

**University of Zululand**

**Symbolism and Implications in the Zulu dance forms:  
Notions of composition, performance and appreciation  
of dance among the Zulu.**

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**Symbolism and Implications in the Zulu dance forms;  
Notions of composition, performance and appreciation  
of dance among the Zulu.**

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## Declaration

**Except where specifically indicated to the contrary,  
this dissertation is entirely my own.**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Vusabantu Ngema**

15/03/2007  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

**For my children:       Siyanda, Sithembiso and Simphiwe(Vuyiswa)**

**and**

**Ingoduso yami       Xoliswa (UMaMkhize)**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I like to thank all the mothers, fathers, grandfathers and grandmothers I had conversation with and a special thanks go to those young men and women who were always willing to perform and share their experiences with me, I say to them *Unwele olude bafowethu nodadewethu*.

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I am also very grateful to my parents, Phendukani and Sarafina (UMaMbuyazi) Ngema, for their encouragement towards the persuasion of a career and research in the Zulu dance tradition.

**Nikhule nize nikhokhobe.**



**'In the continuation of the Zulu dance Tradition, everybody have a place and a role to play'.**

## ABSTRACT

*'Indigenous people today are seeking to transcend the history of pain and loss that began with the coming of Europeans into our world. In the past 500 years, our people have suffered murderous onslaughts of greed and disease. Even as history's shadow lengthens to mark the passing of that brutal age, the Western compulsion to control remains strong. To preserve what is left of our cultures and lands, is a constant fight. Some indigenous people believe the statements of regret and promises of reconciliation spoken by our oppressors. Some have come to trust and accept the world that has been created through colonization... But those who find sincerity and comfort in the oppressor, who bind themselves to recent promises, must yield to the assimilationist demands of the mainstream and abandon any meaningful attainment to an indigenous cultural and political reality. Thankfully, those who accept the colonization of their nations are a small minority. Most people continue to participate in, or at least support, the struggle to gain recognition and respect for their right to exist as peoples, unencumbered by the demands, controls and false identities imposed on them by others.*

*Amid the seemingly perpetual conflict that comes with defending our ideals, there is confusion, division, and sometimes despair. Sometimes it seems we have lost our way, and then the confusion, division and despair threaten to overwhelm us again. Distracted from our goal, we wander a forest of frustration living inauthentic lives that make us easy prey for those who would enslave us. Such times constitute crises, and we are in the midst of one today....'*

Taiaiake Alfred

## Summary

### CHAPTER ONE

The first chapter gives a general introduction to the study. It also lays down the aims, motivation, methodology (the study follows) and the scope and the views from the experts and existing literature on the Zulu dance tradition.

### CHAPTER TWO

Chapter two investigates the processes of learning and teaching in the Zulu dance tradition. The focus is on the basic techniques and movements in the Zulu dance tradition. It also attempts to provide the meaning of those movements. It categorically gives meaning to the different forms of Zulu dancing and gives explanation to the compositional approach to each form.

### CHAPTER THREE

Chapter three deals with the performance in the Zulu dance tradition. The focus is mainly on the formations in performance. It looks at the number of performers and elements of space such as directions, focus and density.



## CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter four looks at the popular styles in Zulu dancing. The focus is on the history and the continuation of these styles of dancing, that is, **Indlamu**, **Ingoma**, **Imigido** and **Imiqhudelwano**.

## CHAPTER FIVE

Chapter five contains the findings, recommendations and the conclusion of the research.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

#### 1.1 Introduction

Zulu dance tradition is but just a portion of a vast evidence of the expressive and intellectual sphere of the Zulu people. It is an art form generally enjoyed, performed and critiqued by communities or groups rather than being a prerogative of individuals alone. It provides an entry point into the sphere of thought, socio-political context of the Zulu people and an insight into the relationships between arts and religion in the Zulu context. It lately provided an insight to the economic situation of the Zulu people. As Erlmann (1991:98), puts it

*...ingoma is a product of the dramatic socio-economic changes in Zulu society after the final downfall of the independent kingdom*

The story of the Zulu people has always been that of dramatic changes. The coming to power of King Shaka marked the biggest dramatic change in history of the Zulu people. The story of *Mfecane* was that of people either repelled by Shaka's rule or attracted by it.

A good example of what was happening in the land of the Zulu, is what Sparks (1990:92) talks about in, The Mind of South Africa:

*"The age of interaction had begun, an age that commenced with the drama of attempted escape and a blood-spattered dispersal before the players came together again into an ongoing relationship of rejection and attraction, of mutual antipathy and dependency. It is a relationship not unlike that of Arthur Schopenhauer's porcupines on a freezing night, who bunch together for warmth only to prick each other and move apart, causing them to freeze again and move closer once more. That is the story of modern South Africa"*

And that was the story of the **Zulu** during *Mfecane*.

The political, economic, social and cultural landscape was totally transformed to that of cross pollination.

Shaka's rule was pre-occupied by the quest for forging a united nation out of diverse small "tribes" and clans while on the other hand trying to allow freedom and self determination by those groups.

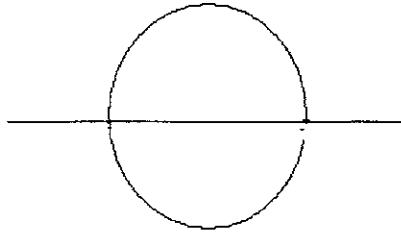
That situation therefore brought about dramatic changes in the way people expressed themselves culturally. Cross pollination was inevitable. So when lately the migrant labour system came into the Zulu people, it was yet another challenge to either resist the changes or to accept those changes.

It (dance) is a body of history that embodies explanation and the justification of the existence of the Zulu people and a process through which Zulu people have preserved, evolved and transformed themselves.

It is therefore important to view the Zulu dance tradition as a three spherical entity.

The first sphere of the Zulu dance tradition is Static in nature hence it is based on those elements of the tradition that can never be changed. They present the conditions of the absolute. Their movements are arrested in time. Their basic movements are highly repetitive, thus representing a present moment with no beginning, middle or end. Their formations are linear and circular, thus representing continuity and unity in time. These are the elements that always serve as points of reference for the other spheres of the tradition.

Here the circle represents the consciousness that evolves and devolves concurrently while the line is a representation of the reality of man. It is a reality that never gets into a point where it is about to be finished or to begin. It represents the state of totality and completeness. It is the harmonization of the opposites, that is, evolution and devolution, continuity and discontinuity.



**Figure 1:** The figure above represents the state of consciousness evolving and devolving around the never ending line of reality. This is what most rituals represent.

The performance formations are either in a circle or in a line. The circle is the symbol of totality, unity, completeness through re-inventing the self. The line is the symbol of continuity with no beginning, middle no end.

The movements are an extension of a very long ritual preparations leading towards the actual dance. For instance, in the case of *Umhlonyane*, the performance on the arena on the day of coming out of the girl whose ceremony is about, is the extension of a week long ritual in the grandmother's hut.

The second sphere of the Zulu dance tradition is Temporal. It is more actively involved with the search for new and modern aesthetics.



Sometimes it could be an artistic innovation or artistic genius by an individual. This is the sphere where the past and the present collide. This collision then creates a spark which is synthetic hence it provides creativity and innovation. Therefore it becomes Static-Dynamic since it draws heavily from the past to create the future. In this sphere, things are uncertain and chaotic since they lack consistency. Here questions are asked over and over and the answers that are obtained do not provide solutions instead they raise more questions.

The third and the last sphere of the Zulu dance tradition is Popular. This sphere is more locally, regionally or sometimes gender and age group oriented. It constitutes a narrative on important political, social, historical and economical situations. Structurally, this sphere is simple and easy for both the performance and appreciation by almost everybody. Aesthetics though important, play a very insignificant role instead emphasis is put on the freedom of participation by everybody. Sometimes participants appear as if their ultimate goal(s) are to outshine one another.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Zulu dances (like almost all other African cultural practices) are often referred to as a mere “Traditional”. It is like a norm that a reference to African cultural practices be prefixed by the word traditional; that is, traditional Zulu dance, traditional leadership, traditional healers and others.

*“Traditional”* in this regard is being used to denote that which is primitive, backwards and belonging to the mystic past, without sound bearings to the present and the future.

According to the Collins English Language Dictionary (1987;1557), the word tradition refers to:

*...a custom or belief that the people in a particular group or society have practiced or held for a long time.*

The Cambridge: Advanced learners dictionary (2005;1377), refers to word traditional as:

*...being part of the beliefs, customs or way of life of a particular group of people that have not changed for a long time.*

The Oxford dictionary on the other hand refers to tradition as:

*...the passing down of elements of a culture from generation to generation, especially by oral communication.*

And:

*... a mode of thought or behavior followed by a people continuously from generation to generation.*

From the three explanations stated above, one can deduce that the word tradition refers to that which is the means of connection between the three dimensions of time, which are yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Thus tradition becomes a process whereby people transform themselves through times.

Levine, (2005:11) contends on the term 'traditional':

*...this term is seen as a static expression of something that is fluid.*

He further states that,

*...Cultural expression shifts with social context.  
new forms bleed into older forms, social context change,  
and art continually evolves and shifts position.  
(Levine, 2005:11).*

Zulu dance tradition is both a part to the body of knowledge that is passed down from generations to generations and also signs and symbolism which punctuate the processes of cultural transmission.

The story of Zulu dance can only be better explained through Hegelian *dialectical* method. It is the story of conflicting forces, between modernization and maintaining what was an ancient mode of life by the Zulu people. It is the story of contradiction between a western idealism that promise freedom and deliverance from "primitive" past and African ancient idealism that promise peace and stability and independent from the "evil" colonial present.

It is due to that conflict of ideas and contradictions that forces the rise of so many dance forms around 1920's, which many can easily mistaken to *traditional* dances. They (dances) form a *synthesis* of actions and reactions to both forces. This gave rise to people who were referred to as *Amagxagxa*. *Gxagxa* means standing with your feet wide open or standing on both sides.

The problem therefore is to unlock the puzzle of the *synthesis* of Zulu dance as it evolves through generations.



**Figure 2:** Babani and Mfana of EmaNgadini clan at a wedding at a Biyela homestead (OBuka) their attire reflect a typical Amagxagxa part of the Zulus.

### 1.3 Aims of Study

The aims of this study are to generate fresh thinking with regards to the dancing tradition by the Zulu people. This will be done by properly placing the tradition of dance by the Zulu people on its context as seen and understood by the people who are doing it.

The study shall attempt to unpack each and every theme and purpose under-which every form of dancing is done. This will help correct the mistake often committed by a vast majority of people about Zulu dancing.

Many people always regard or view Zulu dancing as one form done for almost one purpose.

The study shall also attempt to specifically look at symbolical meaning of some of the basic-movements, costumes, times and periods on which each dance is performed and the influences of the natural world to the movements in relation to the places in which each dance occurs.

Some people also hold a view that Zulu dancing always come natural among the Zulu people. They have a belief that Zulu dancing is not thought and learned in a formal way like all other art forms. This study will demonstrate exactly how Zulu dancing as an art form is thought and learned both formally and informally by the Zulu people. The study will also attempt to analyze the structural constructions of different forms of dancing among the Zulu people.

#### **1.4 Motivation of Study**

The study is being motivated by the fact that the present national Department of Education has endorsed African dance and the Arts and Culture as some of the learning areas in the new curriculum.

It is therefore important to provide, through a thorough study, some forms of insights into some of these new areas of study which through

indifference and neglect they have been reduced into a state of none importance.

Indifference also provided a platform for some Westerners to deliberately distort cultural practices like Zulu dance tradition. It will be fatal therefore to begin to teach Zulu dances in schools at their present state. It would be like continuous perpetuation of the inferiority notion towards the Zulu people and their cultural heritage.

Zulu dancing has also been reduced into a mere entertainment and recreational activity. While this has helped popularize the dance tradition, particularly amongst the foreign tourist to our country, it has also help confine the practice and enjoyment of Zulu dancing into those people regarded as backward and tribal. Zulu dancing has been made to look like it is only appreciated by hostel dwellers, rural people, farm-workers and by the tourists in the game parks.

There is also another growing trend that Zulu dancing and all other Zulu cultural practices are only good for schools, hostel dwellers and farm-workers competitions. This shows that even the Zulu people themselves are gradually adopting the one dimensional view of the dance tradition.

## **1.5. Research Methodology**

The methodology and procedure this research is going to follow will be ethnographic inquiry. This will be based mainly on interviews (with participants and experts), literature review and recorded videos as major sources of information. It will be guided by an investigation to the following questions:

- What are the origins of the thematic and movement ideas in the making of Zulu dances?
- The procedure followed by **Izindabuli** (choreographers) and **Izingqambi** (Composers) when developing their themes and movement patterns and songs?
- How the quality of movements and the use of the body form the overall impression about the dance- song?
- What influences do cultural, historical and structural aspects of form, have in the making of Zulu dance-song?

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study shall focus on the history of the Zulu people as it is expressed through different trends of dancing by the Zulu people themselves.

The first focal point shall be on those dances that fall under ritual ceremonies. These are the dances that are regarded as classical and ancient. These dances can never be fixed on any particular time or period in terms of their origin. They bear a strong element of being sacred and religious. They symbolize a bigger thought and knowledge than just being a movement or entertainment activity. They form a connecting thread between the three dimensions of time, that is, past, present and future.

Rituals are by nature a revelation and concealment of life secrets. For instance, during **Umhlonyane**, a young girl is secluded and concealed from the rest of the society but the seclusion itself mark the moment of revelation of the most important secrets of life, particularly those of womanhood.

The irony surrounding the ritualistic ceremonies is that whilst they (rituals) appear to be a static way of expression, they always dramatize the change of status for an individual or a society. The movements are often simply and repetitive yet in the case of a young girl who have reached her puberty, they mark an entry into womanhood. Although the movements and songs in a ritual are simple, they are taught, learned and rehearsed with an ultimate goal of accuracy and perfection.



As Biebuyck (1968:36) puts it –ritual systems:

*...are concerned with the solution of various crises in the life cycle of individuals and occur at such critical stages as social puberty, nobility, investiture and enthronement adoption into age or cult grouping, accession to or promotion in associations, acquisition of specialized skills. Various functions are performed by the groups of individuals constituted through these initiations, which regardless of other characteristics, involve a process of systematic teaching and learning (duties, skills, moral code of behaviour, rights and obligations, supporting texts, objects, rhythms)*

But more to that as Zahan (1979:54) argues;

*... Initiation in Africa must rather be viewed as a slow transformation of the individual, as a progressive passage from exteriority to interiority. It allows the individual to gain consciousness of his humanity.*

The nakedness of the body is a symbol of purity and renewal while the masking paints on the face and the body symbolize the innocence of being. Bare feet are an indication of sacredness attached to the ritual.

Rituals are a journey from the known to the unknown and from the unknowing to knowing. They are the journey from the old to the new and from the new to the old, for instance, from childhood to adulthood and from the old food of the winter to the new food of the summer (Ukweshwama).

There are six cardinal points in relation to this study:

*(a) Agrarian cult*

These are the dances that relate to the ceremonies about the soil and the food production such as, **Umkhosi Wokweshwama** and **Umkhosi KaNomdede** (WENALA KANYE NEMVULA)

*(b) Ecstatic dances*

These are the dances that relate to the dances of healing and divinity. They are performed by **Izangoma** and other related professionals.

*(c) Social relationships*

These are the dances that relate to the ceremonies of bonding between two people. They are performed during weddings and courtship ceremonies.

*(d) Life cycle*

These are the dances that relate to ceremonies to the stages of life itself, such as birth, puberty and death.

*(e) Human-animal relationship*

These are the dances relating to those ceremonies performed before or after the engagement with the animal kingdom such as **Umgubo** done before and after **Inqina**.

(f) *Spiritual/ancestral*

These are the dances that relate to those ceremonies performed to pay respect to ancestral spirits and Deities. Like in the case of **Umkhosi kaNomkhubulwane** and the **Reed dance (Umkhosi Womhlanga)**, the central objective or the theme is fertility either of the soil or of the young women.

**UNomkhubulwane** is believed to be the deity for fertility and prosperity. So the Zulu virgins are a symbol of the presence of **UNomkhubulwane**. The reed is a symbol of the *primordial* penis where the **UMvelinqangi** (the ancestor to all the Zulu people) first emerged.

As the Zulu saying goes;

**“UMvelinqangi owavela Ohlangeni”**

And the Zulu people refer to the king as;

**INkosi YoHlanga**



**Figure 3:** Inkosi Yohlanga Isilo Samabandla, ihlola izintombi emkhosini Womhlanga (2006)

The king is the father of the nation, therefore the king is a representative of **uMveligqangi** or the king is **uMveligqangi** personified. Therefore the reed dance is the symbolism of the mating between **uMveligqangi** and **uNomkhubulwane**.



**Figure 4:** Izintombi Emkhosini WoMhlanga EsiGodlweni Enyokeni (2006)

The second point of focus shall be on those dances that are temporal. These are the dances that move with times and situations. They are the common entry point to the people's everyday happenings. They also form opinions of individuals and groups towards everyday life. These dances often defy the conventions of generally accepted modes of performances.

The third focal point shall be on those dances that are popular and recreational. These are the dances that are mainly for entertainment and show-of of artistry and strength. They are dynamic and spectacular with an aim to out-shine (other competitors). They are often a reflection of some individual flare. These are the dances that are sometimes used as sporting activities by young Zulu men and women. They are

characterized by strong display of physical strength and character of an individual. They are an important avenue for the release of energy.

## **1.7 Definition of terms**

### **1.7.1. Culture**

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1964; 282), defines culture as,

...the Arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievements regarded collectively.

There can never be a single definition of the Zulu culture. Zulu is a complex poly-cultural society, therefore contextual dimensions and parameters are not easily defined. Culture is the product of the people; it gives meaning to their existential behaviour. But on the other hand, the people are the product of cultural behaviour. People identify with culture that is meaningful to their daily lives. Therefore, cultural activities like dance, song, music and stories are an outgrowth of the people's lives or the people's lives are expressed through aesthetical method of form.

### **1.7.2. Dance (Ukusina)**

There is no single definition to dance. Each and every society or individual tends to define dance according to their own experiences and aspirations. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary; dance is:

*...move about rhythmically in fixed steps  
or sequences to music.*

In Africa or among Africans dance is not just about steps and their execution instead, it is the avenue of expression that goes beyond steps, music and song. It is the way of life, worship, education and training. But AmaZulu refer to **Ukusina** as that kind of dancing which involves the lifting of feet.

#### **1.7.3. Ukugida**

It refers to that kind of dancing that involves the use of feet in pounding the ground. **Ukugida** is commonly used by **Izangoma**.

#### **1.7.4. Ingoma**

The original term for the Zulu anthem was **Ingoma** which referred to the royal dance song that was performed at the first fruit festival (Umkhosi) every year.

*...the term **Ingoma** is now used to classify the broad category of Zulu recreational dance  
( Levine 2005:49).*

#### **1.7.5. Ukubhina**

Songs sung during **Ukuthomba** (puberty) ceremony. This is the time when the girl menstruates for the first time.

These songs are also sung during the **Umkhosi** for **UNomdede**.

*... The songs are delivered through recitation  
as opposed to pure melodic song  
( Levine 2005:52)*

#### **1.7.6. Ingcekeza**

**Ingcekeza** is a Zulu dance song sung during the **Umemulo**. **Umemulo** is the ceremony done to announce the girl's marriageable status.

#### **1.7.7. Ukunqukuza**

Clapping, cupping hands to produce a hollow sound. Together with **Ingungu** (friction-drum) **Ukunqukuza** forms an accompaniment for **Ukubhina/Izithombiso** songs.

#### **1.7.8. Umchwayo**

**Umchwayo** is a sitting dance with gradual shuffling forward.

#### **1.7.9. Ukugiya**

**Ukugiya** is a wild solo dance of an improvisational nature. It is an improvised combination of quick stamps, strides, leaps and jumps.

#### **1.7.9. Ukugqashula/Ukugqiza**

**Ukugqashula** is a solo dance performance done usually by **Amaqhikiza** as response to **Ukugiya** by their male counterparts.

#### **1.7.10. Indlamu/ukugadlela**

**Indlamu** is a lively dance indulged, mostly, by young, almost imitative of the surging sea or boiling water.



#### **1.7.11. Umqonqo**

A dance performed in a linear formation with people singing and clapping behind. The stamping is simple on a 4/4 pattern and the hands are raised above the head of the dancer.

#### **1.7.12. Ukudliba**

A dance commonly found in **Maputaland** (northern part of KwaZulu –Natal).

It is a rhythmical dance where a dancer pounds the ground in quick footwork.

### **1.8 Literature review/experts views**

There are a number of scholars on Zulu dancing and Zulu culture in general who have written extensively on the subject of Zulu dance but there are very few who have attempted to present an analytical study on the composition of Zulu dancing. Johnny Clegg is amongst a few that have attempted to present a rhythmical structure of both the **Isishameni** and **Umzansi** in his papers delivered on the second, third and fourth symposium on ethnomusicology in 1981, 1982 and 1984 respectively.

Although Johnny Clegg's study of **Isishameni** and **Umzansi** presents the most important structural insight to the general understanding of the two dance styles mentioned above, it still fall short of getting to real heart of the two dance styles.

It is true that as dance styles, both **Isishameni** and **Umzansi** claim their identities from what one can refer to as basic structures, but it will be dangerous to ignore compositional processes and interpretation employed by different **Izindabuli** for each and every dance situation.

**Isishameni** like all other popular dance forms and styles among the Zulu people are not static. They can never be explained through one structure or formula or even by one sentence. Each dance activity is characterized by its own situation and time.

The people, the venue, the purpose and the place where the dancing is taking place determine the structure of the dance.

It is also important to analyze and give interpretation to the basic movements employed by the two dance styles.

Erlmann, (1991) in his detailed study of *Ingoma* by Zulu migrant labourers in Durban around the 1920's is very much based on the cultural aspect of the dance tradition by the Zulu people. This cultural aspect is very much a result of some historical situation that gave rise to some kind of cultural shift. The study only addresses the question on why Zulu people dance that way and fails to look at the symbolic meaning of movements.

Krige, (1936:177) contends that the use of **Umsenge**, the skin membrane, and the reed is symbolic during **Umbino** dance songs. He argue that

**Umsenge** is a symbol of fertility and rain it was used to represent the womb or the vagina and the passing of wetted hands alternatively down the reed is symbolical to the milking of the penis during a sexual act.

Larlham, (1985:1-19) attempts to give a detailed account of his observations of Traditional Zulu Rites and Ceremonies around certain areas of Zululand, but his observations fail to provide meaning to those Rites and Ceremonies. He also makes no attempts in providing interpretation to basic movements and body positions displayed by the dancers. For example, he witnesses a moment where **AmaQhikiza** are doing what is called **Ukugqiza**:

*each executed a series of ....stamping steps, with the body bent forward... a style of dancing known as **Ukugqiza***  
( Larlham,1985:8)

The body bending forward is a symbol of total submission and connectedness to mother earth of the dancer. The pounding and quick shuffles symbolize the attempts to evoke ancestral spirits since the dance is taking place at *Esigcawini*.

## 1.9 Conclusion

In Merriam's terms, (1964:210) most writers on Zulu dance tradition only confine themselves on the use and the function of the dance. In this situation, it appears that the situation (use) and the reason (function) are only the cause of the dance, not the other way round. It is a fact that most of the times people dance as a response to situations facing them but sometimes

situations are a product of dance performances. For instance, moving certain parts of the body in a particular way can stimulate a specific re-action from either the dancer or the spectator.

Krige, (1936:342) contends that **Umgubo**, for example was performed with an objective to create enthusiasm for the forth coming hunt. The enthusiasm was a result of the dance not that the dance came as a result of people being enthusiastic about the hunt.

Another typical example of a dance rendition whereby the use and function are resultant is a possession dance performed by **Izangoma**. The pure convulsive way of moving the head leads to a trance-state of **Isangoma**. **Isangoma** does not wait for a trance-state so as to dance instead the trans-state is produced by a particular movement of specific parts of the body in a particular manner.

By carefully examining different central movement axis and the meaning attached to different basic movements, it becomes clear that situations and reasons are sometimes products of dance rendition. But that should not be viewed as two separate and opposing situations, they are intertwined and complimentary, one can never happen without the other.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. LEARNING IN ZULU DANCE

#### 2.1 Introduction

There are two kinds of learning processes in Zulu dance. The first process is about learning the movements and the second process is about learning through the dance. Each of these processes employs different methodologies in imparting the knowledge to the learner. Some methods are more direct while others are indirect depending on the nature of the text.

In the field of Classic-ritual-ceremonial dances the learning is strict and direct. It is always the elders or expects passing on the information as it was taught to them by those who came before them. In most cases, time and place is set aside for the learning to take place. It is always intended for specific individuals or group, for instance, the young girl who has just reached her puberty is taken into seclusion ( in the Grandmother's hut) where she will be taught the dances, songs and the ways of womanhood or a group of **Amathwasa** who have just entered the process of **Ukuthwasa** to be **lzingoma** are secluded from the rest of the community to be taught **Ukugida** and the rest of the ways of **Ubungoma**.

Although it appears as if the large portion of teaching and learning taking place during classic ritualistic ceremonial dances is about the learning of the

dance movements and sequences, the main objective has always been that of imparting knowledge through dance. The novice in an initiation for example is taught important values and key secrets of life through dance. Important values such as respect of elders and self perseverance and ways of survival are taught while the novice is taught dance movements.

But the situation with regards to dances like **Ukugiya** and **Ukuggiza** is different. Each individual teaches him/herself to dance by just observing the others doing it. Since these kinds of dance are performed in solo, they differ from individual to individual. Young children too follow this method when learning **Ukusina** generally. They learn by watching and imitating adults when dancing. So the learning process is indirect. Some become very good at it while others don't. But what is important is that children are allowed to decide and interpret the dance medium the way they see it through their own eyes. Grandmothers play an important role in creating a space for young children to learn to express themselves without any fear of criticism. Grandmothers always appreciate performances by their grandchildren thus allowing children to take risks which are major components in the learning of a child.

In the case of the Nazareth Baptist Church, Larlham, (1982:43) contends,

*...The dances are learned through imitation at the festival,  
...at the festival young boys, emulate their elders, learning  
the dance.*

As children grow they get to be introduced into popular dances where they have to learn set dance sequences and steps. But it is not uncommon to find children through what they have observed from the older people composing their own dance sequences, like in the case of **Isishameni**, **Isizingili**, **Umzansi** and others. Almost in every area in **kwaZulu** where these dance are popular, there is a group of young ones who are emulating their older brothers or sisters. Although it seems as if children teach themselves but there is a strong element of direct and indirect teaching and learning taking place since there is always one or two children who take the lead in composing the steps and teaching those steps to the others.

## **2.2 Basic technique in Zulu dances**

The basic technique in Zulu dancing is rooted on the natural position(s) of the body. These positions are found when the body is standing, kneeling, squatting and sitting. The body of a dancing Zulu is using natural bends that are found on major joints of the body, such as knees, elbows, pelvis and ankles. The chest whether standing, sitting or kneeling is always opened towards the earth. The feet are either wide apart or assembled together but they always remain parallel.

There is also a strong sense of two forces acting on opposite directions when a Zulu is at the dancing position. There is a force that seems to be pulling the body right-up (through the head), while on the other hand there is another force that seems to be pulling the body down (towards mother earth). This situation helps the body of the dancer to maintain a perfect balance while moving. It also keeps the body in relaxation mode which is essential for the execution of quick and intricate movements.

This position allows the body to move naturally and efficiently using little effort. It takes away a lot of pressure from the muscles thus allowing the dancer to dance for a long time without getting tired. It also reduces the risk of sustaining injuries by the dancer.

Ti`erou, (1992:67) contends that, in most cases the technique used in most dances in Africa is a result of the influences of the natural world. He argues that people who live around the mountains tend to dance with their bodies held upright, while those who live around the jungles tend to dance with their bodies bent forward, and the people living around coastal lands tend to shuffle and tumble a lot and their legs are always wide open as if they are balancing on a canoe.



### 2.3 Kinds of basic movements in Zulu dances.

Generally, movements in African dances fall under two main categories, which are simple or intricate; they can either be slow or fast; sometimes they are smooth and rounded or sharp and angular. Those that are smooth and rounded are perceived feminine while those that are sharp and angular are perceived masculine.

A typical example of a rounded movement will be that which is found in dances like **Kwasa-kwasa** and **Ukutyityimba**. These movements are normally executed through the movement of the hips, buttocks, shoulders and breasts. The examples of the dances where sharp and angular movements are found are **Indlamu** and **ukugiya**.

Another important area on the study of movements in African dances is that of *central movement axis*. These are the areas in the body around which movements occur. They are the head and the neck, shoulders and breast, hips and pelvis, legs and feet.

#### 2.3.1. Classification of movements in relation to central movement axis

##### 2.3.1.1. Head and Neck:

Movements mainly used by dancers performing possession dances.

These movements are sometimes referred to as *convulsive* movements.

There are two kinds of *convulsive* movements; which are pure and weakened *convulsive*. Pure *convulsive* movements are those that can lead into a trance.

Weakened *convulsive* movements are those that do not lead into a trance.

#### 2.3.1.2. Shoulder and Chest/Breast:

Movements mainly used by dancers performing courting dances such as **Ijadu** and **Umchwayo**

#### 2.3.1.3. Torso:

Movements mainly used by dancers performing war dances like **Ukugiya** and hunting dances such as **Umgubo**.

#### 2.3.1.4. Pelvis and Hips:

Movements representing fertility whereby dancers vibrate shake and tremble when performing the dance.

The movement which is almost common to all Zulu dances is **Ukusina** (stamping). **Ukusina** is central to most forms of Zulu dances that fall under the terms **Indlamu** and **Ingoma**. Another common feature in Zulu dancing is **Ukugida**. **Ukugida** (pounding the ground) is commonly found in dances such

as **Umqhuqhumbelo** of **Izangoma** and **Ukudliba** of the people of **KwaNgwanase**.

Tumbling is a movement which according to **Hugh Tracy**, (1952:30) was commonly used by the **Twa** and **Ndau** people of the eastern **Mozambique** but it has become a common feature with dances such as **Umzansi** and **Isizingili**. Shuffling is a basic movement in Zulu dancing commonly found in dances such as **Ukugqiza** and **Umqhuqhumbelo**.

Leaps, hops and jumps are commonly used in solo dancing such as **Ukugiya** and **Ukugqiza**. Sometimes kicks and minor turns are used in the solo dancing depending on the agility of the dancer.

**Isicathamiya**, **Umbholoho**, **Imashi** (Ingodlomane and Isifekezelo) and **Gumboot** dance are all commonly referred to as step dances. Although dances like the gumboot uses pounding movements, they are still deeply rooted on the stepping movements.

## **2.4 Meanings of movements in Zulu dances**

In order to comprehend the meanings found in most movements used in Zulu dancing, one needs to first understand (1) general social context attached to most of African dances (2) Common themes surrounding dance performances in African dancing and (3) The relationship of central movement axis to specific themes.

Every dance in Africa happens for a specific reason and purpose and it always have a specific function. It is always done by a specific people with a *distinguishable age, gender and status*. It is performed in a specific time or period. It could either be a season, an occasion, a day, month or a year. Dances need to be performed in specific location, spaces and venues. Body position and movements are also an integral-part in contextualization of dance performance.

The theme of each dance determines the body parts that are used and the manner in which they are used in dancing. For example, the theme of *fertility* demands the use of hips. The area around the hips is considered as the source of life. The theme of *courtship* is centered on the movement of the hips, breast, shoulders and the torso. These are the body parts that are regarded as ones that arouse the partner. The theme of *spiritual* world is characterized by repetitive movements centered in the neck, the head and the feet. This is the area of the talismans which often leads to trance

Theme	Body Part
Fertility	Pelvis/Hips
Courtship	Breast/shoulders/Hips
War	Torso
Work	Torso/Hands/Feet
Healing	Head/Neck/feet

## 2.5 Forms of Zulu dances

There are three main forms of Zulu dances, which are **Classical**, **Popular** and **Created**. Each of these forms is distinguished through its functions in the society and the people who are doing it.

### 2.5.1. Classical dances

Classical dances are sacred and ancient. Their sole purpose is to connect the past and the future. They are the Mind, Soul and the Spirit of a people. They are the wisdom of the people that is passed on from generation to generation. They are the life and the survival of the people. They are the movement and the transformation of the people.

The movements in classical dances are always simple and repetitive. Repetition is the symbol of the inter-connectedness between the past and the

future. The sole purpose for the simplification of movements is to allow the participants to easily follow the sequence(s) yet precession being the main objective. Classical dances demand discipline and focus. There is no room for improvisation as it is the case with a lot of secular dances among the Zulu people.

But **Ukugiya** and **Ukugqashulu**, although are an auxiliary to the ritual-ceremonial dancing, they are improvisational in nature.



**Figure 5:** Mathande'yikude Ndlovu doing a solo dance (Giya)

Form of ritual	Ceremony	Dance
Agrarian rituals	1.Umkhosi(KaNomkhubulwan e) wokucela imvula 2.Umkhosi(KaNomkhubulwan e) wokucela inala 3.Umkhosi Wokweshwama	Ukubhina songs and very simple movements  Ukusina by Amabutho
Ecstatic rituals	Umgido wezangoma	Umqhuqhumbelo
Life cycle rituals	1.Umhlonyane 2.Umemulo 3.Umkhehlo	Ingcekeza Ingcekeza Ingcekeza
Social relationships	1.Courting  2.Wedding	1.Ijadu 2.Umchwayo  1.Umgqumshelo 2.Umphendu 3.Imashi 4.Isigekle 5.umbholoho
Animal rituals	Inqina	Umgubo
Ancestral/spiritual	1.Umkhosi Womhlanga 2. Umkhosi WeLembe	Ukusina(kwezintombi) Ukusina (Kwamabutho)

### 2.5.2. Popular dances

Popular dances are secular, open to anyone to partake at anytime one feels fit to do so. They got a tendency to appeal to a larger population compared to (sacred) rituals. Most of dances which are known as team dances, performed by selected bands of people, fall under the category of popular dances. There are two kinds of team dancing among the Zulu people. There are those team dances that are done with the accompaniment of a drum or drums and other percussive instruments and there are those team dances that does not require drum accompaniment instead they just require hand clapping.

The team dances that require drum(s) accompaniment are often referred to as **Indlamu**. Names given to these dances are often derived from places where they are believed to have been established or places where they are still highly performed; for instance, **Umzansi** which is believed to have been established around **Ndwedwe** and **Maphumulo** areas (J Clegg). These areas were referred to by the people in the Natal midlands as *Ezansi* meaning down-south. There are also those kinds of **Indlamu** who are named after the people who are doing them; for example **Isizingili**.

**AmaZingili** are the people living around the areas close to the boarder between **KwaZulu** and **Swaziland**. People who live in places such as **Ingwavuma**, **Ndumo** and **KwaNgwanase** are often referred to as



**AmaZingili** because of their dress which is *lhiya* around the waist, and also their being of mixed backgrounds. Some of these people regard themselves as having strong links with **AmaSwazi**, others regarding themselves as having that of **AmaThonga** and some regarding themselves as remnants of **amaShangane** and many more other nationalities such as **amaTshopi**.

Team dances which does not require drum accompaniment are recently being referred to as *Ingoma*. Although the term *Ingoma* has always been regarded as a general term for dancing among the **Zulu** people, it has emerged as term now used (particular) in competitions in order to categorize dancing activities in a much more manageable manner.

Team dances that have now fallen into the category of *Ingoma* are dances such as **Isishameni**, **Ukhwaxa/Ubhaca** of (**Nongoma** and **Hlabisa**), **Ukhwaxa/Isibhaca** of (**Umzimkhulu**) and **Isikhomazi** from **Umkhomazi** region. The same principle of naming dances according to a place, a people and sometimes a basic movement is also applied on the *Ingoma* category. **Isishameni** is named after the river stream called *Ushameni* at **KwaMiya** district at **Umsinga** reserve (J. Clegg). **Isikhomazi** is also named after the areas around the river **Umkhomazi**. **Ukhwaxa** is named after the sound which comes as a result of the movement whereby a dancer hit the armpit with the knee before stamping the ground.

There are other team dances which do not fall under the *Indlamu* and *ingoma* categories; for instance **Isicathulo/Gumboot** dance, **Isikapulane/Makwaya** and **Isicathamiya**. The naming of the dances under this category is largely based on the dress, like in the case of **Gumboot** dance and **Isikapulana** (Ihiya/Ibhayi) and movement although sometimes it is based on the time when it is performed as in the case of **Isicathamiya** from *Ukucathama* (tiptoeing) and **Ingoma Busuku** (song of the night).



**Figure 6** Ladies from KwaNgwanase doing Isikapulana (Makwaya) dance.

Form of dance	Purpose	Style of Dance
Communal dances	1.Wedding	1.Umbholoho 2.Imashi(Ingodlomane and Isifekezelo)
	2.Recreational	1.Isicathamiya 2.Isicathulo(gumboot)
Sport dances	Competition	1.Ijadu 2.Indlamu 3.Ingoma
Game dances	Children's play	1.Inkankelana

Some of the team dances are used for *sporting* and *game* purposes. Children have always been associated with play as means of growing and learning. They will use dance-games like **Inkankelana** to square up to each other in a game. These dance-games where not necessarily done with an objective to compete like in a case of **Ijadu**. **Ijadu** was always used as either a dance for sporting competition as Dhlomo, (1936:56) states;

*... Kuthe ngelinye ilanga kwamenwa umkhosi weJadu, uzosinela eMgungundlovu, kuzoqhudelwana izinsizwa zaKwaZulu nezaseMaqadini.*

And **Bryant** , (1949:225) also contends that;

*... Zulus conceived the idea of inter-clan Love Dances (Ijadu).*

*...the young men and maidens of any clan would accordingly arrange to meet the young men and maidens of another clan on some particular spot convenient to both and generally on the veld near by a wood, nominally, for the purpose of competing at the dance, but really with the object of becoming mutually acquainted.*

Or match making dance activity, as **Krige**, (1936:340) puts it,

*...In former days it was customary for love-dancing or dancing competitions to be held in the veld by the young people of the locality.*

### **2.5.3. Created dances**

Created dances are those dances that are commonly found in theatre productions such as **Umabatha**, **Ipi tombi** and other television commercial productions like the famous (**M'bonise**) castle milk stout (beer) commercial. Created dances are also used as accompaniment for **Maskandi** music performances. These dances contain all the elements that qualify them as Zulu dances but their use and their function are totally different from that which has been described earlier. When one looks at the movements, songs and the costume, it is clear that those dances have got all the ingredients to be classified as Zulu dances but they are often created for a specific purpose either to make a statement in relation to the text of the production or to promote and market a certain commercial purpose.

Form of dance	Purpose of dance	Style of Movement
Created dances	( <i>Maskandi</i> ) Accompaniment	<i>Ukusina</i> (stamping)based on popular dances like <i>Isishameni</i> and <i>Umzansi</i> .
Created dances	Co-operate/commercial entertainment	<i>Ukusina</i> (stamping)to show-off.
Created dances	Musical stage performances (Ipi Tombi&Umabatha)	<i>Ukusina</i> (stamping)based on Indlamu to enhance the text.

## 2.6 Compositional approach to Zulu dances

Most of the dances performed at Ritual ceremonies by the Zulu people are not a product of one choreographic process. There were exceptional cases though, like in the case of marriage ceremonies whereby in preparation of towards the wedding day, **Indabuli** will be called in to compose certain dance sequences. On certain instances like **Umphendu** and sometimes **Ukugqumushela** dances elders of the clan had a lot of influences on the composition of the dance sequences. Although the movements used in **Umphendu** are the same in every performance, the sequencing differs from clan to clan. This is a result of the wording and the recital of those words that determine the rhythm and the movement sequence to be used.

In dances like **Ukugiya** and **Ukugqashula**, each individual compose his or her own dance sequence. Sequences in the two mentioned dances are either fixed or improvised.

In the case of popular dances, a dance form is established in a certain area or place and different groups and individuals then take it and rework it in a style one can liken to that of remixing in musical terms. A dance style becomes like a language which gives birth to different dialects; like in the case of **Isishameni** which was (according to **Johnny Clegg**, (1981:10) established by *Jubele Dubazane* at **Kwamiya** around **Weenen**. When the dance became popular among the young Zulu boys and girls, it became so diverse in such a way that each group has to approach the composition in its own way.

Same thing applies to dances such as **Umzansi**, **Isizingili** and **Isikhomazi**, whereby there is standardized dance routine followed by all the groups in performance but each group compose its own sequence to differ from the rest of other groups. **Amagosa** always play the leading roles in putting dance steps together. The steps get rehearsed with other members of the group allowed to make adjustments to those steps.

There are situations whereby dances are composed due to either sensory or ideal stimuli. **Ukukhomikha** and **Gumboot** dance are two typical dances that were established as a response by the Zulu people to what was done by the

Europeans. Earlmann, (1991:100) suggests that **Ukukhomikha** might have been a way of ridiculing the of the military drills while on the other hand Tracy, (1952:7) suggests that **Gumboot** dance was an imitation of the visiting Russian by the mission school pupils.

**Ushameni** on the other hand was a product of an idea whereby, **Jubele Dubazane** wanted to mix **Umqonqo**, **Gumboot** dance routines with **Indlamu**.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

Several points are beginning to emerge as the investigation to the processes of learning in Zulu dancing advances. Firstly, it is becoming clear that dancing among the Zulu people is an integral part of Zulu life. Dance is a body of knowledge that is passed on to the young either by the elders or by the leaders of different sectors of the Zulu community such as **Amagosa** (Stewarts), **Izinduna (zezinsizwa)** and **Izindabuli**.

Secondly, it is becoming clear that dance is a sense of identity among the Zulu people. Through dancing it is easy to identify the status, the place of origin, the age and gender of the dancer. Although this is slowly changing but it is still common to find people from a certain area being more attached to a particular dance style or form; for example, people from **Umsinga** and **Bergville** still perform **Umzansi** more than any other dance style. And people

from **Ndumo** and the surrounding areas of **Kwangwanase** are re-known for their classy performances of **Isizingili**.

Most of the **Isicathamiya** and **Ingoma** groups often called themselves after the name of the firm they work for (**Dunlop** morning birds) or the hostel they stayed in (**Dalton** evening stars) and the place where they come from (**Biyela** home tigers).

Thirdly, it is also becoming clear that dance among the Zulus is more of a language and a medium of communication of history; social comments on daily life of the Zulu people; and the nerve of the Zulu nation whereby daily experiences are constantly recorded, documented, preserved and promoted through action.

Finally, dance among the Zulus marks the entries and exits points into life. **Umdlonyane** ceremony marks the entry point of a girl into womanhood. Recently there is an emergence of a practice that clearly illustrates the point of exit of an individual among the dance community. The ceremony of **Ukukhumula Imbadada** is an act of send-off of one of the dancers (who have passed on) by the group.



## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. FORMATIONS IN ZULU DANCING

#### 3.1 Introduction

Formations in Zulu dancing depend on the number of performers participating, the movement and spatial patterns formed during performance. The elements of space play important role in determining the final picture of a performance. Advances, retreats, ascends, descends, spinning and sideway movements give the direction of the dance. The eyes of dancer(s) give the dance its focus; for instance, looking up, down around and over the shoulder. Design is determined by the position of the dancer(s) in relation to the spectators. It is common with all performances in Africa to have spectators participating during performance hence they get referred to as spect-actors. There is always a circular formation around the performance space.

In the case of most of Ritual ceremonial dances, dancers tend to move, stand or kneel in a circular motion, curves and semi-arcs; for instance, in the performance of **Umphendu**, two files move towards opposite directions and curve back to meet each other at a particular point. In the case of **Ingcekeza** performance, a circle or a semi-arch is formed, as **Bryant**, (1949:650) puts it;

*...Out in the courtyard, the girls formed themselves into a ring, into the centre of which two girls at a time advanced, ...and performed an Ingcekeza.*

The circle is the symbol of ancient timing. It used to be represented by **Imamba** biting its own tail that is, 'yesterday being swallowed by tomorrow'.

But in the case of team dances like **Isishameni** and **Umzansi**, a linear formation is always evident. These dances can be performed in single files or in columns. Column formations can also be found in most of wedding dance performances such as **Umbholoho**, **Ukugqumushela** and **Isigekle**. The linear or the column formations are determined by the number of performers and the space/venue or locale where dancing is taking place.

The linear formation is the symbol of conservative representation of reality in time without the beginning, the middle and the end.



**Figure 7:** Esigcawini, Umakoti singing Inkondlo (carrying Isinqindi on her right hand)

Mass dancing is performed by a large crowd of people, as, for example **Ukusina Kwekhetho** as in a form of **Iziqubulo** and **Isingeniso** and **Umthimba** in a form of **Inkondlo** or **Isimekezo**. Mass dancing can also be seen on major **Zulu** national ceremonies such as **Umkhosi WeLembe** and **Umkhosi Womhlanga**.



**Figure 8:** Izintombi zikaZulu zisinela ISilo Samabandla Emkhosini WoMhlanga EsiGodlweni Enyokeni (2006)

The **Nazareth Baptist Church** also uses mass dancing during its major festivals. Dancers are normally arranged in rows and columns. Age and gender play an important role in the grouping and the arrangement of the

dancers, for instance, the older men referred to as **Injobo** dance alone, the younger men referred to as **Izikoshi** also dance alone, **Ubuhlalu** (married women) dance alone and the young unmarried women (**Tuban**) dance alone.

Movements in mass dancing are usually simple and slow. They comprise of mild stamping and some kinds of stepping. The performances are not necessarily presentational, that is, not to entertain the spectators except in the case of **Ukusina kwekhetho** or **umthimba** and **Umbholoho** in a wedding ceremony.

### 3.2 Solo dancing

There are three kinds of solo dancing among the Zulu people. These solo dancing are determined by the *function* and the *use* for their performance. There are those dances that are free in such a way that the dancer is free to do as he or she pleases. They are all characterized by inspired dancer(s) who takes a centre stage to express them.

The first and the most common and well known form of solo dancing among the Zulu people is that of **Ukugiya**. **Ukugiya** is always accompanied by **Izihasho** (praise poetry) of the person dancing. The directions and focus are always spontaneous since the dancing is full of improvisations. The rhythmic rendition is determined by the recitation of **Izigiyo** themselves.

The second form of solo dancing is that which is known as **Ukugqashula** or **Ukugqiza**. Although **Ukugqashula** is always done in response to other solo dancing such as **Ukugiya**, it is still an independent form of solo dancing by **Amaqhikiza**.

The third and the last form of solo dancing among the Zulus, is based on **Ukusina** and is divided into two styles. The first one is used in an **Umvalelo** situation. This kind of **Ukusina** is improvisational and it is accompanied by singing and clapping. Here there are no particular dance patterns to be followed by a dancer. But the second kind (of the form of solo-dancing) is used in team dancing such as **Indlamu** and **Ingoma**. In the performance of **Isishameni** in particular, there is always an introductory solo performance before the main dance routine. In most of **Indlamu** performances these solo dancing are found sometimes in the middle of performances or at the end, like in the case of **Umzansi** when the dancers engage in exercise known as *one-one* or *Qhude- qhude*. In the **Umzansi** solo dancing the dancer is actually dancing to his name given to him by other participants. Elements of **Ukukhomikha** and offbeat movements play a pivotal role during the solo dancing in **Umzansi**.

In **Isizingili**, the focus is mainly on the conversation between the dancer and the drummers. The good dancer is the one who can while teasing the drummer but still manages to take the drummer along with him in a way that

they both come-up with well executed rhythmic patterns. There is great co-ordination and understanding between the dancer and the drummers. The drummers should be attentive to be able to interpret the movements of the dancer precisely.

Solo dancing is regarded as a spice to most of the team dances by the Zulu people. It sometimes marks that point of excelling by the most skillful dancers in the team. But it can at times become *comical* and *acrobatic* whereby a dancer is displaying his/her God-given talent and skill that has been acquired through intensive practice hence practice makes perfect.

But there is a form of solo dancing known as **Isigcawu** found in areas around **Ndumo** performed by young girl in the accompaniment of singing and clapping of hands by the older women. It is a very old social dance form which was performed by the youth of the area on special gatherings known as *Isigcawu*. Sometimes these performances (according to Nomvula Mpotshana, an elder from Ndumo) used to go on through the night. The women stand in a circular formation and the performers take turns in the middle of the circle performing a high stamping dance.

### **3.3 Dual dancing**

Dual dancing can either be side by side or face to face. It rarely becomes a back to back performance. In the performance of **Inkankelana**, young girls

face each other but when girls (young and old) perform **Umshikilelwana**, they turn the buttocks towards each other.

In the performance of **Unomzimane**, the dance is initiated by one person, usually a boy and if his performance is impressive, he will be joined by a girl in admiration which is called *Ukuqoma*. The two will eventually dance their way to the **Unomzimane** pole.

Young girls at **Ndumo** also perform some form of dual dancing but they lift the knees and shake them alternatively to the rhythm of the drum. This kind of performance is referred to as **Indlamu** or **ingadlela yezintombi** and is done in an accompaniment of song and clapping of hands by the spectators who usually stand in a circular formation. Couples (girls) take turns in the middle of the centre to perform quick movements described above.

*Ukushaya lqhulu* is a variation used in the performance of **Isishameni**. **lqhulu** is an exclusive performance done by the two dancers on both ends of the line of dancers. When this kind of performance takes place, other members of the team are usually kneeling down for a short break. Sometimes the performance is done by the dancers in the middle of the line but they are not referred to as **lqhulu** since they are not *Eqhulwini*.

### 3.4 Team/group dancing

Team dances can only be categorized through the form of accompaniment and the way dancers execute movements. There are three forms of team dancing according to accompaniments and movement executions.

There are team dances that use the accompaniment of drum beat and high-stamping movements such as (all forms of) **Indlamu**, like **Umzansi**, **Isizingili** and **Isikhuze**.



**Figure 9:** Isiko Lika Zulu dance group from Madlankala perform Isikhuze

There are also team dances that only use the accompaniment of song and hand clapping and high stamping movements such as in the forms of **Ingoma** like **Isishameni**, **Ukhwaxa** and **Isikhomazi**.



In both **Indlamu** and **Ingoma** forms of dancing, accompaniment is always provided by the other members of the community or the supporters of the team.

But in the case of **Isicathamiya** team dancing, the music accompaniment is provided by the dancers themselves. The movements in **Isicathamiya** are referred to as *stepping*. *Stepping movement is what defines Isicathulo team dancing*. But **Isicathulo** is divided into two forms, that is, the traditional and the modern form. The traditional form would be the one that was famous with the **Bhaca** people, which used the accompaniment of the guitar and concertina while the modern one will be the one that relies only on the sound created by the slapping of the boots.

Costumes and performance venues are also important factors in categorizing team dances. **Isicathamiya** singers and dancers are re-known for their use of designer clothes hence they used to be referred to as **Oswenka**. **Isicathamiya** was developed and popularized in the community halls and it was an evening performance and was referred to as **Ingoma Busuku** (song of the night).

**Isishameni** looks good when it is done by the dancers wearing **Udabuluzwani** and long pants. Dancers of **Isishameni** are constantly seen pulling their pants up before doing a high stamping movement which is,

evidence that it was established by the people who uses pants for their everyday life.

### **3.5 Communal / Social dancing**

Communal or social dancing is often done as a response to event that affects people's social relationships, belief systems and values. People often group themselves according to their needs and means of existence, like those that hunt together, drink together or even grew-up together and work together. The moments of togetherness are often celebrated in song and dance, such as **Umvalelo** when one of **Ontanga** has been accepted by **intombi**. When the young men and women hear the sound of the horn, they know that one of them **Useqonyiwe** or **zimnikile**, they will then rush to that homestead where song and dance in congratulating their fellow **Untanga** will ensue.

At **Umvalelo**, dancing is socially oriented in a way that there is no fixed way of dance routines and steps instead everyone is allowed to express him/herself as they see fit to show happiness.

The same style of dancing used in **Umvalelo** can be seen in a situation of **Indishi**. **Indishi** is a *stokvel* like gathering which usually happens after **Umkhehlo**. The aim of **Indishi** is to raise money (by the groom's party) for the **Inkehli**. The songs and dancing used at **Indishi** are full of exhibitionism and improvisation that is, to show-off and entertain.

But the roots of these kinds of social dances by the youth can be traced back into **Umchwayo** dancing long time ago.

Bryant, (1949:649) on the celebration of **ukomula**, contends that;

*...the guests arrived that very evening, and spent or most of it ,with other youths in their private hut performing **Umchwayo** sitting dance..*

### **3.6 Improvisational dancing**

Most of the solo dancing by the Zulu people is improvisational although sometimes some individuals resort into formulating their dance routines for the purpose of identification by fellow community members. In solo dancing like **Ukugiya**, some dancers tend to formulate certain portions in their dance routines which act like a trademark for his performance. But the major part of **Ukugiya** is characterized by improvisation and exhibition aiming to show-off the dexterity of a performer.

The kind of dancing in **Umvalelo** and other such gatherings, the performance is highly improvisational with an objective of showing agility towards rhythm from the clapping of hands by the members of the society. The good dancer will be the one who can add some distortions while at the same time go with the rhythmic pattern created by the clapping of hands.

The good dancer is the one who can identify full, half and off-beats in a rhythm, like in the case of **Ukudliba** found in areas around **Maputaland**. **Ukudliba** is commonly done by women in celebration of the **Ilobolo** that has been paid. It is accompanied by hand clapping and singing by the spectators. The movements are in a form of **Ukugida** (pounding) and the rhythm (from hand clapping) is a simple 4/4 beat. The dancer is supposed to improvise around the beats.

Although **Ukudliba** is regarded as a form of solo dancing, it is but a solo in mass, because the dancer is never alone on the arena. It is the kind of the performance whereby anyone who feels inspired can come up and dance regardless who is at the arena. But each dancer is doing her own thing disregarding others as long as she is having a conversation with the rhythm.

The beginnings and endings in improvisational dances are commonly never anticipated. The beginning of **Ukugiya** depends on the inspiration acquired by the dancer and the right moment to respond to the inspiration obtained from the song or the chant and **Izihasho**.

Improvisational dancing can also be found in most of team and mass dancing. Improvisational dancing is a spice to most of team dances. It is common with some individuals in an **Isicathamiya** groups to see one member coming out

of the whole team to execute a surprise move solely to entertain and show-off his artistry.

In gumboot dancing, there will always one member who sometimes do something that draws attention to himself at the expense of the whole group by disrupting the sequence.

In the performance of **Umzansi**, the climax is always marked by the individual performance by the group/team members. This is the time when the dancers are allowed to show themselves without any fear of transgressing with the set dance sequences of the team. Each dancer on the arena is expected to improvise around his praise-call and the rhythm of the drum.

This is the time where the drummers ability to follow dancers are tested, like with **Isikhuze**, a dancer will do all sorts of acrobatic movements and the drummers should be able to anticipate the next moves and be able to provide the necessary backing beats.

In the performance of **Isizingili** the ultimate goal of the improvising dancer is to lead the drummer in such a way that the drummer produces the good rhythmic pattern much to the approval of the on-lookers.

During **Umbholoho** in a Christian wedding, a good **Umbhidi** was always the one who can maneuver comical movements while keeping his party on track

of the singing and dancing. Sometimes **Umbhidi** initiates the performance by doing a short improvised movement sequence to the singing and clapping by the rest of the party.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

Dancing by the Zulu people never happens in isolation from everyday life. Whether a dance is done by one person or the group, it is always an activity involving almost all the members of the community.

In actual fact, every member of the community is either an active or a passive participant in a given performance. The formation of the dance performance does not only depend on the people who are doing the steps, instead it depends on the rest of the participation of everyone involved including those that seems to be just onlookers.

The shape and the size of the performance stage or the arena, is determined by the people accompanying the dancer(s) and those who are onlookers. Spectators show their appreciation by **ukukizela** (ululating), **ukushikila** (showing your back) and **Ukukha** (giving a token) the dancers.



**Figure 10:** A lady showing her appreciation to the performance of the dancer of Isiko likaZulu dance group.

The performance arena is always a shared platform by individuals and groups. In the case of **Ukugiya**, for instance, the performer will always share the arena with either the **Amaqhikiza** doing **Ukugqashula** or by the old ladies ululating and doing what is called **Ukubhiyoza** (running-dancing about) in appreciation of the performance.

As the Zulu saying goes, "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*", every dancer is a dancer because the rest of the community is involved. The community makes the dancer through teaching and accompaniment. The dancer draws the energy and inspiration from the members of the community and the way the

community arranges itself around the performance determines the level and the standard of the performance being rendered.

When a solo dancer performs, a team or the mass-dance occur, the members of the community provide the accompaniment in the form of clapping, *drumming and ululating*.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. POPULAR STYLES IN ZULU DANCING

#### 4.1 Introduction

The popularity of a dance is determined by the number of people who are performing it and the number of times and places where it is performed. The *dance should appeal to a larger audience or certain class, gender and age in order for it to be accepted as popular.* It becomes an estuary for those people's aspirations.

Dance performances become an identity of certain communities, gender and class. **Indlamu**, **Isicathulo** and **Cothoza** have always been associated with the working class. It is often performed by the migrant workers during their spare-time or for inter-district competitions.

Some of the dances are popular because they play central role in customary practices such as dances performed in ceremonies like **Umkhosi Womhlanga**, **Umkhosi WeLembe** and **Umkhosi Wokweshwama**.

The structure of popular dances always consists of a verse and a chorus as opposed to repetitive structures found in ritualistic dances. The basic rhythmical patterns and movement are canonized so as to allow everybody (dancers and audience) to follow and appreciate. The essence of popular

dances is not the meaning of the movements but the ability to move to the beat with accuracy and style.

## **4.2 Types of Indlamu**

### **4.2.1. Indlamu**

**Indlamu** is a team dance performed with the accompaniment of drums and whistles. New developments have sought the introduction of other percussive instruments such as bells, shakers and **Imbomu** (wind instrument made out of plastic pipe). The rhythmical structures associated with **Indlamu** are always intricate and movements are somehow acrobatic.

Some forms of **Indlamu** make use of sticks and shields hence they are referred to as war dance. The focus and directions in **Indlamu** dancing suggest advancing and retreating.

#### **4.2.1.1. Umzansi**

The performers of **Umzansi**, requires the use of the military drum as an accompaniment. The dancers of **Umzansi** are often referred to as **Amasosha** (soldiers). Entrances and exits in the performance of **Umzansi** are in a drill form and the formations are in columns. The introductory songs are referred to as **Izinhlamvu** (bullets).

Sometimes the partaking of a group/team in a dance is referred to as **Ukujoyina** (joining). This is derived from the employment of Zulu migrant workers by the mines referred to as **ljoyini**. **ljoyini** used to take about six to eleven years away from home. During the time of **ljoyini**, men used to keep themselves occupied by joining the dance team in the hostel. The composition of the team was either based on homeboy syndrome or work association.

**Umzansi** is popular among the people of **Emsinga** and **Bergville**. Some early writers on the subject of **Umzansi**, like Johnny Clegg, contend that, **Umzansi** originated from the areas of **Maphumulo** and **Ndwedwe**, hence the name **Umzansi** referring to the people of **Ezansi** (down-south).

Mpishongo Zigubh'eyibili Zulu of **Keatsdrift** told me that **Umzansi** was brought to **Emsinga** by the man called "queen". Mpishongo believes that Queen learned this kind of dance at the place where he worked. Johnny Clegg also concurs with Mpishongo on this matter. On the paper delivered in **Grahamstown** in 1984 ethnomusicology symposium, Clegg acknowledges that the information of his paper comes from the old men known as, "Queen Victoria" who was a leader of a dance group in George Kogh hostel.

The performance of **Umzansi** is in three movements, that is, *Ifolo*, *Ijambane* and *one-one*. *Ifolo* is a slow movement sequence always performed at the

beginning of the performance and it is performed with sticks. In the middle of the line of performers is **Isifuba** which is composed of two to three best dancers. Since *Ifolo* movement is like a call and answer kind of performance, **Isifuba** acts as a call in which the rest of the team has to answer. **Isifuba** act as the reminder to the rest of the group of the dance sequence to follow.

The formation in the performance of *Ifolo* is always in a curve or an arc. It is important to note that this kind of a formation resembles that of King **Shaka's** horse shoe attacking formation. King **Shaka's** attacking formation comprised of **Isifuba** which was used to lure the opponent and **Izimpondo** which were used to run and circle the enemy. But that does not qualify *Umzansi-Ifolo* as a war dance rather *Umzansi-Ifolo* should be viewed as a dance reflecting on the aesthetics derived from the tactics of war as a mere celebration of those aesthetics.

*Ijambane* is a fast movement sequence and is performed by the best dancers within the team. The formation in *Ijambane* is linear and is very acrobatic. *Ijambane* is also characterized by military maneuvers and gestures like salute and diving.



**Figure 11:** Students of the University of Zululand performing Umzansi

The performance of *Ijambane* movement does not require the use of stick, actually when the performance starts, the dancers execute the sequence that allows them to put the sticks behind them.

The participants of *Ijambane* must be very alert at all times since there are no signals and movements alerting the dancers of what is going to happen in terms of the next sequence. The number of dancers must be even because the number plays the most important roles in the formation of the performance of *Ijambane*. **Igosa** (stewart) decides on who among the dancers will partake on the performance of *Ijambane* by selecting those he thinks they are fit to perform.

The performance of one-one movement is in two forms, that is, the first one is performance whereby each dancer seizes the opportunity as it avails itself and, the second one is whereby *Igosa* will engage certain dancers in something called **ukuQhatha**.

#### 4.2.1.2. *Isizingili*

The performance of **Isizingili** requires the usage of drums and whistles. There are two kinds of drums used in the performance of **Isizingili**, which are, **Isigubhu** and **Ingulule** (friction drum). Usually the drums are played by women and men do the dance.

Dancers are always arranged in one line or columns with **Igosa** standing in front. The middle part of the line is always occupied by the most skillful dancers.

**Isizingili** is perceived less militant compared to other forms of **Indlamu**. The shields and sticks are also used in the performance of **Isizingili** but the sticks are often covered with fur and the shields are very small. The way in which the sticks are carried suggest less aggression, that is, the stick is sometimes placed under the armpit or held by a left hand.

Compared to other forms of **Indlamu**, **Isizingili** is less stamping instead its movements are more of stepping and kicking. The influences of *Isikhonde*

dance (pounding the earth with the knees) and the **Ndau** and **Twa** tumbling movements are evident.

**Isizingili** is the only form of **Indlamu** by the Zulu people that uses full turns and dives. The influences of the natural world of **Umhlabuyalingana** (flat land) also have a major influence in the nature of movements since the major part of that area is sandy.

The performance of **Isizingili** is divided into two forms, that is, the team and the solo. The team dance is a series of set movements while the solo dancing is improvisational. Team dance is formal while the solo is informal in a sense that even the members of the audience are allowed to partake. Solo dancing always occurs towards the end of the overall performance of **Isizingili**.

Like most forms of **Indlamu**, the rhythmical structure of **Isizingili** is in two folds, that is, canonized and non-canonized rhythms. Staggered beats are also a common feature in the performance of **Isizingili**. Canonized patterns could be regarded as the root and identity of **Isizingili** dancing.

Canonized rhythms are those fundamental rhythmical-patterns which help to distinguish **Isizingili** among other forms of **Indlamu**. The non-canonized are those that distinguish an individual/team amongst other dancing teams of

**Isizingili.** These rhythmical-patterns are based on fundamental aesthetics principles of form, such as variety, contrast and sequence.

The dancer(s) could either lead the drummer or the dancer could follow the patterns from the drummer. There is always a two way conversation between the dancers and the drummers. The sense of understanding and intimacy is the key between the drummers and the dancers.

A rare dimension common only to **Isizingili** dancing is the movement of the pelvis. The thrusting forward and backwards of the pelvis by dancers of **Isizingili** suggests the sensuality of the dance. The inclusion of **Ingulule** (friction drum) sister drum to **Ingungu** which is used for rituals of sexuality, is also an addition of sexual dimension to the performance of **Isizingili**.

#### 4.2.1.3 **Isikhuze**

**Isikhuze** is characterized by the use of many drums and very intricate, sometimes polyrhythmic patterns. The stamping is high but not hard and aggressive as it is the case with **Umzansi**.

The entrances and exits are military and linear. The entrances and exits take a form of Zulu regiments when leaving from *Esigcawini* after ceremonies such as **Umkhehlo**, **Umgcagco** and **Umemulo**. This kind of regimental drill is



often referred to as two-two (two lines of regiments walking side by side) and **izinduna zezinsizwa** are always seen walking on the sides of the lines of regiments. This is also duplicated in the entrances and the exits of the dance teams of **Isikhuze**. Although in **Isikhuze**, the line is one and the sticks and shields are joined, **Igosa** and other principal dancers such as soloists and duets could be seen marching on the sides of the line of dancers.

The performance of **Isikhuze** is also comprised of two movements, which are, team and solo performances. The overall structure of **Isikhuze** is made out of the entrance as it has been described above. The introduction comprises the movement of the shields above the heads, around the torso, on the ground and finally (the team moving forward) to drop the shield.



**Figure 12:** Isiko likaZulu dance troop (dance by sticks and shields)

The team then either, remains in a single file or split into two file for commencement of the main performance.

Team dancing forms the major body of the performance of **Isikhuze**. The dance sequence is divided into phrases and each phrase is preceded by a short solo performance or a duet. The call "*yebuya baba*" is a vital component of the performance since it signals the commencement of each and every phrase. The call is followed by what Clegg (1982-83) refers to as *Ukuthathela* (found in almost all **Nguni** dances) which marks the beginning of the phrase.

Solo dancing within **Isikhuze** is divided into two parts. The first part is the one which is used to introduce each phrase and the second one is usually a stand alone performance by a skillful or one of the principal dancers. It is typically acrobatic and comical and characterized by movements such as back falls, somersaults, hands walking and many forms of physical displays.



**Figure 13:** The concluding solo performance (Isiko likaZulu)

After the exit by the team, solo dancing is done to signal the conclusion of the performance. It is a moment which marks the exit of the drummers.

The teams in the performance of **Isikhuze** are gradually becoming a mixture of males and females which is a shift from the traditional all male affair. Although the drumming is still dominated by males, the dancing team is often mixed.

The teams are also of mixed ages, the young playing the lead role in solo performances.

#### **4.3. Ingoma (Idlamu without drums)**

There are four main types of team dances that could be referred to **Indlamu** without the drum accompaniment, that is, **Isishameni**, **Ukhwaxa** **Isikhomazi** and **Isigenyane**.

##### **4.3.1 Types of Ingoma**

###### **4.3.1.1. Ukhwaxa**

**Ukhwaxa** is divided into two types, that is, the one which is popular with the **Bhaca** people and the one which is popular with the people from **Nongoma** and some parts around **Hlabisa**. The second type being also referred to, by the people from **Nongoma** and **Hlabisa** as **Ubhaca**.

The difference between the two types of **Ukhwaxa** is the tempo. The **Nongoma** version is faster than the **Mzimkhulu** version. The intensity of the movement and the impact of the sound coming out of the armpit in the **Nongoma** version is lighter than the **Mzimkhulu** version.

This reference of the **Ukhwaxa** from **Nongoma** as **Ubhaca** proves that it was derived from the **Ukhwaxa** of **Amabhaca**. It is not yet clear when did the **Bhaca** people develop the **Ukhwaxa** style of dancing. There are two

possibilities to the development of **Ukhwaxa**. The first possibility could be that **AmaBhaca** invented the form long before they settled around **Umzimkhulu** or they developed the form after the settlement around **Umzimkhulu**. History records tell us that **AmaBhaca** as a people were forged during the great dispersal of **Nguni** nations which is known as **Mfecane**.

Fuze, (1979:54) contends that,

*...there was one **Sonyangwe kaKhalimeshe** of the **Zulu** clan, who collected his people and fled during the night into the large forest of **Ngoye**. There he remained hiding with his people. In consequence they came to travel mostly by night and concealed themselves by day. Eventually they crossed **uThukela** and all other rivers. ..and settling at **Khwela (Bluff)** for few years. ..*

*Eventually they moved on to the **Mzimkulu** river where they're to be found today.*

In an interview with Mzizi from Mzimkhulu, he said that;

*Amabhaca ngabantu abaqhamuka KwaZulu. Basuka ngesikhathi sokubusa kukaNodumehlezi. Basuka nje sebevele bezibiza ngaMabhaca. bahamba njalo baze bayozinza Empumalanga Hiligwa phansi kwenkosi UMadikane. Kodwa UMadikane wabuye waqhubeka nabanye waze wayo zinza E-Mount Eyliiff kwelaMampondo phansi kwenkosi UFaku. Abasala Emzimkhulu bona basala phansi kwenkosi UMsingazwe,  
(Mzizi, 2006).*

The settlement around **Mzimkhulu** and **Mount Eyliiff** should have brought the **Bhaca** people in direct contact with nations such as **Amampondo**, **Amahlubi**,

**Amahiligwa** and some sections of the **Basuthu** people. The styles of dancing by the people of these nations could have had a direct influence to the **Bhaca** people.

There are other forms of **Ukhwaxa** found among the people of the Southern parts of **Lesotho** and among the **Amampondo** people. Both of these versions are performed with a stick. The possibility could be that **Amabhaca** derived their form of dancing from both the Sotho and **Mpondo** people or the **Sotho** and the **Mpondo** derived theirs from the **Bhaca**.

'KK' Mzizi says; the original form of dancing by **Amabhaca** was **Idadla** (gumboot dance) accompanied by '*Inkositina neMpempe*'. **Ukwaxa** came as a result of **Amabhaca** come into contact with other nations such as **Amazulu** and **Amaswazi**.

**Ukhwaxa** became a symbol of strength and manhood. Mzizi further states that during the performance of **Ukhwaxa** the bottom leg was not supposed to shake because if it did, it was a sign of weakness by the dancer, (Mzizi,2006).

**Ukhwaxa** (**Bhaca** dance) as it is sometimes known, is a dance form whereby the knee is drawn into the armpit before the foot stamps the ground. When the knee hits the armpit it makes a "**khwaxa**" sound hence the name of the dance **khwaxa**. The **Bhaca** people are also known as the people who invented the

popular gumboot dance. This occurred while they were working at the **Durban** harbour. Today they can still be found in the hostels and townships of the **Durban South**.

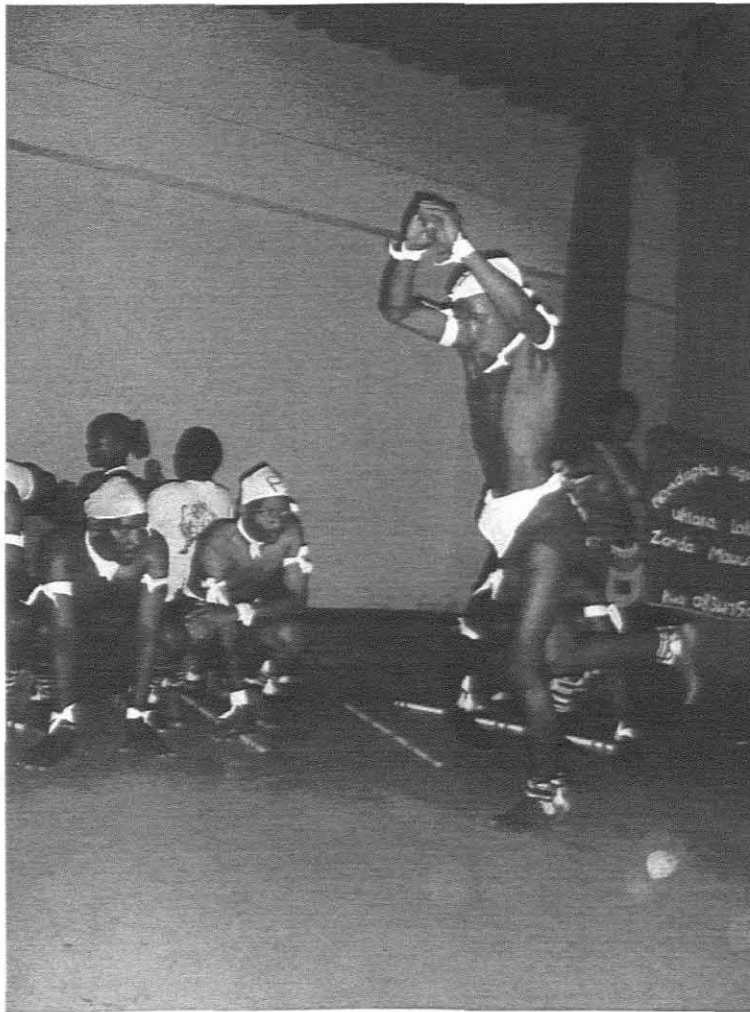
**Ukhwaxa** is better performed with half naked bodies, that is, the upper part of the body should be uncovered so as to allow the knee to have a direct contact with the armpit and that produces the **Khwaxa** sound.



**Figure 14:** Izinsizwa performing Ukhwaxa at Umzimkhulu.

Sometimes **Ukhwaxa** is referred to as **Isikhwapha**. The stamping in the performance of **Isikhwapha** is secondary compared to the **kwaxa** sound coming from the armpit. The ability to hit **Isikhwapha** and the clarity of the sound coming from the impact is the confirmation of strength and manhood.

Although generally **Ukhwaxa** is regarded as a team dance, solo performances are also common particularly before the main performance by the team or between intervals of the main performance.



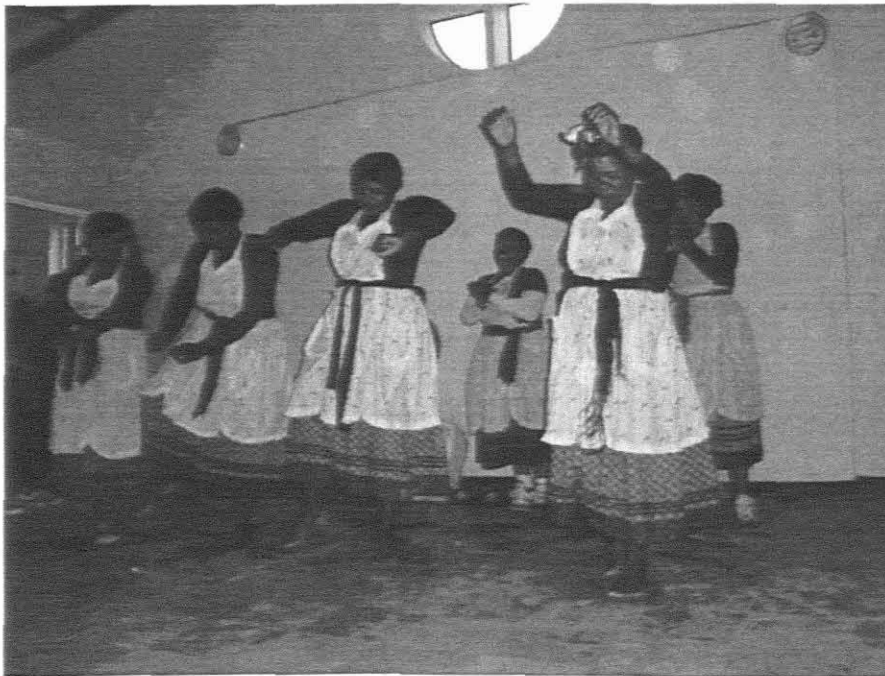
**Figure 15:** A solo performance, during one of the renditions by one of the teams

Solo performance is usually used as a build-up towards the main performance or it is done for normal social gatherings such as beer drinking.



Performance among the **Bhaca** people is strictly gender and age based. Young men are normally referred to as **Izinsizwa**, married women are referred to as **Inhlokohlela** and young girls are known as **Izintombi**.

Although the movements done by **Inhlokohlela** are in terms of the structure, similar to those done by young men, **Inhlokohlela** is not supposed to lift their knees too high since they are married. As married women they are expected to **hlonipha**.



**Figure 16:** Inhlokohlela goups from Umzimkhulu in full performance.

The performance by **Izintombi** is meant to showcase the essence of **Ubuntombi**. **Ubuntombi** represents youth, virginity and freedom. The young

girls are expected to lift their legs much higher as compared to the married women.

There are three kinds of dancing by the **Bhaca** girls, that is, **Isikhwapha/Ukhwaxa**, **Ubhezula** and **Isigenyane**.

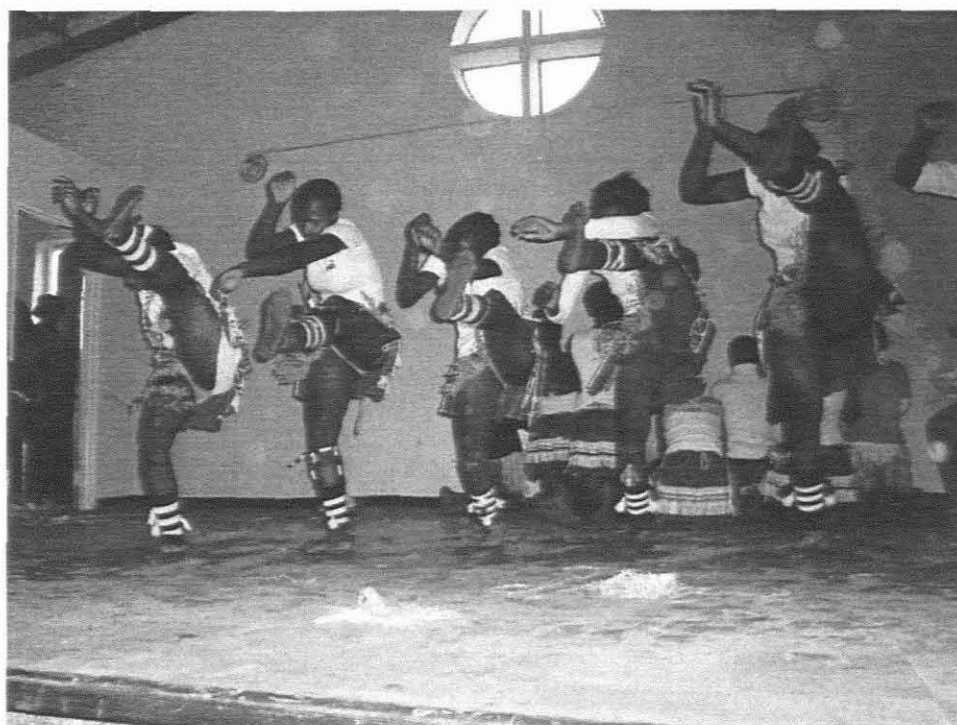


Figure 17: Izintombi performing a form of Ukhwaxa/Isikhwapha

Ubhezula used to be accompanied by the playing of a Harmonica and clapping of hands. Today the use of Harmonica accompaniment is not that common. It had since been replaced by either the beating of a single drum and whistles.



Figure 18: A modern version of Ubhezula (without an accompaniment of Harmonica)

The dance below is square to the front (to the audience) while the top one is more about the partner than the audience.



Figure 19: Isigenyane sezintombi

One of the main pillars to the dance performance by the **Bhaca** people is **lbhodwe**. **lbhodwe** is the term used to refer to the people behind the line of performers. **lbhodwe** is responsible for providing the music and **ihlombe** to the dancers. The most important element of **lbhodwe** is the direction it faces during the performance. **lbhodwe** is arranged into a circular formation at the back of the dancers.



**Figure 20:** The formation of **lbhodwe** before the commencement of the dance

**Ebhodweni** (pot) is where the performance is brewed. The circular formation is the symbol of unity and strength,

#### 4.3.1.2 ***Isishameni***

The detailed historical, structural and cultural perspective of **Isishameni** dance has been discussed by Clegg in his paper delivered at the second symposium in 1981.

Clegg's analysis is the best literally study on **Isishameni** anybody can get at this point in time. There might be other studies available somewhere but Clegg seems to be a pioneer in the field of literally study of **Isishameni**. But Clegg's study is limited to the people of **Umsinga** as the inventors of the **Isishameni**. The focus of the study should now move out of **KwaMiya** and the rest the people of the **Msinga** reserve and begin to focus on the continuation of the **Isishameni** and its performance by other communities outside **Umsinga**.

The continuation and transformation of **Isishameni** can be attributed to two main sectors of the working class among the **Zulu** people, that is, the industrial and farm working class. The hostel and compound systems create a situation whereby the workers spend most of their leisure time together. **Ingoma** provides a perfect means of recreation.

Hostels and farm compounds have become places where new songs are composed and new movement sequences are choreographed. The competition element in the performance of **Isishameni** compels the **Izindabuli** and

**Izingqambi** to constantly having to come up with new songs and dance sequences.

The transformation in **Isishameni** has been a result of it being exposed to other forms of performances of dance. The elements of **Isicathamiya**, **Ukugiya**, **Isikhomazi** and **Ukukhomikha** have helped shape the performance of **Isishameni** as it is seen today.

The performance of **Isishameni** is in two movements. The first movement is a solo performance by anybody inspired to perform to the music and clapping by the members of either his team or of the community. Usually this kind of performance takes place at ceremonies like **Umvalelo** or before the dance competition begins. But there is another kind of solo performance which is linked to the main performance by the team. This kind of solo performance is normally used as an introduction of the team or it marks the beginning of the dance or as variations in the middle of the dance sequence.

The second movement is the team dance (*ispani*) which marks the main thrust of the performance of **Isishameni**. Team dancing is also divided into two movements. The first movement is marked by a very short dance sequence at the beginning of the performance by the team. This sequence is performed to the song which is sung as the team march to the arena.

The second team dance sequence is longer and is the main thrust of the performance of **Isishameni**. Its common features are short solo introductory performances and duet performances by the dancers at the opposite ends of the line or in the middle depending on the design by the **Indabuli**.

**Isishameni** has become a common feature in dance competitions by the working class and recently, by the schools. This situation has forced the teams to constantly search for new and innovative movements to out-class their rivals. Some innovations are a result of some form of cross pollination with other dance forms, for instance, elements of **Isicathamiya** and **Isikhomazi** are becoming a common feature in the new styles of **Isishameni**.

Two camps of critics are beginning to emerge, that is, conservatives and liberals. There are those people who frown on new ways of the performance of **Isishameni**. They are advocating for the traditional pure and original form of performance. On the other hand, there are those that feel and see the necessity for new innovations and growth. In competitions, heated-debates always ensue between the two camps. The purists argue that the winners should be those who stick to the original while the modernist argue for new and stylish innovations.

The traditional accompaniment to the performance of **Isishameni** is the clapping of hands but there has been an introduction of **Imbomu** which is made

out of sewerage pipes. The blowing of **Imbomu** produces a sound almost similar to that of **Ingungu** and it creates another dimension to the whole rhythmic structure of **Isishameni**.

#### 4.3.1.3 ***Isikhomazi***

**Isikhomazi** is commonly done by the people from **Umkhomazi** and surrounding areas such as **Fafa**, **Uzinto** and **Uthwalume**. Although the performance of **Isikhomazi** is done with the accompaniment of a drum, it is normally done to the accompaniment of hand clapping.

The dancers arrange themselves into the line with the leader standing at the end of the line, usually on the right hand side of the line. The dance sequence of **Isikhomazi** is arranged in short phrases. Every phrase is initiated by the leader by stepping forward, clap the hands and return back to the line. This act by the leader is the signal for the commencement to the next phrase. The movements of **Isikhomazi** comprises of high stampings and stepping.

The formation in the performance of **Isikhomazi** can change from a simple line into columns, kris-cross and solo or duets. The dance performance is made up of stamps, jumps and tumbles (on buttocks).

**Isikhomazi** can either be done by a group or an individual. Individual performance is ideal for normal social gatherings such as beer drinking. The



choreographies for solo dance performances are never. Each performer creates (through improvisation) his or her dance sequence.

#### 4.3.1.4. *Isigenyane*

**Isigenyane** is the dance performance by the **Bhaca** people of **Umzimkhulu**.

**Mbandlwa** contends that the **Isigenyane** dance had originated from **KwaZulu**.



**Figure 21:** A member of community improvising with solo performance of **Isigenyane**

**Isigenyane** is commonly regarded as “dancing like a woman”. **Amabhaca** regards **Ukhwaxa** as the only dance by them that represents manhood and strength. **Isigenyane** is similar to the form of dancing popular with young girls among the **Bhaca** people. In this kind of dancing, girls seem to imitate the girls from **Zululand**. This kind of dancing by the young girls puts more emphasis on the lifting of the leg and high stamping as compared to the common **Ukhwaxa**.



**Figure 22:** Young Bhaca girls performing a high stamping dance

The vertical position of the body of both the dancers and backers is in resemblance of that of **Isishameni**.

#### **4.4 Sport/recreational dancing**

The roots of sport-dancing can be traced back into the days of **Ijadu** and **Ukugqumushela**. The rivalry between two parties was central to both forms of dancing referred above. **Ijadu** was a form of dancing competition between the youth of two different districts and **Umgqumshelo** was a sort of dance competition between the groom and the bride's parties early in the morning before the part of the Zulu wedding begins.

Between the years 1929 and 1939 dance tradition which was meant for recreation during weekends became a form and means of settling regional rivalry. Different firms and industries encouraged dance competitions by their workers as the means towards domestication of **Ingoma** as it had already been mentioned before in this study.

Certain dances became synonymous with certain people and history. **Isizingili** is synonymous with the history and the people from the northern part of **KwaZulu-Natal** province. **Ukhwaxa** is synonymous with the history and the life of the **Bhaca** people and **Umzansi**, with the people of **Emsinga** and **Bergville** respectively.

People from these areas commonly used these forms of dancing to promote unity among them. Some dances became the pride of certain firms and the tool to instill patriotism towards the working conditions in those firms, for

instance, the dock workers took pride in their gumboot dancing since it resembled the working conditions of the stevedores and the sailors.

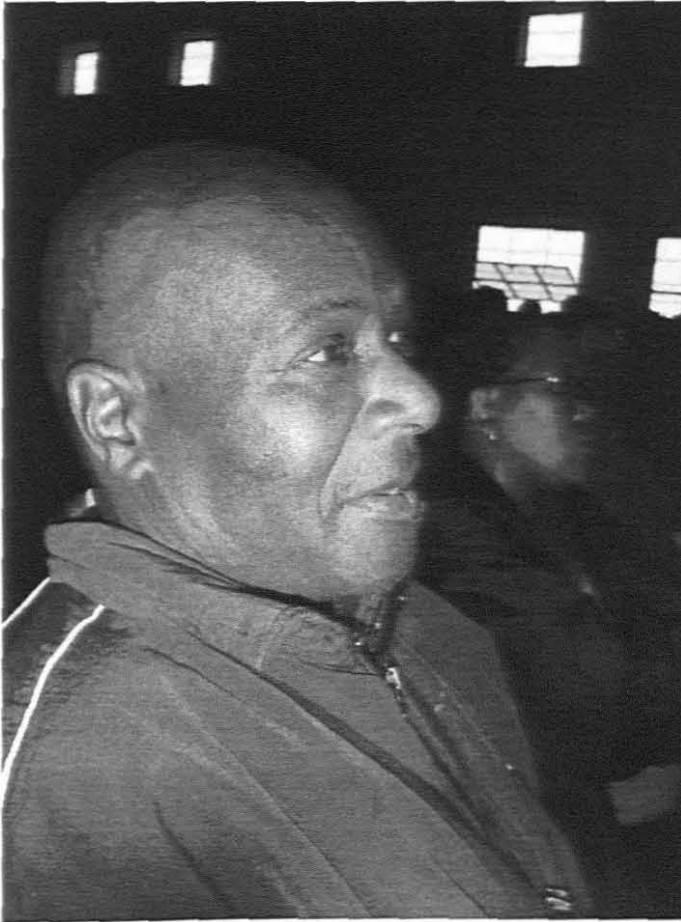


Figure 23: A group/team performing gumboot dance

Certain firms took deep interest in the dance in such a way that the ability to dance became a prerequisite for employment. Certain employers believed that a person with dancing skills carries special qualities such as discipline and strength. Mzizi an elder from **Umzimkhulu** claims that Gumboot was used as curriculum vitae for every **Bhaca** to get employed.

*"for a Bhaca to get employed either in the mines or at the municipality's bucket system, he had to demonstrate that he can perform gumboot dance"*

(Mzizi,2006).



**Figure 24** Felix 'KK' MZIZI ( The elder from Umzimkhulu) giving an explanation of the performance happening on stage.

In some instances, employees were encouraged to recruit their skillful homeboy dancers for their firms with an aim of strengthening their part in dance competitions.

Dance competitions became a major part of the working class during weekends and evenings. Dance competitions also became a major attraction back home especially during Christmas recess and Easter holidays.

**Isicathamiya** use to be the most preferred form of performance during the Christmas recess and Easter holidays due to the association of it (*Isicathamiya*) with **Amakholwa** tradition in opposition to **Ingoma** of **Amabhinca** tradition.

Today, the tradition of dance competitions has spread into the compounds where sugar cane and forest workers are found. Schools and municipalities have followed suit in using the dance competitions to allow good rivalry to take place among their respective districts and at the same time promoting the spirit of togetherness and co-operation among those districts and wards.

Dance competitions in schools and municipalities, have become another tool of unearthing and identifying talent among the youth and the general public. Dance competitions also help to instill self discipline and control and a sense of identity among the youth.

#### **4.5 Co-temporal Zulu dances**

Almost all the dances that were classified as **Ingoma** during the period between 1929 and 1939 can be referred to as co-temporal. They all emerged almost at the same time and for the same purpose. **Ingoma** dances and music embodied the aspirations of the working class.

**Ingoma** dances and music have continued till today and they are still central to the lives of the working class. Although other sections of the society have begun to associate with **Ingoma** dance and music, it has always remained a symbol and an identity for the working class.

**Isicathamiya** for instance, was once referred to as **Ingoma Busuku** (song of the night) because it was performed during the evening. The movements used for the performance of **Isicathamiya** are basically stepping and walking. The word **Isicathamiya** is derived from a Zulu word '*Cathama*' meaning tip-toeing or stalking. The movements were preferred as an alternative to stamping movements for two reasons; (1) they were quieter than loud stomping of the **Indlamu** dancing thus not causing disturbance to the sleeping white bosses, (2) they were acceptable to growing **Kholwa** consciousness of the time.

**Isicathamiya** came as a result of innovative and creative endeavour by those people who were neither western nor rural commonly known as **Amagxagxa** (vagrants). It was a mixture of **Izingoma Zomshado** and **Ukukhomikha**. **Izingoma Zomshado** were derived from the Wesleyan Methodist church hymns.

Bombing, as **Izingoma Zomshado** or **Umbholoho** is commonly known became the only acceptable form of performance acceptable for the **Kholwa**

wedding ceremonies. This was also another way of breaking away from 'traditional' ways yet not fully embedded into the Western ways of living. Step dancing was the only option so as not to offend the whites and to show their detachment from 'barbaric' rural past.

Part of the co-temporal dancing and music have remained central to the weekend and evening recreational performances by the workers in the hostels and sugarcane compounds. Another part of co-temporal dancing has been transferred to Tourist entertainment in the game-parks and holiday resorts of **KwaZulu-Natal**. The last section of the co-temporal performance has since become part and parcel of theatrical works of playwright such as Mbongeni Ngema, Edmund Mhlomo and Jerry Poole.

Central to all dances that are referred to as co-temporal is the essence of evolution and transformation for instance in the case of Gumboot dance, it started as the dance by the **Bhaca** dock workers and evolved into mine worker and sometimes township protest theatre dance performance.





**Figure 25:** 'Traditional' Bhaca gumboot dance accompanied by a concertina in sailor outfits

The two pictures above and below, illustrate the transformation in the performance of gumboot dancing. The top picture reflects the 'traditional' dock workers style of performance. The bottom picture reflects the 'modern' mine workers style of performance.

Although the age group of the dancers on the bottom picture reflect youth, it still reflect the mine worker situation and it is the further illustration of the fact that most dances among the Zulu are learned by the young through the imitating of the elders.



Figure 26: 'Modern' gumboot dancing in mine workers outfit

Although the both the dock and the mine workers used to live in the hostels separated from the rest of the community, they eventually became surrounded by the townships which eventually became populated by families. Hostel dwellers and township population mingled freely and influenced and affected each others life both culturally and economically.

The picture below reflects the worker/township life in fusion mode.

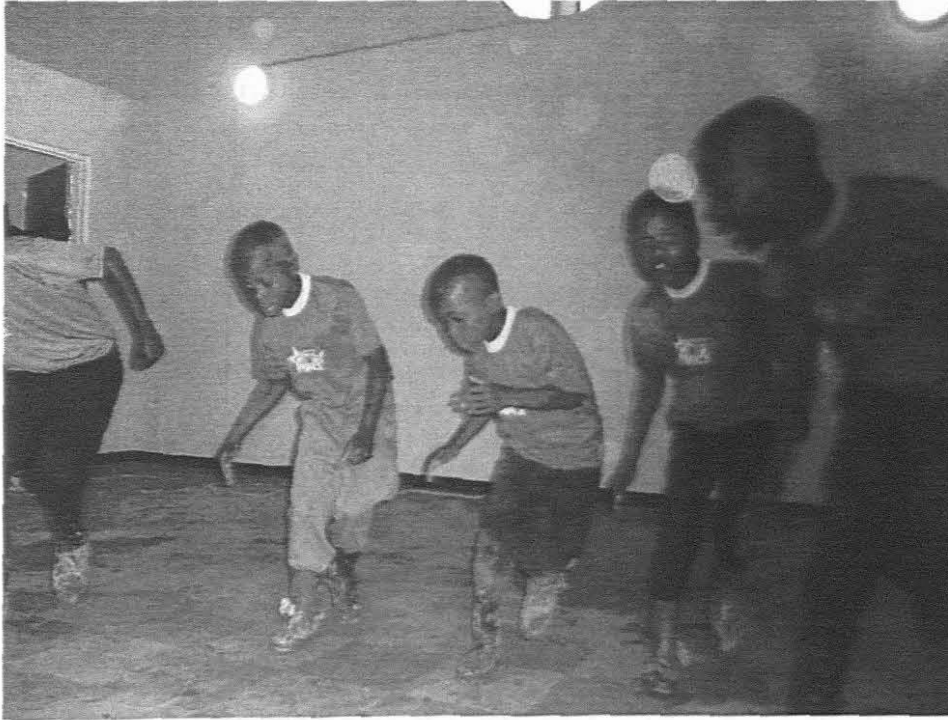


Figure 27: 'Modern' gumboot dancing in young township boy's outfit

**Ukhwaxa** is known as a **Bhaca** dance yet today it is also highly popular with the people of **Nongoma** and **Hlabisa**. The **nongoma** and **Hlabisa** version of **Ukhwaxa** is quicker and lighter compared to the **Umzimkhulu** one. **Ukhwaxa** from **Nongoma** and **Hlabisa** does not put more emphasis on the sound made by the contact between the knee and the armpit hence the performers do not perform half naked, instead the emphasis is on the stamping and other movements that resembles the 'traditional' **Bhaca** dancing.

Among the **Bhaca** people themselves there is already conflicting views between the 'traditionalist' and the 'modernist'. The dispute is about the costume for the performance of **Ukhwaxa**. 'Traditinalists' believe that

Ukhwaxa has been distorted by the performers who wear what is called Umsubelo which is not a Bhaca traditional dress for the performance of Ukhwaxa.



Figure 28: Performers of Ukhwaxa wearing Umsubelo

Umsubelo according to (a teacher from one of the local schools) is believed to originate from the Mpondo people. Umbleselwa is regarded by the 'traditionalists' as the authentic dress for the performance of Ukhwaxa:

*"Sesiyalahleka manje, lento osuyibona lapha akuseyiyo  
eyangempela. Abantu manje sebe nxiba Umsubelo.  
Umsubelo akusiyona into yethu, iqhamuka Emampondweni.  
Into yethu htina Mabhaca Umbhleselwa ngoba iwona okwazi  
Ukukhipha umsindo ofunekayo uma idolo lishaya ekhwapheni"*  
(Mbandlwa, 2006).



Figure 29: 'Traditional' dress for the performance of **Ukhwaxa**

Although there is evidence of transformation and evolution around the costume by the performers of **Ukhwaxa**, there are no major changes in the formations and the rhythmic patterns of the dance and music.

Coplan, (1985, 65), contends that

*The new style first appeared during the First World War under the name ingom'ebusuku (night music). It has since gone through many transformations under different names and remains popular today as isicathamiya (a stalking approach).*

Like in the **Umbholoho** performance in weddings, **Isicathamiya** has remained an avenue for individual show-off within a group and established parameters of performance. The movements are characterized by stepping,

kicks, shuffles and 'moot' stampings. Sometimes **Isicathamiya** singers can be seen swaying their (upper) bodies from side to side.

The formations are usually linear and facing the front, but there has been some developments in a sense that dancers could be seen executing some kind of columns and drills maneuvers.



Figure 30: **Isicathamiya** group from **Umzimkhulu**

The drills resemble the two-two formation by **Izinsizwa** living **Esigcawini** after **Umemulo** or **Umkhehlo** ceremony.

#### 4.6 Liturgical Zulu dancing

Larlham, (1985;21), states that,

*...Many black Christian churches in South Africa retain elements of traditional African religious belief and practice in co-temporary services, to the extent that communal song and dance have become an integral part of religious worship..*

There are two main churches that have directly retained the elements of the 'traditional' Zulu song and dance in their religious worship, that is, Zionist Christian church and Nazareth Baptist church.

It is a well known fact that the Nazareth Baptist church was founded by prophet Isaiah Shembe. Although prophet Isaiah Shembe had his first encounter with his prophetic visions at the time when he was still living in the **Free state**, the larger part of the foundation of his mission occurred after his settlement at **Inanda** where the headquarters of the church could still be found.

Although prophet Isaiah was born at **Harrismith** in the **Free state**, his mission later became an attempt to either adapt the Christian worship to the ways of Zulu cultural practices or the attempt to return the **Zulu** nation into its self determination and pride through Christianity. Shembe eventually got referred to as the king of the Nazareth Baptist church.



Besides the dress, the worshipers are arranged according to their age, gender and status during the dance performance. The rendition of dances is based on the known Zulu dance traditions such as **Udwendwe** or **Ukusina kwamabutho** during major spiritual ceremonies or **Ukusina Kwezintombi** at **Umkhosi Womhlanga** or **Umemulo** and **Isigekle somame** in the wedding ceremony.

Since all the dancing by the Nazareth worshipers is based on mass participation, the formations are in rows and columns. The most senior in each category are always found in front and at the centre of each row. Like in all Zulu dance performances, the dancers are always accompanied by the drum, percussions, singing and clapping by the people behind the dancers.

The basic movements of the dances by the Nazareth worshipers are based on stamping and stepping. These basic movements (stamping and stepping) reflect, a strong combination of both the West and Zulu ways of performances. Women carry umbrellas and small shields while men carry small shields and flywhisks which are also another representation of the meeting of two worlds (**Zulu and West**).

There is a strong resemblance of the diviner's performance by the Zionist worship dance. The essence of dance performance by the Zionist worshipers is healing as is it the case with activities by **Izangoma**. The movement in a



circular formation brings about an ecstatic feeling which is central to the healing process by the diviners.

Zionist worship suggests a strong sense of ritualistic engagement than just a mere worship. The circular formation and movement symbolizes unity and continuity which is the essence of every ritual engagement in Africa. During the dance performance the direction is always anticlockwise, (which is fundamental most ritualistic performances in Africa). Anticlockwise movement suggests the nullification of time and it also prevents the dancers from getting dizzy.

Zionists are also known for carrying the staff when performing their worship dances. This is done in accordance to the apostolic foundation of Zionist worship and the African ritual participation. Zionists are also known for their possession by *Umoya* which is a direct resemblance of the diviner possession by the ancestral spirits. Yawning and groaning is a common feature during the Zionists worship and during the healing processes by *Izangoma*.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

Participation in the performance of popular dancing is not usually confined to dancers and their backers only but it is extended to a larger participation by the rest of the populace. It is this sense of freedom that allows the rest of the members of the community to add another dimension to the performance of every popular dancing. That dimension adds value to the performance. It also compliments and supplements the performance.

Every performance in popular dancing is an individual flare. Every group or individual participating in a popular performance brings in a new interpretation to the already established mode of expression. This notion brings about a renewal to the mode of performance and it provides continuity necessary to keep the form of performance in existence for a long time.

Popular performances always bring a sense of a conflict either in a form of competitions or in a form of debates between the 'progressives' and the 'purists'. In a competition, everyone wants to outshine the other thus creating a platform for new and innovative ideas which at the end become points of contention by the 'traditionalists'.

Popular performances are a perfect example of the conflict that ensued when the rural, urban, mission and working-class traditions come into contact with each other. In most cases this conflict created a fertile ground for the

emergence of new forms of dance performances while on the other hand helping to promote and preserve the old forms of dance performances.

Sometimes the popular dance performances reflected a popular acceptance of and conformation to the western ways of life or they (dance performances) were a reflection of a popular resistance to and rejection of western ways of life. December, 26 was referred to as the boxing-day whereby concerts were staged as celebrations of Christmas in song and dance. Is Instead of Christian hymns and, **Isicathamiya** and **Umbholoho** were the main items for the concerts hence **Isicathamiya** was once referred to as **Ikonsati**. On the other hand there were those popular dance performances, like **Ukukhomikha**, which were intended to ridicule the white employers and their 'boss boys' or the police.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1. Findings of the research

##### 5.1.1. Symbolism and Implications.

The performance mode in the Zulu dance tradition is a collection of movements (steps, jumps, leaps, runs, gestures and tumbles) and sounds (songs, drumbeats, whistles, guitars, concertinas and hands-clapping). These movements and sounds significance is through evocation of specific aspects in the consciousness, for instance, **lzaga** can evoke an emotional experience. **lzaga**, are therefore, a symbolic evocation of an emotional aspect which is, expressed by engaging into military drills by the participants.

Zulu dance tradition should be viewed in two perspectives, that is, (1) a series of metaphors and symbols and (2) the mystery in the hidden meaning. Metaphors and parables are there to address emotions and feelings of, either the participant or the spectator while on the other hand the mystic meaning addresses the spiritual aspect.

But there are two kinds of symbolisms found in the performance of the Zulu dance tradition, that is, *exoteric* and *esoteric* symbolisms. The *exoteric*

symbolism is that kind of symbolic expression whose meaning of the determined aspect is known by the general public, for instance, the stick is a symbolic aspect of participation and authority in a performance. The aspects of exoteric symbolism are objectifiable, that is, sticks, costumes, make-up and signs. Exoteric symbolism can be equaled to words. Words are symbols of objective images, for instance, the word 'cat' represents a formed image of an animal.

The esoteric symbolism is different, its aspects are magical their meaning are known and understood only by the initiated. The esoteric symbolic expression is commonly found in ritualistic and ceremonial performances. Repetitive nature of songs and movements of ritualistic-ceremonial performances or the geometrical formations and designs of movements and artifacts are a magical aspect in the consciousness of the participants which produces an abstract response. As Schwaller de Lubicz, (1949, 46), puts it;

*...The esoteric symbolism is a natural or artificial fact which elicits an abstract vital response, which will then be expressed physically, nervously, mentally, or emotionally in an organized being, or by an energetic reaction in a non-organized being.*

Ritualistic practices are ancient in nature and they carry the knowledge of sages of a people. Therefore the aim of esoteric symbolism in a ritual is

always to evoke the mentality completely different from the present, one that belongs to the sages of the ancient past.

Sometimes what the symbols evoke can never be described or defined but only experienced. It is for this reason that difficulties in interpretation and understanding Zulu dance performances arise. Sometimes even the most experienced participants of Zulu dancing fail to describe their experiences in performance.

Aspects in a ritualistic expression are irrational and unimaginable, that is, they often represents a discontinuous object in the continuous present, abstractions which only the repetitive movements, geometric formations and sounds can symbolize.

Generally, a symbol is a synthesis, that is, an aspect that is compressed into one unit while the intended meaning to that aspect is broad and deep. It is a moment where everything is collapsed into naught while on the other hand everything is accumulates into multiple units.

**Umkhosi Womhlanga** is an esoteric symbolism to the Zulu myth of creation. The reed is a representation of the primordial penis personified by the King. The penis is the giver of life, which is, the thesis. On the other hand, the

virgins that bring the reed to the king are the non-givers of life, which is an anti-thesis.



Figure 31: Virgins at Umkhosi Womhlanga at Enyokeni royal palace (2006)

In the case of **Umkhosi Womhlanga**, virgins represent the future and purity, yet the reeds and the dances represent the ancient past. The simultaneity (synthesis) is a symbol outside of time and space. Swaller de Lubics, (1949: 53), contends that,

*...The symbol as synthesis is the eternal 'present moment', because the same conjunctions that created its development will compel it continually to be what it is; this prescribes the notion of identity, which is objectively inconceivable..*

To the esoteric symbolism, **Umkhosi Womhlanga** represents the constant creation. Thus the creation process is not fixed on time, that is, neither the past nor the future, instead it is in the present moment (where everything mingles) that the creation process constantly happening.

My observation at **Ndumo** in 1991, Easter weekend **Isizingili** dance festival organized by Mafuthenkukhu Msane had a symbolical aspect. At the centre of the arena (where the dancing was to take place), **Ubhoko** was placed and a small fire was made next to it. **Ubhoko** is a long stick used to block the blows during the stick fighting, therefore, here it was used as a symbol of protection against evil and negative energy that might come along the competition and the fire is a source of strength to the participants.

Every team that was going to partake had to drill (in a circular motion) around **Ubhoko** at an anti-clockwise direction before settling at a spot allocated to it (team). An anti-clockwise movement has a magical aspect in itself (the power over the opposition and against and kind of **umuthi** that might have been put on the arena). The centre of the arena and the repetitive nature of the movements of the drill are also magical and *esoteric*.

During the drill the team held the sticks and shields together which symbolize the unbroken and unbreakable spirit and loyalty to the culture. The linear formation always symbolizes continuity and growth of the culture.





**Figure 32:** A typical entrance drill by the dance teams in the **Zulu** team dancing (note: the sticks and shields are held together to form an unbroken line)

At the front or the side of every drilling team is the most senior or experienced performer which symbolizes the role these performers play in the preservation and promotion of the cultural practice. But sometimes a skillful performer can be given a lead role for his or her ability, which represent the importance of skills and precession in the performance of Zulu dance tradition.

#### **5.1.2. Composition.**

Composition on classic-ritual-ceremonial dancing can either be attributed to the sages of the Zulu nation as a whole or to the founders of each clan and community, for instance, **Umpendu** for each and every clan is said to have

been composed by the founding fathers of that particular clan, like **Umphephu** of the **Emangadini** clan of **Kwabhadaza**, **Obuka** is said to have been composed by *Uphefeni*, son of *Undlamlomo kaSoyamba*, the founder of the clan.

In the case of the Nazareth Baptist Church, all the songs and dances were composed and choreographed by the founding prophet, Isaiah Shembe. Here dances and songs are to be performed according to the commandments by the prophet.

But in the case of **isishameni**, the dance form was founded by Jubele Dubazane (Clegg; 1981), yet dance sequences seen everyday in modern performances are the composition of **Amagosa** from different teams.

### 5.1.3. Performance and appreciation.

Performances are a communal affair and every performance is enjoyed and critiqued by the members of the same community. The good and the bad performance is given the same platform and appreciated equally, that is, the good and the bad dancer can be seen on one and the same arena some times performing side by side. Although **Amaciko** are a sweet taste to a performance, **Amabhimbi** too are the providers of fun in the performance. The members of the community provide **Amadliwa** the same back-up (in terms of singing and clapping) they provide **Amaciko**.

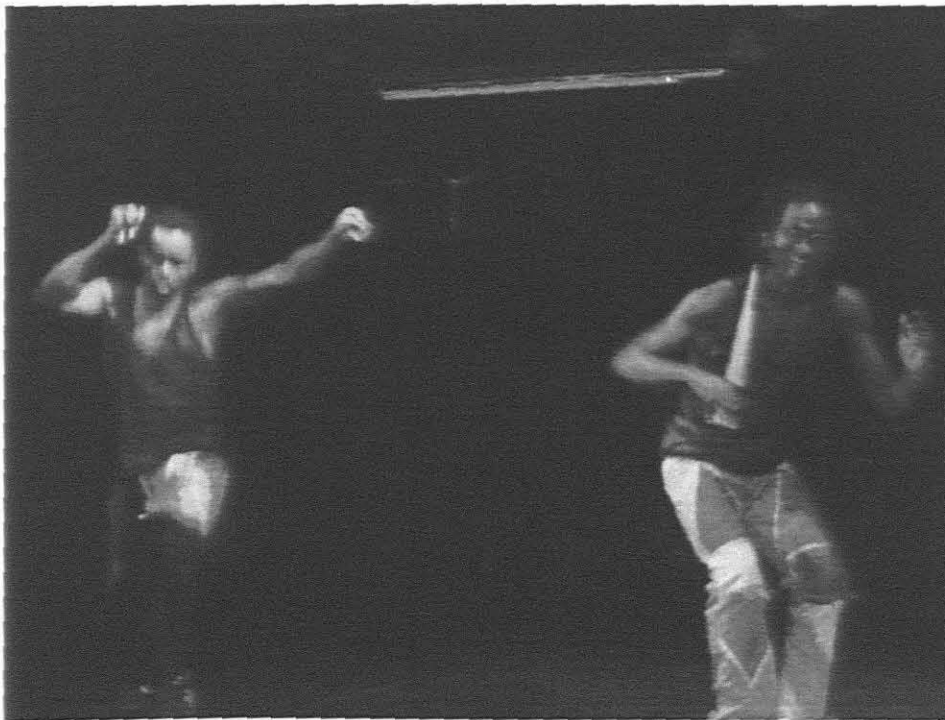
Being known by the community is also important to enhance your performance as a performer. The song each performer sings is better sung when the whole of the community is singing along. A performer whose praises are known by the members of the community stands a better chance of performing to his potential. Life outside the performance also helps towards acceptance of the performer by the members of the community, that is, a good stick fighter is in a position to receive a resounding applause every time he enters the arena.

You cannot ask a Zulu to perform for you, instead, you can ask a Zulu to perform with you. In the Zulu mode of performance, no one can perform alone, that person will look mad. Same thing applies to a passive audience during a Zulu dance performance, looks awkward and naïve. The audience should look the part and knowledgeable of the performance by singing, applauding, *shikila*, *gqashula*, *kikiza*, *izibongo* and clapping hands to the beat.

Dance performances do not happen in isolation from other performances such as singing, drumming, storytelling and acting. Visual arts play important part in enhancing the performances. Designs in cloths, props and instruments form an essential of the performance.

#### 5.1.4. General Technique.

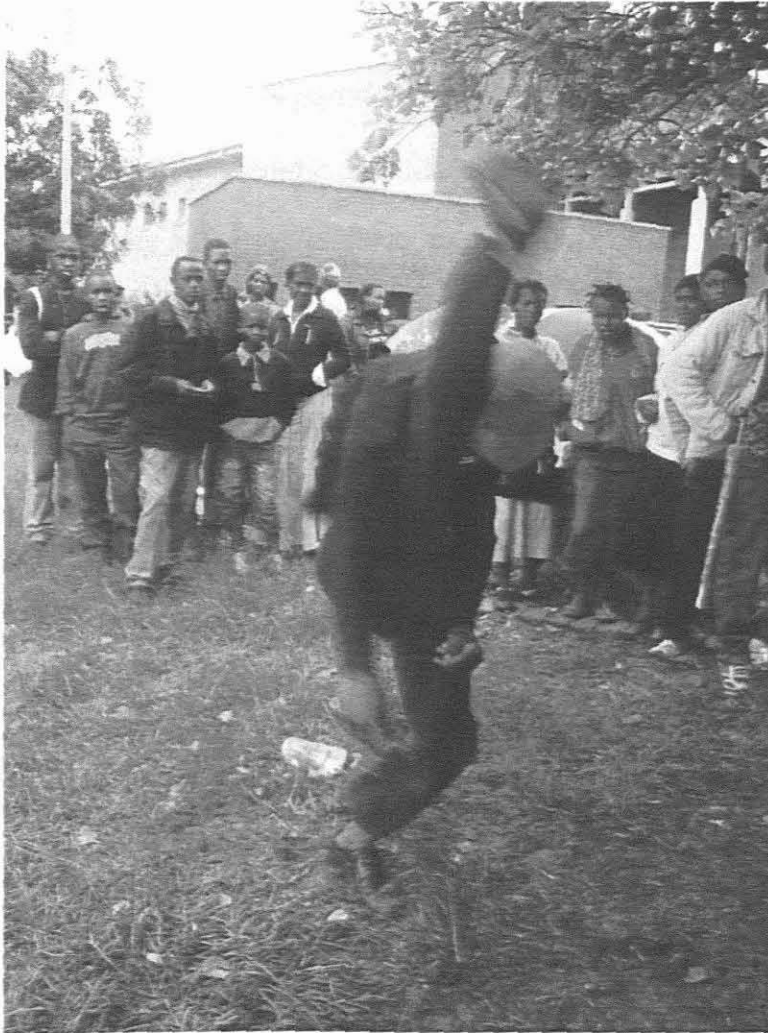
Generally, the technique used in the performance of dance in the Zulu dance tradition is based on the 'position' of the body. In all dance performances in Africa, the body is always bent forward, that is, the chest opening towards the earth and the knees at the natural bend position.



**Figure 33:** A typical body position for Zulu dancing

When the body is in a standing position or in a squat, the aforementioned position divides the body into two halves, that is, the top and the bottom. In a performance, the top always moves to the bottom or vice versa. Whether stamping, pounding the ground, kicking or jumping during **Ukugiya**, the two halves of the body are always in motion towards each other.

In a high stamping dance movement, the two end of the two halves curve as if they are going to touch each other.



**Figure 34:** The dancer doing a high stamping dance (Note the head meeting the foot)

When the stamping leg is lifted, the bottom/supporting leg is bent in a natural bend position.

### **5.1.5. Elements of dance performance.**

#### **5.1.5.1. Participants.**

The theme of the dance performance determines the age, the gender and the status of the people partaking. For instance, the theme of fertility requires the participation of young girls under the direction of the elders and the rest of the community acting as 'passive' participants.

#### **5.1.5.2. Locale.**

The place, the venue and the location of the performance plays the most important role in determining the nature of performance in the Zulu dance tradition. For instance, the **Umvalelo** ceremonial performance by the youth in a **Rondavel** or **Iqhugwane**, tends to create the intimate interactive response from both the individual performer and the rest of the participants.

More important is the architecture of the venue structure, like **Iqhugwane** or **Isibaya**. These two structures tend to follow a rounded formation thus forcing the focus of the performance towards the centre, where **Insika** or **Ipali** (in the kraal) is situated. Every performer tends to move towards the centre which eventually becomes the symbol of an elevation of his/her performance.

#### **5.1.5.3. Timing and period.**

**Isicathamiya** was called **Ingoma busuku** because it is usually performed during the night. It was also referred to as **Ikhonsathi** because it was the main feature of Christmas concerts of the **Amakholwa** society, like the 26<sup>th</sup> of December which was known as the boxing-day in the olden days.

The dance can either be performed annually such as **Umkhosi Womhlanga** dance, seasonally like **Umkhosi Wokweshwama** or occasionally such as **umvalelo** and **Udwendwe**. Sometimes a dance performance can take place early in the morning like **Umgqumshelo**, midday like **Udwendwe** or evening like **Ingoma busuku**.

#### **5.1.5.4. Purpose.**

The purpose of the dance performance always determines the nature and the content of the performance. For instance, during **Umhlonyane**, the songs are full of 'vulgar' and insults and the movements are a mere open and close, with the sole purpose of educating and discouraging young girls from early engagement with sexual intercourse.

**Ukukhomika** and all other popular dance performances such as **Indlamu** and **Isicathamiya**, were done with the sole purpose of entertaining the spectators. But performances such as **Gumboot** dancing later became part of protest theatre and injustices of Apartheid and working condition.

## 5.2. Recommendations

More attention should be paid on promoting and preserving indigenous dance performances. Schools should play a major role in promoting and preserving indigenous performances. It only when our heritage is planted on the youth that we can begin to say, it has a future and relevance to our modern life. Elders and other experts like **Amagosa** should be drawn into our modern school system to help inculcate the culture in a proper and acceptable way.

Indigenous dances and performances should not be reduced into something which is only good for competitions and extra mural activities. Often teachers are found engaging learners into indigenous dancing only if there is nothing to do from the 'normal' school work. Teachers need to spend time researching into indigenous performance so as to be in good position to impart the right knowledge to the learners. It is a known fact that, due to our past history of learning and teaching, most of our present educators were made to turn their backs towards indigenous knowledge systems because they (indigenous systems) were regarded by European idealism as backward and uncivilized.

Teachers are also still finding difficult to merge the knowledge systems into one education system appropriate for a new South African learner. Academic research is desperately needed to find a way(s) to close this gap. Also workshops with the elders and experts should be conducted so as both worlds



can begin to understand and reach out to one another for the sake of our new and future generations.

A deliberate effort to grow indigenous performances in schools and cultural centers needs to be made, in order to change the attitude our youth have towards our indigenous performances. Our indigenous performances and other art forms should be made part and parcel of our every day life not just something for special moments like competitions and 'cultural' days and commemorations only.

The provincial government of **KwaZulu** should be lobbied into establishing a directorate charged with looking at the question of Indigenous performances in schools and the general community. A scholar who will be prepared to work closely with the knowledgeable members of the communities will be appropriate for this position.

An academy of indigenous Zulu performances should also be established so as to fast track the academic approach towards the understanding of the Zulu indigenous performances. The University of Zululand's **Isizulu Namagu** department and the Centre for Arts and Culture should play the leading role in the establishment of such an academy.

The University of Zululand should also lead the way in establishing a Zulu national arts festival within its premises. The festival should not focus only on the performing arts, instead it should try to incorporate all aspects of Zulu culture and history, such as, exhibitions of Zulu cultural artifacts, lectures and workshops on Zulu history and heritage, food and fashion.

The Zulu Royal house through His Majesty the King and the government through the office of the premier and the department of Arts, Culture and Tourism should also be lobbied into creating incentives and awards to those outstanding men and women who are working tirelessly to promote and preserve the Zulu indigenous arts, language and heritage.

### 5.3. Conclusion

Performances in the Zulu dance tradition are a story of relationships. Certain relationships that are forged by kinship, such as, wedding ceremonial dances, like **Ikhethe** or **Umthimba**. Some relationships forged by places of worship, such as, the **Nazareth Baptist Church** and **Zionist Christian Church**. Other relationships are a result of work place and places of origin, like in the case of the teams that make up **isishameni** (Young men from **Enkandla**), **Umzansi** (young men from **Bergville**), **Ubhaca** (from **Nongoma**) and **Isicathamiya** (workers of **Dunlop**).

The (performances) are also a story of actions and reactions to conditions the Zulu people have found themselves in through the years of their existence. Ritualistic ceremonial performances were a symbolic story for the two complimentary components of time, that is, past and future. Through ritual performances, Zulu people always draw from their ancient past with the aim of projecting and forging the future.

**Umdlonyane** ceremonial performance was a reaction and response to what had happened to the young and a way of transition to the future or the new stage the young girl was entering. **Umkhehlo** was a transitional stage of a young woman into marriage after **Ilobolo** has been paid.

Relationships are a symbol of two complements, as Schwaller de Lubicz, (1949; 64) puts it:

*...As existence, manifest only through relationship, that is, the interchange between the two components compliments of being. Compliments the two specific qualities of a thing, one which denies the other.*

The relationships between the performers and the spectators, is that of the active and the vital passive principles. The vital passive principle is different from the mechanical passive state. The vital passive principle is that which compliments the active principle and together they form a synthesis, a symbol of being.



**Figure 35:** Mama Jane Mathenjwa of **Manguzi** Traditional dancers (**Isikapulane**) is telling the story of how as young girls used to go about in relating to admires and lovers under the guidance by **Amaqhikiza**.

**Isikapulane** cloth was not just a dancing garment but it was also used to hide the breast of the young girl so as to prevent her lover from touching her. It was a shame for any young girl to be seen touched by her lover. **Amaqhikiza** were very strict on that matter. No one was allowed to touch the young girls breast up until the **Ilobolo** has been paid in full and the wedding has taken place.

*“Kwakuye kuthi uma sesiyovalelisa emasokeni ethu  
uma esehamba eya emsebenzini, bese sibhinca Isikapulana  
lesi sangezansi bese kuthi lapha emabeleni sibhinca esinye.  
kwenzela ukuba isoka lingakuthinti amabele. Uma nje like  
lakuthinta, kozwakala usukhala uqandugandu. Lapho- ke  
amaqhikiza ayoza ephangelana esezothethisa isoka”  
(Mthembu: 2006).*



**Figure 36:** The students and teachers of the Centre for Arts and Culture are listening attentively to the story of the growing up of young girls, told by Mama Jane Mathenjwa of Isikapulane group from Manguzi(above).

**Isikapulane** dancing is the story of youth relationships and their love affairs. It is the story of relationships between the young males and females. It is also a story of the relationships between the **Amaqhikiza** and **Amatshitshi**.

Performances in the Zulu dance tradition are also a journey of every individual or group participating, out from the inner-self into the rest of the community. They (performances) are the radiations of energies, thoughts and feelings of the Zulu people about their relationships among themselves and the rest of the universe. It is therefore often difficult for outsiders to determine the beginning, the middle and the end of a performance. For instance, the songs and movements often used by **Ingoma** dancers can be heard and seen when the workers are at work or walking to the venue where dancing is supposed to take place. Every group or team coming to partake at an **Ingoma** festival always arrives at the venue singing and sometimes doing some kinds of dance movements.

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