape and in the abuse of children (Lucey 2014). An emphasis is then put on the problem of music industry which, despite promoting black youth culture in the genres of hip hop and kwaito (Haupt 2012:13), seems not to give enough space to marginal artists. Its priority seems in fact to be known local artists as well as international artists (Haupt 2012:4). The same Lucey states: “Look, you still don’t have access to the air waves and television but we accept that, we are not even gonna bother with that anymore.

It's always been controlled by the record companies and that's a different story, a different debate" (Lucey 2014). Another proof of the little importance record companies give to local artists might also be seen in the 2010 Soccer World Cup where international artists such as the Canadian (Somali-born) rapper K'Naan and Colombian Shakira "were the headline acts after having secured the privilege of performing their songs for the opening ceremony" (Haupt 2012:187). Furthermore, according to Haupt (2012:7), that event promoted "the interests of transnational capital" instead of serving the needs of South African marginalized citizens. However, despite all the problems presented in the context of post-apartheid South Africa, Lucey maintains that the social problems of integration between black and white people are starting to be resolved in the youngsters generation; he reports this by alluding to his black fosters son and daughter (Lucey 2014). Another positive aspect worth considering in post-apartheid South Africa is that both black and white singers and musicians have the same possibilities in relation to international visibility (Lucey 2014). Some of them go to America, although "that's much harder, the American ear is much more tuned to American music" (Lucey 2014) but there are almost 83 different South African artists performing regularly in Europe, where it is more accessible for them to have success (Lucey 2014). He suggests:

I think it might be easier for black people at this point in time, that's good and natural, that should be how it is you know, with people previously disadvantaged. But the playing field is now becoming level (Lucey 2014).

5.2 Roger Lucey post-apartheid biography and poem-songs

It is then through this context that Lucey's life continued. Only in the year that followed the Democratic Elections, Lucey found out how the policeman Paul Erasmus stopped his voice as well as his career during apartheid (Lucey 2012:241, 256). In a 2002 interview with Drewett, Erasmus claims:

The whole security monitoring apparatus came into effect. Firstly, we had the informer network. Most anti-government organizations were totally infiltrated so we'd get information from human intelligence sources. Secondly, Roger's telephone was monitored, as were other people in the industry or in the segment that he was part of. So we knew after that if there were shows coming up or he'd been booked or he was going to appear at whatever place. It was a simple matter then, of using this incident as a sort of threatening stick with the next venue. I can't even remember how many places I've phoned and said, 'Look, I understand that so and so is booked to perform here, Roger Lucey. I'm from Scorpio...' (the organization that we used for all these activities was a body that I constructed called Scorpio) ... 'If you let that bastard, Lucey, that terrorist, Lucey, play we're going to blow the place up!' (Drewett 2011:385).

Hence, it was the same Erasmus who confiscated Lucey's records from the shops (Drewett 2011:385). However, in the process of a new start after the democratic elections, those were also the years of Lucey's rebirth. In particular, 1996 was a turning point for him as he started to build his house on the mountain, a concrete way of "rebuild my [his] life and reclaim the parts of my [his] soul that had been savaged by decades of upheaval" (Lucey 2012:258). Lucey and Erasmus first met up in Braamfontein, a central suburb of Johannesburg as Michael Drewett wanted to shoot the documentary *Stopping the Music* that summarized their story (Lucey 2012:262). They then went together to its world premiere in Copenhagen and they stopped in Frankfurt before going back to South Africa (Lucey 2012:263). They reconciled and attended many events in which they explained their story (Lucey

2012:263). Lucey states: “through forgiving Paul, I discovered that I could also forgive myself” (Lucey 2012:264). As Lucey maintains, his meeting with Erasmus was part of a wide reconciliation in South Africa, prompted by the same Mandela and from Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Lucey 2014b). This reconciliation also brought him to the release of his 2000 album *21 Years Down The Road* which, contains most of the songs of his apartheid albums. The release of *21 Years Down The Road* might suggest the right to free his voice in a ‘new’ South Africa. One of the songs that well explains this concept is to be found *Back In From The Anger*:

And I’m back in from the anger of the winter
And I’ve bust out of this prison called the road
And I’m caught up in the comfort
Of a small house in the suburbs
That’s my choice that’s where my river’s flowed

That road, often the metaphor of prison in his previous albums, continued to keep that symbol in post-apartheid South Africa. The difference here is that Lucey managed to escape. This concept is, in fact, explained in the word ‘house’ which recalls his inward space; as he states: “home being where you’re gonna finally find a peaceful place in your life” (Lucey 2014). He goes on to maintain: “And I think you find it inside first, it’s not a roof and walls, it is a place in your life, a place in your heart where you can finally find peace and where you can be contented” (Lucey 2014). The home that he built in the mountains near the Breederivier Valley in the Western Cape is the concretization of this concept and so it is his next book *How to build a house in the mountains* which is “about the house that I [he] built in the mountain and the journey” (Lucey 2014). The idea of the inward peace he

achieved is also emphasized in the song *I'm Alright Now*, which seems to present the duality of darkness, with its pain and its healing, a duality which before he could not see. Through the elements of the moon, the night and the stars which are all synecdoche for darkness, Lucey expresses his healing. This healing also seems to be underlined by the joyful river that runs through him and allows his flourishing.

Part of the song *I'm Alright Now* states:

As the sun goes down like the vanquished
In some unholy game
And the moon calls the lovers
And the moon calls my name
And the night brings the comfort
And the night brings the pain
And the stars warm my body
And the stars calm my brain
And the river flows right through me
And the river heals the pain
That the darkness marked my heart with
But that won't happen to me again
Like a runaway Like a runaway
I won't get lost again
I'm alright now

Despite his individual change and healing, Lucey continued to denounce the problems of that post-apartheid era which still was (and is) in transition towards change. In his 2002 album *Gipsy Soul* there is a song called *Heroes* that goes:

Heroes where are the heroes?
What's become of the heroes?
...
And nothing is moving
And nothing is changing round here

This poem-song, written in one of his journeys from Cape Town to Johannesburg, in order to reach the house he built in the mountains, expresses his disappointment towards the injustice that was going on among those inhabitants. As he explains, in building his house, he had called on people from nearby to help him and paid them properly but “at one point in time a local farmer came and said: ‘watch out, you are upsetting the balance of things here, we don’t pay people in the same way’” (Lucey 2014). So Lucey’s song functioned as a warning for a possible upheaval. In fact, years later a massive tumult started right in that area, with local farmers and inhabitants blocked the road and burnt the crops in order to protest against slave wages. Finally, protesters and police “came to an agreement with minimal wage, living wage” (Lucey 2014). At the same time, though, the poem-song *Heroes* claims that a personal way out is possible²⁷. He states:

It’s saying there is a way out, there is a way through. If one has dreams and if one has a vision, one can go towards and you can find a place where your life can become whole, you don’t just become disillusioned about life. And it relates personally to the bigger picture of me living in South Africa. It’s all tide up my personal life and when you hear my new songs, my new album, there’s a lot more positive, it’s about having left stuff behind and moving forward.

The amnesia Lucey was perceiving in post-apartheid South Africa is represented in the poem-song *Rewriting History*, where the road here does not seem to have stopped but rather follows the opposite direction of memories. Here again, he is asking for remembering the past in order to continue towards a new country:

And the road it just gets longer
And further from our past

²⁷ This paragraph is to be considered as part of the summary of Lucey (2014).

And our memories just get shorter
And the future comes so fast

Another important event for Lucey in post-apartheid South Africa was the launch of his biographical book in 2012. He toured three times in different bookstores of his country where he would play and sing his songs (Lucey 2014). His wife Karen describes this event as follows:

I had never been there and I had never heard Roger playing in SA so when he came, when he played for the first time in Jo'burg for the book launch at the Radium, it was packed, it was completely sold out and people talked to me because they couldn't get to him 'cause it was so tight. They hadn't heard him playing in 20 years and he was there. It gives me goose bumps now. The response, across the country were like that to him. People of our age but also young people were listening to the music. But the response was amazing (Lucey 2014).

One can therefore say that Lucey's voice was stopped by the apartheid government but not by his supporters who continued to believe in him. More recently Roger Lucey composed a song to denounce the impossibility for Dalai Lama to go to South Africa because of government bureaucracy. In his video *Roger Lucey Dalai Lama*, he reports: "a song to mark the occasion of the South African Government's inability to grant a visa to the Dalai Lama to attend Archbishop Desmond Tutu's 80 birthday celebration". At the same time he maintains: "we must never forget that democracy is 20 years old" (Lucey 2014) and therefore the road towards real freedom is still long.

5.3 Mzwakhe Mbuli's post-apartheid biography and poem-songs

After the release of his album *Izigi* (1994) and the different concerts he gave in order to promote peace, in 1995 Mbuli sang in front of a 10,000 crowd for Harry Gwala's funeral, activist of the ANC in Natal and leader of SACP (Gunner 1996:321)²⁸. 1996 then saw the release of the album *Kwazulu Natal*, in which one of the songs asked for "an end to the Zulu in-fighting that was taking place between ANC members and Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) supporters" (Frid). However, Mbuli's poem-songs during post-apartheid era followed a slightly more commercial line as he signed a contract for lending his voice to advertisements for Nestlé Milk Powder, something which damaged his credibility (Frid). In addition to this, troubles did not end with democratic elections for Mbuli as in 1996 nine bullets were shot on his car; however, once again he managed to survive without serious injuries (Noakes 2004). As the police "failed to find out who was responsible, so Mbuli set up an independent investigation" (Noakes 2004). Not long time after, during the years 1997-2003 Mzwakhe was sentenced to prison with the accusation of bank robbery (Amudaphi 1998). Apparently, that was a conspiracy to put him to prison and another attempt to silence his voice (Revolutionary Worker 1998). In 1997, in fact, Mbuli got an anonymous call which claimed to have some information about those people who tried to kill him in 1996 (Revolutionary Worker 1998). Soon after he was driven to Pretoria where he was given an envelope that should have contained the names of the supposed murderers (Revolutionary Worker 1998). The police reached him and they caught him with the envelope that

²⁸ This is to be considered a summary of the original Italian article: "La cultura dell'oralità nel Sudafrica del dopo apartheid" (Gunner, 1996).

contained instead 15,000 Rand, the right amount of money which was stolen from a bank (Revolutionary Worker 1998). While police found a hand grenade, several hand guns and R 15000 in the possession of Mbuli, on the other hand he claimed to have R 1850 and a licensed pistol (Amudaphi 1998). The poet-songwriter saw his imprisonment a consequence of his denouncement of a smuggling conspiracy between South Africa and Swaziland (Amudaphi 1998). He talked to Jessie Duarte, former Gauteng MEC for security and safety but “she told him the matter was too big for her to handle and that he should speak to President Mandela. He was arrested before being able to do so” (Redpath 2001). However, there seems to be something hidden beyond his arrest. First of all, an error seems to lie in the fact that the cameras were off when the robbery was done and secondly, despite the fact that the robbers were unmasked, nobody recognized him (Donald 1998). Thirdly, according to Mbuli the person that chose him in the lineups did it because the police told him “to pick the tall man” (Donald 1998). Furthermore, another witness said he saw Mbuli in his car whereas he states: “My windows are tinted, I can barely see out. How can anyone see in?” (Donald 1998). Mbuli goes on claiming his innocence:

I maintain my innocence. I have no doubt in my mind that the people behind my arrest are politicians who are involved in the drug trade. Given my stature and popularity it is not possible to go and rob a bank without even some form of disguise. Police have abused their power and issue wild, tarnishing and malicious statements to ruin my reputation. However, they only succeed in enhancing it. It is a sorry state of affairs that the Mandela-led government has inherited apartheid police who were previously involved in acts of terror and atrocities. Public support is overwhelming since I was arrested. I remain the victim of a grudge and political vendetta (Revolutionary Worker 1998).

Moreover, “one of the arresting officers committed suicide just before the court date” (Revolutionary Worker 1998). Mbuli, though, was forced to share his cell with Janus Walusz, Chris Hani’s murderer (Revolutionary Worker 1998). While he was moving to Pretoria Magistrate’s Court, in 1999 he even was beaten by the police (Amudaphi 1999). Despite the lack of support from ANC, Mbuli received visits from Helen Suzman, the “white liberal *grande dame* of South African politics – who was for a long time apartheid’s sole opponent in Parliament” (Anthony) and a worthy woman for the human rights (Amudaphi 1999). Redpath 2001 states: “both the original magistrate's court trial and the High Court in Mbuli's appeal referred to the ‘slovenly investigative work on the part of the police’”. Moreover, he was supported by the Toronto-based International Freedom of Expression Exchange Clearing House (IFEX) and by supportive groups from Australia, Canada, U.K., Denmark, US (Anthony). An alert was also given by PEN, the world writers’ association which asked for “expression to the South African government for fairness and due process in the Mbuli case” (Anthony). Mbuli’s words clearly defines his anger towards a post apartheid South Africa which was very much focused on apartheid: “I am still very much innocent. In the environment of lies, the truth becomes a stranger” (Donald 1999). Mbuli was released under parole on 24 October 2003 (Mzwakhe Mbuli celebrates 2007). Relating by this experience he reports: “I’m in a situation now where I’m above pain. I need to be tried. Unless you are tested, there is no testimony. Troubles and pain have fine-tuned me. This is the fire that burns impurities that will bring out the best in me” (Clark 2004). In 2002 an important matter was revealed: in 1989 an order was given to put explosives into Mbuli’s house in Pimville, which was later bombed (*Amandla!* 2012

cover album). Nonetheless, despite critics believed that this case would put an end to “his reputation as the nation’s premier performance poet” (Clark 2004), in 2004 his album *Mbulism* was released and “went gold locally” (Clark 2004). The brutal way in which Mbuli was treated is well described in the song *Triple B*, which states:

My underpants pulled down
My private parts exposed
Is this the New South Africa?
Is this the Rainbow Nation?
My intelligence is beyond humiliation
My resilience is beyond malicious allegations
My spirit cannot be broken
I am vulgar-proof
No regime can take away my dignity
No police force can arrest my talent

In the same album the themes of the other poem-songs are still songs that denounced the reality of the supposed new country. Other themes that Mbuli explores are rape (as Lucey said in his interview), his position against abortionism and a praise poem to God. 2005 saw Mbuli’s performance for Mandela’s birthday and Winnie Madikizela Mandela and “helped to organize a concert for tsunami victims” (Frid). According to Chapman, the role of Mbuli now has shifted towards “the voice of campaigns” in the sense that he is denouncing particular issues (Kane Lo 2009:112). As again expressing his delusion against the government, in 2006 Mbuli criticized Thabo Mbeki for attending “an unrepentant symbol of apartheid, Botha” and asked why on the other hand nothing was said about Zeph Mothopeng and Nana Kutumela, heroes against the system of segregation (Njwabane 2006). In 2007 he was arrested as he assaulted his wife at their home (Khamango 2007). Mbuli’s protest of that year took form in Operation Dudula, a protest against musical piracy

(Frid). In 2008 the album *Gospel Greats* was released and also his album *Thunder* and *Tribute to Mandela* for his 90th birthday. The song *Madiba* remembers the Father of the Nation:

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela
90 years of dedication and discipline
90 years of experience and excellence
90 years of heroism and humanity
90 years of leadership and loyalty
90 years of patriotism and passion
90 years of sunshine and storms
90 years of servant-hood and survival
Yes a long walk to freedom-a long journey to freedom

The other poem-songs in the album talk about the power of the traditional African music that is ‘soil uplifting’, about the denounce against racism and towards afrophobia, the exploitation of workers and about the denounce of unprotected sex which in most of the cases leads to HIV and AIDS. Despite the social problems Mbuli touches in his songs, he felt the need to express his approval for the 2010 FIFA Cup, which according to him was an opportunity for Africa to shine. The song *2010* suggests:

The 2010 of the World Cup is about recognition
It is about a better life
Economy, a development in the infrastructure
Yes the World Cup is about
Soccer and tourism

Another issue Mbuli explored in 2011 was to create the anti-piracy campaign *Shoot the Pirate!* which protested against those policemen who encouraged people to sell and buy fake CDs (Mpande, Khoza 2011, Frid). Moreover, in 2009 the CD book of

poems *The Voice of Reason* was released. Its poem-song *Ngaphesheya* gives its listeners a message of encouragement on the basis of what Mbuli experienced in his life:

Never advertise your pain and problems
Never allow failure to personify you
Never give up never surrender
Never lose the will to live
Never refuse to listen to wisdom
Never refuse to listen to the voice of reason

Finally, in 2012 his album *Amandla!* was released, the title remembering the heroes who struggled during apartheid (Duma 2012). It is dedicated to all the people “who paid a supreme price for our [their] freedom, this includes those who died in detention” (Duma 2012). With *Amandla!* Mbuli also emphasizes the importance of Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Angola which supported South Africa in its liberation (Duma 2012). In 2012 Mbuli even took part on a worker’s protest leading his voice of denounce “over labour brokerages and the planned implementation of e-tolling on the nation’s roads” and sang his song *Papa Stop the War* (Bauer 2012).

CONCLUSION

As the poem-songs here considered were part of the apartheid struggle, one has to see how the historical context was reflected in them. During the '50s poem-songs discussed black people's forced movement from the suburb of Sophiatown to Meadowlands. In the '60s the theme of the poem-song changed as a consequence of the Sharpeville Massacre in which sixty-nine Africans were brutally killed. Poem-songs, therefore, asked for a change also during the '70s, period in which Steve Biko was murdered. It is in this context that Roger Lucey released his first album, that was soon banned and its copies confiscated. In the '80s, the period of the State of Emergency, poem-songs asked for Mandela's release and at the same time criticized the PW Botha government. In this context Mbuli released his first album, which was banned. By considering poem-songs as part of an oral literature that continues thanks to the audience and despite censorship, this dissertation has attempted an overview of the poet-songwriters Roger Lucey and Mzwakhe Mbuli and their poem-songs as part of the struggle during apartheid. If on the one hand, Lucey's voice was apparently stopped through censorship and a special police commission that managed to cancel his concerts through the whole period of his apartheid career, one might notice how, as his wife describes in the interview, his poem-songs were circulating in South Africa. In a similar way Mbuli, despite his first cassette was banned and his life had been in danger for many times, managed to come across his message because of South African oral literature. His voice was even widespread in Europe. If this similarity is to be found in the two poet-songwriters, one has to bear in mind how the different ethnicities chose a different

style to approach the apartheid culture. Roger Lucey explored the themes of the road, of home and of line by deeply digging in his personal life, as, for example, in the poem-song *Thabane* or *My Son My Father and Me* show. On the other hand, the element that seems to be predominant in the people's poet Mzwakhe Mbuli is Christianity, towards which he assumes the role of a prophet, therefore by taking a religious distance from his audience. For this reason, Mbuli's style might be perceived as less personal. In the post-apartheid era, Lucey does not renounce to his straight-to-the-face approach in order to denounce the situation of injustice South Africa is still living. The freedom he finds is more related to his personal peace, the refuge he could not find during the apartheid era. The difference of styles of the poet-songwriters is given also by the difference one might find in their influences. If Lucey took inspiration from the American continent, from both its northern part, with examples like Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs, and its southern part, thanks to the Chilean poet Victor Jara, Mbuli gleaned inspiration from South African poets like Ingoapele Madingoane and Isaiah Shembe. During the post-apartheid period one might see how, if Lucey managed to find personal freedom through forgiving the security police officer Paul Erasmus, Mbuli's oral literary works followed first a more commercial road with poem-songs like *2010*, which talks about the FIFA World Cup. Another aspect worth considering is that Mbuli's period in jail in the post-apartheid era might reveal that not only the policies of a 'new' South Africa remained unchanged, but also that he could not find his personal freedom.

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APPENDIX

1) Lucey, R., 2014a. Personal interview. Vicenza, 8 September 2014, 9.30.

Irene Pozzobon: Were there people who inspired you when you were writing your songs among: songwriters, rock stars, philosophers, authors, painters, politicians?

Roger Lucey: The kind of music that I listened to at that point in time was the American and British folk rock tradition that was going on and that was being built around. The emergence of people like Bob Dylan, they were people like Phil Ochs who was former influential to me. I liked Bob Dylan very much but I like the ideas of Phil Ochs, he was a formal political type of person, he was a formal principle person so he was a very big influence when I was formulating my ideas of what songwriting was about. But I liked a lot of other musicians and bands, people who were doing things musically interesting, like Jethro Tull for example. You know, I found musically interesting and exciting. And at that point in time I discovered writers like Aldous Huxley who was very very influential. I think my songs came out of a combination of a lot of what was going on in SA. I was really influenced by the kind of radical poets. In SA at that time there was one group of poets called the Sestigers, the kind of radical poet in South Africa it's an Afrikaan word meaning those from the '60s, they were radical poets and they were radical playwrights at that time. There was an established tradition of what was called the protest theatre

I was very influenced, I liked the idea very much. I sort of mingled my songs. I didn't start out being a songwriter, I wanted to be an actor at first and then music kind of came second really. When I was at high school, I was performing in the school plays and I started to play music but the idea was I wanted to be an actor. I went to London soon after leaving the army, I was conscripted into the army and I applied to go to an acting school and I was accepted but I didn't have the right papers, so I couldn't go. It kind of broke my spirit a little bit for the acting thing but in the meantime I was starting to get more into music and when I came back to SA I was really formulating this idea that you need to be singing songs about the Vietnam war and about the atomic bomb but it had actually nothing to do with us in SA, we had our own issues. At that point in time there were a couple of people that were dealing with SA issues but not very many and when they did it was in a way that they had to be very careful about what they said, the state was really apprehensive. There was a singer, a songwriter by the name of Jeremy Taylor who was actually British but he lived in SA and he wrote some fantastic songs but he was deported from SA because of the kind of stuff that he was saying in his songs. It was a difficult time. At that point the person who was to become my music publisher David Marks was very involved with the South African theatre group cause he had started a little venue at the Market theatre, which was the home of like protest theatre in SA. When I first went to Jo'burg even before I started my life as a songwriter, I had the opportunity to be exposed to that group of people but it was, it's all in my book but it was very very influential. There wasn't anyone personal philosopher or philosophy that influenced me, there was a whole lot of thing, I was just a young guy that was just looking for meaning in SA that was so oppressive

and confusing and I wasn't anyone. I was part of a group of young guys artists, who were all looking for this way that we could express ourselves in our own country rather than singing songs imported from somewhere else.

I.P. Did you get inspiration from African music, from European/American music or both?

R.L. And it was that. The African music at that time was either in a choral group. You know, the one thing about African Music that was quite problematic for me was that it didn't lead itself to individual expression, that was always done in large groups. So a lot of the traditional African music is church music essentially and it's all performed in large groups. It wasn't the tradition in African musical tradition of individual voices. So I was hearing individual voices coming from all over the world, people expressing themselves individually, all the songwriters were making strong statements, they were expressing where they were in the world. You know, from America, England and South America, as I mentioned Victor Jara talking very powerfully about his country, individual voices. In that way African music didn't appeal to me, we wanted a place where you could speak your own voice, find your own voice. Which of course was very severely criticized by the extreme left, the Marxist, within that circle of people cause they said individualism was a very bad thing.

I.P. As a white person why did you choose to fight for black people's rights?

What was your role as a songwriter?

R.L. Gee... That was a difficult thing at that time because there was... It's almost a forgotten part of our history now. And the ruling party at the moment are making a strong effort to hairbrush the Afrikanist tradition out of that part of history. This is a bit of security answer to your question... but what we're seeing at the moment is the people like **Steve Biko**, the events that lead up to Sharpeville for example, had nothing to do with ANC. Nowadays the ANC are claiming those events as their own almost, but those events were stimulated by the PAC (the Pan Afrikanist Congress) and there was this afrikanist movement, whose spiritual philosopher was Steve Biko. Their political line was that black people needed to do things for themselves and white people didn't have any place speaking on behalf of black people. But there was another part of that argument and it wasn't so much that white people were speaking for black people, it was that people, and it didn't matter if they were black or white, we were seeing that there was a great injustice going on in the country. And you either spoke against it or you didn't. That was the big debate at that time. As it happens the Afrikanist movement has all but disappeared from the political landscape, they got 1% in 1994 elections and that was a pure surprise to everybody because nobody quite knew who was strong and who wasn't strong because of the oppressive nature of our political system. My role was, I wasn't trying to speak to black people, you know, through my music, I was lucky enough to be able to play at concerts, to trade union gatherings, and my songs always have done very well. I've always thought my primary role was to educate young white

people about what was going on because we had had such a propagandistic upbringing. If you went to a public school as a white SA, the stuff you were taught in the country was such awful propaganda and there was nothing to encounter it, there was nothing to say “that is not how it is”. You were told that Black people were communists, they were dangerous, that they were going to drive all white people into the sea and that was how the country was, which of course wasn’t true at all. It is much more complex than just a white person speaking on behalf of black people, it was more of saying there is a broader injustice and it needs to be spoken about and how does one speak about it, how does one do it? Especially as a songwriter when you have this funny little window 3-5 minutes where you have a song where you try to communicate and get people’s attention through that song. So I don’t know what my role was. After my stuff was banned I thought that my role had been completely useless and I was very disillusioned and disappointed. As the years have gone by I constantly bumped into people, find people, people contact me who tell me how much my songs have made to them, you know then, and it’s not only white people but black people as well. That’s very meaningful thing to me. And I continue to have that position, that one needs to be principled about what is not right, what is not just. At the moment in SA there are far too many people that are not saying... for example this thing with the Dalai Lama, there are too many people who are just saying “that is just how it is”, we should stand up against it. There are many white people now in SA who are saying “the new government is corrupt and unjust”, who are raising their voices, but they didn’t raise their voices when the old government was in power and was corrupt and unjust, only to keep an even line on that, a consistent political line.

I.P.: I remember your song *You only need say nothing*. Would that apply to this concept as well?

R.L. Yes, and there is another line in one of my very new songs which says, this is a famous American... Karen might help me with this “all that’s needed for evil to thrive is for good men to turn their back or not to speak” so I got a line which says:

We can turn like good men

Out of mind out of sight

We can hide in the darkness

Or we can stay in the light

But I mean, I think I still continue to play and I always speak about my position in the country and there’s no point in just moaning and criticizing without being active, without saying, criticism needs to be more constructive in order to see what’s good and not only what’s bad.

I.P. How was the musical circuit in Durban, Johannesburg, Capetown before and how is it now (bars, pubs...)? Is there now limited access to pubs/bars for white people who want to play?

R.L. It was very different and very active. In fact, it's become much more difficult in a way, we only got tv in 1976 so there was a much stronger tradition of people going up and listening to music, there wasn't home entertainment like in tv. There were lots of places where you could play. For example, when I first went to Johannesburg I used to play at Mangles every Friday night regularly and I often went to Durban, which is much closer than Cape Town to do 2-3 gigs down there and then come back. It was active and you could... With difficulty you could make a bit of a living. It was a situation where it was a forum where people would come out and be challenged, it wasn't just like minded people all the time, people would come a lot of young people were going to that sort of places. I can remember many many arguments about my position with my songs with people at different time at these gigs. It was very active in that respect. And there were places even in the more conservative part as well. The first time I've played in Pretoria I was very very surprised, when I went to a place, I actually stood there for a friend, who was sick and I started playing in his gigs and I started playing cover songs, it was a very conservative town, mainly Afrikaans people and at one point a man asked me "can you play some of your songs" and it turned out that they all knew my songs. You know, it was full of surprises but it was very active. Look, I mean, having said that, when Karen and I went back from America, we toured 3 times and we played all over the country, over and over again. Lots of different venues and they were all full, well, not always but mainly.

KAREN GLYNN (Lucey's wife): but the reason we toured 3 times was the launch of his book and instead of doing readings in bookstores he played and at the first tour it was all sold out. So the venues contacted him and booked him again a couple

of months later in February and it sold out again, and they booked him again which was July of 2013. We circled 3 times because he sold out. And he had response. I had never been there and I had never heard Roger playing in SA so when he came, when he played for the first time in Jo'burg for the book launch at the Radium, it was packed, it was completely sold out and people talked to me because they couldn't get to him cause it was so tight. They hadn't heard him playing in 20 years and he was there. It gives me goose bumps now. The response, across the country were like that to him. People of our age but also young people were listening to the music. But the response was amazing.

R.L.: when the thing happened with the security police, it sound so weird what happened, that it was a secret operation. Nobody knew what was happening except that I couldn't play anymore. Nobody would employ me, people would get threatened and everybody's busy with their lives so I just disappeared off the scene, I was there playing and doing it, doing it, doing it and suddenly I disappeared.

I.P.: but people knew you were there.

R.L.: I was there but I wasn't playing my stuff.

K.G.: but you were on Tv

R.L.: but that was much later, it was 2002.

K.G.: So he had a tv programme the first art show, like a magazine style showed on tv focused on all different art forms in SA and Rog came up with the idea and produced it and he was the host on tv. So people saw him there.

R.L.: but that audience didn't know of my story. Really it was only when my book came out and I got lots of publicity and lot of stuff, all the regional newspapers and magazines.

K.G.: and the Rolling Stone (6 pages)!

R.L.: and then people were saying: "Gee, I didn't know what happened."

I.P.: You got your own victory in the end.

R.L.: I think so. Karen and I often talked about how lucky we are just to be where we are, the opportunity we have to play music, to do it at this time of life. It's real pleasure. You know, I'm 60 years old. When we get back to SA, I'm making another album and then writing another book and then we go on another tour. It's good times, you know. It's what I want to do.

I.P. Is there now limited access to pubs or bars for white people who want to play?

R.L. No no no, I don't think so. There's still segregation in SA, it's a generational thing. I have a black foster son and my daughter but their social thing is becoming more integrated, white and black people are becoming more and more integrated. It's very difficult for people of my age, generation. People have different interests, different things. It's very difficult, it's something that everybody is trying to achieve in SA, trying to find a way. It's just something that's gonna take time and it's a generational thing but there are many venues that ..is that what you're asking? I mean, Places to play?

I.P.: yes, if there is a limitation now for white people, a kind of reverse situation?

R.L.: no, there's a lot of places where... Look, you still don't have access to the air waves and television but we accept that, we are not even gonna bother with that anymore. It's always been controlled by the record companies and that's a different story, a different debate. But in terms of playing, for me that's the important thing, to get out and play a live I don't even try that hard. If I was really going, like I did when I was younger, I could be playing every weekend in a couple of times a week but that's too much for me, cause I've got other things that I wanna do. And the way we are doing it now is you know, if we go around the country twice a year, and what we do is we do not just go and play music, we got this thing where we go camping in the game park, so if we go, we play in the cities during the weekend and during the week... there are many game parks in SA and if you do what we do, you get a card for the whole year and it's very inexpensive, we go to the game park and go to the cities and play the gig. Game reserves, there are lots of them in SA. They're wild animals. We bought an old tent and we got a little cooker but they're very well equipped so that's what we're doing and we have concerts. And we play

and we do concerts and presentations, sometimes I play on my own, sometimes with other people, different musicians that I work with. So your question is there are places to play and they come and go, you know. We were going to go on tour in August and I had to cancel it because of the house we are moving to. We had, I had dates set up in all the major cities and several small towns and we would have played the Mondays, the Tuesdays, the Wednesdays, the Thursdays and the Fridays as we were travelling.

I.P. Do white or black singers/musicians have more international visibility now?

R.L. I think everyone does. There's a lot of black musicians that have international visibility, there's a lot of white bands that are doing really well in Europe. Everyone tries to go to America and that's much harder, the American ear is much more tuned to American music, it's more accessible for people of SA in Europe and they seem to do well. I can't quite remember, how many SA artists are regularly performing in Europe? I think it's something like 83 different artists performing regularly. I'm not there at this point, my friend who is a promoter that I work with, who is in fact of Italian origins, he's gonna be the co producer of my next album and he's looking to get us into a circuit, you know, to play more in Europe. I think it might be easier for black people at this point in time, that's good and natural, that should be how it

is you know, with people previously disadvantaged. But the playing field is now becoming level.

I.P.: Let's move on to more focused questions on your songs. So: In the song "Back in from the anger" (1996) you say: "Freedom don't just happen, freedom grows". Could you tell how your freedom has grown from apartheid to post apartheid period? /how did you find your own freedom during apartheid?

R.L. I think, you know, freedom is such an interesting word when we first start discussing it as young people and I don't think we didn't quite understand what we mean by freedom. We didn't quite understand this term in a political sense. People in SA are still saying: "ok, now we're free but there's another corrupt regime". The poor are worse now than they have ever been in SA. For me, freedom is to free yourself from emotional burdens and much of that comes from your political past, to free yourself from deep prejudicial ideas, to be open. So I think what I saw during the change, pre to post apartheid, was that many people thought freedom was the freedom to dictate other people and that's no freedom at all. We are struggling with that term at the moment in SA, freedom hasn't been achieved for many many people, poverty is very very bad, the education system is bad, service is very bad and that's not freedom. At the same time I'm saying that anybody that thought that 1994 was going to certainly bring about new freedoms for people, they were

delusional, that's not how it was gonna happen, it was going to be a long process and I think that anybody that had an understanding of the type of personalities within the political organizations you could see that there was going to be a period of adjustment. Like a lot of people believe that their freedom is the freedom to become rich and you hear that from people, you hear that from people of the ANC saying: "we didn't fight the struggle to be poor" but people are enriching themselves but at the back of the large poor working population or non working population in many cases. So you see people who were heroes for the struggle and now seem to have abandoned this idea of uplifting society, it's about personal gain and that's what freedom has brought us. What about other people within society? You know, when you have a part of society that is unstable, that is unhappy then your freedom is getting eroded. Because really, when you think "what is freedom?" The freedom to be able to walk down the street without being attacked by somebody. But why would somebody attack you? Because they are poor. So this is what we're looking at. We need to restructure the idea of freedom. Freedom, if you look at freedom in solid terms, it has to be freedom from poverty, freedom to educate oneself which of course goes hand in hand with the idea of lifting people up from poverty. And that's not gonna happen by avaricious politicians just helping themselves and that needs to be rethought and is being rethought all the time. The whole saga that's going on now with President Zuma is all part of that and I believe, president Zuma is not going to see artist terms in his office, if he does that would be American. In SA we have a constitution that does work and we have a civil society that is very very active, these are people who are truly fighting for freedom, freedom is the freedom to be educated, the freedom to feel safe, to have electricity and water, which is not

being given by the current government. And at the same time we have a president who has been embroiled in corruption, scams, I'm sure you've been following a little bit about the thing with Zuma and his home in Nkandla. And all that is going to unravel, we're gonna see the change of regime, the same way that Zuma took over from Thabo MBecki. We're gonna see a cabal rising and overthrowing Zuma. This time it went, it's a pendulum, one side is positive, one side is negative and eventually is gonna come towards the middle where we can start building stuff. I personally think there's a very interesting dynamics in the politics of the country at the moment with the Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa who is kind of in the wing and who was the natural heir to President Mandela but then everything changed and then Mbeki came in and now he's back in power, he's a very good manager. We've seem being changing. I know it's a very long answer to the question of freedom but we need to rethink freedom, we need to go back to the drawing board about what freedom is.

I.P. Would you say that singing and playing music was a kind of way of freedom to you?

R.L. As it turned out for me it wasn't especially back then cause it got me into lots of troubles and it took my voice away, I mean now it feels very good to be able to express myself and I do. And one still worries, I don't know if you are aware, the government is trying to put through an act which is called the Secrets Act and basically it's going back to the old apartheid type of censorship regulations. You

can't criticize the state and there are certain things you can't talk about. One of the songs I sang last night which was called *Those days are over* and in one line I say:

Those days are over

They won't happen again

But history repeats itself and there's no telling when

Those days are over

Keep your eyes wide for the slow creeping darkness and the turn of the tide

There's always a dark side. We're travelling through Europe at the moment and we are seeing signs of Neo nazism, of fascism, who would have thought after the Second world war that would happen again. It can easily happen again. And that's the same in SA. Because we had this wonderful thing that happened in 1994 when Mandela came out of prison that doesn't mean that darkness is not over the horizon.

I.P. In the album *The Road is much longer* the words 'home', 'road', 'space', 'voice' and 'storms' are emphasized. What did they represent to you during apartheid? What did they represent to you during post apartheid?

Yeah, the road and I didn't realize that at the time. I started realizing it many years afterwards. Bear in mind that when *The Road Is Much Longer* was made 1979 I was very very inexperienced I was just energy and ideas and very little intellect. I

realized later that the road would be a metaphor that would come over and over again in my songs. I still don't quite know how or why but I think it is about journeying, and I think that journey, Karen and I, is part of our life. It's not just tourists, it's a journey of self discovery, going to these little journeys to find what we want, to find our inner dreams. And when I was younger, I was always on a journey, physically and metaphorically of discovery for myself but also to be on the road and at that time I would hitchhike around the country with my guitar playing wherever I could play. I think when we were talking about freedom, I think that the road was like the essence of freedom, of being able to move.

Home, part of what the journey is is searching for home and that home being where you're gonna finally find a peaceful place in your life. My next book is called *How to build a house in the mountains* and it's about the house that I built in the mountain and the journey. There's also this idea of home, what is home, where is home? Where does one find it? And I think you find it inside first, it's not a roof and walls, it is a place in your life, a place in your heart where you can finally find peace and where you can be contented.

I.P.: Would you say that now you've found your own home but during the apartheid you hadn't?

R.L.: it was very difficult back then when we were searching.. I think so. In many ways I kind of shutted off, every now and again we talk about but it's a lot of pain

and trauma, and Karen knows about how our life was back then. It was very painful, for many reasons. So now, we are looking. Now we're finding a home, we have this old house which is a home but we're also finding a place in our lives, not just in the country and we find it at home.

Space, yeah I suppose it's all part of the same reference.

Storms, I know that storm comes and goes. And even in the new song that I played last night

“the storm is cleared on my broken shoes”. I think for most of my life I've lived through a storm, and the storm has been my own personal emotional upheaval but it's always been related to, well, I don't think that upheaval in one's life can be separated from upheaval in the society one lives in. We came through a time when the upheaval in our society effected our lives. You know, we were traumatized, we didn't live in a normal place, we didn't live a normal life, there was stuff going on all the time. The thing that happened with the security police, I was in my 20s, you can imagine the upheaval, the effect it had in my life. And you try to raise kids, and you try to get married. And then in my case either I had been addicted to drugs, I'm not making it an excuse, but I'm saying that was natural, that was what would happen, alcohol. You know, that was the storm, the storm just kept coming and finally it started clearing. And I think for me, when it really started clearing was when I was to build a house in the mountains. The storm inside my head cleared, I was able to start thinking and being in control and at the same time the storm within the country started clearing now the storm is gathering together again but we are stronger at this point.

Voice, I lost my voice. “I found my voice in the shifting sands, I’m skinned and breath and I understand I’m blood and bone, I m not a brand, my way is clear”. My voice was all I had back then when I was young, I didn’t have an education, I didn’t have any money, I didn’t have any prospect, my voice was all I had and it was taken away. It was shuttering. I went into other things, I had to get a job but I lost my voice, I didn’t have a voice. I’m very very lucky that I have found it again, I’m a little bit old to do it now (laughing), but I’m doing it and that’s what I want to do. I think it’s important to have found that voice. And my voice is still a voice that is pricking consciences and I don’t have big popular stages when I perform, they are rather small, and I challenge my fellow white SAs regularly when I do my performances who are just complaining, become part of the bigger picture, get involved, don’t just complain about it. what have you done to make our country a better place? A lot of it, really is quite simple, has to do with how you treat people on the street, and how you treat people that you deal with. And I’ve seen all the times. I’ve seen it even in the process of this new house that we have been renovating and then we moved to there are certain coloured black people and many people still treat these people with a completely lack of respect. And when you treat people with respect no matter who they are, it comes back to you. If everybody was to be doing that in the country, it does change things. It does change when people speak to each other in a respectful way. It’s a start, it has got to start somewhere. Well, everything has to start somewhere and it starts with small things. I like to challenge people like that in my concerts. What have you done to make your little part of the country a better place? I am not naïve about it. We need education, we need services, that’s how people get out of poverty. That doesn’t help when people

feel there's just no hope, when they think the mountain is way too high to climb. That doesn't help from the township when young black people feel there's just no respect, they feel denigrated just because the rich people told down on them. That needs to change. It's a difficult one but it has to start. We see some of it now, you see black people who are completely disrespectful to other black people who are below them on the social ladder. That needs to be challenged.

I.P.: What story does the song “The night Harry J went to war” describe?

That's a song about... it's a true story about a guy who basically was getting.. in the incident his wife was attacked by these gangsters in the township and the police did nothing about it. So he took action himself. I'm not advocating vigil anti action, I'm just saying these are the kind of things that happened. It tries to give a description of the desperation that people feel with gangsterism and in many ways, there's part of modern culture, and part of rap music that celebrates that kind of stuff. I think it's a deterioration to society, it's a terrible thing. It's all very well to have gangster rap but when it glorifies something that it rode society like that it's not surprising that person like Harry J, Joshua is going to respond in the way that he did. That happened kind of frequently. There was an incident, just last week when we were in the aeroplane I saw it in the newspaper of 3 thugs that stormed into a black church in Johannesburg, in a high population area called Hillbrow (Johannesburg) and sort of robbing people of their phones and the women in the

church became enraged and they beat them, they beat the hell out of them. That's gonna happen more and more if we don't take control of society and if the police don't take control. Some of the ethos of popular culture needs to be challenged. The gender politics in rap, the misogyny that comes through, the anti woman, that doesn't help, we have big problems in SA with rape, with abuse of children. That glorifies that kind of male dominated violent culture is awful. I think Harry J. was a little response to all of that.

I.P.: What's the meaning of the sentence "and you've got one foot in your homeland, one toe in your town" in the song "Crossroads"(1979)?

Bare in mind back then there were the independent homelands and people that came to live in crossroads were illegal, they didn't have permission but there was nothing in the homelands for them, they were completely denuded, there was no food, no work, there was draughts, nothing for them so they would come to Capetown into this quarter camps to look for work, some kind of means of survival but their houses would get knocked down so they were stuck between nothing here and nothing there they just had one foot in the home, one toe in the town, just a toe, just trying desperately to get some means of survival and getting hammered the way they did. It's still like that. Evictions are not happening in the same way but people are coming in all the time from the Eastern cape which was the old homeland and there's nothing for them there and there's nothing for them in the city either. The situation hasn't changed, it's still very problematic.

11) What did you mean by “there’s more than one war, that’s for certain” in “No easy walk to freedom” (1990)?

What I meant was that it was always the way apartheid was described especially like in the foreign Press for example was that there was a war between black and white and there were the good guys and the bad guys and it was that simple. Then what sort of happened was that you started seeing different groups within the black society, conservative groups versus radical groups and then even within the radical groups there were conservative arms of it, then there was the Afrikanists, then there was the stuff between coloured people and the white people and there was the stuff between black Zulu people and Indian people. The Zulu was gonna attack the Indians and you started to seeing the complexity. So what I’m saying is that it’s a mistake to see SA a simple black and white thing, it’s much more complicated than that and there’s many wars and they continue. Since 1994 you see new groups that are coming out and they have privilege and one group has more privileged than by necessity leaves somebody else with nothing. Everybody’s fighting for their little bit of privilege. People need to rethink the idea of freedom and that all comes through education, broad uplifting of society. I wrote this song and I think I first wrote this song in 1979 and in many cases the songs were correct in their assessments, I think it still applies. When I wrote those words the idea of what was then called as black violent wasn’t even identified. It was just, you know, there were black and there were white. But then you had this thing with the Zulus, I don’t know if you are aware of that in 1976, a big massive fight within different black groups,

and fueled by the white regime cause they were supporting the most conservative side so battles on the townships would be awful between black and black.

I.P. In Storms & Fires (recorded in 1983) there's the sentence: "The dreamer stood freely weak and naked. "when I felt at last that the storm was over, I looked into my home and I found a pile of stones". Did this describe the feeling of being hopeless for a way to freedom?

Yes, that's exactly what it was. That was a long time ago, I would be lying if I say I could remember what drove the lyrics.

I.P.: it was recorded in 1983.

R.L. Laughing. Yes, that's a long time ago but I can remember the sense of desolation, it was a predominant feeling in my life at that time.

I.P.: In 2002 album *Gipsy Soul* there still are images of sadness such as: "Raging storming hide the signs" (Come the day), "the fire in your heart is as cold as stone" (the soft glows of dreams), "heroes, where are the heroes (Heroes)?". Why?

R.L. You know, I had such a sense the other day. You know, I wrote *Heroes* 20 years ago and I wrote it in the train going from Cape Town to Johannesburg going through this valley where I've built my little house and while I built the house every now and then I'd use labour, people from nearby and it was a very controversial thing when I was doing it because I paid people properly, the rate that was recommended by the Trade Unions and at one point in time a local farmer came and said: "watch out, you are upsetting the balance of things here, we don't pay people in the same way". In the song "Heroes" I say something like "the valley is peaceful, no sign of dissent or of rage" and it's a warning, I'm saying there's gonna be an upheaval. If you look at the words you'll see there's a warning of rage that's going to come. When we were back to SA just under 2 years ago, there was this massive upheaval started in that area to where I was going to in through the train, right there, with people living in the valley saying "enough is enough" and they went on their own page, they burnt the crops and they blocked the road, farmworkers who were saying "we can't live on this slave wages anymore", it went on for several months and the police were there and it was a huge story and eventually people came to an agreement of a minimal wage, living wage. The song was a warning of that. And I looked at the song I didn't even really remember and I remembered oh my god, it's so strong the image of it and it's describing it to a point, saying the heat of the valley is gonna explode like a drumbeat if we don't do something about it. Those songs really were describing something that I felt deeply, that I was seeing in the country very deeply. They were also describing my personal situation. What were the other songs?

I.P.: There were just parts of songs: the fire in your heart is as cold as stone...

R.L. Deluding passion, you know... but at the same time it's not just a song of negativity. It's saying there is a way out, there is a way through. If one has dreams and if one has a vision, one can go towards and you can find a place where your life can become whole, you don't just become disillusioned about life. And it relates personally to the bigger picture of me living in SA. It's all tied up my personal life and when you hear my new songs, my new album, there's a lot more positive, it's about having left stuff behind and moving forward.

I.P. Is the song "Gipsy Soul" (2004) a kind of hymn which suggests that you are ready to welcome everything that happens in your life (the heart is like the ocean) or something which does not help you in being free (there's no wall but you are not free?)

R.L. I haven't played this song for so long. I tell you where Gipsy Soul came from and give you a broader answer. When I was building my house in the mountains, I had a little caravan which was pulled out to a tractor, pulled out there and that was where I stayed almost a year while I was building the house. And there was a sense of being on the move, and I was, I think, finding, I tried to describe that sense of not being rooted and it was a fantastic time, I wasn't moving, I was in this little

place but becoming self sufficient and healing . I was becoming healing, things slowly were building up, the scars of the past slowly healing and I in this little caravan being out in the country, working hard and the sun and the rain, just being out, nothing there and the sun, and the rain, no running water, no electricity, just under the African sky.

I.P.: So that was a sense of freedom

R.L.: Yeah, yeah. I think what's happening now is that I'm putting it really altogether in this new book that I'm writing, because now I have got space. And I think *Gipsy Soul* was a transitional song, it was finding the way. I don't know if I even know what that means. I don't always know what my songs mean (laughing).

2) Lucey, R., 2014b. Concert and questions. Vicenza, 7 September 2014, 19.00.

Roger Lucey: Mandela had given up power and he had lost his memory. He withdrawn from power. The fact that Mandela didn't seek a term of relations and didn't interfere with politics at that time was a very strong symbol of hope and a

symbol of positivity about how politics work but at the same time it was like the grand... a moral campus had gone. But that is not to say there are not other people in SA like Tutu (archbishop) and many many people, I think that we are at a bad state at the moment because there is this cabal within the ruling party, moved towards this way of conducting themselves but even within the ruling party there are very very good people. People need to vote for their feet, and that's another problem in South Africa, people vote very very traditionally, very emotionally. So for a lot of people under rural areas of South Africa even though there were protests against a less conservative one vote in their way so it keeps the corrupt in power. I think that's a generational thing, we started to see it at the last elections. Mandela is passing.

Marco Fazzini (translating somebody's question): She's asking about reconciliation. Was the crucial part of your life a big part of reconciliation, trials and confessions and so on or was it something different. Was the meeting between you and Paul Erasmus part of a very big reconciliation in South Africa?

R.L.: Yes, very much sir. I think that many people reconciled, people that had done very bad things to their family, there was a strong call for reconciliation. I was criticized for reconciling with Paul Erasmus, but what do you do? Do you stand as a matter of pride? You're only hurting yourself by doing this and I think Mandela showed the way very clearly. There's Tutu this link , a kind of spiritual, I'm not the

most religious person at all but you know, there was great sensibilization from people like Tutu in saying that reconciliation is good for both sides, not also for the victims but also for the perpetrators to give. You know, I got to know Paul Erasmus and probably it was much harder for him to approach me than it was for me to approach him in terms of reconciliation.

P.: I'm curious about the music part. I don't know anything really about SA culture and what is like to grow up there but I understand that you did and so I want to know what your musical influences were because it doesn't seem to me African your music, which is not a criticism, I'm just curious how this is possible.

R.L.: You know, SA music is essentially choral music, it's become a lot of other things, you talk about Miriam Makeba and you talk about Masekela their music is essentially not African, it's American. There's a lot of misunderstanding about this. When Makeba and Hugh Masekela were much younger they were seen in the first place, were in a show called King Kong which was a SA musical but it was completely based on American style, the whole star, you know King Kong, it was an imitation of what was going on in America at that time. The big band era. And it was a start. They sing songs in the African languages but that was the musical star. Even what is now known as the traditional music, the Zulu music, all came from European influences, it's a type of music called Maskanda, you see mandolini within the maskanda tradition, where Zulu guitarists would put a cap at the neck of their guitars and play and that came from hearing all Italian music on the radio. African music, Zulu music tradition is voice and drum. That's what it is. So as a

young white guy in South African I grew up in an English speaking country, we listened to American and British music; that was my influence. My big challenge when I was in my late teens was saying, you know, we are all singing these songs about Vietnam and the blue hills of Scotland and they had nothing to do with us. We were in a much much bigger circle of influences. My early influence was people like Bob Dylan and Victor Jara, the Chilean poet and musician. So what we need to do is take what we have and what we like and turn it into South African stories, let's find out our own voice there. And when I play in America I know that I don't sound like an African but when I'm in America I don't sound like an American or English musician, I know that.