

## Sounds of Freedom: Music, Taxis, and Racial Imagination in Urban South Africa

Thomas Blom Hansen

At first sight, the major cities in South Africa do not appear to have changed much over the last decade. Their physical layouts still reflect the apartheid planners' obsession with fixity—of identities, of space—and with control of movement. Yet cities like Johannesburg and Durban have experienced profound changes. The diverse spaces of the city are today used in radically different ways and are imbued with a new set of meanings more related to the senses than to economic functions. A city like Johannesburg, as pointed out forcefully by Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall (2004), has become the site of a radical heterogeneity and proliferating desires. Its new dynamism both reinvents the city's founding moment of creativity and moral transgression during the gold boom of the late nineteenth century and indicates its emergence as a new, immensely creative African metropolis. The distinction between the erstwhile white centers of South Africa's cities (clean, modern, and universal in aspiration) and the racially defined townships (designed as enclosed, stable, and quasi-domestic community spaces) have given way to what Mbembe and Nuttall call a new and radical "social velocity" (2004: 349). This essay focuses on how the kombi-taxi—the

This essay is part of my ongoing work in one ethnographic site, a formerly Indian township in Durban. Much of this material will be included in my forthcoming book, *Melancholia of Freedom: Nostalgia and Anxieties of Belonging in Postapartheid South Africa*. Earlier versions of this essay have been presented at the Departments of Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam, University College London, Yale University, and the University of Chicago. Critique and questions at these seminars helped me to improve and sharpen my arguments. A special thanks to Saba Mahmood, Achille Mbembe, Jean and John Comaroff, and the editorial committee of *Public Culture* for suggestions, encouragement, and constructive criticism.

eight- to twelve-seat van—has emerged as one of the most effective and literal manifestations of such social velocity and a new form of movement and inhabitation of South Africa's urban spaces.

The ethnographic focus of this essay is a formerly Indian township south of Durban. One of the general effects of the new urban dynamism is that the township has been transformed from a site of quasi-domestic stability and what Michael Herzfeld (1997) calls "cultural intimacy" to a properly urban space, marked by unpredictability, difference, and the incessant movement of anonymous bodies and signs.

This transformation of the township from an order of fixity and familiarity to one of eros and unknowability has produced major upheavals and anxieties. The formerly Indian townships are today pervaded by a profound sense of melancholia produced by the loss of an object that cannot be recognized and must remain repressed: the stability and intimacy of community life during apartheid. The melancholic "knows whom he has lost but not what he has lost in him," argues Freud (1989: 586). This nonrecognizability of the lost object leads, Freud argues, to self-reproaches and self-revilings. Freud (1989: 587) continues: "In mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself." As we shall see, the condition of melancholia and loss pervades even the enjoyment of the new possibilities of the postapartheid city.

### **Taxis and the Dying Days of Apartheid**

The final stages of apartheid saw a flurry of initiatives aimed at fostering a black middle class and trying to remove the worst excesses of the "petty apartheid" that had caused so much anger (pass-books, the Immorality Act, etc.). One of these measures was to liberalize the inadequate transport sector and to open the market for Black, Indian, and Coloured entrepreneurs venturing into the taxi business. Starting in the late 1980s, an ever-growing fleet of kombi-taxis began to service the townships, taking the workforce to and from the city centers and plying between the major cities, urban centers, and densely populated *bantustans* (designated homelands) such as Transkei, Boputatswana, and KwaZulu.

The taxi trade proved a relatively easy and inexpensive way to start a business, and competition was stiff and often violent from the outset. The trade was relatively unregulated and soon a number of rival taxi associations emerged, often based on existing networks of ethnic bonds or political affiliation. For this reason the turf wars of the townships soon extended to the taxi ranks. Rival associations clashed and the resulting shoot-outs, which killed and wounded innocent bystand-

ers and passengers, became recurrent phenomena. In the province of KwaZulu-Natal, the virtual civil war between the ANC (African National Congress) and the Inkatha movement suffused and structured the turf wars between taxi associations, which usually became aligned with one of these political formations. The overall scarcity of jobs increased the pressure on the taxi trade, which also proved an easy money-laundering device and attracted powerful crime syndicates.

After 1994, the new government imposed a string of regulations designed to define routes, areas, fares, and the number of taxis.<sup>1</sup> Many taxis remained unauthorized and broke the rules by hunting for passengers outside their own territory, overcharging, overloading, not paying attention to maintenance standards, and so forth. The organization and regulation of the industry made having political connections essential for the major operators. Influential members of the taxi associations soon began to enjoy political clout as patrons of local political figures. The so-called taxi wars were now fueled by rivalry in business, politics, and underworld activities. The violence peaked in 1996 when official police statistics reported over three hundred deaths and six hundred wounded in taxi-related violence in South Africa. Most of this violence was perpetrated by professional hit men who were employed by taxi associations to shoot rival owners and drivers and to terrorize passengers of rival taxi associations (see Dugard 2001).

In South Africa's urban landscapes and highways, the taxi industry defines its own rules. Taxis have become a metonym of the underworld as well as a powerful symbol of postapartheid freedom. The promise of earning a fast buck in a job that does not require formal training, the cool style of the drivers, and the sheer promise of a world flush with quick cash and potential have made the industry a highly attractive place for many young men. The taxi business has been an important arena for black economic empowerment, emerging alongside but independent from more formalized transport sectors like the bus services that had been a source of quasi-monopolistic self-enrichment by black elites during apartheid. Taxis have been central to the gradual reconfiguration of the former sociospatial order of the apartheid city. In the kombi-taxi, black people have explored the formerly white world: its beaches, its parks, its exclusive neighborhoods, its shopping malls. For drivers and attendants, this enjoyment of a now formally democratized space was crucial in their experience of "freedom"—a term that came up in virtually every conversation I had with informants in the taxi busi-

1. A recent report on the taxi industry in the province of KwaZulu-Natal reports almost twenty thousand taxis organized in 287 registered associations. The report estimates that there are at least thirteen thousand illegal taxis in operation in the province (Profile KwaZulu-Natal 2001).

ness. The experience of freedom, however illusory it may be considering the economic imperatives that govern the lives of drivers, emerges from the everyday phenomenology of taxi driving: the open road, the unpredictability of the wishes or directions of your next customer, the inchoate promise in flirting with nameless women, and, not least, the experience of being a hunter, with its associated possibilities of “luck” on the road (making lots of money) or of “making a mess” (fatal accidents). This precarious experience of freedom and autonomy via incessant movement and unpredictable fortune undoubtedly characterizes taxi driving across the world, but in South Africa it acquired a particularly powerful symbolic force in the postapartheid generation.

This sense of freedom, autonomy, and enjoyment was often compounded by claims of being legally untouchable. Many drivers claimed that they never paid speeding tickets thanks to the legal protection of their politically well-connected bosses. While such claims are impossible to verify, there is little doubt that the taxi industry enjoys a very substantial *de facto* autonomy in terms of regulation and police intervention. The sheer size and quasi-legality of the taxi industry have made it an important source of corruption. Police stations, government officials, and all the affiliated sectors—spare parts, sound systems, and garages—are now involved in a vast network of deals and financial flows that remains almost impenetrable to law enforcers and anticorruption squads.

### **Cool Drivers and Hot Sounds**

Taxis have become poignant and fine-tuned sensors of trends in the youth culture of the townships. The style of the taxis, the make of cars (Toyotas being common, Volkswagens the solid and expensive choice), their decoration, and the size and quality of their sound systems are all key parameters of style. Loud music dominated by a deep and thumping bass has become the trademark of the coolest taxis—those catering to young and highly fashion-conscious teenagers. The sound of the bass has, in fact, become the quintessential signature of the taxis—one can hear them and even feel the vibration of the bass before they come round the corner. The sound signals many things—sensuality, the infinite play of desire and pleasure in the city, assertive masculinity—but it also signals the township itself, that is, a space of blackness that is plebeian, no-nonsense, defiant, and, potentially, violent. While the thumping bass signifies a certain youthful insubordination within the black township itself—the sound of undisciplined gangsters—it also signifies an assertive and defiant black identity when moving in the formerly white areas or, as we shall see below, the Indian townships. South

African cities are not walkable spaces for the flaneur or the jaywalker. In their stead, the speed and sound-space of the taxis embody the ever-present and enticing element of strangeness that remains an irreducible mark of the urban.

There is a clear hierarchy among taxi owners in terms of their influence and economic power. The richer owners flash their status through new, well-painted cars with big sound systems. Their drivers and attendants (those who solicit customers, charge the fees, and crack jokes with passengers and drivers) often reflect that status in their own behavior by being loud and cheeky in their dealings with passengers and colleagues. This elite league of taxis are preferred by young people and often elaborate a certain daredevil masculine aura around themselves, underlined by recurrent racing contests in which the drivers compete to get from the city center to specific townships in the shortest possible time. Those lower in the hierarchy have older cars, less flashy drivers, lower prices, and are placed in less conspicuous locations in the taxi ranks.

Let us turn to the musical styles which are so central to taxis, to young people, and, more broadly, to the various youth cultures that have emerged after apartheid. Life in South Africa's townships has always been defined and expressed in a rich variety of musical forms, from the predominantly Zulu *isicathamiya* tradition to the rhythmic *maskhandi*,<sup>2</sup> which spread through small clubs and *shebeens* (informal bars) in African townships in the 1940s. Today, one musical form, *kwaito*, dominates the African townships, airwaves, and cities. *Kwaito* is South African pop music that combines the beat and style of rap, house, and hip-hop music with older South African musical forms, for instance, the so-called bubble-gum pop music of the 1980s of which Brenda Fassie was the most famous exponent. Official and semiofficial Web sites link *kwaito* to a celebration of freedom, to the democratic transformation in the country, and to the huge commercial success of black music in South Africa after 1994. More commercially minded Web sites addressing a young audience explain *kwaito* as a South African version of Ameri-

2. The *isicathamiya* tradition, the male a cappella singing made world-famous when the group Ladysmith Black Mambazo appeared on Paul Simon's famous album *Graceland* (1986), dates back to the early twentieth century mining hostels in Johannesburg and Durban. The tradition, style of singing, and lyrics are decidedly Zulu. The style of singing and the slow dancing that accompanies it (*isicathamiya* means "speaking like a cat") developed as a reaction to the ban on drumming and dancing—both seen as having the potential to excite workers—by the mining authorities. For an outstanding ethnography and analysis of this musical form, see Erlmann 1996. *Maskhandi* is a rhythmic music, played on European instruments, with a very characteristic guitar sound, as well as lyrics that sometimes are spoken words (*izibongo*) rather than song. It was developed in the 1940s by Zulu musicians who tried "to teach their instruments [to] speak in Zulu," as one of the eminent performers, Phuzhe Khemisi, put it in a recent broadcast on South African television (2004).

can house and hip-hop and thus as black music that is intrinsically urban, irreverent, youthful, and provocative. Other Web sites describe the music as expressing “power to the party people,” thus playfully opposing those who like to party and those who are in the party (ANC, or African National Congress). A widespread story goes that *kwaito* began when some DJs started to play 45-rpm American house singles at 33 rpm to allow South Africans more space to dance and move. The next step in its evolution was the introduction of rap, again more slowly than in the United States, often with several singers doing the chorus.

The result was a unique sound that is now spreading from its creative core in Johannesburg back into the “Black Atlantic”—Gilroy’s apt term for the historical transatlantic space of black subjection and emancipation that gave birth to the most powerful and globalized musical expressions of the contemporary world. As Gilroy demonstrates, black musical forms have circulated across the Atlantic world (in both directions) for more than a century, with New York, London, Jamaica, New Orleans, Johannesburg, and more recently Lagos, Dakar, and Kinshasa as major nodes. These musical forms have established connections with other black people and have also balanced awkwardly between essentialist notions of black identity and more open, antiracist attempts to undermine the very idea of race and thus blackness itself (see Gilroy 1993: 72–110). *Kwaito* clearly positions itself as black music and draws heavily on African American notions of the ghetto, masculinity, and of being streetwise—all translated into a celebration of the township, the erstwhile key symbol of apartheid’s oppression, as the quintessential space of black life, black sexuality, and black expressiveness in postapartheid South Africa.

The normative reversal, or recoding, of the township is expressed in the term *kwaito* itself. Many expressions in the township slang known as *isicamtho* (which derives from *tsotsitaal* or “gangster slang”) are derived from Afrikaans. *Kwai* comes from the term *kwaai*, which has a rich and suggestive set of meanings and connotations—bad, miserable, poor, nasty, angry, even stupid. In contemporary colloquial Afrikaans, *kwaai* is often used to describe things that are enticing, morally ambiguous, and attractive, that is, things that are both hot (e.g., girls, food, and spices) and cool (e.g., men, style, and music). As with the origin of the music itself, nationalist voices claim that the word *kwaito* originates in African languages. Yet it is obvious that urban popular cultures in South Africa all depend on demotically modified Afrikaans, the lingua franca of most urban South Africans.

*Kwaito* is seen as black music by its performers and main audiences; it is popular among the young generation and its lyrics are daring, racy, provocative, and suffused with sexual connotations and innuendo. Many *kwaito* lyrics have clearly

incorporated the hypermasculinist, if not misogynist, pose of many U.S. rappers. Reformulating Stuart Hall's remark that race is the modality in which class is lived, Gilroy argues that "gender is the modality in which race is lived. An amplified and exaggerated masculinity has become the boastful centerpiece of a culture of compensation that self-consciously salves the misery of the dis-empowered and subordinated" (1993: 85).

This observation resonates profoundly not only with the public poses of *kwaito* performers but, more disturbingly, with a hypermasculinist township culture characterized by one of the highest levels of rape in the world and extensive domestic violence. Some of the lyrics are overtly political and tackle issues of racist abuse, crime, unemployment, corruption, and the sense of disappointment and hopelessness that defines the mood among many young people almost a decade after the fall of apartheid. Yet most of the best-selling artists, like Mdu, Ismael, Skeem, Skizo, and the very popular Mandoza, sing about everyday life in the streets, the impossibilities of true love, sudden death, the hope of a glitzy life, and other such things.<sup>3</sup>

Taxis play many types of music, but it is the core market of the young, the highly mobile, and the style-conscious who define their cultural profile. As we shall see in the context of the formerly Indian township of Chatsworth, near Durban, the compact of sound, music, and movement constitutes a dynamic field upon which notions of ethnicity, sexuality, and racial anxiety are formed and contested.

### **Spatial Anxieties and the Loss of "Our Place"**

Let me turn to some ethnographic details of the township of Chatsworth, south of Durban, where I carried out fieldwork in 1998–99 and in 2001. The township was created in the early 1960s as a flagship community in the new spatial regime introduced with the Group Areas Act, which was to permanently separate the residential areas of the country's four racially categorized groups. Thousands of families were moved from the city's older Indian areas, such as Cato Manor, to

3. This self-conscious depoliticization of mainstream *kwaito* and its celebration of black masculinity and "predatory sex" is the cause of much concern among church leaders and social activists. Among white liberals, this culture and the everyday violence it entails and condones are sources of great worry and incomprehension. For an informative but also revealing analysis of *kwaito* and African youth culture along such lines, see Stephens 1999: 256–73. For an exploration of the *ama-gents* (gangsters), their networks, their time spent hanging out (*blom*), the ethics of never stealing "at home" (i.e., among other black people), and the "dizziness of deviance," see Segal, Pelo, and Pule 2001.

what the city council claimed to be a new hygienic form of living: the modern and planned township.

As intended, the township became racially pure, inhabited by diverse people of South Asian origin, but defined as a single racial category of “Indians.” One area, the so-called Unit 2 at the edge of the township, had a community of several thousand Muslim Zanzibaris—descendants of African slaves brought from Zanzibar in the nineteenth century, who were moved to Chatsworth. The group was settled next to the large area of public housing estates in the area—the poorest part of Chatsworth, a center for drug trade, and the home of many of the working-class Muslims in the township—but integration proved complicated. The rhetoric of Islamic brotherhood did not transcend racial and cultural differences. In the 1980s the Zanzibaris were given a separate mosque on a hilltop overlooking the river, and an African imam from Malawi was hired to create a separate congregation. Abobaker, an elderly Zanzibari community leader, told me, “Now, we feel more at home, but we have lost some of the respect we used to enjoy among the younger generation. . . . That is the same all over Chatsworth—the policeman, the teacher, the Imam—no one is respected these days. . . . People who are not Muslims just come over from Umlazi [an adjacent African township] and hide among our black people—but what can we do about it?”

What Abobaker referred to is the massive growth in the number of Africans living in Chatsworth since 1990. Large, informal settlements with thousands of houses have emerged. Street corners, local shopping complexes, and the small patches of playground and recreational space that used to be the pride of many people in Chatsworth have now become the battleground where civic organizations, private security companies, and the city council fight over the future character of the township. The Zanzibari area in Unit 2 is now seen by many Indians in the area as a bridgehead for what many local residents consider “a black invasion of our Chatsworth.”

The battle over the character of the township revolves around two understandings of entitlement. One is the widespread perception of Chatsworth as a properly Indian space—a space that, according to many residents, was transformed from wilderness to “our place” as the result of the initiative and self-help of its residents in the face of decades of discriminating policies. In particular, the older residents, who recall the forced removals and the loss of their ancestral homes, take inordinate pride in their houses and gardens inside what they regard as a proper and safe Indian space. This reflects the legacy of the relatively privileged position of the Indian working class in apartheid’s strictly regulated labor market (see also

Freund 1995 and Desai 1996), which enabled a working-class family to get their own house and enjoy life in the ethnic-racial enclave.

According to the other understanding promoted by the ANC and left-leaning, well-educated Indians, the residents of Indian townships should be prepared to share some of their amenities and resources with the majority population. The policy of the government and the city council reflect this opinion. Schools are open to all, and the informal African settlements are gradually being replaced by little brick houses, making thousands of Africans legally recognized residents within the primarily Indian township. Many Indians see this as a partisan political move, sponsored by the ANC to gain a foothold in the township in order to deliver on promises made to their African supporters at the expense of hapless working-class Indians. The strong nexus between the ANC and the informal settlements was confirmed during the election campaign in 1999, when political meetings in Chatsworth were filled with singing and *toy-toying* (rhythmic dancing in a crowd that became a signature of antiapartheid rallies and protests) African ANC supporters from the informal settlements. This meant, in turn, that Indians largely stayed away from these meetings. A similar thing happened in July 2001, when Nelson Mandela's eightieth birthday was celebrated in Durban. The aversion to the ANC runs deep in Chatsworth, and so does the fear experienced by most Indians of being in a crowd of thousands of Africans. "You may get killed in a crowd like that," I was told by a friend and longstanding ANC member. "To be honest, I don't feel comfortable when they start dancing and *toy-toying*. . . . They also speak at the top of their voice and the music is too loud. . . . It is too much for me," he confided.

### **The *Charous* of Chatsworth**

Like so many slang expressions in South Africa, the term *charou* comes from Afrikaans and literally means "burnt [*char*] man [*ou*]." It is not quite as derogatory as the older colonial term "coolie" and has today acquired a wide range of connotations, ranging from disdain to affection, while also being an important signifier of cultural intimacy. If people say about someone that "he is a real *charou*," it refers to a certain way of speaking, joking, eating, and drinking that is characteristic of working-class life in the big Indian townships around Durban. People living in the elite areas designated by the apartheid state for wealthy and upwardly mobile Indians are, in other words, definitely not *char* (the adjective form). They often see themselves not merely as Indians, in terms of the racial

category created by apartheid, but as people who strongly emphasize their Indian origin. The established cultural model of upward mobility among Indians in South Africa has for decades involved a systematic purging of everything *char*, such as drinking cheap liquor; speaking the characteristic South African Indian English heavily inflected with words from Afrikaans, Tamil, and Hindi; eating meat; cracking lewd jokes; and listening to Hindi film songs and talk shows on the largest Indian radio station, Radio Lotus, originally created by the apartheid government. A stereotypical “proper Indian,” by contrast, is often a devout Hindu (neither Christian nor Muslim, as these groups often distance themselves from Indian roots); a vegetarian (most of the time); active in local cultural and civic work; keen on cultural roots, music, and art; and proud of the Indian contribution to the new South African nation.

The memory and knowledge of *charou* ways—funny accents, crude manners, simple food, and badly performed Hindi pop—remains, however, the heart of Indian ethnicity in South Africa, a semisecret set of codes and references that, unlike Indian high culture, cannot be learned and appreciated by outsiders. For the aspiring middle classes, *charou* culture holds a deeply ambivalent position—denounced, despised, and ridiculed (often in stand-up comedy and community theater). When it appears, in glimpses, in the behavior or speech of people thought to be “cultured,” it is both despised and enjoyed, even celebrated, as “our past,” the ethnic thing that is truly “ours” and therefore the object of ambivalent enjoyment and jouissance (see Žižek 1994). Many young people only reluctantly admitted to me that they somewhat surreptitiously enjoy Hindi films and particularly the popular Indian music played by local radio stations. “I grew up with it, and it is just a *charou* thing,” I was told on many occasions. This implied that no outsider could fully understand the ambivalent feelings of loss, but also of embarrassment and sensuous enjoyment, that this music evoked. In the last few years, advertisements, newspaper columnists, and talk-show hosts have increasingly referred to *charou* culture as something simple and quaint and yet honest and unpretentious. This supposed authenticity and élan of *charou* life is always contrasted with the lives of the aspiring middle class, who carefully purge every trace of *charou*-ness from their accents and behaviors in order to appear “white” and respectable.

But how do the *charou* and *char* ways of living then appear to those who live in the heart of the townships? The strictures of apartheid governed social life in innumerable ways that remain highly visible and deeply ingrained. The township was a space of experience, predicament, and possibility that was shared by both the middle class and the unemployed; by Hindus, Christians, and Muslims; by Tamil, Gujarati, and Hindi speakers. One became an Indian because one lived

an Indian life—went to Indian schools, shopped in Indian shops, went to Indian cinema halls and beaches, and visited family in other Indian enclaves. The *charou* culture was interior to this life, a code that one could switch back to, a mode of being and speaking that was a part of the everyday experiences of most Indians, however ludicrous, morally ambiguous, and even shameful it was in the eyes of those striving for respectability, or however embarrassed and anxious ordinary Indians were about this inner “truth” of the community—a truth far removed from the classicized idea of Indian culture espoused by the local elite. The *charou* register had negative cultural capital. It was the zero point from which cultural capital could be built and developed, but it was therefore also a register one could slip back into if *charou* ways were not carefully purged from one’s home and family. The term *charou* is often used in the third person, as if it were something latent out in “the community,” vices and flaws that might appear in people—such as cheating, stealing, wicked ways, gossip, superstition, and so on. In everyday conversations people might warn one another, “Don’t carry that cell phone—the *charous* might take it.” If a serious crime was committed by an Indian, people might say “the *charous* did it,” thereby casting the event as interior to Indian township life and thus shameful, but at the same time making the crime exterior to that life, attributing it to bad and immoral elements that remained isolated and specific from the general occurrences of the township. Yet most of my informants would readily admit, always with a chuckle, that they basically all were *charous*. Most informants found great pleasure in laughing at themselves and mocking the township culture; this mockery has been a staple in the rich tradition of community theater I have explored elsewhere (Hansen 2000).

The proverbial “sandwich” position of the Indians between whites and Africans and their relatively privileged situation during the apartheid era have produced a very complex structure of recognition among Indians in South Africa. Superficially, the racial attitudes of Indians are reminiscent of the self-images Frantz Fanon identified in the Antilles: on the one hand, the attitudes display a loathing and contempt of blackness, identifying it with primitive and natural drives, a lack of refinement, and oversexualized bodies untempered by restraint or cultural mores. On the other hand, Indians display a widespread admiration of whiteness, of the imputed rationality of whites, and of the beauty of fair skin and light eyes; they fear and are awed by the aggressiveness and resolve of white men. Yet the self-hatred and the loathing of internal traces of blackness that Fanon describes among people of the Antilles (Fanon 1986 [1967]: 109–22) have no clear parallels among the Indians of Durban. One finds, rather, a concern with an imputed external gaze, a certain embarrassment about Indian customs and

practices that are seen as excessive, too *char*, too oriental, and too alien to be understood by outsiders (whites), combined with an inordinate pride in claiming to be heirs to an ancient and refined civilization. At the heart of these claims is the Indian family—not in its actual lived forms, but as an ideological construct of cohesion, respect, and deep tradition that seems to be more true and enduring than any actual lived kinship relation.

During the apartheid years a certain pride could be taken in reversing the stigma by proudly calling oneself a *charou*. However, since the educated began leaving the township in the 1990s, *charou* culture has in fact become the culture of working-class, uneducated, and marginalized Indians—those left behind as an anachronistic object of jokes and nostalgia. The township of Chatsworth is today affected by massive job losses, an informal economy consisting of small businesses operating from private homes, and a steady decline in the standard of living. Correlated to this sudden reversal of fortune (in a community that had seen slow but steady progress for decades) has been a massive and spectacular growth in the number of Hindus converting to various Pentecostalist denominations, which today have a dominant influence and strong following among impoverished Indians. Another corollary of the *charou*fication of the township and the generally more permissive climate after 1994 is that the problematics of youth and youth culture have become much more pertinent issues. As authority structures in families and the community are losing their efficacy, partying, drugs, and high levels of promiscuity are dominant elements in a new, consumption-oriented, and decidedly nonpolitical Indian youth culture that shares much more with African youth culture than is often admitted.

Many parents and community leaders attribute the growing insubordination of Indian teenagers to the impact of what they see as unrestrained African immorality and the growth of the number of Africans in Chatsworth to approximately 25 percent of the population. In spite of widespread apprehension, if not outright hostility, towards the African worlds surrounding them, many Indians are nonetheless beginning to mix and engage with Africans in two fields—the taxi industry and the churches—both of them distinctly *charou* and mediated by Black Atlantic cultural forms and soundscapes.

### **Taxis, *Charou* Style**

Taxis became a dominant part of Chatsworth's street life in the mid-1990s. A taxi owner, nicknamed "Mandela" for his active role during the antiapartheid campaigns in the area, pioneered the organization of taxis into ranks that had specific

bases of operation and designated areas within which their taxis could operate. Soon he lost his influence and status. He told me: “Now the gangsters control the whole thing. . . . before we all owned our own vehicle but now the big drug lords buy taxis to become legit . . . they threw me out of the taxi association and they charge new members fifteen to twenty thousand rand.”

Mandela and others have formed their own association, which mainly services the less profitable routes within the poorer areas of the township. The main ranks, which service the profitable route between the city center and the township, are controlled by big owners with fifteen to twenty taxis each. With job losses and the informalization of the economy, the number of private cars has declined and the demand for transport has grown rapidly, not least among young people and teenagers who go to Durban city for shopping and entertainment. Many former industrial workers have spent the package they received upon their dismissal on buying a taxi or setting up small businesses—often related to cars, tires, or spare parts—that today are dominated by Indians across the Durban region. The competition is stiff and the profit margins are often thin among the township’s three hundred taxis. Violence is common in the Indian taxi industry in Chatsworth, but it is less politicized and lethal than in the African taxi ranks and is often related to personal rivalries between taxi owners.

In a bid to attract the burgeoning market of style-conscious teenagers in Chatsworth—keen consumers of white, Afro-American, and the globally circulating South Asian forms of fashion and music—taxis began to compete on style and sound. By the late 1990s the so-called swanking taxis, or swankers, appeared—painted in bright colors and sporting striking and dramatic motifs, seats in matching colors, and huge sound systems. The motifs range from dragons and huge weapons to half-naked blondes in leather outfits. The names range from Bad Boyz, Bone Crusher, or Spiderman, to distinctly unsubtle ones such as Ladykiller and Big Willie. Other taxis take their names from the local soccer heroes, the Manning Rangers (also known as the Mighty Maulers), and some taxis flaunt the Muslim identity of their owners with green colors and inscriptions such as “*Allah-hu-Akbar* [Allah is great].” Today, almost half of the taxis are swanking, and each time a new taxi, or a redecorated one, hits the street with new fresh colors and a huge sound system it becomes the object of rumors and much interest. The swanking taxis charge twice the regular price but remain the most popular. Many teenagers have their favorite taxis, and their constantly changing preferences drive the competition and the production of ever more fanciful motifs and extreme equipment. Customers are discerning; both young boys and girls will dismiss taxis without “whitewalls”—the wide and white-walled

tires that have become de rigeur—and most would never consider using a taxi without a sound system. The styles of the driver and the conductor (who solicits customers)—their clothes, jokes, and reputations—are also important to the success of a swanking taxi.

The life span of a swanker before redecoration or renovation is about one year or less, and the initial investment of up to two hundred thousand rand (a large sum of money in the local economy) must be recovered in that time. Many of these taxis are hijacked and stripped of assets—sound systems, tires, headlights, and even engines. To drive a swanking taxi is therefore more risky, but also more rewarding, than working a more anonymous vehicle. The earnings are much better, the visibility is higher, and a certain romantic aura of being “wild at heart” has developed around the drivers and conductors of these vehicles. Many drivers and conductors see themselves as mavericks and freebooters, and they enjoy the rush of traffic, the intensity, the quick money, and the attention of women. Conductors and drivers of swanking taxis like to see themselves as “sexy beasts”—men well versed in the law of the street and the world of gangsters, the ubiquitous hijackings of cars, and other such things.

The swanking taxis and their decorations are distinctly Indian interpretations of the world of taxis. For taxis in the African townships, style is marked by the style of drivers and conductors and the style of music rather than by visual decoration. The style of decoration and equipment in the Indian townships reflect the wider obsession with cars—the single most important staple of everyday male conversation—and the technical competence that abounds in Chatsworth. However, it also reflects the difference in emphasis that historically has been placed on the visual as compared to the sonic. The sonic—singing, *toy-toying*, drumming, loud music—has always been central to the black township, while the visual—the use of color, clothing, and adornment—traditionally has been central to the marking of “Indianness,” and possibly to South Asian cultural forms more generally. As we shall see below, this distinction is becoming increasingly blurred. The emergence of new forms of Indian pop, fusion music, and *kwaito* has indeed afforded Indian taxis a new and powerful sonic medium.<sup>4</sup>

4. The distinction between the sonic and the visual in the South African context stands in an interesting contrast to Miller’s example from Trinidad. Afro-Trinidadian cars are marked by paint and outward decoration whereas Indo-Trinidadian vehicles excel in elaborate upholstery and interior decoration. Miller interprets this as a reflection of different ideologies of masculinity within the two communities, performed in the street and within the home, respectively (Miller 1994, 2001). In South Africa, the notion of the street as defined and dominated by black culture has not yet been realized, and the Indian taxis do in many ways constitute a creative assertion of Indian masculinity performed in the streets, at least in the formerly Indian townships.

The style of decoration on taxis also reflects an ironic play on stereotypes about Indians—the loud and colorful style, the over-the-top quality of the Bollywood style and aesthetic. When discussing this apparent Indian predilection for colors, the taxi drivers, owners, and ordinary customers always provided ironic and mocking explanations: “We Indians love colors, don’t you know?”; “Ah, it is like Bollywood!”; “When you *witous* (whites) think it is too much, that is when the *charous* love it!” Others would ironically repeat the slogan of Radio Lotus, the biggest Indian radio station in the country: “Not Everything Is Black or White!” The paint and the colors also reflect a more assertive Indian identity in the postapartheid context. The official denunciation of racial categories has in fact produced a growing urge to visibly mark racial and ethnic identities in an increasingly mixed, plural, and also permissive society. As we shall see below, the half-embarrassed play on the *charou* enjoyment of Oriental excess is also central to the style of music played in the taxis.

But let us first return to Unit 2 in Chatsworth. The center of this area is a slightly run-down shopping complex on the road that separates the row houses and bungalows on one side from the large public housing estate, the sprawling Zanzibari community, and the informal African settlements on the other side. The shopping complex has a gas station, some small supermarkets, a butcher, a hardware store, and two bars, while fruit sellers and other small vendors are spreading over the shopping complex’s chaotic parking lot. Many of the shops are owned and run by Muslims (as elsewhere in Chatsworth), and a local kebab restaurant is run by Pakistanis whose loud conversations in Urdu and “funny” accents bemuse many locals.

Around the shopping complex, there is a constant bustle of taxis incessantly using their horns, while the conductors hang out of windows soliciting customers, passing comments on women, and showering each other with lighthearted abuse. Because of the presence of the Zanzibari community and the large informal African settlement, many taxis are “black” taxis, that is, taxis with a black driver and conductor. Some of the Indian taxi owners have hired black drivers and conductors in a bid to keep out the competition from taxis based in the neighboring township of Umlazi. These black taxis are often the hip (*kwaai*) ones preferred by the younger black people when going to or from the clubs and popular shopping malls in the city center.

Among Indian customers, the black taxis are regarded as both exciting and potentially dangerous. Young Indian men use them frequently. Here, they encounter what they see as a somewhat cooler African interpretation of Afro-American music, hairstyles, and dress codes. These styles represent interpretations of a uni-

versally accepted black American culture rather than a Zulu or traditional black South African culture. Similarly, *kwaito* has gradually become popular among young Indians because some lyrics are in English and because the style is seen as a rough Johannesburg interpretation of American rap styles. Many young Indian men told me that they liked the aggressive beat, the sexualized lyrics, and the masculinist poses that are so associated with both *kwaito* and black township culture more generally.

There is undoubtedly an intimate nexus between music, ethnicity, and race. Music relates directly to sensual and bodily registers. Music is enjoyed with and in the body, and this is particularly true of styles like house, *kwaito*, and bhangra (Punjabi folk music mixed with drums and bass). There may be tunes or styles you do not particularly like, but your foot will start to move as the music gets “inside your head” or “inside your body,” as my informants put it. Music is at the visceral heart of ethnicity, not merely as ethnic music, but as an emotional anchor for feelings of attachment that may relate to childhood or to banal pleasures of community life. As Charles Kiel and Steven Feld have noted, listening to music involves the invocation and remembrance of locations, the recognition and categorization of styles, and the enabling of a range of emotionally powerful associations—including both images and sensations (1994: 83). In this way we can understand the embarrassed admissions by young Indians that they like Hindi films and their songs, although they until recently were seen as distinctly uncool. Kiri Naidoo, an astute political commentator who grew up in Chatsworth, recently coined the term *bhangra nationalism* for the process whereby conservative Indian politicians at big, free “bhangra bashes” consolidate and recreate an emotionally strong Indian identity in the face of the country’s momentous change. This effect resonates with Mark Mattern’s notion of “musical action . . . [when] music express[es] meanings that give listeners direct access to emotions and ideas” (1998: 17). Indeed, the bhangra bash has become the standard populist technique used to attract and gather Indians across generation and class; it is deployed by radio stations, political parties, and commercial advertisers; and it is even mobilized to accompany public celebrations like the Hindu festival of Diwali.<sup>5</sup> The flip side of this emotive-cohesive force of music and dance is the anxiety generated by the compact of unfamiliar African music and bodily movement such as those deployed in *toy-toying* or in the celebrations of Mandela’s birthday mentioned above.

5. Diwali, also known as the festival of lights, is one of the biggest festivals in the Hindu calendar and is celebrated by Hindus across the world. It celebrates the return of Lord Ram to Ayodhya after having defeated the demon king Ravana.

While bhangra in its traditional Punjabi forms had been around for many years, it was only when it was combined with a heavy bass and linked to contemporary dance tunes that it became available as a consolidating factor in Asian identity in Britain (see Huq 1996). In South Africa, the music of the Hindi films had, since the 1940s, been a dominant source of entertainment in the Indian working class (see Veeran 1999). However, in the 1970s, Western pop music began to dominate this music scene, and by the early 1990s the interest in Bollywood among younger people was almost nonexistent. The arrival of bhangra, and later the more dance floor-oriented music by artists such as Bally Sagoo, Apache Indian, Asian Dub Foundation, Punjabi MC, and many others, made a sound available that seemed both modern and Indian, that sounded Western, Afro-American, and oriental, in a mix that was accessible and in tune with the new and increasingly assertive Indian youth culture.<sup>6</sup> Bhangra and its successors, not least the increasingly popular indy pop and indy rock coming from Mumbai, London, and North America, offer an experience of authenticity that rests on the possibility of racial identification with other so-called brown folks across the oceans. Not unlike the African diaspora's discomfort with the actual Africa (as opposed to its idealization by the intellectuals of the Black Atlantic), the theorizers and producers of what one could call an emerging "Brown Atlantic" (its nodes being London, Birmingham, Toronto, New York, Trinidad, Mumbai, and Delhi) are also wary of any direct identification with the supposed cultural "motherland" of India (see Sharma 1996).

The authenticity sought by this music is not the one of blood and origins that is pursued by Hindu nationalism, but one that thematizes the shared predicaments of nonrecognition and misrecognition as minorities. It is a music that seeks to enjoy and interiorize South Asian sounds while recognizing the fundamental embeddedness of diasporic Indians in a modern, urban, and decidedly non-Indian environment.

The arrival in South Africa of these new sounds—both Western and Asian—coincided with the reinvention and rethinking of Indian identity after apartheid. As the official, racial definition disappeared, a new, culturalized definition of "Indianness" began to emerge. The music provided a signifier of an identity that had enormous visceral energy and reach by virtue of its own hybridized and lowbrow character that nonetheless was distinctly Asian. The range of references invoked by the music is vague and eclectic, and thus it is in almost perfect tune with

6. A similar logic applied to the revival of Bollywood film as a new generation of films like *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* and other youth-oriented films with bhangra-inspired soundtracks and English subtitles emerged from 1998 onward (Hansen 2005).

the geographical-historical vagueness that marks the cultural self-identification of most *charous*. The new Asian dance music and aesthetic evolved internationally and won recognition among some whites and a few educated blacks in South Africa (though far less so than in the UK or North America), where it became an important symbol of “our thing” and the “Indianness” that otherwise remained so vaguely defined. The new music constituted a repertoire by which the space of the township could be sonically marked and asserted, and at decibel levels matching those of the black township culture. In both the bustling streets of Chatsworth and the big taxi ranks in the city, music is a key marker of identity and presence along racial lines — sometimes in friendly and teasing “matches” of subwoofers, on other occasions in more aggressive sonic wars involving horns, shouting, and verbal abuse. Yet music like *kwaito* appears as a significant leveling force — a genre distributed across racial lines and across subcultures.

The power of loud music with a heavy bass is not merely cultural or political. It is also locally interpreted as suggestive, sensual, and seductive. Afro-American R & B has, in South Africa, become universally accepted as dating music among all racial and cultural communities. The appeal of its lyrics of pure and devoted love and its celebration of romance must be understood against a reality, in black American culture and even more so in South Africa, of feeble family structures and the agonistic relationships between men and women that Gilroy sees as one of the deep and almost irreparable damages of slavery and emasculation. The association of black music with sexuality and licentiousness does indeed have deep historical roots both in North America and the Caribbean. Calypso music and its associated dancing were for decades seen as deeply immoral among Indians in Trinidad. Much like the impact of bhangra on Indian dancing in South Africa, it was only the emergence of the upbeat and popular Indian chutney music in Trinidad in the 1990s that made dancing more respectable among Indians (Manuel 2000).<sup>7</sup>

The actual and lived realities of Indian family life (such as the high number of female-headed households, the many divorces, and the pattern of sexual liaisons in Chatsworth’s *charou* culture) are indeed much closer to familial patterns in the African townships than to any received idealization of the Indian family. The change in youth culture in Chatsworth and the overt sexualization of body, dress, conduct, and soundscape in the erstwhile purely Indian spaces probably consti-

7. Peter Wade also demonstrates how rhythmic music and dancing became one of the central features associated with the historically marginalized black culture on the Colombian coast. In Africa, similar connections and strong moral condemnation of dancing and drinking have remained a foundational element in the work of many missions and missionary institutions (Wade 1993: 267–94).

tutes one of the most significant and visible transformations since 1994. To most of my informants, this is squarely linked to the presence of Africans. The taxis, with loud music and young, loud teenagers, are regarded by many adults as moving signifiers of blackness—that is, sexuality, danger, and aggression—regardless of the fact that most passengers are Indians. A woman from Unit 2 expressed her reactions to this new street culture in the following way:

These taxis make me a little nervous. Some of the drivers look like gangsters and their loud music is very aggressive. Even when you walk the streets the conductor will shout things like, “Come on mummy, come with me, I give the best rides in town.” They laugh all the time, but I don’t like it, and I never go with them. Many of our Indian taxis have also started to do the same thing, but I will not go with them . . . I prefer the taxis without music, or the ones with nice Indian music like in the films.

Local newspapers regularly carry articles condemning the loud music, and, in letters to the editor, readers complain that the taxis’ culture of music and flirting makes them into “rolling nightclubs.” Worried parents, teachers, and religious leaders see the taxis and the permissive youth culture they represent as responsible for the growing rate of teenage pregnancies, prostitution, drug use, and crime. Drivers and conductors are routinely described as school dropouts and as antisocial elements. For girls, riding alone in taxis, especially black taxis, can be enough to cast doubt on their moral habitus. The simple proximity to younger African men, however superficial and economic such a relation may be, is seen as a moral problem. Yet it is clear that Chatsworth is far from being dominated by Africans, but rather is dominated by a new, louder, and more conspicuous *charou* culture that has incorporated taxis, *kwaito*, bhangra, and ever-growing use of drugs and *dagga* (dope) within the last decade or more.

As so many others in the township have done, Ramesh has coined an English nickname for himself, but somehow the name Rocky does not sit too comfortably with his skinny body and slight appearance. Ramesh is twenty-two years old and has been a conductor in a taxi owned by his brother for two years. It is painted bright red, called the Mighty Mauler after the aforementioned local soccer club, and has the logo of the club painted all over its sides. Following current fashion, Ramesh’s head is shaved, and he displays golden earrings, one gold front tooth, and three other front teeth with gold rimming. He dresses as if he were going to a nightclub, in black jeans, big boots, a shiny golden shirt, and Ray-Ban sunshades. The driver, who is a bit older, also wears black and gold and a leather jacket, even in the heat of the midday sun.

“This is our style,” Ramesh says. “You get customers with your style, you know, how you dress, your music, and the way your car is done. We play bhangra in the daytime, not so loud in the mornings, but then in the afternoon when many of the kids leave school we shift to R & B and then mostly *kwaito* in the evening. . . . Many of the kids like it to be loud and some of them will wait for us outside their school, because they know us and like us.”

Ramesh admits that a part of the attraction of the job is that he gets to know a lot of people and that chatting, joking, and flirting is part of the job. Sometimes he has been in trouble with the boyfriends of the girls he knows, but as he says, “It depends on which taxi you *graf* [work]. If you work in one of my brother’s taxis you are safe. . . . everybody knows his reputation and no one messes with him.”

Ramesh does not mind black customers; they are better than the *charous*, he insists, because they never try to run off without paying. His ideas of Africans are strongly gendered, however, and he asserts that he prefers black women as customers because “some of them are very shy and sweet, not like these *charou* chicks, they have such loud mouths.” Too many black men in the taxi at a time clearly is a threat, he thinks. “I will rather go [*sic*] half empty than with a load of these guys—they are arrogant when they are in a group.”

Ramesh has been held up and robbed more often than he can remember. It is a part of the job, he says, and so they never keep much money in their car. He has a gun himself, which his brother gave to him, but won’t use it out of fear that he might get shot. He is very practical about the muggings: “You give them [a] hundred rand and they run off—my life is worth more than that,” he says, and claims that he has never been threatened or mugged by Indian men because they don’t dare to do it, out of fear of being found and punished. “Besides,” he says, “we Indians stick together in this taxi business. If we don’t the darkies will take everything from us.” Ramesh’s fortunate experience is undoubtedly conditioned by his brother’s reputation; in contrast, many other drivers and conductors readily admitted that most of the crime and muggings in Chatsworth were indeed committed by local *charous*.

### **Conclusion: “Indianness,” African Style**

Although denied by most inhabitants of Chatsworth, it seems that there is an increasing convergence of patterns of life and cultural enjoyment between Indian and African townships. The new markings and negotiations of territory and identity afforded by the taxis express this convergence as vehicles (in more than one

sense) of the “party culture” that has been the primary refuge for an emancipated but also bewildered postapartheid generation.

The taxi industry itself has produced many forms of convergence. It has introduced new forms of criminality and has allowed drug lords and other operators in the informal economy to develop a highly conspicuous and profitable legal business. This has earned them unprecedented levels of visibility and respectability as the spokesmen and public faces of both local communities and their taxi associations. Such a nexus between criminality, the threat of violence, and political eminence has long been a feature of local politics in African townships. While criminal networks previously played a role in the Indian townships during apartheid, they are now acquiring an unprecedented level of everyday visibility.

Another convergent form is the style of masculinity and more broadly of gender relations among ordinary *charous*. While the emerging youth culture in Chatsworth has provided more personal freedom for young women in terms of appearance, mobility, and choice of partners, the level of sexual and domestic violence against women is also growing. The African township culture, especially the more violent forms associated with the taxi industry and gangsters, present codes of masculinity that are being widely copied among young Indian men. These include black hairstyles, baggy pants, colorful caps, and a huge emphasis on muscular bodies, plentiful cash, and a certain ruthless and often misogynist attitude toward women. Many of these elements are vernacularized interpretations of black American culture. The taxi industry is regarded by many young men as a perfect place for raising quick cash and for gaining access to what colloquially is known as “*charou* chix,” or supposedly easy Indian women. The *kwaito* music and its lyrics fit quite seamlessly into this masculinized street culture.

Yet none of this is actually recognized as elements of “black” culture by people in Chatsworth. Such forms are seen as Indian because racially Indian bodies are performing these forms of masculinity, because the music often has Asian tunes in it, and because the lingo is South African Indian English, rather than *isizulu* or *isicamtho*. What in reality amounts to a gradual Africanization of the culture in the formerly Indian townships is interpreted by most middle-class Indians as the dominance of a morally inferior *charou* way of life. In this way, the fundamental misrecognition of markers of race and class seems to continue, albeit in a different form.

If apartheid was built around a system that institutionalized racial oppression and segregation as the lived form of class subordination, it seems that the reverse is true among non-African communities in postapartheid South Africa. Here, the

reality of increased influence of black and African culture in everyday life is attributed to differences in class. In the early twentieth century, poor Indians, poor whites, and poor Coloureds were assumed to be without the required cultural capital and self-formation that would enable them to withstand the onslaught of more primitive and coarse forms of sociality associated with Africans. The prevention of this assumed debasement of the poorer sections of whites was a major impetus in the creation of apartheid. The same supposed threat prompted Hindu and Muslim organizations to carry out missionary work in the first half of the twentieth century among coolie laborers to prevent them from being “contaminated” by African culture and Christianity.

The supposed moral decay of the *charous* and their pollution by African (and Afro-American) culture after the fall of apartheid has prompted multiple Indian organizations in South Africa to attempt to purify religious practices among the *charous* and to forge links with the wider Indian diaspora and the “Motherland,” while others try to convert *charous* to Christianity or to Islam. In the eyes of these reformers and concerned Indians, the community has lost a sense of cultural intimacy. The reproduction of a local sense of “Indianness” is now challenged by a proliferating range of global and translocal identifications, as well as a new and unmistakably Africanized way of inhabiting the city through the senses.

In view of this wider South African context, the taxi, its colors, and its deafening *kwaito* signifies much more than a demotic celebration of postapartheid freedom. It also signifies a new inhabitation of urban space and a new morally ambiguous cultural genre—Afro-Indian—that cannot recognize itself as an identity. Not yet.

### References

- Desai, Ashwin. 1996. *Arise ye coolies: Apartheid and the Indian, 1960–1995*. Johannesburg: Impact Africa.
- Dugard, Jackie. 2001. Drive on? Taxi wars in South Africa. In *Crime wave: The South African underworld and its foes*, edited by Jonny Steinberg. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Erlmann, Veit. 1996. *Nightsong: Performance, power, and practice in South Africa*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1986 [1967]. *Black skin, white masks*. London: Routledge.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1989. *The Freud reader*, edited by Peter Gay. New York: Norton.

- Freund, Bill. 1995. *Insiders and outsiders: The Indian working class of Durban, 1910–1990*. London: Currey.
- Gilroy, Paul. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. London: Verso.
- Hansen, Thomas B. 2000. Plays and politics: Politics and cultural identity among South African Indians. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26: 255–69.
- Hansen, Thomas B. 2005. In search of the diasporic self: Bollywood in South Africa. In *Bollyworlds*, edited by Raminder Kaur and Ajay Sinha. London: Sage Publications.
- Herzfeld, Michael. 1997. *Cultural intimacy: Social poetics in the nation-state*. New York: Routledge.
- Huq, Rupa. 1996. Asian kool? Bhangra and beyond. In *Dis-orienting rhythms: The politics of new Asian dance music*, edited by Sanjay Sharma, John Hutnyk, and Ashwani Sharma. London: Zed Books.
- Keil, Charles, and Steven Feld. 1994. *Music grooves: Essays and dialogues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Khemisi, Phuzi. 2004. “Phuzi Khemisi,” produced by Damon Heatlie. South African Broadcasting Corporation, June 11.
- Manuel, Peter. 2000. Ethnic identity, national identity, and music in Indo-Trinidadian culture. In *Music and the racial imagination*, edited by Ronald Michael Radano and Philip Vilas Bohlman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mattern, Mark. 1998. *Acting in concert: Music, community, and political action*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Mbembe, Achille, and Sarah Nuttall. 2004. Writing the world from an African metropolis. *Public Culture* 16: 347–72.
- Miller, Daniel. 1994. *Modernity, an ethnographic approach: Dualism and mass consumption in Trinidad*. Oxford: Berg.
- . 2001. Driven societies. In *Car Cultures*, edited by Daniel Miller. Oxford: Berg.
- Profile KwaZulu-Natal. 2001. The Taxi Commission of Inquiry: Cleaning up the taxi industry in KwaZulu-Natal. *Profile KwaZulu-Natal* 1, no. 1. [www.profilekzn.co.za/archive/vol1-no1-March2001/latest2.asp](http://www.profilekzn.co.za/archive/vol1-no1-March2001/latest2.asp).
- Segal, Lauren, Joy Pelo, and Rampa Pule. 2001. Into the heart of darkness: Journeys of the amagents in crime, violence, and death. In *Crime wave: The South African underworld and its foes*, edited by Jonny Steinberg. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

**Public Culture**

- Sharma, Sanjay. 1996. Noisy Asians or “Asian noise”? In *Dis-orienting rhythms: The politics of new Asian dance music*, edited by Sanjay Sharma, John Hutnyk, and Ashwani Sharma. London: Zed Books.
- Stephens, Simon. 1999. Kwaito. In *Senses of culture: South African culture studies*, edited by Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl-Ann Michael. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Veeran, Naresh. 1999. “Orchestral music was the music of the working class”: *Indian popular music, performance practices, and identity among Indian South Africans in Durban 1930–1970*. PhD diss., University of Natal, Durban.
- Wade, Peter. 1993. *Blackness and race mixture: The dynamics of racial identity in Colombia*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Žižek, Slavoj. 1993. *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.