

DUST OF THE ZULU

NGOMA AESTHETICS AFTER APARTHEID



LOUISE MEINTJES

With photographs by **TJ LEMON**

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/ / /

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TO MY BROTHERS

André, Andrew, Doug, and Dominic

Siyazi, Zabiwe

David, Aaron, Jairo, Tom

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EsiPongweni, 25 December 2006. FROM VIDEO TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

Saliva and dust. Writing about the body, I write about the voice. About the swivel of the foot to the percussive click of the tongue. The torso stretching and twisting to song.

I listen to the body *of* a voice, its weight, quality, and form. The stridence of the lead singer's throat. The resonant bassy response of his team. The piercing attack of a boastful interjection. Dental whistles. A mother's quivering ululation ringing out. Verbal art as performance. I listen to the body of a voice.

I hear the state of the body *in* the voice. Saliva wetting the sound. Breath expelled from heaving dancers having danced. *Ulaka*, moral anger, said to reside in the throat, audible in the vocal qualities of Zulu *ngoma* singing.

I notice the body *as* a voice. Uzowotha kick-stamping to the sound of his own dance name. "Val'inkunzi, Val'inkunzi, Vala, ji!" Zabiwe brushing his hand against his ear in improvised solo display. *Do you hear what I'm saying (with my dance)?*

I register that the voice is *of* a body that has personality and biography. Mlambo's aged vocal fry. Siyazi's poetic contemporary lyrics: "Hey, maggots, you who eat our father's children"; the shimmer of his hands as he begins to dance. Zabiwe's old-style signature head bob. Uzowotha's mammoth grace. I register the singularity of a voice.

I approach the voice as produced in relation with multiple other voices. The camaraderie of seated teammates vocally producing the soundtrack that supports and amplifies a dancer's solo. Mqubi competing against Mboneni, sequence by improvised sequence. Mqubi. Mboneni. Mqubi. Mboneni.

(Dust!) Whistles from their teammates, and from men in the crowd. Cheers from the throats of women. Mqubi's mothers and sisters calling out "He's from our house!" as he completes his final sequence. Deep in the crowd, a girl takes notice. But I will come to this.

I first met ngoma singer-dancers during a recording session at Down-Town Studios in Johannesburg, 1990. Siyazi Zulu and friends were recording a new Zulu traditional album featuring the concertina ace Msawetshitshi Zakwe. I listened in on the creative process in the control room, research that became *Sound of Africa: Making Music Zulu in a South African Studio* (Duke University Press, 2003). Siyazi told me his ngoma group sang and danced outside Jeppe men's hostel on the edge of the inner city on Sunday afternoons. Johnny Clegg (South Africa's Afro-rock celebrity) had learned from them, he said, and sometimes Clegg still came to dance with them. "By all means, you are welcome," he offered. "Come and see us." Times were precarious, dangerous, for Siyazi's dancers. I didn't often find them at their spot. But dotted around the hostel neighborhood, others were clapping, kicking, stamping, whistling, singing, and shouting out. Frequently TJ Lemon, whose photographs appear in this book, accompanied me. He photographed; I conversed, practicing isiZulu, and recorded in sound. (Later I turned to video.) Sometimes Siyazi met us there. For the long Easter weekend in 1991, he invited us to his home in the subward esiPongweni in the ward Uthuli lweZulu (Dust of the Zulu) of the Mchunu chiefdom in Msinga KwaZulu-Natal. I have been visiting ever since.

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For the pleasure of conversations that finessed the book’s ideas, I thank my colleagues and our graduate students at Duke and at the institutions that have hosted me during the years in which this project evolved. Steven Feld, Yvette Christiansë, Paul Berliner, Chris Nelson, Jairo Moreno, Nomi Dave, Kelley Tatro, Tommy DeFrantz, Anne-Maria Makhulu, Charlie Piot, and Ken Wissoker collectively distilled the book’s argument. Eve Mothibe, Matthew Somoroff, Serkan Yolacan, and Patrick Galbraith attended to editorial details across the manuscript. Veit Erlmann, David Samuels, Tom Porcello, Ana Maria Ochoa, Priscilla Wald, Laura Edwards, Esther Gabara, Ellen Gray, Amanda Minks, Alessandra Ciucci, Jennifer Woodruff, Jessica Wood, Michael Kramer, Steve Waksman, Jeremy Smith, Creina Alcock, and Helen Meintjes disciplined various chapters while spurring me on. Angela Impey, Tim Taylor, Andrew Boule, and Jocelyne Guilbault were frank sounding boards for various aspects of the project. Working alongside Kristina Jacobsen, Darren Mueller, Spencer Orey, Jay Hammond, Joella Bitter, and Julia Meintjes has shaped my thinking over the course of writing.

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EsiPongweni, 25 December 2007. FROM VIDEO TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR.



/ / / INTRODUCTION

The Politics of Participation in Ngoma Song and Dance

A summer afternoon in Msinga, wind. The rasping against the ear. The wrapping around the body. The covering of the voice. The lift and billowing of dust.

For migrant Zulu men in rural KwaZulu-Natal and Johannesburg, ngoma performance is a form of participatory politics with regard to community life, while it offers a way of being in the world. Imagine the politics: Mboneni, curtailed in a moment of improvised dare. Uzowotha dancing, and nothing is spoken. Zabiwe slicing through Siyazi's dance that day. Mdo strutting, calling out praises, struggling this year against the virus. Spindly Sono replacing his father, now gone. Notice ways of being: boys parroting the dancers, and mothers exhorting their sons. Zabiwe singing with the eloquence of men. Ntibane trumping the moves of his friend. The elders advising, admonishing, blessing. The granny crisscrossing the dance floor, crisscrossing, crisscrossing, as the wind blows.

Ways of being and ngoma's politics of participation are embedded in histories of violent encounter and its mediation. Late apartheid fomented Zulu ethnic nationalism and with this, notions of Zulu men as warriors. The performative features of Zulu warriorhood—singing and dancing—captivated the global media covering South Africa's struggle. But African men as singing, dancing, drumming figures also lie at the heart of a much longer history. To colonials and Afrikaner nationalists for whom African aesthetics were impenetrable, African men's performances stood as the very index of excess—of body over mind, rhythm over melody, sound over logos. Derided as ex-

pendable and irrational, Africans were exploited, their bodies appropriated for imperial and nationalistic projects that were impossible without a labor force. Colonials and white nationalists used their depictions of African performances to justify their politics of dehumanization in the interests of their imperial, entrepreneurial, and nation-building projects, whether in the 1890s or 1980s. At the same time, Zulu men's performances have circulated globally as representations of frenzied, sometimes formidable warriorhood to acclaim on stage and screen, in print and sound, from the earliest travel accounts through the struggle to overcome apartheid.¹ *Dust of the Zulu* investigates the legacy in ngoma of this brutal control of African men's bodies with its twinned and double-edged celebration of performed ferocity.

In contrast to the ahistorical representation of the warrior-dancer, and in relation with it, postapartheid ngoma exposes the temporality of men's bravado. Vulnerability presses in at the edges. The dancer as warrior is at once a worker, and what happens when wage labor fails a man? In times of conflict and epidemic, when the warrior-worker falters, how does he redress his unbecoming? (A wavering voice, a waning song, the bellow of a sacrificial ox.) On another day, in another register, the warrior is sung into public as commodity culture. In the search for professional breaks, for sponsorship and new relationships, in dreams of elsewhere, in the noise and spillage of mediated desires, warrior-workers articulate aspirations and the futures aspiration shapes.

Ngoma dancers play in the space/time between vulnerability and aspiration, in an enduring relation with the history of violent encounter. In this space/time, ngoma's warrior politics hover between the easy instrumentalization of the arts and their relegation to mere expression, between the enactment of violence and the pleasures of artfully rendering form. Ngoma rides the tension, finding its eloquence by pushing at the limits where the question of violence as performance is excited.

In a world in which dancers encounter violence, live and manage it, fear and suffer it, violence becomes a theme enunciated by the singing, dancing body. That violence, rendered into an aesthetic, has entwined injurious forms. Periodized through South Africa's history and enacted in the present, experiences of violence are carried in bodies and voices, and so also are positions reflecting upon it, and the will to speak back to it or with it. Less a genre to be culturally contextualized than an embodied practice—crafted, subsumed through a lived history, enacted, and naturalized as affective, ngoma aesthetics are inextricably linked to violent politics.² Ngoma performance

can be a means of witnessing, an assertion, and a sense of potential sung and danced. It is the finesse of politics and the force of aesthetics coproduced through violence. I will expand on this key point and explore it ethnographically once the dancers are singing and dancing and their home is on the page.

The Place of Conflict

The singer-dancers call the area around the town of Keates Drift in the magisterial district of Msinga in the province of KwaZulu-Natal home, *ekhaya*. Msinga has long served as a labor reservoir for industrializing South Africa. One of the first areas declared an African reserve (in 1849) by the British administrators of the Natal colony, it has, in short, always been a place of state neglect.³ Mining and other industrial concerns depended on droves of migrant laborers from rural southern Africa, including Msinga. Through the twentieth century, these labor dynamics as well as encroaching agricultural enterprise produced dry and rugged Msinga as overcrowded, overgrazed, and underdeveloped. Homesteads depended on men's mobility (and later, also on women seeking urban employment) while competition for sparse local resources rendered families economically impoverished, and sometimes it fueled tensions among them.

Also important to ngoma's story—to the way its aesthetics are also its politics—is Msinga's history as a long-standing zone of conflict. Once a buffer between Afrikaner settlers encroaching from the west, British colonials from the south, and the Swazi kingdom pressing down from the north, eruptions of violence at sites of encounter occurred through the nineteenth into the early twentieth century when South Africa became a union (1910). The Anglo-Zulu wars (1879–96) passed through the area, and in part were waged on the land, engaging men of the local chiefdoms as well as chiefdoms that subsequently migrated south into the area. The global media spectacularized these wars, but they were by no means the only altercations with colonials. (Later altercations included those between rival chiefdoms in Zululand, fomented by the British.) Through the twentieth century's national struggles, first to establish the colony as an independent union, then an apartheid state, and later for liberation and democracy, Msinga remained a zone of conflict. Continuing local competition for resources intersected with deadly national political differences and with policies that increasingly curtailed access to land and property. The history and politics of Msinga's labor migration is also its history of conflict.⁴

After late apartheid's ravaging violence (especially through the 1980s)

in and around this Zulu-identified area, Msinga entered the postapartheid era aligned with the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party. This would be of little consequence to Zabiwe, Siyazi, Mboneni, Mqubi, and many other ngoma participants, except that national politics impinges upon their lives. First, in the transitional period (1990–94), national struggles continued to be waged on the ground through the bodies of men and women in their communities. Second, as the new state failed to come to grips with an epidemic raging through the land, young bodies, especially those in underresourced communities, bore the burden of the state’s inaction, as did their social networks. Third, rewards from the new African National Congress–led state that would begin to rectify apartheid’s inequalities trickled down erratically to rural KwaZulu-Natal. At the same time, faced with the challenge of shifting from pariah nation to full participant in a global neoliberal economy, state institutions and parastatal and commercial enterprises shed labor and slashed wages, rendering young bodies redundant. While their forebears had rushed in multitudes to seek prosperity in mines and factories, Bheki, Mbusiseni, Mphiliseni, Mbongiseni, Bafo, Bafana, Sicelo, Phumlani, Philani, and their friends were sent scurrying into the informal economy or scuttling from the city to stay at home.

Msinga, home, ekhaya, is 99 percent African, 99 percent rural and isiZulu speaking (Cousins and Hornby 2009). It falls under a municipal districting system and under traditional jurisdiction, which consists of six chiefdoms, each divided into wards (sing. *isigodi*, pl. *izigodi*) and subwards (sing. *isihosha* or *umhlathi*, pl. *izihosha* or *imihlathi*).⁵ The district of the Mchunu chiefdom includes about sixteen wards, including Uthuli lweZulu, which is a large ward containing five subwards.⁶ The ngoma team representing the subward of esi-Pongweni is the focus of this study.

Msinga’s population is young, as is South Africa’s overall. The settlement’s size is relatively stable now, with more women than men living in the area as a consequence of migrant labor. At least double the number of people and livestock live on the land than it can support (AFRA Newsletter 14, in “All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016). Households rely on multiple sources of income: small-scale farming (including livestock) for consumption and sale, earnings from agricultural labor nearby or from migrant labor in the cities and industrial areas, and any other small-scale or temporary options that present themselves, such as driving taxis. Illegal activities like marijuana growing and gun running provide income for some. Commerce is sparse. For many families, welfare and social support grants from the state are essential.⁷



KwaZulu-Natal with the Msinga Local Municipality highlighted.

Msinga is the fourth poorest out of 227 local municipalities in South Africa, with 86 percent of the population living below a lower bound poverty line (Noble et al. 2014).⁸ Unemployment in Uthuli lweZulu lies at 69 percent.⁹ Households struggle against daunting odds. Vulnerability presses in from the edges.

The Warrior Dance of the Migrant Laborer

“The Zulu nation is a nation of proud warriors,” proclaims the opening blurb on the jacket of the first LP release of *Umzansi Zulu Dancers*, an internationally circulated product of Gallo Record Company. *Umzansi Zulu Dancers* (sometimes styled *Mzansi Zulu Dancers*, sometimes just *Umzansi*) is a pro-



Married women outside the supermarket, Keates Drift, 24 December 1992.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

fessional group led by Siyazi Zulu that draws its membership from three community teams. “Their tradition of song and dance goes back to the sixteenth century. When the warriors returned home victorious from war, they would be greeted by the War Lord, their families and the whole community in wild celebrations of song, dance, cheering and screaming. This is where the tradition of Zulu song and dance began” (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 1988). In a description of the group at the National Arts Festival sixteen years later: “In a high-energy performance of traditional Zulu dances they embody the spirit of the victorious warrior, the respect of the tribe for its elders, and the joy of the wedding couple with voice, melodies and dynamic moves” (“Dance around Grahamstown” 2005). From Mandla Thembu, faxed from London prior to his arrival in Johannesburg: “Dear Siyazi, I am not expecting to see any unfit warriors with big stomachs when I come to South Africa. Any one who is not prepared to train hard and rehearse will not come on the tour.”¹⁰ From crossover/Afro-rock musician Johnny Clegg introducing dancers for a featured spot in his show in Johannesburg: “[This is] umzansi war dancing!”¹¹

Like the Idoma, Asante, Samburu, and Masaai, the Zulu are considered

ancient warriors in the global circulation of cultural commodities (Kasfir 2007).¹² Reports of the fighting that beset the colony of Natal and its environs over the course of the nineteenth century mythologized the Zulu warrior figure and the grand Zulu army. However, the Zulu army never was a standing army. It was “a part-time militia” integral to “the labour system through which the king exercised power and authority over all his subjects, both male and female, in the interests of the state” (Laband 2009, 172). Furthermore, the celebrated Zulu military system—expansive, highly organized, and formidable—that operated by means of age-grade regiments (*amabutho*, sing. *ibutho*) operated in its highly developed form only from the reign of Shaka, in the 1820s, until the battles of Isandlwana and Rorkes Drift (Laband 2009) that ended the Anglo-Zulu War and left the Zulu defeated in 1879. When Shaka was consolidating his power in the 1820s, he expanded his dominion and cultivated the loyalty of those he conquered by raiding rivals who refused him loyalty and tribute, then redistributing a portion of the booty to loyal chiefs and to his *amabutho*. Loyal chiefs and warriors alike had an incentive to go to war (Laband 2009).¹³ In this bloody 1820s milieu, Zulu warriorhood gained its long-standing reputation.¹⁴

Irrespective of the inaccuracies and ahistoricity circulating through Umzansi Zulu Dancers’ emblematic promotional texts, singer-dancers take pleasure and draw value from a past they feel they embody and through which they play. When Siyazi applies for nonprofit organization status for Umzansi Zulu Dancers, they compose a preamble to their constitution championing Zulu tradition tied to Shaka. “ZULU Tradition and Culture stood the test of time through staunchness of such custodians like UMnumzane ZULU [Mr. Siyazi Zulu] who proudly follow the Nation building endeavours that KING SHAKA gained notoriety for across the Southern African subcontinent. With this resilient foundation still visible and proudly preserved, UMnumzane ZULU only serves as a catalyst towards the preservation, expression and future growth of rich ZULU Traditional routines.”¹⁵

Not only do ngoma dancers trace an epic military lineage in performance, but they identify historic Zulu warriors as also being performers who sang and danced in preparation for battle. But ngoma’s twentieth-century history in fact is distinct from an epic history of Zulu war. It is a migrant men’s singing and dancing tradition, a recreational aesthetic form, and a style of competitive display.

Teams compete while intrateam competition also fuels the drama. Each team is organized hierarchically with leadership offices held by elected or ap-

pointed figures responsible for the management of the team, and elders overseeing the team. The organization is akin to that of a soccer team, a regiment, a choir, or in local terms a span of oxen.¹⁶

These general features are shared across a complex of hierarchically organized competitive song and dance practices found through southern and southeastern Africa from South Africa to Uganda and Tanzania (Argyle 1991; Gunderson and Barz 2000; Janzen 2000; Perman 2010; Pier 2015; Ranger 1975; Tracey 1952). Solo call and choral response singing as well as dancing that features frontal kicks and stamps, and choreographed line dancing are musical characteristics likely to be found in most ngoma.¹⁷ While there are historical and regional differences in style and shifts in value, one could claim that there is an ngoma belt that spans the region, wherein teams exhibit similar colonial influences in their organization and likely mutual influence through contact via labor migration to South Africa's mines.

The specifically Zulu ngoma tradition grew out of a system of migrant labor developed by South African state and mining interests through the twentieth century. This includes a history of staged tribal dancing associated with sites of work.¹⁸ School holidays in the early 1970s: an outing to a mine on the Witwatersrand. We protect ourselves under sun hats in this outdoor arena. The earth is red. Teams of men file in, sing and dance, file out over the red. With flouncy ostrich feathers, flapping animal skins, laced and sculpted drums, the Swazi, Shangaan, Pedi, Sotho, and Zulu each offer variation.

Now Zulu ngoma is danced at homecoming times, especially at Christmas, in rural KwaZulu-Natal and seasonally on Sunday afternoons at working and work-seeking men's hostels in the cities of Johannesburg and Durban. These decrepit hostels—men's dormitories—house a number of teams, each of which usually consists of migrant homeboys from one rural ward in KwaZulu-Natal.¹⁹ George Goch hostel traditionally houses the team I follow, though some singer-dancers live in the inner city, in backyards or hostels in the townships, or in Jeppe (officially named Wolhuter) hostel close to George Goch.

There are three Zulu ngoma substyles: *umzansi*, *isishameni*, and *isiBhaca*.²⁰ Each style combines choreographed group work and individual improvisation and is danced to call-and-response singing and clapping. The *umzansi* style adds a marching bass drum. Each style features the kick, though its execution differs stylistically. The *umzansi* dancers kick highest and straightest and land hardest, often following a phrase-final kick with a flamboyant backward fall. The *isishameni* style is boring, Zanaso says, for "there's no pain."



Umzansi team from Bergville, George Goch hostel, Johannesburg, 1992.
PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



IsiBhaca team, Vosloorus, 1992. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

From the outside, the umzansi style is seemingly the most warriorlike, the most ferocious or aggressive, and so also appears as the most traditional of the three styles. The team I follow dances in the umzansi style.²¹

The history specific to umzansi dancing, as recounted by Clegg, “is that it originated around Ndwedwe and Mapumulo and the Umvoti area [of KwaZulu-Natal], was taken up by the migrant workers around Durban and became very popular at the organized dance competitions that were held around the end of each year. The dance later became an integral part of the migrant worker culture in Johannesburg and more especially at Wemmer Hostel, which is a famous hostel at the bottom of Rissik Street” (1982, 64). The team that spawned today’s umzansi groups was established at George Goch hostel in 1941 by the famed team captain named Kwini (that is, Queen Victoria). (It was one of the earliest teams in the city [Clegg 1982].) While today a multitude of isishameni teams exist, as do numerous isiBhaca teams, umzansi is practiced only in the wards of Uthuli lweZulu, Madulaneni, Galibasi, and Nxamalala within the Mchunu chiefdom of Msinga, and by dancers in Bergville 150 kilometers to the west. In Johannesburg, these dancers practice at the George Goch and Jeppe hostels, at Thokoza hostel in the township to the south, and sometimes at Diepkloof hostel in Soweto.

Ngoma’s Body

Zulu men’s body habitus, which is also a habitus of the voice, is cultivated playfully, socially, continuously through and around ngoma. Six-year-old Wunda Boy stands steady, watching for his turn with the bevy of boys playing at ngoma. Little Jabu is spinning about, legs and arms flailing in all directions. As he paces out his steps, he sounds out the core rhythm with palatal clicks. Next Wunda Boy jumps in. He mimicks choreography he has scrutinized at the dance arena. Rhythmic breathy rasps sound out his exertion and his counting on the pickup to each danced kick and on each stamp that follows. His mother eyes him as she passes over the kitchen threshold. “Wunda!” she calls out in praise, with a peal of laughter. Three boys are playing at ngoma behind the house. One taps out the drum pattern with two twisted metal shards on a crumpled metal sheet. Another waits his turn, sitting on his haunches. Mpi solos. “Hwa!” he exhales on each stamp. “Hwa! . . . Hwa!”

As well as being expected to learn masculine comportment, performance styles, and perseverance, boys learn the social value of courage and bravado. They are taught through boisterous play to toughen up, incrementally accumulating the composure needed to deal well in a world of hard knocks. They



Mbusiseni Zulu preparing his ngoma costume, assisted by his son, esiPongweni, 25 December 2009. PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

begin to bear the signs of training on their bodies, whether through scars or physique. Stick fighting, a martial skill gathered in boyhood especially while herding, is one such preparation for manhood, as it is for ngoma dancing.²²

Ngoma itself socializes participants, entrains bodies, and finely crafts expressivity in ways envisaged to cultivate admirable men, participants in a community.²³ In particular, the organizing tension between competition and camaraderie calls oppositional personal qualities into action: aggression and intimacy, courage and fear. It shares this organizing principle with other martial arts and competitive sports in which practitioners self-present as fighters (Wacquant 2004); the give and take of punishment in stick fighting (Carton and Morrell 2012); deception and solidarity mediated by ambiguity in capoeira (Lewis 1992); hostility and trust in independent professional wrestling (Smith 2014); tough love and intimacy in a boxing ring (Trimbur 2013). When exploited skillfully, these creative tensions produce fine performances and cultivate intense sociality among participants whose working bodies all bear the signs of their effort, carrying their experience of the past. This soci-



Boys play at stick fighting, esiPongweni, 22 December 2013.

PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

ality grows out of shared body aesthetics and practices. It hinges on collaborative evaluation of entrained bodies, and on building relations through competitive training.

As men and women shape local senses of manhood through ngoma practice, and men and boys perform their gender experiences for themselves and to others by means of ngoma, they directly encounter democratic South Africa's most pressing struggles.²⁴ The threat of injury in a gun-ridden world (a world that is postapartheid, but not postconflict), the danger of physical weakness in the context of a raging epidemic, and the commodification of singing, dancing, and drumming or of tribalized ferocity in a deindustrializing market all impinge upon athletic and sung performance.

These oppressive dynamics are produced by a particular historical complex. Apartheid (in conjunction with the neoliberal trajectory of democratic South Africa) has of course left its deep imprint on emerging registers of manhood across race, class, and ethnicity. For one, South African manhood is entangled with the ethics and experiences of violence (Morrell 2001),

whether in the form of a “struggle masculinity” (Xaba 2001), in an attachment to a culture of guns (Cock 2001), in forceful processes of labor dispute resolution (Donham 2011; Moodie 1992), or in widespread domestic abuse and a high national incidence of rape (Nuttall 2009). For rural and migrant men, the bravado of hard labor and mining (Coplan 1994; Moodie 1994; Morris 2008), the dehumanizing living conditions that accompany apartheid’s labor system, and the practices of social allegiance that grow out of it (Epprecht 2002; Magubane 2002; Ramphele 2000) have been formative masculine experiences. In conjunction with the bravado that labor migration cultivates, so too is manliness enhanced by breadwinning (Donham 2011; Hunter 2010; Maré 1993; Waetjen 2004). When wage-earning capacities diminish and the kinship ties upon which domestic reproduction depend are unsettled (White 2010), ways of being a responsible man are placed under duress. Additionally, the pressures brought to bear on sexual and gendered social practices by HIV/AIDS (exacerbated by a neglectful state) trouble traditional African masculine forms and ideas about the body (Campbell 1992, 2001; Decoteau 2013; Gibson and Hardon 2005; Macheke and Campbell 1998; Maharaj 2001).²⁵ New versions of the same long-standing brutalities render African bodies excessive and expendable, marginalized as they are in a zone of increasing global neglect (Ferguson 2006; Piot 2010).

Ngoma’s Voice

In these circumstances, what does it mean to speak with a dancing body? What does it mean to have a voice? *Listen to my dance*, Zabiwe says by cupping his ear as he begins his solo sequence. *Can you hear what I’m saying?* A dancer is not speechless if he holds some control over his own representation (Feld 1996a), and if he is heard (Koestenbaum 1993).²⁶ A “speechless emissary,” on the other hand, such as a depiction of a Zulu warrior, or the figure of the refugee upon which humanitarian interventions hinge, is represented without name or narrative, and without dialogic participation in the form in which she is presented (Malkki 1997, 223). (In the case Malkki analyzes, the refugee figure is a photographed woman, though representation in image does not in itself make one speechless.) Having a voice, whatever the medium, is having “the ability to establish narrative authority over one’s own circumstances and future, and also, the ability to claim an audience” (Malkki 1997, 242).

Being heard requires that a voice be materially instantiated. A material voice carries the past, including the contours of biography (Feld 1996b):

Mlambo's aged vocal fry; Kusakusa's drumming replacing his dance when metal replaces part of his thigh bone. (It was a homecoming taxi crash.) Voice is also a site of pleasure and intimacy (Goldin-Perschbacher 2007; Gray 2013) that is gendered (Koestenbaum 1993) and raced (Eidsheim 2009; Fisher 2016; Ochoa Gautier 2014): a girl eyes Mqubi's style; dancers sing Zulu close harmony, their bodies pressed together in a tightly seated cluster in the heat. The voice is mindful and affective, constituted through and instantiated in historically specific, culturally inflected social relationships. Genre's organizing principles set interpretive frames through which the voice is heard, evaluated, and answered (Bauman 1984; Goffman 1959).

In the case of ngoma, a team consists of ten or more singer-dancers and usually at least double that. An elected *igoso* or *ukaputeni* (captain) and *iphini* (vice captain) are responsible for the training, discipline, song selection, choreography, and leadership of the team. A disciplinary adviser, *iphoyisa* (police), mediates between dancers and the leadership when necessary and assists with management of the team. Elders advise the *igoso* and *iphini* and give their blessings to the team at performance events. These elders are community leaders, including former team leaders and members.

An umzansi dance event begins with an entry dance in file formation called *ifolo* (follow, as oxen in a yoke). Thereafter the performance is usually broken up into two sets. The opening and closing sections of a set always involve the whole team: the beginning is sung and danced with line choreography for the whole group (*isipani*). The line dance consists of a slower part followed by a faster section. In the line dance the team members carry their fighting sticks, wooden rods about the size of broomsticks that are also used in the martial art of stick fighting and that are carried by men ceremonially, at times for protection, and on occasion as masculine accoutrement. The set closes similarly, followed by collective song.

The flow and sequence of the subsections within the middle of a set are determined by the *igoso*, who directs the performance with a shrill whistle, a whip (also used to herd cattle), sung signals for call-and-response singing, and sung-spoken directives for group chanting. These middle subsections consist of self-choreographed subgroups of two (*isidabulo*) to ten peers competing against one another (sometimes called *jabane*) and individual competition (*one-one*). The only instrument played is a marching bass drum, usually played by two drummers at once. When teams combine for an event, so too do their drummers. The rest of ngoma's sound is produced by dancing and singing bodies, using ngoma's principles and its living, changing structure to speak.²⁷

Just as ngoma participants consider the moving body and the singing voice to be able to speak, so too do they consider the role of the dancer to include singing.²⁸ BaSotho migrant performers who talk of a “song sung with the feet” (Coplan 1994, 323) seem to do likewise. Metaphorizing body and voice in terms of each other is a practice tied to specific singer-dancer traditions, as well as a widespread one variously deployed with poetic or analytic goals in mind. For example, in the heat of *tumbuka* ritual, sound and image are mutually convertible, participants in effect “seeing the beat and hearing the dance” to effect healing (Matonga 2010, 283). Song articulated as “danced speech” similarly metaphorizes the relationship (Lomax 1968, 222).²⁹

While the singing and dancing practice of ngoma posits that the body and voice bear equivalent value, are metaphorically interchangeable, and are joined in an ineffaceable relationship, it also reveals discrepancies and disjunctures between them. The dancing body is more than (or not only, or not always) a resonator for the sung or spoken voice. In turn, the voice is not always or only the body made audible or articulate. What the sung or spoken voice has to say in its text and texture is often but not necessarily the same as that which the body performs.³⁰

Three points follow. First, as vocalizing implicates breath, the internal vocal mechanisms, and supporting musculature, material instantiations of a sung or spoken voice are embodied in the course of vocalizing (Feld 1996b; Tatro 2014). Dancing as a mode of expression contributes another dimension to the embodied acoustic voice. Second, factoring the moving body into the concept of the voice is less an amplification than a complication of the idea. The body-voice is an expanded creative and material resource.³¹ Third, the techniques of producing a voice involve the manipulation of sound and kinetics as material, and the organizing of sociality as a set of musical relationships shaped by their history. It concerns the crafting of forms of representation in material. In this way, the material voice conjoins political and poetic projects at once.³²

The Force of Aesthetics

Whether dedicated performers, gripped fans, curious newcomers, or recoiling colonials, aesthetic force is presumably the reason why men’s song and dance has captured their attention. Striking performances that display technical virtuosity and unique imaginative instantiations of ngoma’s principles inspire engagement. By means of the character of individualized artistic expression in relation to the expression of others, ngoma has the capacity to

assert, question, dare, provoke, comment, joke, or narrate, and so to captivate, impress, move, or persuade its audiences. To notice the artistry in its specifics—to heed the detail of form—is to participate in the dancers' feelingful play and to understand its intricate politics.

When Zabiwe cups his ear in a danced request that his audience listen, what is he specifically going to say? The ideas of danced speech and songs sung with the feet point to the tensions between what song and dance can reference, and what is necessarily left opaque in heightened poetic forms and in sound and kinetics that pass by in time (and that are in part improvised). Whether in the register shifts upon which poetics rely to deepen a statement's meanings, or in the shift from vocalizing to body movement, or in the pragmatics of a poetic statement, the meaning of danced speech and songs sung with the feet points in multiple directions at once, making their significance more than (or different from) their appearance. Herein lies ngoma's expressive potential (Samuels 2004).³³ Indeed, the bonds of ngoma brotherhood are strengthened by sharing that which requires no articulation. Not only this—sometimes leaving things unsaid is essential to the maintenance of that camaraderie, while details danced out but unspoken, noticed and unremarked, can suggest alternative stories. Certainty felt in the deeply held gist of a poetic trope is fleeting and unarticulated (Friedrich 1991, 41–43). Rendering this feeling of grace (Bateson 1972) in a voice—a gist too deep to translate, but too diffuse to articulate—is the captivating craft of the trope.

With the poetic leeway aesthetic ambiguity offers, performers and their fans generate a robust feelingful sociality among themselves through playful improvisation (Fox 2004), whether in talk, song, gesture, or dance.³⁴ In the perfectly performed moment, socially shareable understanding is made available, and yet the experience of performing and listening also exceeds its collective dimension (Feld 2012).³⁵ Such ambiguities enable intimate encounters with difference, just as they enable pleasure. They enable life to go on without closure or fixity or certainty, and they ensure that the capacity to instrumentalize the arts toward political ends can never be contained or complete.

The fixity of aesthetic forms and of their significance is also disabled by technologies of mediation. The global culture industry depends on the capacity to unhook popular representations—the Zulu warrior—from the periodized violent histories from which they emerge and to circulate them in processes of schizophonic mimesis (Feld 1996a). As the gluttonous historical Zulu warrior figure devours alternative representations in cycles of

accumulating cultural feedback, ngoma dances between the heaping up of representations and the paring down of ideas represented, between possibilities for creative augmentation and for troubling diminution (Keil and Feld 1994). Whether the immediate reportage of struggle politics and the apartheid state's repressive actions, or the epic narrative of Zulu war stemming from nineteenth-century colonization, the history of the representation of Zulu violence is inseparable from ngoma's circulation.³⁶

Likewise, the affective silence of ngoma brotherhood—a form of aesthetic ambiguity—is intimately coupled with the positive valence of masculine toughness that ngoma renders into art. In other words, the silence of brotherhood is as much a quality that emerges out of mediations of violence as it is a quality that relies on grace (Bateson 1972).³⁷ Corporeality is “limned by violence” (Cohen and Weiss 2003, 4).

The body and voice are constituted in immediate dialogic improvisations that themselves draw from a repertoire of relationships near and far, contemporaneous and historical, imagined and remembered, material and elusive. This intercorporeality (Merleau-Ponty, via Fischer 2008; Weiss 1999) and its inflection into the voice as intervocality (Feld 2012) blend the experience of the body-voice in motion with the organization of the ngoma collective as a competitive practice and brotherhood. It blends the significance of the sound with its reshaping in the moment of sounding, gesture with its reshaping in the moment of moving. Singular voices carry within them multiple others, present and elsewhere. They emerge in dialogue with others and in relation to ways of being heard (Feld 2012).³⁸ In a competitive practice, distinctions among these voices are kept alive, disrupting the shared recognition of feeling by recognition of differences, defying closure to the communicative system and so always rendering new possibilities, new inflections to ways of relating in an intertwined world (Fischer 2008). Materiality, history, and textuality are inseparable, as are the prereflective and reflective (Cohen and Weiss 2003; Weiss 2003). Ngoma's artful vocalizing and moving tell of performers' relationships to one another, to the communities they articulate as their own, and to the worlds with which those communities intersect. Their vocalizing and moving likewise tell of the histories from which dancers emerge, and the futures toward which they reach. Expressed in ways too deep to translate, too diffuse to articulate, dancing, Zabiwe cups his ear.

Aesthetics, then, gathers its persuasive power from the histories of conflict and the hard experience of migrant labor ngoma encompasses. In a narrative sense, it is an aesthetics about the forcefulness of violent encounter, compe-



Mboneni Zulu, esiPongweni, December 1991. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

tition, and struggle. It utilizes components of various military styles as a playful expressive resource. Military aesthetics incorporated into ngoma ambiguate ngoma's relationship to acts of violence, intensifying the performance. In a dramatic sense, military aesthetics heighten the forcefulness of ngoma's effect for an audience. The way that ngoma's body-voice carries histories likewise enhances ngoma's persuasion, while the links between experience in and out of the dance arena open the possibilities for one domain producing effects in the other. In this social sense, ngoma aesthetics has force in and upon the world. It has the potential to redirect action. Likewise, violence as itself a performance in the world that acts upon that world can enter ngoma by force, and it can dramatically reduce or inspire ngoma aesthetics. The mediation of conflict histories, as of ngoma, amplifies and extends the reach of both. Mediation and the potential to redirect action tie ngoma to politics. As an aesthetic that represents forcefulness and embodies forceful experiences, yet combines this with artful ambiguity and improvisational play, ngoma aes-

thetics offers a means to finesse the disruptions of violent politics. The force of aesthetics and the finesse of politics are coproduced through violence.

Registers of Representation

Many ngoma friends have multiple names in an elaborate and playful naming practice that marks multiple registers of their personality, relationships, place in life, and dance style. I add to this by substituting pseudonyms on occasion. Mostly, in the spirit of celebrating the singular artistry of individuals and circulating their reputations, I use names that belong to those I reference.

Just as names shift in feeling, form, and function, my text shifts in register from the evocative to the explanatory, the terse to the detailed, and the mimetic to the analytic. Usikhwishi raises the dust and draws the gaze of on-lookers when he takes to the floor. Usikhwishi, they call him, for he attracts the attention of women. “Usikhwishi!” chant his teammates, using his praise name to set up a groove for his solo. “Usikhwishi! Usikhwishi! Usikhwishi!” “Yeyi, Test-and-Pass!” friends salute him in the street, in fond remembrance of his reputation for scoring high with women in his youth.

In mimetic mode, extended passages in this text depict the flow and technique of improvisations. They contrast with imagistic bursts using short sentences and spare description. I think of this concision as equivalent to the flash of a screen shot, a fast cut, a snapshot; and as rhythm deployed in writing about dancers springing surprises, cutting, turning, holding a pose. Analytics interrupt the mimetic with reportage, interlocutors’ commentary, and historical and cultural frameworks. I also move among media, from words to photographs to series of screen shots. These moves represent a search for ways to convey the multimediated sensualness of ngoma, and to depict the details upon which analyses of singular performances hang. The creative challenge lies in how to reproduce a sense of flow and the energy of action on one hand, and the detail of body movement and sound in which dancers’ finesse is displayed on the other. My shifts within the text and among media aim to amplify ngoma’s kinetic poetics and support an ngoma analysis, given the challenges of precise description the performance practice presents. The screen shots and photographs therefore also shift between the mimetic and analytic, sometimes assisting as example, but mostly standing as commentary that keeps my analysis as a point of view.³⁹ I think of them, especially TJ Lemon’s, as ululations to ngoma dance. Lemon’s eye distinctively arrests dancers’ action while at once unleashing it.⁴⁰ His subjects are immersed in the moment and relating to the action of others, often off camera. Even



Nkululeko Dladla, esiPongweni, 26 December 2006.
FROM VIDEO TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR.

when he captures a full body, the action exceeds the photograph's frame: the dancer is on the move, his or her action incomplete. Color vibrancy (of the original images) intensifies the bursting action.⁴¹

Dance ethnographies that have variously turned to poetics, transcriptions, and single photographic images in reaching for the sensuality and aesthetic finesse of dancing inspire my experimentation. Hahn (2007) evokes through mimetic reference to the fan, central to the *nihon buyo* Japanese dance she addresses, enfolding poetically evoked scenes into the analytic text, pointing to feeling and atmosphere rather than illustrating danced form. Lewis (1992) replaces photographs with sketches of *capoeiristas* in performance. He brings attention to body stances through sparse line drawing. His lines are a form of editing, allowing an untrained viewer to look into body form that would be harder to see if only presented photographically. His sketches represent features of isolated frozen moments.⁴² Julie Taylor (1998) inserts motion onto the page by playing with a flip-book technique that animates a tango dance sequence in silhouette figures on the edge of each book leaf. Rahaim (2012), writing about body gestures that accompany and interpret Hindustani singing, combines a series of visual techniques to illustrate gestures of head, face, arm, hand, and fingers. Sequential line diagrams isolate key details; photographs overlaid with graphic arrows index motions; and screen shots coupled with musical notation tie particular movements to the sounds they interpret.

My screen shots are intended minimally as clarifying illustrations that redress the inadequacies of my language to convey an accurate image of a dancer in motion, let alone of dancers moving in response to one another. The sequences point to the action I seek to evoke and analyze. Maximally the screen shots, themselves terse evocations of the flow of movement, stand as a counterpoint to my written representation. Sequences beginning and ending the book are excerpted from a performance of 26 December 2006.⁴³

Before the thunderstorm a gusty wind, *isikhwishi*, gathers all in its path.

The Finesse of Politics

The figure of the warrior-dancer mediates the relationship between aesthetics (a way of imagining the world) and contemporaneous politics (a way of acting upon it).⁴⁴ The relationships among the temporality of violence, its mediated circulation and feedback, the nonfixity that ambiguous aesthetics allows, and the timing of ngoma sound and motion produce an intense sociality around and through ngoma's artfully moving body-voice. Against African colonial history and apartheid and with a view toward the

apparent futures neoliberalism presupposes, this sociality is a noisy presence (the reclamation and redirection of the warriors' danced "frenzy" and sung "babble"), a refusal of the charge of victimhood and of relegation to the past. It is a presence mediated by an experience of fighting as culture rendered through hard work as art.

The trajectories that render young African bodies vulnerable postapartheid stretch back through apartheid, through South African state building over the course of the twentieth century, through colonialism in southern Africa. Forms of violence are present throughout. Inattention to African disease and radically unequal health facilities are components of colonialism and apartheid as they are in the new era. Radical unemployment began in the 1970s. Struggles to earn and to secure wages were present alongside industrialization through the twentieth century, and the struggle to subsist prior to this forced men and women to enter the cash economy of wage labor. But what might be particular to the new moment of promise when all citizens are at last given a voice?

In preparing for a collaborative presentation with Siyazi Zulu at Stanford University in 2001, I selected a series of photographs that I thought would give the audience a South African political context for the dancing of which they were to see an excerpt. "No politics," said Siyazi. He worried Americans would take the dancers for ideologues, frenzied into violent action through political rallies at home. He wanted to represent his art and their ngoma tradition as Zulu culture at its best. "Why make it more complicated?" he asked.

A few years later, we were translating Inkatha Freedom Party songs I had recorded in 1992 at the height of the urban violence during the negotiation period leading up to South Africa's transitional democratic government. We listened. "The police sergeant was present when we sliced off the balls of the leader [of our opponent the ANC, Mandela]," sang the protestors. Siyazi hesitated: why did I want these songs documented in English? I wanted readers to understand the broader context in which ngoma dancers were living at that distressful time, that dangerous time if you were a hostel-dwelling Zulu-identified person, that time of intense struggle against the violences of everyday life. He worried that readers would imagine that ngoma dancers sang such songs, songs that were both dirty and radical, though he acknowledged that he understood that the overseas market wanted to hear about politics (so we should include some information). "All right," he said, skeptically, about the rally songs, "but write carefully so people can understand nicely."⁴⁵

Siyazi and I mean something different when we speak of politics. He does

not want his art instrumentalized in the service of the agenda of a political party or an activist group. He does not want his art to be reduced to a political act. He favors standing in the service of the ideas of heritage, tradition, and Zulu culture, ideals and values he wants to promote for what they promise professionally and commercially in the neoliberal order and because he believes in them as the affective and moral core that can sustain his community. In this, he mirrors the current perspectives of many marginalized people in the global South, perspectives developed in synchrony with UNESCO's preservationist policies and discourse on cultural rights. Siyazi's politics recognizes his and others' intentionality as people knowingly grasping for control over their own histories and representation. Politics, for Siyazi, is not the equivalent of resistance. It requires that one enter into contested, usually unequal, and sometimes compromising spaces in search of ways to dialogue and collaborate. Such mediation is a means toward collective self-actualization. I, on the other hand, take politics as the asymmetrical order of the everyday that necessarily produces forms of struggle.

To get at the historical contingencies of politics and so also at the temporality of violence, the chapters that follow loosely periodize South Africa's postapartheid narrative. After the first two chapters introduce ngoma's key stylistic and social principles, chapters 3 and 4 cover the transitional period (1990–94); chapter 5 spans the mid-1980s through the mid-1990s; chapters 6 and 7 focus on the mid-1990s through the early millennium; and chapter 8 focuses on the remaining years.

Starting close in by detailing ngoma's form (that is, by attending to singular moments of artistry), I profile ngoma masculinity as it is represented in a key aesthetic value, *isigqi* (power) in chapter 1, and, in a related affect, *ulaka* (anger) in chapter 2. These chapters focus on how the ngoma body-voice summarizes a history of work. Next I fill in and flesh out these themes as they are brought to bear in motion, in time: that is, in moments of performance that have efficacy in the world of social relationships from which they arise. Incrementally zooming out from ngoma's form into the world around it, chapters 3 and 4 consider the safety of the body, along with the issue's underbelly, namely the necessary management of danger for migrant workers in violent times. While chapter 3 focuses on intracommunal struggles and their tense resolution, chapter 4 connects local danger and bravado to the network of national violence that dramatically charged the notions of masculine Zuluness during South Africa's transitional period. Chapter 5 considers the effects at home of the celebration of the warrior body on the entertainment



Zama Zulu, Vusimuzi Zulu, Mdo Mdlalose, Mboneni Zulu, esiPongweni,
25 December 1992. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

circuit by narrating the relationship of renowned musician Johnny Clegg to ngoma at Keates Drift. Histories of local violence and national struggle are imbricated in ngoma's international successes, as are the will for better living and dancers' cosmopolitan forms of aspiration, while the racialized global discourse of South African aesthetics enters ngoma play at home.

If prior chapters highlight the strengths and agility of the ngoma body, chapter 6 addresses the struggles weakening bodies provoke by considering how individuals and the team manage well-being and stigma in the context of the AIDS epidemic. Chapters 7 and 8 likewise consider the daunting circumstances of precarious neglect, searching for the pressure points where management might also be read as a form of resistance and hope, a masculine resolve to sustain becoming. Chapter 7 follows Umzansi Zulu Dancers into a recording studio where competitive masculine sociality sustains a contemporary presence even while aesthetic and acoustic accommodations compromise their self-representation of ngoma. In chapter 8, dancers engage and redirect cultural brokers' nostalgic Zulu warrior figures in their efforts to hold open the possibility of an expansive future. I conclude with thoughts on the pleasures of ngoma performance as they are entwined with Zulu mascu-

line virtuosity, anger as affect, and the violent politics of South African history. Participants struggle for respectable manhood in a postapartheid South Africa that is still unfolding, while improvising in an art form that thrives on the tension.

Dancers work to keep ngoma valued in public culture as a living aesthetic with a deep past. Sometimes they are expedient. But most of the time, singing and dancing is more than a political act or a representation of cultural identity, even in the moments in which it plays out in the world in these terms. To ngoma dancers, ngoma does not always say something. Sometimes it is a way of being in the world that exceeds explanation. Sometimes it is just playing.

Dancers are preparing indoors and in the yard, dressing in their uniforms, securing cowbells to their belts, sipping Coke or beer or hot stuff, smoking, stoking up, warming up, hanging together. Age-mates practice their collectively choreographed sequences behind the house. Cowbells jangle as they stretch and raise their legs half-high to stamp. “Shhhha!” under the jangle and clang. “Shhha!” they say together softly, sibilance rushing into the vowel as they raise their legs slightly to stamp lightly. “Shha!” representing the energy they will use in performance, the power that will rain down through the kicking, stamping leg.



Siqhandolo Mzila, esiPongweni, 27 December 2015. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Flirting and courting (*ukushela*), Keates Drift, 24 December 2003.
PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

1 / / / TURNING TO BE KISSED

Praise, Flirtation, and the Work of Men

25 December 2002, esiPongweni

Early morning, little Fikisile rushes into her grandmother's room squealing, "It's Christmas! Today" — a breathy flutter of anticipation — "we'll go to ngoma and see *malume*, Uncle Mbusiseni, dancing!"

27 December 2007, esiPongweni

Reviewing my video, Mbusiseni advises me on filming ngoma. "Shoot all the dancers," says the twenty-something-year-old. "When one falls, turn to shoot the next. When there is choreography, get all the dancers in the shot. You need a microphone: the drum is too soft. When we sing, shoot the spectators. Choose the most beautiful ones. We dancers want to see them on the video. The *amatshitshi*, *amaqhikiza*, and the *owelile*: zoom them."

Zoom in on the young girls wearing a cloth around their waists, slit at the side on the thigh. Zoom in on the teenagers who layer towels around their waists, drape blue cloaks from their shoulders, and hang decorated sashes down their backs. Also film the Christian girls dressed in town fashion. We dancers want to see them (watching us).

The Gendered Expression of Team Song

25 December 1999, esiPongweni

Family and friends clustering under their gleaming umbrellas ring the barren arena.¹ Neighbors and visitors squeeze into the shade of skinny thorn trees.



Mdo Mdlalose leads the team, esiPongweni, 25 December 1992.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

Men gather for a view from the boulders. Mingling on this Christmas afternoon, they wait.²

In dance-marches a line of forty singing men. After skirting the inner circumference in salutation, they perform the *ifolo*. Coordinating their stick work and footwork (a centipede, more than a line of individuals), they launch a cycle of thunderous kicks and stamps to a slow, thudding beat. Power lies in their steady collective action. Ululations glisten. Next drummers and dancers ratchet up the energy with a faster-paced line dance till they shuffle into a cluster, sit on the ground in the arena's center back, and sing.

"We saw, we saw the star," calls Siyazi, in the role of igoso (captain), beginning with an old song about dancers from Germiston, an industrial town near Johannesburg. The song derides this famous team, whose emblem was a star.

"We saw the star—we saw the little boys from Germiston. My heart is white, so white [pure]!" respond his men in melody.³

Having barely set the groove, Siyazi switches gears. Improvising, he builds the narrative flow of this subsection of the set while introducing variation in his references, weaving a story about men's experiences of the world over a

consistent beat. In this textual fragment, the team asks young girls for directions in a rural area. Local knowledge says that, in deference, young girls will reply honestly to a stranger's request. Men unknown to you, on the other hand, might be deceptive. (Italics represent the chorus here and subsequently.)

I hear, I hear there

I hear

I hear

I hear; we are pointing over there

We are asking for directions, young girls.

Ngoma's narratives arise from a male perspective. Snatched from longer songs and strung together, of significance is each song's story and how they are combined, presenting a multifaceted image of masculine experience. What that image draws from the worlds of men while at once making men's experience through aesthetic engagement is my focus here. This articulation of ngoma's manliness in a changing world involves the dialogics of performing and performativity, as it does the two-way tracking of narration and feeling, producing the sense of being an ngoma man always also in a state of becoming.⁴

Next Siyazi leads this team into the world of humor and idiom, commenting on homestead construction, a central concern of responsible men. They sing a whole lyric text straight through, once.

Hey, hammerhead bird,

Hey, hammerhead bird,

Hey, hammerhead

Hey, hammerhead

Hey, hammerhead, what do you use to build your nests to be like peoples' houses?

This animal is so clever for it builds its nests like people's houses.

We say [aghast] "Wow!" Hey, hammerhead!

Siyazi begins again:

Hey, hammerhead bird, hey hammerhead

Hey, hammerhead

But after the first line, he diverts the team to matters of love and propriety, and to men's prerogative over women.

There is a girl I won't tell anyone [the people] about.

It's Sunday tomorrow . . . Monday tomorrow

They sing through the days of the week until the boy can at last meet the beautiful girl, for oh, he is sure she is the one for him. Siyazi cuts the song before its punch line, leaving unspoken the fathers', brothers', friends', and teammates' warning to men from other areas not to meddle with the new girlfriend of one of their youths:

Don't trouble yourself, for we have taken her

Don't trouble yourself. . . .

From singing about courting practices, Siyazi shifts to taunt those who think they can beat them at ngoma dancing. (Sweetness and hard-hitting poetics animate each other.) They boastfully invite strangers inside, for they are not afraid of challengers. The dancers repeat Siyazi's lines:

Help yourself, my child, help yourself [Do your own style]

Do your own style, my child; do your own style

Do your own style, my child; do your own style

Hey, person who comes asking for ngoma, we've got ngoma

Please tell them, come inside; we want to see them.

They can be better or worse [than those we've already beaten]; we'll still
beat them.

Ji eya eya eya ji eya! [vocables]

Ji eya eya eya ji eya!

Do your own style, my child; do your own style

We are too hot these days, way too hot!

[We're] hot!

We are too hot these days, way too hot!

[We're] hot!

Like the flame of a cigarette lighter, we are too hot!

[We're] hot!

Leading the team through these songs, Siyazi builds drama in preparation for the individual virtuosity of competitive one-on-one dancing, framing the awaited moment with lyrics pertaining to manhood. In the process of drawing narratives from the worlds through which dancers move, their performance comes to act upon that world.

First, manhood is subject to scrutiny and celebration via ngoma, for danc-

ing is a display around which courting and flirtation take place. Adult women ululate, whether in exhortation, agreement, competition, proclamation, encouragement, anticipation, or praise, at once sharing in a mature women's world and marking their relationships to others. Teenagers flock to watch. When dancers mingle with the crowd during breaks and after the event, the admired and the admiring, the flirtatious and the shy have a socially sanctioned opportunity to interact. Girlfriends send their sisters and best friends to present gifts to men they are courting. They string sashes and towels decorated with cigarettes, candy, and matches around the necks and waists of those they admire. Fafa's brother receives a gift from Fafa's girlfriend's sisters, for his wife has run away.

Expert dancers enjoy high prestige among women. Looking pretty is not enough; you need to persuade through your dancing action, Siyazi says. A mother must exclaim, "I wish that one were my son," as he executes an improvisatory turn; "the ladies" watch before they say, "I want that *insizwa* [young man]!" Through the expressive, bodily work of the dancer-artist and the craft of immersion, many generate seductive power. "I'm leaving you, my husband!" teases a woman loudly, admiring the dancing in progress. "We'll see you before you sleep!" calls another, praising their moves.

Through evaluation, ngoma masculinity is drawn out of its theatrical performance frame into the everyday. As an opportunity for gendered play, ngoma performance is also a site of invitation into that frame. With the license afforded her by her age, Ma Soshangani Zulu, Mboneni's granny, hobble-dances with her walking stick, weaving around the dancers and ululating. She continues all afternoon. "Zize kubani? Ezakwabani? [Who are the girls coming to see (visit)? From where are they coming?]" she inserts rhythmically between her trills and over the ngoma singing. She plays with phrases conventionally asked of girls coming to represent their courting sister at a boy's homestead. Here she draws on a ritual practice to enact an objective of the ngoma event: affirmative social exchanges about courting and social reproduction of the homestead.

Later Siyazi spots a girl checking out the dancers as he leads the team. "Girl, choose your boyfriend please. The room is full of boys. Girl, where is your boyfriend?" he inserts into the stream of his narrative, improvising in song.

Ngoma opens up public space for flirtation. Men and women, young and old, dancers and audience members alike engage the process. The dance event is framed by additional opportunities to self-present in parade and to interact.⁵



Watching ngoma, Muden, 27 December 2010. PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

It is 24 December, a sweltering afternoon for the annual promenade along the tar road at Keates Drift. Mbusiseni, his father Siyazi, their male friends, and fellow acquaintances are home for Christmas. Everyone is home, almost. Even Mbusiseni's suburban uncle might arrive with his Jack Daniels and canvas camping chair. Young women who work in the cities and towns will come home too, and urban relatives will visit. Everyone arrives, less because it is Christmas than because it is leave time, time to knock off from work. The construction industry closes mid-December till the New Year. Businesses shut. Schools are out. The sun shines. The roads out of Johannesburg down to the coast clog with speeding vehicles hitched with bicycles and boats, and with minivan taxis loaded with people body to body, heading for home in KwaZulu.

On 24 December, everyone mingles along the tar road cutting through Keates Drift. Men, mostly, mill around the bottle (liquor) stores; women sell tomatoes, cling peaches, and decorative aprons along the road; taxis zoom in from Johannesburg in the north and Durban in the south, and spill out their passengers home at last. Jubilations, whistles. Bags and packets tumble out; crates are shoved and lifted. Youths saunter. Girls parade. Such finery. A tinsel spray sparkles in her hair. Friends home from the city find one another.

Women visit together. Overloaded *bakkies* (trucks) transport shoppers up and down the hill. Kids move in bands. A drunkard creates a ruckus. Music blares from a shiny car. “Be off with you!” shouts a mother, wielding her furled umbrella as she charges toward the bevy of boys enclosing her teenage daughter.

The twenty-fourth of December is a public courting day. Down the way, dancer age-mates Mbusiseni, Philani, and Oli cluster their umbrellas tightly, shading their proceedings with the girl Philani is wooing. Mbusiseni moves in to hold the handle of her old FM radio, her parading prop. Of course she won’t let her radio go. The youths sweet talk her. Surrounded, she turns her face away from her suitor. (If only she would turn as if to be kissed!) He wants just one string of her beads, wrested from her neck, a sign of consent to his flirtations. Ha!

Age-mates dressed in new matching outfits parade as a team, checking out the scene in their rayon leopard skin trousers. Girls, sisters and friends, cloaked in Msinga blue, checkered long socks overlaid with beads, rubber canning rings, and shiny watch straps ringing their calves all the way up to their knees. Hairstyles. Headdresses. Young feminine hips and buttocks filled out further with towels wrapped under knee-length skirts, backs of knees to be glimpsed. Christian girls decked out in fitting town dresses. A dude in sunglasses. Girls eye youths.

Uthuli lweZulu’s men have organized themselves, en masse, this year, 2011. They gather at the dancing spot outside Zama’s house. Forty-eight men have dressed alike, collared striped shirts and tan trousers topping spotless white sneakers. “Beautiful,” teenaged Welile said of the men of her place, “all All Stars [sneakers] and Brentwoods [trousers].” *Amajita* (dudes), they head down the dust road to the tar road. Khetho drives his minivan taxi at a walking pace. From the bridge at the bottom end of the bustle and hubbub of the promenading community, the men split into two files on either side of the road. Khetho drives between the two lines, tooting his taxi horn all the way, holding the road open, while the men parade with the gait of gentlemen in single file. Celebratory commotion erupts. Mothers and wives’ ululations ripple up the road like a sound caught on fire. Girls turn to watch. Some call the names of their friends. “Yeyi, Pretty [a dancer’s nickname]!” “Weh, son of Mdlalose!” Young *amajita* step out of the line and into the road for a quick flurry of a dance, a kick, a comic boast, then shoot back to their place in line. At the top of the road, past the grocery, the bottle stores, and the tea room, past the shoe factory outlet that closed, the turnoff to the clinic and St. John’s



Sweet talking,
Keates Drift
main road, 24
December 2015.
PHOTOGRAPH
BY TJ LEMON.

Apostolic Church, past the gas pump, the taxi stand, and the vendors, the men end their parade. Another community's team of immaculate lookalikes arrives to promenade. Stiff competition. Dudes check out dudes. Some greet. More celebratory commotion.

Mpitshongo Zulu is a wizened man. When it is his turn among the elders to address the dancers at the close of the Christmas afternoon set, 1996, he thanks them for their beautiful performance, for making such a nice event. "I'd like everyone from here to get a girlfriend. They must love you in this area. Today I thank you very much. If someone is treating you badly, let me know, so I can remind him that I don't have a child to be hit and I don't have a child to be killed. I've only got men for the ladies, to make love with the

girls, and to be loved by all people. You know, at the bottle store yesterday, I heard people exclaiming, ‘Those beautiful amajita! I wonder where they belong?’ Even I was caught off guard, for I didn’t think I knew amajita as beautiful as they. Then someone recognized a young man from esiPongweni, our community. I myself realized they must be from esiPongweni because they were so much of a unit. Next year, please continue with what I saw this year. Start as soon as you arrive home from Johannesburg.”

In his closing appreciation and advisory speech, Mpitshongo echoes the history that ties courting practices to migrant labor, which allowed men through the twentieth century to accumulate the authority, cash, and commodities that enable customary marriage and homesteading. Likewise, his speech connects ngoma camaraderie and migrant labor with courting, love, and domestic reproduction and with the problem of violence. His speech describes the space/time of migrant labor: now, with everyone home, is the prime time for parties, rites of passage, and communal events.

The Work of Ngoma Men

If ngoma narrates a gendered story, it also references the urban life of migrant workers and their endeavors to garner the standing and income that facilitates courting. “The plane I’ve bought for my darling is coming,” sing Umzansi Zulu Dancers. “Darling, you will get all the promises. . . . Hurry back [home] in the afternoon, darling. I’m going to get things set up for you / You’ll get your stove this afternoon / not a coal one, darling, but an electric one . . . the temperature setting will be just right,” they joke.⁶ While dancers’ employment patterns have changed over the last three decades, working to earn for a household remains a core principle of responsible manhood.

Bangindawo Loli Zulu, captain of Uthuli lweZulu’s team from 1975 to 1987, spent his whole working life at a single company—Anglo American Mining Corporation—and retired with a pension in 1994. Initially a cleaner, he eventually attained a supervisory position. No one is employed this steadily anymore. Undergirding the generational and biographical shifts is a process of industrial rationalization rooted in South Africa’s recession of the mid-1970s. In the decades since, labor has become increasingly casual (Makhulu 2015).

A few mature men have never entered the formal sector. Zanaso Dladla, who danced from 1972 until about 1985, assisted his father in his *spaza* (shop) inside George Goch hostel, when he arrived in the city in 1969. Soon he embarked on his own enterprise selling booze upstairs. Upon his father’s retire-

ment, he took over the spaza, selling necessities like soap, cigarettes, bread, and hot meals. He begins cooking at 4 AM, opens at 5:30 AM to catch the early workers, and closes at 11 PM, seven days a week.

Most mature men were once salaried, whether in long-term positions or shifting employment, though few have retained their erstwhile stability to the present. Mashiya Dladla arrived at age sixteen to work in Johannesburg General Hospital's kitchen, kosher section. In about 1982 he joined the cleaning staff at the University of Witwatersrand. After twenty years of steady service, he encountered a new trial: the university outsourced the cleaning. The staff could retain their positions by joining this new employer, which offered reduced benefits. The union balked. Unrest around and on the campus ensued, including some intimidation, Mashiya said. He went to work protected. His gun spilled out of his locker. It dropped onto the trigger. It fired. He moved to another of the company's sites, two long taxi rides away. He struggled with illness on and off. The company failed to renew his contract, so he collected unemployment for six months, now that it was the new South Africa. High and dry after that, he returned home to help his wife cultivate vegetables, irrigation supplied by a nongovernmental organization (NGO) having expanded the gardening possibilities.

Siyazi arrived in iGoli, City of Gold, with Mashiya. For some years he was employed full time, slowly moving up by moving on. He washed dishes for R26 per month, cleaned offices for a better salary (R150 per month), worked in a timber factory, then collected trash as a driver's assistant for Wastetek. When the French discovered ngoma in the later 1980s, Siyazi toured with Umzansi Zulu Dancers and released an album that sold well. He glimpsed a brightening future—were he to work at it. He dumped Wastetek to become an arts professional, performing at festivals and recording. Just as the availability of jobs diminished drastically, the group's acclaim waned. He trained for three months with a security firm, thereafter intermittently guarding buildings, usually at night. Now with NGOs and the government interested in culture, he strives to live through his artistry again.

Zama Zulu worked as a chef at the Johannesburg General Hospital, kosher section, until Anglo American Corporation (now Anglo American PSI), which had employed his father, Loli, took him into their kitchen. Eventually the corporation outsourced its catering. Zama and friends didn't trust their pensions would remain secure. They resigned and invested their pensions in their own start-up catering venture in the townships.

Vusimuzi Zulu worked night security, downtown Johannesburg, till *amatsotsi* (robbers) jumped him as he walked back to the hostel in June 2002. He lost his life.

Ntambo Zulu owns a registered minivan taxi, operated by Khetho Zulu.

Zabiwe Makhanya cuts plastic at the Vodacom cell phone chip factory. Some dancers work under him. When temporary openings arise, he helps esiPongweni friends secure them. The factory closed where Bheki Mdlalose worked, so he returned home to grow vegetables. (No one received the pensions they thought were coming their way.) Denga, Khetho, and Simanga Zulu welded in a crate-building factory, as did Falakhe Zulu until he was shot at home outside the bottle store. (Some say he stole a girlfriend.) At last Mkhumbuleni Zulu could afford to complete his bride wealth payments and host a wedding, so beautiful, so plentiful, so full of celebration. Soon thereafter he was laid off.

When five young men of the new millennium's generation trekked to Johannesburg for the first time in 2002, none found employment for at least two years, and none expected this to change in the near future. A private company had offered a security course at their high school, but even this turned out to be a dead end, for the certification was bogus. The youths shared a hostel room. At 6:30 AM they traipsed to factories in case work was available. At 12:30 PM they returned to the hostel for tea. They unpacked goods from trucks at R40 a day when possible; they frequented the hot spots for pickup as casual workers. They took temporary positions when they found them: for two months Mbusiseni Zulu worked in a plastic factory, three months in Falakhe's crate-building factory. Stan and Neli Dladla worked in their father Zanaso's hostel spaza until they secured driver's licenses and taxi work, like Bhekiseni Ndlovu and Khethukuthula Dladla. Nkululeko Dladla attends a gas pump near a major taxi rank.

Mbusiseni studied some bookkeeping, as he dreamed of working in a bank. He tried to train for the metropolitan police, but there were too many other prospective cadets to get a chance. He tested and interviewed successfully for a two-year temporary teacher's post at home, but the position never materialized. Slowly he edged himself into taxi work, driving from Soweto to the city. Eventually he moved from George Goch hostel to Soweto, renting a room with his girlfriend and their son. He drives seven days a week, 5:50 AM–8 PM, to keep his spot in the driver's seat. It will be nice when he can marry, but first he needs to contribute to *ilobolo* (bride wealth).⁷ Mbusiseni drives. He drives and drives.

The new generation "does not know the nice of the world," Siyazi says.



Jeppe (Wolhuter) hostel courtyard, Johannesburg, 19 July 2009.
PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

Manhood in the Labor Reserve

A long history of migrant labor shapes the profile of masculinity that ngoma cultivates. From nineteenth-century colonization to the present, migrant labor patterns and conflict have been inextricably entwined, as has Msinga's development as a rural homesteading area in conjunction with the development of mining and industrial interests on the Witwatersrand.

Keates Drift, just south of the Thukela River, lies in an area that was designated as an African location or reserve when the British administrators of the Natal colony first set arid land aside as communal African land. From 1846 on, they moved thousands of Africans into the reserves, securing the remainder of the colony for the Crown and commercial agriculture.⁸ In 1849, the area just north of the Thukela River was designated as a magisterial district within Zululand, and named Msinga. The current, larger Msinga area spanning the Thukela River was later amalgamated into a single magisterial district. Although not incorporated into apartheid's KwaZulu homeland (or Bantustan), Msinga has been subjugated in various forms of Bantu reserve for 140 years.⁹ It has lain within an area governed by indirect rule through the system of chiefs and headmen but subject to taxation and segregationist policies in a state that gave Africans no vote. Just as magisterial powers solidly overlaid customary systems when the Union of South Africa replaced

the colonies (1910), so eventually did poor municipal district systems. All these competitive dynamics produced sporadic conflict and difficult circumstances for developing the homestead that signals a successful man.

In Msinga as an African reserve, men and their families struggled to secure and maintain land for subsistence. With African settlements expanding and commercial agriculture encroaching, as well as drought, rinderpest, east coast fever transmitted to cattle by ticks, and locust scourges, to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency in farming and cattle raising was challenging (McClendon 2009).¹⁰ Increasingly untenable rural subsistence compelled men to supplement their homesteads' productivity with cash earnings from migrant labor (Lambert 2009).

The discovery of gold in the 1880s first produced a surge in migration to the Witwatersrand; by 1910 "an estimated 80 percent of adult males in Zululand entered migrancy to support their rural families," half of whom found work in the mines (La Hausse de Lalouvière 2009, 258). With a booming mining industry ensuring employment on the Witwatersrand and constrained possibilities at home, migration became a standard practice for Msinga's men, a male rite of passage throughout the twentieth century.¹¹

The impact of migrancy upon men's lives was intensified by apartheid's brutalities of the 1950s through the 1970s, when the state implemented and violently enforced policies restricting movement, land ownership, and employment. In particular, forced resettlement policies of the 1960s and 1970s sent families from urban areas to the reserves, putting pressures on already overcrowded land. At the same time, the state outlawed farm labor tenancy and forcibly removed laborers and their families to Msinga.¹² These dynamics exacerbated Msinga families' impoverishment. In turn, cattle theft escalated, eroding homesteads' core symbolic and material wealth, and inciting retribution (Bonner and Ndimba 2009).¹³ At the same time as men struggled for subsistence at home, employment opportunities for migrant laborers dwindled. When South Africa's mid-1970s recession hit, opportunities dropped dramatically, signaling a shift from a system in which labor shortages had been the norm for decades to casual labor and joblessness (Hunter 2010).¹⁴

The pressures of the 1980s and early 1990s were formidable but predictable, emerging from apartheid's ruthless programs of the preceding three decades. During this time, intensifying labor politics—a core component of the African National Congress (ANC)-led liberation struggle—further tested Zulu migrant men's principles of respectability. On the Witwatersrand, they faced growing pressure from labor unions organizing stayaways (lockouts)

and strikes, which increasingly produced violence (Donham 2011; Hunter 2010). Behind labor volatility lay nationalist politics that challenged many Zulu men's sensibility and impinged upon their lives.

While unions pressed laborers into activism, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, as Inkatha Freedom Party leader, and King Goodwill Zwelethini, Zulu nation figurehead, called on Zulu men to work. Working steadfastly was a core quality of manhood. While ANC-aligned labor unions called strikes, Inkatha argued that these union practices countered men's responsibility as breadwinners (Maré 1993; Waetjen and Maré 2001). Additionally, by preaching obedience and patriarchal order as essential Zulu values (Waetjen and Maré 2001), politicians and their supporters left little room for men to be properly Zulu without following the terms laid out by the leadership.

(Mashiya the cleaner reiterates to me that he is a hard worker. The scuffling on the university campus in response to outsourced cleaning services is trouble, he says. His twins must be educated, his house building completed.)

As Zulu nationalist rhetoric grew and the liberation struggle spilled into the streets, the hostels fell into disarray. The rhetoric of ethnic difference transformed these multiethnic living quarters into Zulu-identified barracks.¹⁵ Migrant Zulu men were squeezed by the pressures of both their city life and rural homes (Bonner and Ndimba 2009), by the pressures of being proper men and the dangers this had come to entail.

(George Goch hostel is not the disciplined place it used to be, when everyone worked and lived together nicely, Zanaso says, even though there was apartheid. "See the litter now, the decrepitude. See that bullet hole over there.")

In the new millennium, it is a challenge to accumulate the authority of proper Zulu men without knowing "the nice of the world." To reach maturity, men must negotiate the discrepancies between the lingering hegemonic idea of Zulu manhood promoted by Zulu nationalist discourse and its seeming unattainability. Ngoma improvisation participates in this process. "The plane I have bought for my darling, the electric stove, and the watch are coming, my darling."

The Masculine Affect of Team Performance

When a captain leading ngoma teams in song weaves fragments together that touch on the bravado of dancers, love and relationships with women, working, commodities, city life, and domestic reproduction, he sings out from the context of migrancy, struggle, and cultural nationalism set in a history

of apartheid, more than a century of wage labor, and homemaking hard won against brutal colonial interests. Changing perspectives provide a narrative resource, but masculinity in ngoma is not only representational. Ngoma cultivates a sense of masculinity in the vocalizing, moving body. Dancers collectively and individually work on this affect progressively through performance.

Siyazi is a celebrated dancer, composer, and choreographer. He is a master at sweetness and timing. As a team leader, he exploits a range of musical resources to build drama; this prepares the scenario that allows the solo dancer to so inhabit the moment that he can produce and feel a sense of total consolidation dancing against other men. As Siyazi says, “As an individual dancer, you have to be so focused, so in the experience of your body moving in sync with the sound, that you aren’t thinking, you are simply and wholly doing. You and the sound are one.” Building drama collectively within the group is also important, for it sets up a tension between the spirit of the team and eruptions of competitive individual expression within it.

In addition to the ideas he consolidates into a single narrative flow, Siyazi’s fast-paced song truncations produce a seamless musical groove. The compatible pitch contours, tempos, and rhythms of the songs he selects give the performance an underlying formal coherence, while the sonic character of each individual number adds interest by introducing subtle variations in the ongoing motion and feeling. Siyazi manipulates this narrative and sonic flow to set the stage for the climactic solo dancing. He generates the effect by incrementally increasing the length of song fragments by means of textual and melodic repetitions. His play with repetition becomes more elaborate as he proceeds through the songs. (He compares this to having to check that everything is running right before speeding off in a car.)

In the process of expanding the texts, he also gradually makes the musical texture denser. He plays with vocal timbres (from the low rasp of the chest register to a high nasal voice), with pauses, and with tempo changes. By leaving room for individual dancers to throw in exclamations, he invites their spontaneous overlapping calls as another color and layer in the overall sound. In this preparatory performance, Siyazi deliberately works up the tensions internal to the group structure. Sometimes he drives the team forward and provokes their competitive spirit. At other times he exacerbates the tension by pulling back the energy and frustrating the team.

25 December 1999, esiPongweni

Siyazi is standing in front of the seated cluster of dancers, getting ready to direct them in song. The dancers are raring to go.

“Phusha Khulukuthu! [Push! Get it going, Khulukuthu!]” calls out a dancer to Siyazi, using his dance name, Khulukuthu (Wild one).

“Forget it! Forget it!” shouts Mkhonzeni, the heavy comical dancer everyone enjoys watching. “I don’t know, my friend,” he as-if challenges any of his team mates in Zulu, “but you’re going to [have to] run away [if you dance against me]!”

“Phusha Mankofu!” urges someone from the back of the group, addressing Siyazi by his grandfather’s name, while another whistles through his teeth, piercing the cacophony of the dancers talking among themselves.

Then Siyazi sing-shouts the name of a distinguishing feature that identifies the area to which the team belongs and brings the attention of the dancers together again: “Moliva! [Mooi River!]” he announces stridently at the top of his throat register, drawing out the [o] while he pumps the air with his right forearm as if he’s cranking up a machine. He glides downward in pitch until he has expelled his breath.

“Washiywa! [You have been surpassed!]” blurt out all the dancers in an aggressive bass response directed at anyone who might want to challenge them.

“Kuyinja kuyini! [You are like a dog!]” Siyazi declaims to their opponents.

“Kuyinja kuyini!” reiterates the team.

“Biki biki biki biki!” After us, there is almost nothing left, Siyazi is exclaiming.¹⁶

“Biki biki biki biki!” they respond, increasing the tempo and descending in pitch while simultaneously knocking their right fists into the palms of their left hands to the rhythm of their vocables. They’re getting themselves fired up to dance individually while declaring their superiority to challengers from elsewhere.

“Ububhalakaxa!” shouts out Mdo, referring to Siyazi by another of his names.

“Phusha Khulukuthu!” urges Zabiwe, overlapping with Mdo.

Siyazi launches the team into call-and-response singing, the lyrics and narrative flow of which I have described above. Listen now to how these songs are performed sonically with accumulating drama and growing ten-

sion within the team. Siyazi's own involvement also becomes increasingly embodied even though he has yet to dance.

"We saw the star / we saw the little boys from Germiston / my heart is white, so white," he begins. He gestures lightly here and there, highlighting the start of a phrase with a lyrical twist of his forearm and a pointed forefinger. The choral response follows his call seamlessly and without overlap.

Three song fragments later, his neck veins begin to stand out, marking his increasing expressive intensity. With increasing vocal stridency and volume he begins to sing, "Hey, hammerhead bird, hey, hammerhead," deftly pointing at the singers on every phrase opening. Sometimes he doubles the rhythm of his pointing, subdividing the beat; sometimes he uses both hands.


On the next song, "There is a girl I want to tell everyone [the people] about," he overlaps his entries with the phrases of the chorus, making the sonic texture denser and intensifying the feeling. He begins the song with two gestural punches into the air. Then his arms hang at his sides; his head sways; his shoulders join in. On the last line he starts pointing again, now twice per phrase.

The final song—a long one with Siyazi and then the chorus repeating every line of text—locks into a sustained pulsating groove. Siyazi's attention is intently focused on the team seated at his feet. His body is taut. He dips his arm into the midst of the clustered team with his fingers stiff and his palms outstretched, as if he is scooping up the energy of the singers as his gesture imitates the melodic contour of his sung phrase. He inserts vocables, "*Ji eya eya eya ji eya*" (italics mark accented beats). His finger, hand, and arm movements matching the beats are now vigorous. Energy is building! He calls on the team to begin clapping. His shoulders, then also his torso follows his arm, hand, and finger movements.

Now clapping running eighth notes and sonically accenting the strong beats as Siyazi had done gesturally, the team repeats his vocable line.

A drummer punches the phrase end with a quick burst of activity, signaling his imminent entry.

A moment of reprieve from the tense density: solo and unaccompanied, Siyazi returns to his vocables, "*Ji eya eya eya ji eya*."

"*O ji eya eya eya ji eya*," repeats the chorus, clapping with their vocals again. This time the drummers add their pattern in the bass () doubling the time in relation to the original opening ifolo tempo. Drumming and clapping stop with the vocables, momentarily.

"Do your own style, my child; do your own style," sings Siyazi stridently.

“Do your own style, my child; do your own style,” they sing unaccompanied again.

“We are too hot these days, way too hot these days!” boasts Siyazi more loudly, as he begins rebuilding the sonic texture, taking the drama to even greater heights.

While the team reiterates his lines, he blows a punctuated line on his shrill metal whistle.

He sings the line again.

They sing, their bodies now swaying to the beat. Midphrase he whistles again. He steps back. He lifts his feet on the beats, bends his knees, leans back, and raises his arms to alert the drummers. On the pickup to the next phrase he cues the drummers. *“We are too hot these days, way too hot these days!”* lilt the chorus, cycling through the riff. Siyazi’s whole body is as if dancing as he conducts the broiling flow of the event.

Again the chorus adds its percussive clapping. They vary their pattern to mark the pickup and first beat of each measure of their phrase with accents. They add a counterpattern.

The layered groove pulses, the product of a hard drum at the bottom, the energy of the clapping, dense bass vocal phrases that soar and fall over the reiterated percussion patterns.

Suddenly Siyazi backs off, blowing his whistle repeatedly and gesturing vigorously. He cuts the drum, drops the sound.

“Phusha weMankofu!”

“Phusha weMankofu!” the dancers urge again, chomping at the bit as he signals them to stop. Some whistle through their teeth, slicing through the texture. (He deliberately frustrates them.)

He steps right up to the team, leans over them, frowns. His jugular bulges like a rock singer’s. He jabs at the air rhythmically, picking up the tempo, while he demands of them: “Where are you going to sharpen the horns of the bull? Where are you going?” His rhythmic, gritty incantation ends with an explosively aspirated [p^{hi}], “Uyaphi? [Where are you going?]”

G glaring, he freezes dead while the team reiterates his stock questions.

Pause, a breath long.

The master softens his face, his body, his gestures. A glimmer of a smile suggests itself. He slips back into the sweetness of song. “We are too hot these days!” he sings again in the slower tempo, swaying his head to the groove. From aggressive angles to graceful curves, fast-paced jabbing to twisting and turning, he directs the chorus to slip back into the singing groove.

“We are too hot, like the flame of a cigarette lighter; we are too hot!”

The sweetness is a fleeting suggestion, a creative trick that hardens the hit that will follow. Repeating the line, he again hardens his diction, vocal tone, and body. Midway through the choral response, he steps away from the team, straightens his stature, whistles, stretches his arms out, clenches his fists. Quickly he steps the kick pattern. Then in a flash on the pickup to the beat, he flicks arms, shudders his shoulders, releases his fists, winces intensely, points at the drummers with furious speed, and cues them in. Like lightning, he brings on the drum’s thunder.

The drummers beat their persistent rhythm. He blows his whistle again, pulling up his shoulders. Others punctuate the density with dental whistling. Harder, harder, tighter, tighter, Siyazi gestures to the drummers. He turns back to the singers: Sing! Sing! They clap at a snapping pace. They divide their singing into two overlapping call-and-response parts.

Still singing with the team, directing the drum, moving his body with the beat, he selects two dancers from the seated cluster. He turns to the drummers: tighten up. The drummers notch up their volume, tighten up their groove.

Gawulani, the first dancer, postures in front of the crowd while the singing continues. He mock-starts dancing, then freezes in his pose.

Kusakusa, the second dancer, takes center stage. He as-if nonchalantly dances a short sequence, then stands aside, watching for Gawulani’s opening provocation.

The scenario is set, the competition prepared.

The Sensory Immersion of One-One Competition

A sense of power crafted in performance and valued as an artistic principle can be harnessed into a process of obtaining forms of men’s political power (whether domestic or communal) through an affirmation of manliness. The verb “harnessed” makes the process of converting performance into forms of power seem strategic. I expect that this is sometimes the case for ngoma dancers. But most of the time, for most dancers, the process is more diffuse and nonlinear, operating largely as a sense of things rather than by articulated deliberation.¹⁷ An aesthetic principle—*isigqi*—helps to produce forms of masculine authority and beauty, and the institutions (like ngoma) that organize and confer these qualities upon Zulu men.

Isigqi, I’ve been told by musicians, is Zulu too deep to translate (Meintjes 2003, 261). It is often a deeply felt experience communicated nonverbally. At



Bhekiseni Ndlovu preparing to launch a kick, esiPongweni, 25 December 2003.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

other times, it is a loosely held “suggestiveness” (Friedrich 1991, 41–43) that seems too diffuse to articulate. It is housed in the body and expressed in stylized ways. Of the hardest hit, they say in Zulu, “Inesigqi! [It has power!]” The voiced palatal click *-gqi* is an aural icon of the thud of the foot hitting the ground after a high frontal kick, the lift of which enables energy to rain down into the stamp. After a preparatory sequence, the dancer’s right knee bends, his back arches, his head tilts back. His right arm extends over his head as his left leg stretches back to prepare for the pickup to the beat. The forward thrust of his left arm balances his taut, backwardly arching body. Then he rapidly swings his left leg forward and up, stretching his foot skyward. He curls his torso and shoots his right arm forward to parallel his left one, balancing the one-legged stance. Next his skyward foot thunders onto the ground on the beat, energy directed down and released, *gqi!* Dust flies. He throws away the movement with his hands, the recoil of his torso, a flick of his head, and he saunters off.

Isigqi also describes a sound or musical gesture. The hard sound of a bass drum is the essence of *isigqi*, whether in a dance arena or recording studio. In the studio, a sound engineer programs a bass sound for Umzansi Zulu

Dancers' songs. Siyazi takes the cassette home to listen. He brings it back for a remix; it is too muffled and booming. The onset of the strike lacks attack, while its decay is too slow. He wants a harder sound pushed to the foreground of the mix. He wants some of the bottom end cut and the middle frequencies boosted. That would give the sound a denser core and more of a hit.

At home, Mthatheni and Bheki drum for the dance. They thwack double-headed marching bass drums in a pattern between a dotted duple and triplet feel: short-long, short-long, left-right, right-left. Plastic heads on factory-made drums offer a sharper attack when beaten than skin-and-wood *isigubhu*. Each drummer repeats the short-long motive in a pattern of alternately louder and softer renditions. Mthatheni's softer hits overlay Bheki's harder ones, and vice versa. Together they create a pulsing stream of consistent energy and volume.

Isigqi describes that magic moment when a groove absolutely works because its components coordinate tightly. Exciting teamwork on a soccer field produces isigqi, as do drummers who make dense bass drum patterns sound in sequence like clockwork. A performance has isigqi when dancers, drummers, singers, and clappers meld sound and movement into an experience at once coherent and imminent, dense with internal tensions almost out of balance.

Isigqi is a sense of power experienced when all resources are momentarily consolidated. Rendering that virtuosity, danger, and potential is the height of artistry.

Key to delivering isigqi is the timing and tenor of sweetness, a preparatory rhetorical device that, through contrast, hardens the hit. In the soft gesture, the gentle roll of the dancer's torso, his turning hand, a playful somersault, there is sweetness.

In the plaintive upper male voice that tinges the dense bass chorus over which it floats, there is sweetness. A melodic line sung in the purer head register by a few young men parallels the contour sung grittily by the majority of the singer-dancers in their chest register.

Pretty poetics are "for nothing" really, just "for sweet" in a song, Siyazi says. He playfully turns the phrases of local idioms and metaphors when he composes. He recounts everyday stories to which people in the community will relate, in a style he anticipates they will enjoy. A humorous lyric is sweet: "The chicken was riding in a minivan taxi; it was going to the city of Durban with my sister. What [kind of behavior] is this? . . . Only a rooster pays his

bride price with such speed, only a rooster!” he admonishes young men who run away with their girlfriends.¹⁸

In multiple guises, sweetness heightens the drama of the dense, fast, and powerful move it precedes.

With *isigqi* worked on collectively, the dance now moves into a series of one-on-one challenges, which is considered the most exciting part of the event. On the whole, peers dance against one another. Usually the youngest, least experienced age group dances first, followed more or less in order of seniority and excellence. Younger dancers tend to display less sophistication and variation in their sequences, both in their kicking patterns and in the preparation for them, but as Clegg (1984, 67) remarks, beginners “go down very well with the crowd” even when they make comical mistakes. All dancers strive to feel and produce *isigqi* at whatever level of skill they have developed.

Young *Lwabadla uhlupho* (You’re a nuisance) steps out into the arena. He kicks every four beats, setting up a standard metric pattern to which he dances a sixteen-beat sequence. He prepares each kick and stamp with a right step forward, a right step back, a little left step forward, a left swing back into the arch position, flexing backward in order to prepare for the lift in his leg: the higher his reach in the kick, the more energy gathered for his stamp. In the final measure he doubles up with a midmeasure kick that allows him to shift from kicking with the left leg (the starter leg) to the right, upon which one must end. His arms follow classic *ngoma* formations. “*Lwabadla uhlupho! Lwabadla uhlupho!*” chant his teammates in cycles to support his dancing. He is young, “fresh,” as young admirers would say.

Later *Siyazi* takes center stage, and excitement bristles in the crowd. He moves into position, half crouching, arms stretching out forward at the ready, hands quivering like the shimmer of rattles. He wipes his forehead, demonstrating to his opponents how they will sweat if they compete against him. He does it again. Poised, crouching, his torso erect, he focuses his energies. He slaps his shoulder blades, gesturing that no competitor can touch him. Pause. He launches into a sequence. “*Khulukuthu! Khulukuthu!*” they chant for him.¹⁹

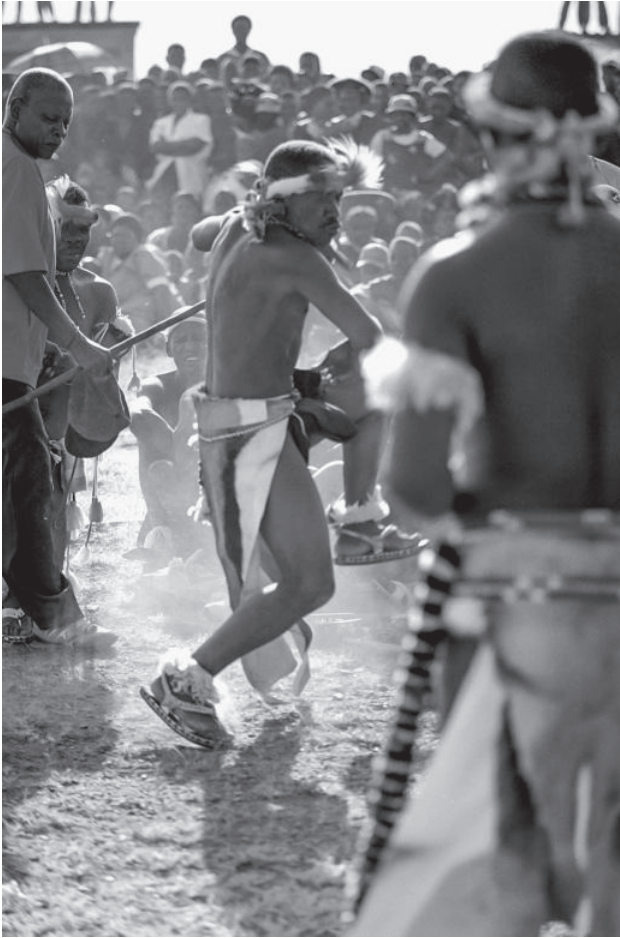
Siyazi’s dancing illustrates the dialogic relation between the kinetic body and the sound as two expressive elements that collectively compose the form.²⁰ Sound melds with kinetics into a single, dense experience, to produce *isigqi*. For *isigqi* to happen, all teammates have to mark the ends of a dancer’s sequences in a precisely coordinated consolidation of their efforts.

This is especially the case for the climactic finale. Matching the improvisational skills of someone like Siyazi requires intense focus of each team member to artfully and collectively adjust their sequences and clapping to coordinate with his changing dance patterns.

As with his manipulation of sweetness and timing in leading the team into the competition, as a solo dancer Siyazi shows masterful control of the form. After setting the basic four-beat dance sequence that ends with a kick and stamp, he plays with the length of the sequence. By expanding it by half, he opens space for invention in the kick preparations. For example, he drops onto his right knee and marks the eighth notes with left foot- and legwork (one of his trademark innovations) and with his arm movements. In another expanded sequence he somersaults and jumps. These expansions also affect the sonic dimension of the performance: by delaying the kick and stamp, he suppresses accents from the clapping chorus (and drummer) anticipated on the landings of his kicks. He also truncates sequences, rapidly firing kicks at the team. Three times he kicks in two-beat sequences, forcing rhythmic changes and elisions of his praise name. “Se Khulukuthu! Se Khulu! Khulukuthu! Se Khulukuthu!” they chant to match his truncated sequences. The last of these three kicks and stamps, the clap, and the chant all land together on a strong beat, with a drum accent. Now he shifts from kicking and stamping with his left foot to the right. A series of three right-foot kicks orchestrates the team. Each hit elicits an immediate offbeat exclamatory “ji!” — the mark of a master. After each, he waits an extra beat before initiating the next sequence. After the last hard hit and its “ji!” he slices the air with his forearms to cut off the performance.²¹ He saunters off.

Makhahlela bursts out of the crowd into the arena. She whirls around swinging her handbag in the air, marking herself as the wife of the great dancer. The shy Mashawomthakathi, Siyazi’s second wife, likewise ululates from her place among her friends.²²

Team performance cultivates collective affect by publicly voicing perspectives on manhood within the context of changing conditions of possibility for migrant men. Stoked by the collective vitality, solo dancers are prepared for sensory immersion in the experience of dancing at the time of their one-one competition. Setting intercorporeal and intervocal relationships in motion articulates the feeling of *isigqi* to masculine histories, experience, and sentiment. Most explicitly, this is articulated in the performance of dancers’ praise names that specify an individual’s experience.



Siyazi Zulu,
esiPongweni, 28
December 2000.
PHOTOGRAPH BY
TJ LEMON.

The Articulation of Zulu Masculinity in Praise Names

The voiced praise name plays an important role texturally, rhythmically, and structurally. It is a key expressive element that organizes the competition, integrating body movement of the one-one dance with the sonic form, integrating the participation of the group with the solo dancer, and integrating the long history of Zulu praise naming with ngoma.²³ Attentive praise-name performance enhances the possibilities that the dancer (and those watching him) will have a deeply felt experience of isigqi. As Johnny Clegg writes from his experience as an expert umzansi dancer, “In the end you don’t have to

do anything about the drums, you can think about your name, that's all you think about, how you are going to manipulate it" (1984, 67).

Each praise name when repeated in cycles displays its own sonic character, just as each dancer has his own dancing style. For example, "Uyawaz' amajongosi, ufundis' amajongosi" sounds rhythmically and phonemically different than "Khulukuthu." The musical potential of the distinctions in the spoken praise names is further exploited in the incantations. Such sonic variation is prompted by virtuosic dancing. For example, the brevity and spoken rhythm of Siyazi's dance name requires the prefixing of a vocable—"se"—to make the team's chanting fit the basic four-beat dance sequence. The chanters throw an accent on the vocable each time they utter it. However, when Siyazi surprises the team with too fast-paced a succession of kicks, they drop the prefix and shift the praise name's accent pattern. In addition, by cutting into their phrase structure to double up on his kicks, Siyazi forces them to drop part of his name. When he shifts into right leg kicks, they add the vocable "ji!"—the conventional response to an offbeat right foot kick—introducing a new accent pattern and new sound. The "ji!" also adds a phonemically dramatic contrast to the sound of his praise name. Unlike the single right kick of young Lwabadla uhlupho, Siyazi's right-kick repetitions invite three responses from the team, integrating the sonic attributes of the "ji!" into the texture. On a microlevel, then, Siyazi's carefully conceived footwork produces timbral and percussive variation in the vocals and adds to the rhythmic play.

Simply by getting up to dance, a man commands a change in the sound around him. By dancing alone, he also demands and gets his team's attention. The whole team chants his name. In a sense, good praise name performance indicates the persuasiveness of the dancer's rhetoric. An effective dancer induces the performance that supports, amplifies, and excites his affective power over the audience (Abrahams 1968; Bauman 1984). With strong support from his teammates, he gains more control over the audience and elicits more appreciation from them.

While praise names critically figure as a performative element in the competition, they also make connections to the wider social and artistic world. For one, dance names form part of a broader Zulu (in fact, Nguni) naming practice in which most individuals, and particularly men, hold multiple names.²⁴ Some praise names fall into disuse; others get used occasionally. Siyazi's friends most often address him as Khulukuthu. Likewise, men and women who are not family members usually refer to him by his dance name.

Like others, he has earned various praise names in past incidents, by his character, and through his skills: Skheshekheshe (Catch him catch him), for example, dates from his soccer days when he played left wing (the position for the team's fast runner) and regularly scored goals; Buklenyeklenye njengebululu (He who strikes like a cobra) derives from his dancing.

This multiplicity of informal praise names exists within the context of elaborate formal practices that designate a person's familial relationships (father of, daughter of, of the Zulu [or other] clan, etc.), and in the case of men, to their lineages. In addition to being saluted respectfully by the Zulu clan praise name Mageba, Siyazi is also sometimes addressed by his father's praise name, Makhalathi, or more frequently by his grandfather's name, Mankofu. (He looks like his grandfather.)

The art of name recitation reaches its heights in the praise poetry of important men (chiefs, for example), an elaborate Nguni genre with a deep history (Kunene 1976; Msimang 1980; Mzolo 1980; Opland 1984) from which genres of self-praise have sprung (Coplan 1994), as have styles of national political oratory (Brown 1998; Gunner 1986; Sitas 1994) and forms for women, children, and grand bulls (Gunner and Gwala 1992). Musicians who perform in the singer-songwriter genre called *maskanda* insert self-praise into their songs (Collins 2006–7; Davies 1994; Olsen 2001). On eight of Umzansi Zulu Dancers' nine CDs, Siyazi inserts incantations into his songs in keeping with the *maskanda* style from which he borrows; he strings together names that poetically describe his abilities with other names that position him within his lineage: "Hear the hissing of the snake who is preparing to strike, the son of Thu thwayisi [Two twice, his father's dance name], Makhalathi is my father."²⁵

Dance praise names do more than designate individual identities. They confer respect upon the named. In the case of ngoma, they do so within a social system that treats creative naming as a high poetic art and the acquisition of multiple names as a sign of accumulating status.

Praise names also comment on an individual's singularity in relation to larger groups, whether his age-mates, teammates, or family. Each dancer chooses his own, or his friends confer it upon him. Some names circulate among teams though no one within a team shares a name; occasionally they are passed down within families; many are unique. As lexical items, names mark multiple aspects of a man's person: his profession, biography, relationship to women, camaraderie with other men, personality, foibles, and affections. The multiple dimensions of nicknaming indicate how others view him.

Names speak of what others notice about an individual—and what they hold over him—while they also suggest features of identity that he claims as part of his own narrative.

By their semantic referents, praise names provide poetic links that connect dancing, quite directly, to a more specified sense of masculinity. (Though bodily posture, kinetics, and musical aesthetics can themselves articulate a sense of masculinity.) The stylistic features ngoma shares with stick fighting and with *amahubo* regimental performance make links, as does the practice of ngoma dancing simply through its ties to migrant labor. In addition to these nonlinguistic means of signification, language holds an important capacity to connect, by means of its pragmatics as well as its lexical poetics, the aesthetic experience of power to a sense of that power as masculine.

Praise names lay claim to power. They are hyperreal and indicate prowess. Some double the intensity of their effect by prefixing a “two”: Two pull (as strong as two drags on a joint), Two bullet, Thu philisi (Two pills), Thu filisi (Two feelings), Thu sayizi (Two sizes), Thu thwayisi (Two twice), Thu tawuzeni (Two thousand South African Rand), Thu thwalofu (Two twelve, that is, two magazines of a rifle that holds twelve bullets).²⁶

Others are challenges that thoroughly diminish the humanity and effectiveness of their opponents: Fusegi inja, khwishi! (Go away / fuck off, dog! Spit!), Inja msuthu (dog, Msuthu clan), Lwabadla uhlupho (You’re a nuisance), Fusegi, uyabheda (Be off with you, you’re making a mess), Uyaminza (You’re drowning), Uyasikizela (You’re off-balance), Shiya, hawu! (Forget it / Leave it / Get off it, hey!).

There are boasts about strength and authority: Dubula sayitsheni (Shoot the sergeant, that is, the dancer is so strong he can beat someone of higher rank), Dilika Nhlimbithwa (Shatter the mountain called Nhlimbithwa), Laduma lakhithika (Thunder is raining down), Uyawudla umuthi (You are drinking herbal potions, that is, medicines that enhance your potency).

Praise names flaunt dancers’ skills and efficiency: Siphuthuma indlu eshayo (We’re hurrying for the house is on fire, that is, I can finish up with you so quickly that I’ll still have time to extinguish the flames), Uyatshuza (You’re cutting through water, that is, diving in), Uyakuzwa ukuzwa? (Can you hear what he’s doing? Can you appreciate what he’s doing?).

Some warn potential opponents, present or not: Halala wethembeni? (What are you trusting? In other words, don’t think that you will win if you compete against me), Bhula sangoma (Consult an herbalist). One might consult an *isangoma* for protective medicines or to enhance one’s abilities.

Other references equate dancers with the strength, staying power, and aggression of bulls: Hlaba zahlangana (The bulls are goring one another), Nkunzi kayihlehli (The bull won't give up), Val'inkunzi (Block the bull). Cattle are iconic of wealth, bulls also of virility and strength; hence they are prime symbols of manhood. Cattle are exchanged in bride wealth payments and as fines in the settlement of local altercations; they are sacrificed in ritual. Metaphors about dancers as bulls are at once often also metaphors for men who are courting (*amasoka*).

References to militarism are commonplace: Shoot the sergeant, Two bullet, Two twelve, Usuthu (an infamous nineteenth-century Zulu regiment), Uyazizwa izinduku? (Can you hear my sticks?), Ungijikijela ngewisa (You're lashing out at me with a *knopkierie*). Men commonly carry a stick and a *knopkierie*—a round-headed club—ceremonially. When walking in rural areas they might carry one or both.

References to dancing skills usually refer simultaneously to ways with women: Wajika wawukhisi (You're turning to be kissed—a reference to being attractive to women, or a put-down of the relative softness of an opponent), Usikhwishi (A gusty wind that gathers everything up before a thunderstorm, a dancer who gathers up dust and draws everyone's gaze, a man who attracts the attention of women), Uyawazi amajongosi, ufundisa amajongosi (You know the youth; you're teaching the youth, that is, you stand as a role model for how to dance and how to get women).

Occasionally references mark relationships between men, for example through kinship and marriage: Sibali ndlelanhle (Brother-in-law must go well).

Dancing style, physical attributes, and personal character are also referenced: Khulukuthu (Unpredictable, wild thing), Sadla isiwula (A person who hits and breaks everything in his path, who like a fool seems not to tire). Khulukuthu (Siyazi) is a small fast dancer, an energetic person, a man who will test others' cunning. His recorded self-praise includes likening himself to a mouse, so fast you almost don't see the scurry. Sadla isiwula, on the other hand, has a big, sculpted physique.

References to personal history, especially identifying a vice associated with manly exploits, occur. We malume safa utshwala (Uncle, we're dying of beer consumption) is the name of a dancer who often came to practices inebriated. Ayi eJulusi (Don't go to Jules Street, a pickup street in Johannesburg) is another example.

Referring to guns or marijuana does not indicate support of violence or



Nanazi Zakwe, Thobani Ndlovu, and an improvising friend, esiPongweni,
27 December 2015. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

drug use; ugly insults and references to promiscuity do not mean that moral turpitude is celebrated. While these allusions are grounded in the everyday experience of Msinga and migrancy, their significance lies in their poetics, rather than in their literal referents.

Naming practices identify valued aesthetic components of dancing: strength, agility, endurance, control over the execution of moves, grace, cleverness, personality, and imagination. Diversity among praise names also celebrates that there are different styles of carrying and performing oneself, different bodies, different aspects of masculinity that are valued, and multiple perspectives on the social practices of manhood. Praise-name performance helps produce an aesthetic experience of *isigqi* while it endorses the masculine values the names poeticize. The way they are performed adds to those values an appreciation for attentiveness to others, solidarity with your brothers, and support of them. The act of praising that the names en-

tail brings into the event a long-standing Zulu complex of artistic and social practices, altogether deepening the felt experience of *isigqi* in the context of the dance, itself emergent from a century of labor and conflict. Through a play with the poetics of prowess, through simultaneous control over metaphor and the stylized body—indeed, in producing a historically and socially saturated experience of *isigqi*—dancers demonstrate competence in performance about Zulu masculinity itself.²⁷

A celebration of a dancer's virtuosity is at once a celebration of aspects of his manhood. Good masculinity is being performed in hyperreal terms, and it is taking shape through embodied and voiced experience, intercorporeally and intervocally produced. *Gqi!*

Ngoma as the Work of Men

In performance, the idea represented in a praise name gets linked to the sense of power experienced in the singing, dancing body in the execution of *ngoma* style. A felt resonance may crystallize—albeit momentarily—into an identifiable figure, which a dancer can “try on” for size and feeling at the moment it is being named repeatedly as one with/representing/demonstrating male prowess. Such a moment is prepared by the team's collective efforts to build the drama in sound and movement, while narrating men's perspectives in the lyrics and stoking the tensions of competitive camaraderie.

The praise names, carried proudly by individuals, specify collective experience and distinguish one man's dance identity from another; collective song and group dance generate some sense of shared feelingful experience. While the lyrics reiterate, elaborate, and reflect upon many of the same themes, the dancing and singing lodge that masculinity in the socialized and stylized body as an experience and feeling.

In their appreciation of the *ngoma* body and voice, dancers and their fans affirm the idea of manliness in its multiple registers and rework its profile. For one, in the absence of employment dancers have come to speak of their practice as work. To deliver when called upon is the responsibility of the singer-dancer, who demonstrates his commitment by working hard at it. His body bears the signs of his efforts.

Ngoma is body work outside of wage labor and mostly outside of remuneration. As affective, physical effort that idealizes the principles of work while growing out of the migrant experience, *ngoma* can in part stand in for the symbolic value of work. Its value is potentially heightened for some as their anticipated avenues toward wage empowerment narrow.²⁸ “I am a hard

worker,” Mashiya assures me when I courier a welcome cash gift to him in 2009. He wants to work in Johannesburg again, but if not that, he will keep working in his vegetable gardens. “I myself *am* a man,” declares his adult son Mzamo upon receipt of the gift for his family. He follows his declaration with an explanation: though he is a working man (a taxi driver), he is the only earner in his family. He appreciates the couriered gift for the assistance it lends with the shortfall. “I am not a cow, so I must work,” asserts Siyazi, referring to the moral imperative to make an effort even when the prospects of earning seem far off. Chewing cud all day is not his purpose in life. Working via dance to produce Zuluness and popular reputation is no substitute for a salary, but it enhances a man’s capacity to act upon his world.²⁹

Periodic, token cash transactions, money exchanged for a dance, have come to perform ngoma as work. When Mbusiseni outdanced his opponents magnificently on 26 December 2007, a male spectator presented Siyazi, as father of the prized dancer, with an R20 note (US\$2) in an appreciative gesture. (His mothers presented themselves by rushing into the arena for a spurt of exclamatory dance, then darting back into the crowd.) Another onlooker gave Mbusiseni R10 because his dancing had made the onlooker “so mad [angry].” When dancers want to avert a publicly judged competition between two of their teammates, they nullify the challenge with a token cash payment to the captain. When Mntambo addresses the ancestors in a ceremony, he wishes for the team to be the dancers’ “firm” (company) in which “dancing is our [university] degree,” while Thusi equates Umzansi Zulu Dancers with a factory, hoping it will generate income for young men. When a local politician drops in on a Christmas performance, he speaks of the “services” dancers are delivering to the community.

The consolidation of forms of power in the act of performing isigqi— itself an aesthetic of consolidation and density— corroborates the successful instantiation of the aesthetic principle and magnifies ngoma’s expressive significance. Its fine achievements (whether social, aesthetic, or symbolic) may become its own undoing if it intersects with contemporary social crises unchecked, that is, without the reflection that artful play with sweetness allows.

As long as the machismo is celebrated within the boundaries of performance, it infuses the art form with extraordinary intensity. Likewise, as long as the performance about masculine competence opens up pathways in the world of social practice to responsible uses of power accumulated in dancing, its striking virtuosity realizes its social potential. But when the poetics of the hyperreal get treated as more than performance, there may be disastrous

consequences. In the context of the particular political contingencies within which these men live, features of the embodied experience of the larger-than-life persona can make sense and may spill over into social interaction outside the dance. When dancers become the hyperreal images of their praise names, features of the struggle for responsibility and proper manhood can become embroiled in a destructive cycle that circulates through the aesthetic form as well.

In the midst of struggles for dignified living, dancers sing about the value of ngoma to themselves, and about the significance of their ngoma camara-derie:

If you're going to mess me around, I don't care
For my extended family [Umzansi Zulu Dancers] is here.
They can come and pick me up anywhere
I don't care [if you cause me trouble],
For my people/family are here [to look out for me].
My will will never be eaten,
*My will, my will is mine alone.*³⁰

"Dancing is my will," Siyazi tells me. It is his livelihood, his spirit, his body-voice, and his legacy. For him it has accumulated permanent value. "No one can take it away from me. My style belongs to me and I'll take it with me six foot under." He launches the team into another song. In the responding chorus, a plaintive upper voice floats over the gritty bass vocals:

Hey, the plane I bought for my darling is coming
Hey, the plane I bought for my darling is coming
Darling, you will get all the promises
Darling, you will get all the promises
The watch I promised you. . . .
Hurry back [home] in the afternoon, darling,
I'm going to set things up for you³¹

Packed into the middle of the singing cluster, Wajika wawukhisi (You're turning to be kissed) is stoking himself up. Perhaps he will be the first to bolt out and dance. From the midst of the crowd, ululations spill into the texture of the song. Laughter.



Ifolo, esiPongweni, 25 December 1992. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



At an ngoma event, esiPongweni, 25 December 1992. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

2 / / / THE UNWAVERING VOICE

Affect, Eloquence, and the Moral Anger of Men

26 December 2005, Madulaneni

“Moliva! [Mooi River!]” calls out captain Mlando Zuma, identifying the river flowing through the valley as he initiates a new section of singing. No one sounds quite like Zuma. His pitch is high, his throat tight, and his initial vowel, stretched out, quivers in a trill. You can hardly hear his fundamental pitch, so prominent are his harmonics and so distorted his high falsetto growl.

“Yizwa! [Listen!]” the dancers bark, their unison sound deep in pitch, percussive in effect.

“Shiya! [Leave it!]” he rasps back at them in his head register, overlapping with their outburst.

“Shiya!” the dancers retort.

I hear the physiological stress in Zuma’s voice as he declaims a longer phrase warning potential opponents that his team will be armed with supernatural powers: “Siyabhula isangoma ushaya uvume [We are consulting the herbalist, who is throwing the bones].”

The team repeats his phrase, again inverting his high register to the bass, his head voice to their chest voice, his elastic phrase to a steady motivic rhythm. They sustain his percussive approach, spitting out the fricatives and plosives of the phrase.

“Oyithi! [You who are the power!]” Zuma sing-yells, high-pitched, as loud as he can. He draws out the opening *oyi* with a back-voweled *o*, hits the middle *yi* with an emphatic accent, then drops in pitch and volume as his

breath expires with the aspirated *thi*. What gives his utterance its persuasive power in the context of ngoma?

“Yithi! [You are the power!]” the team responds.

“Oyithi!” he sing-yells again. How does the kind of persuasive power that is cultivated through artistry articulate with the social authority of men? With what artistic principles does the ngoma team captain sing his leadership into being, instrumentalizing art in the service of sociality, of ways of being men, together?

Hear Zuma’s striking vocal stamina as he growls. Growling is itself a strenuous vocal technique; in the falsetto register the stress on his vocal organs is intensified.¹ He further heightens the drama of the moment by means of his intensifying vocal quality and musical play as he develops the form of this standard ngoma utterance that he is using to drive toward a one-one dancing set.

“Umapunyampunyane inkunzi engenampondo ekade beyithibela zonke izibaya yithi [We are the hornless bull that will enter any kraal and still conquer its bull],” incants the team rhythmically. “Ji!”

“Wathi ntintintintinti wathi ntintinti! [You have approached something very dangerous!]” Zuma rasps, still in his falsetto growl, as he runs through the clipped reiterations.² Accumulating emphasis with each reiteration, *nti-nti-nti-nti-nti-nti*, he hits the final beat as if with a vocal axe, *nti!*

“Wathi ntintinti uthi ntinti wathi ntinti!” the singer-dancers confirm, addressing their competitors.

“Wathi ntintintintintinti wathi ntintinti!” he rasps ever more harshly in a fast dotted rhythm.

“Wathi ntintinti uthi ntinti wathi ntinti!” they repeat down below.

Next Zuma references the rhythm and timbral effect of his opening exclamation while he repeats the command “Awuthi! [Say it!]”

“Yithi! [Say it!]” his dancers demand.

“Awuthi!” he orders twice more, each with a response from the dancers in rapid rhythmic succession. Is he beginning to repeat the form he has just laid out, simply varying the text?

But Zuma pauses, a pregnant pause, before identifying their home again, this time with his timbre so distorted that the declamation is recognizable by its contour, rhythm, and placement in the flow, but barely by its semantics.

“Moliva!” he calls. He stretches out the initial *mo*, injects extra kick into *li*, spits out the final fricative, *va!* He holds back on the tempo.

“Washiywa! [You are being left in the dust!]” the team retorts gruffly, as if dismissively, to their imagined opponents.

Again Zuma works at the exerted quality of his voice, while controlling the unfolding of the utterance as a whole and shaping its form. Sibilance and percussive presence excites the sound. Rhythmic exchange in overlapping exclamations builds a thicker texture. Rapid motivic repetition initiates a groove:

Washiywa! [You are being left in the dust!]

Washiywa!

Washiywa!

Washiywa!

Washiywa!

Washiywa!

Washiywa!

Washiywa!

Shiya!

Shiya!

Shiya!

Shiya!

Zuma pauses a moment extra. Agitation mounts as he interrupts the groove.

“Shiya!” he shout-chants.

“Shiya!”

By now Zuma has so distorted his voice that his chanting has almost no specific pitch. Feel the strain on his vocal cords. Hear his internal body working. Hear his throat. Where will he take the form?

Zuma begins singing over the team’s declamation, his voice made audible by its pitch and timbral contrasts to the collective voice of the dancers. Pitching the phrases high while singing in his chest register and still placing his voice far back in his throat, his lyricism is edged with gritty distortion. On sustained tones toward the ends of his phrases his vibrato is wide and fast. The sound jitters. Hear his effort. Vibrato that is wide and fast and sung with tension in the throat, neck, and chest stresses the vocal cords. Pushing the voice to the top of the chest register adds to the strain.

By cycling through a lyrical phrase with overlapping responses from the team, Zuma sets up a new groove. Once the singer-dancers are swaying their

torsos to the rhythm, and some have added upper voices, enriching the sonic texture with harmonization, he turns to the drummers. He cues them to initiate their pattern. Soon the groove is steaming, pulsing, ready for dancers to compete one-on-one in front of the seated team. Young Uwudl'umuthi breaks out of the tightly packed mass of the seated team to steal a kick before Zuma can mock-discipline him.

The Eloquence of Anger

Isigqi is an aesthetic principle that is rendered in ngoma's finest moments, produced individually as a sense of power danced, and cultivated collectively as a form of competitive solidarity or brotherhood. It is best rendered when ngoma singer-dancers are in control at the edge. One accumulates toughness by pushing to find that edge, whether in singing or dancing. In finding that edge, an unwavering voice bears the signs of exertion, and, in Zuma's case, of a history of exertion. Sustaining one's control at the edge is a marker of steadfastness. The resulting performance is a sign of intense feeling that in turn is a provocation to act. Here, in the will to respond, *ulaka* resides. It is an affect critical to ngoma's competition.

Working to be in control at the edge is a way to register vital components of Zulu masculinity, including *ulaka*, which is prized among these valued qualities. A man who possesses *ulaka* is respected as formidable. In contrast to being described as *udiniwe* or *ucasukile*—upset or cross or frustrated without any specification of the depth of the feeling—when a man possesses *ulaka* his anger registers the potential to be violent. It is a deep emotive state, and a positive quality in men. In the context of men's singing and chanting (understood historically to precede fighting), *ulaka* is a spirit for the better, even in the context of fighting. Envy and jealousy, in contrast, can lead to evil action.³ *Ulaka*'s positive valence is also gendered: when women are accorded *ulaka*, they are being criticized as belligerent.⁴

Ulaka, moral or legitimate anger, takes its name from the throat, *ilaka* (Berglund [1976] 1989, 255).⁵ By deep Zulu proposition, the throat is also the site in which eloquence resides. Ngoma's lead voice sounds out *ulaka*. Is anger moral in Zulu terms when it is also eloquently expressed? To Zanaso, *ulaka* is a shaking, a grating of the voice. (Touching his neck, he wiggles the area of his voice box.) He hears a body state in vocalizing, a voice that is strained, an emotion on edge.

Ulaka, experiencing a depth of feeling almost to the point of being violent,

can of course turn under some circumstances. This possibility is an aspect of its potency. In artistic performance, ulaka produces drama by its expressive intensity, as well as by the ambiguity that emerges from its potential to turn. How much is performance, how much is feeling? On the one hand, ulaka is rooted in Zulu cosmology. It is simply part of personhood and of a way of relating in the world. On the other, there might be a range of provocations that evoke a feeling recognized and named as ulaka, a will to act with justification in a particular moment or performance. Is a dancer riled by the challenge of outdoing his own performance, through rivalries (real or playful) internal to team politics, through feelings of personal wrongdoing external to the team, or through collective experiences exacerbated by histories of struggle for recognition and equal rights? Various identified as aggression, rage, passion, self-possession and pride, standing up for oneself, deep indignation at being one-upped or passed over or at the presumption of being beatable, the key to ulaka is that it is propriety. It mobilizes unwavering (ethical or moral) action in specific circumstances, while it is a socially and historically rooted practice of expression, recognized and named, assigned positive value, and offered as justification when it is put to use. Ulaka, residing in the throat, is worked at through the craft of song.

25 December 2005, esiPongweni

With a piercing whistle blast, Zabiwe surges toward the cluster of seated dancers.

“Moliva,” he sings out, at the top of his chest register. His voice resonates in the open arena. What volume, what ring, what clarity on his short lyrical phrase! This is not Zuma’s falsetto growl, but it is magnificent.

“Shiya! [Leave it!]” the dancers shoot back in a percussive, deep, collective bellow.

“Siyabhula isangoma ushaya uvume [We are consulting the herbalist, who is throwing the bones],” Zabiwe sing-chants.

“Yizwa! [Listen!]” the team incants.

Zabiwe sustains his high pitch and volume levels through a rapid-fire exchange:

Shiya! [Leave it!]

Shiya!

Suka! [Be off!]

Suka!

A woman ululates agreement. With nonchalance Zabiwe walks away from the team. Silence, for a moment. Suddenly he turns, rushes toward the dancers, and shifts from sing-chanting to singing, dropping down a tone.

“Father, you are wooing a girl in the mountains where it is cold,” he sings loudly, with his vowels open wide, produced toward the back of his mouth.⁶ His melody undulates within the range of about a tone. The team responds.

He references a second song, still circling around the same pitches near the top of his chest register, accenting the phrase climax on the penultimate syllable, belting it out with increased volume and extending its duration.

He switches to a third song, holding the same basic pitch and volume levels and tempo, while introducing variation within the melodic contour, rhythm, and lyrics. Briefly he dips a little lower into his chest register before reiterating his high-pitched energy:

I’ve heard, I’ve heard there,

I’ve heard

I’ve heard there,

I’ve heard, we are pointing over there. We are asking the way, hey girls.

He sings a fourth song fragment: “Hey, brother-in-law, why are you not intervening on my behalf?” Here, after an initial high-pitched blast on the opening syllable, he wends his way down melodically into the middle of his chest register, where he repeats the lyrics weaving his phrase around a central pitch. He adds information to the story about his in-laws: “They want cows [for bride wealth].”

The team cycles through their lilting response. Once the dancers are moving their torsos to the rhythm as they sing, Zabiwe whips a few team members on their shoulders with his belt, indicating they are first up to dance. He blasts his whistle. He turns to the drummers. The drummers hit the first beat, and the dancers begin clapping the pulses. The drums drive toward the moment of dancing.

Zabiwe’s voice carries. The resonance and clarity of his singing voice coupled with the register in which he sings produce a sound with sustained audibility. In conversation he talks of the importance of having a high voice. Because his voice is high it has power, he says. To sound powerful as a solo singer in this acoustic environment is challenging. Outdoors, the sound dissipates quickly. The afternoon wind of high summer exacerbates this. The audience encircles the dance grounds at some distance to facilitate visibility for all and to utilize the shade of the few trees on the perimeter of the grounds.

Zabiwe's singing voice is very high in pitch, which makes it distinct over the bassy full-bodied chorus. It is also high in its timbral quality, colored by the strong presence of higher harmonics or sympathetic frequencies. The resulting voice is bright rather than dark, adding further contrast to the chorus and greater audibility in the performance context. These pitch and timbral qualities result in part from his singing technique, for his voice placement is high in two ways. First, it is placed forward, utilizing the mixed resonance of the chest and mouth area. Second, while the chorus sings fully in their chests, he sings right at the top of his chest register, and mostly in his middle register, in the zone between the two bridge points in a male voice.⁷

To be an *igoso*, Zabiwe says, you need a level voice. In addition to being a signature voice, a voice with distinct and captivating character, a voice is level when it is audible above other voices. Its audibility, together with its particular kind of artfulness, lends it power. I gloss Zabiwe's anglicized description addressed to me, "ibe-level," as an unwavering voice. I use "unwavering" to represent the stressed quality of the techniques of the vocal production as well as the focus and commitment required of the singer to produce a powerful sound.

There are different techniques a lead singer might employ and a variety of sounds that *ngoma* participants value as unwavering. Whereas Mlando Zuma contrasts his opening growled and vibrated declamation with the sung melody that follows it, Zabiwe uses the same voice for both parts. However, he usually pitches his penetrating declamatory call a tone higher than his lyrical singing. At this pitch level in a male voice in a pulled-up chest register (that is, at the top of his chest register in the zone where it is difficult to control the sound smoothly), every semitone sung higher makes an enormous difference to the level of stress on the vocal cords. Aesthetically, the move produces drama and intensity in the voice, just as Zuma's falsetto growl does.

Zabiwe could release into his head register. He doesn't, even though it would ease the tension. Instead he pulls his chest register up high, producing a strident and penetrating sound. From dance event to dance event, and from song to song, he fairly consistently picks the pitch area around the upper bridge point for the sustained notes of the tops of his phrases. In other words, he places his most significant and sustained singing in a pitch area in which it is physically difficult to produce a resonant and powerful tone. To maintain a consistent sound here requires refined technical control.

Pulling up the chest register as Zabiwe does broadens a singer's vowels, thereby straining the vocal cords. This in turn limits the possibilities of dy-



Khethukuthula Dladla leading the team, esiPongweni, 25 December 2011.

PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

dynamic variation: you get a relatively steady, dynamically even voice. It also utilizes the horizontal resonating space (that is, the upper teeth and mouth area, more than the head cavity), resulting in a bright timbre and spread sound (Boytim 2003, 59).⁸

Voice pathologists and classical singers claim that this singing technique can have an adverse effect on a singer's vocal health. It can damage the vocal mechanism physically. When a singer shifts registers as he or she ascends in pitch, the vocal ligaments (inner edges of the vocal folds) stretch, and their mass diminishes. However, when a singer carries the chest voice into the upper range as Zabiwe does, he or she holds the vocal folds in a dense configuration while raising the pitch. This inhibits vocal-fold elongation, thereby increasing the tension on the vocal ligaments (Miller 2004, 152). This is, indeed, a physiologically stressful way to sing.

Zabiwe's singing style, like that of Mlando, requires vocal stamina. It is an aesthetic in which one hears (and feels) that the internal body is intensely at

work. Sustained, strident, penetrating, and heard as fully committed to the moment of the utterance, the unwavering voice is the effort of the body made audible. It is a voice that is pushed to the edge, yet the singer is in utmost control of its production. This is a highly developed skill, honed over years of singing.⁹

26 December 2005, *Madulaneni*

Ntibane, Zabiwe's young *iphini* (vice captain), surges toward the seated dancers. He leans right over them, pointing over their heads while he sings loudly at the top of his chest register, pulled up. His voice cracks at the top of his first phrase, the highest pitch. It breaks again when he repeats the line. It breaks again, sounding an involuntary squawk, as he punches an accent onto the penultimate syllable of the third phrase. As he strings song fragments together, he keeps up his exciting tempo, register, and overall volume. But his phrases are littered with vocal cracks, that is, with unintended breaks in the flow of the sound of his voice.

Ntibane's voice is pitched high, but it is not yet level. In overexerting, he keeps dropping notes. Dropping notes like this happens when a singer can't sustain his chest register yet doesn't release from his chest into his head register at that bridge point in his vocal range. Such cracking occurs through insufficient or excessive air support.¹⁰ The breath flow and glottal closure are not successfully coordinated (Miller 2004, 166). The result in Ntibane's case is an erratic sound full of cracks over which the singer has no control. Ntibane isn't engaging his whole body to get the power he needs to sustain his pulled-up chest register. In addition, he lets out too much air too quickly, so he is unable to sustain such a long phrase. He doesn't have the right balance of air pressure to vocal fold elasticity to voice placement position to avoid the cracks. As a result, he doesn't produce a level voice.

27 December 2007, *esiPongweni*

Mphiliseni, Zabiwe's *iphini* who succeeded Ntibane, towers like a pine in the midst of acacias.¹¹ His lanky build makes for a striking lead figure.

"Moliva!" he calls.

He sets the team chanting back and forth with him.

While his *iphini* directs, Zabiwe joins the team in their collective responses.

Next they shift into lilting cyclical singing.

Mphiliseni sings the lead with a voice weak from overuse. He is hoarse on this third consecutive day of hard singing. He lacks breath support. He strains to produce volume. His pitch is lower than usual, his projection weak.

Zabiwe takes over the lead in the next cycle. His sung call projects out over the team, over the arena, over the socializing onlookers. The team answers Zabiwe, seated in their midst, back and forth, overlapping, back and forth. Mphiliseni paces, surveying the dancers, enacting the gestures of leading while he shifts to sing with the chorus. At the appropriate moment, he punctuates the texture with a whistle blast. He crouches. His hand shoots out like a spear hurled toward the drummers as he calls on them to begin their groove. The drums blast forth. Mphiliseni selects the next dancers, hitting them symbolically with a cattle whip.

I had never before heard an igoso assist his iphini in this way. By lending his unwavering voice, Zabiwe bolsters the power of the performance and tightens the coherence of the group's singing. He takes responsibility for his iphini and reasserts his own authority.

Both Mphiliseni and Ntibane display their striving to realize the idea behind the unwavering voice: they are both pushing their bodies to the limit. Mphiliseni sings even when he has no voice left with which to captivate his audience. He has gone too far over the edge. Ntibane overexerts himself, but only from the neck up. He is not directing his efforts right physiologically to achieve the desired acoustic effect. His voice cracks. Neither young iphini enjoys the eloquence of being in full control of his voice.

A leader must sustain his hold over the sound, over the dancers, over the event. His voice must not break; he must not go over the edge. His voice, located in the throat, artfully sounded, and representing the body, is a source of his authority.

At its best, the unwavering voice expresses the dignity of men's anger, present, productive, positive, deeply embodied, able to be provoked, on the brink of eruption but held just in control.¹² The unwavering voice is singular while it resonates with a history of exertion and with a culturally recognizable sense of why, being so moved, one might be mobilized into action.

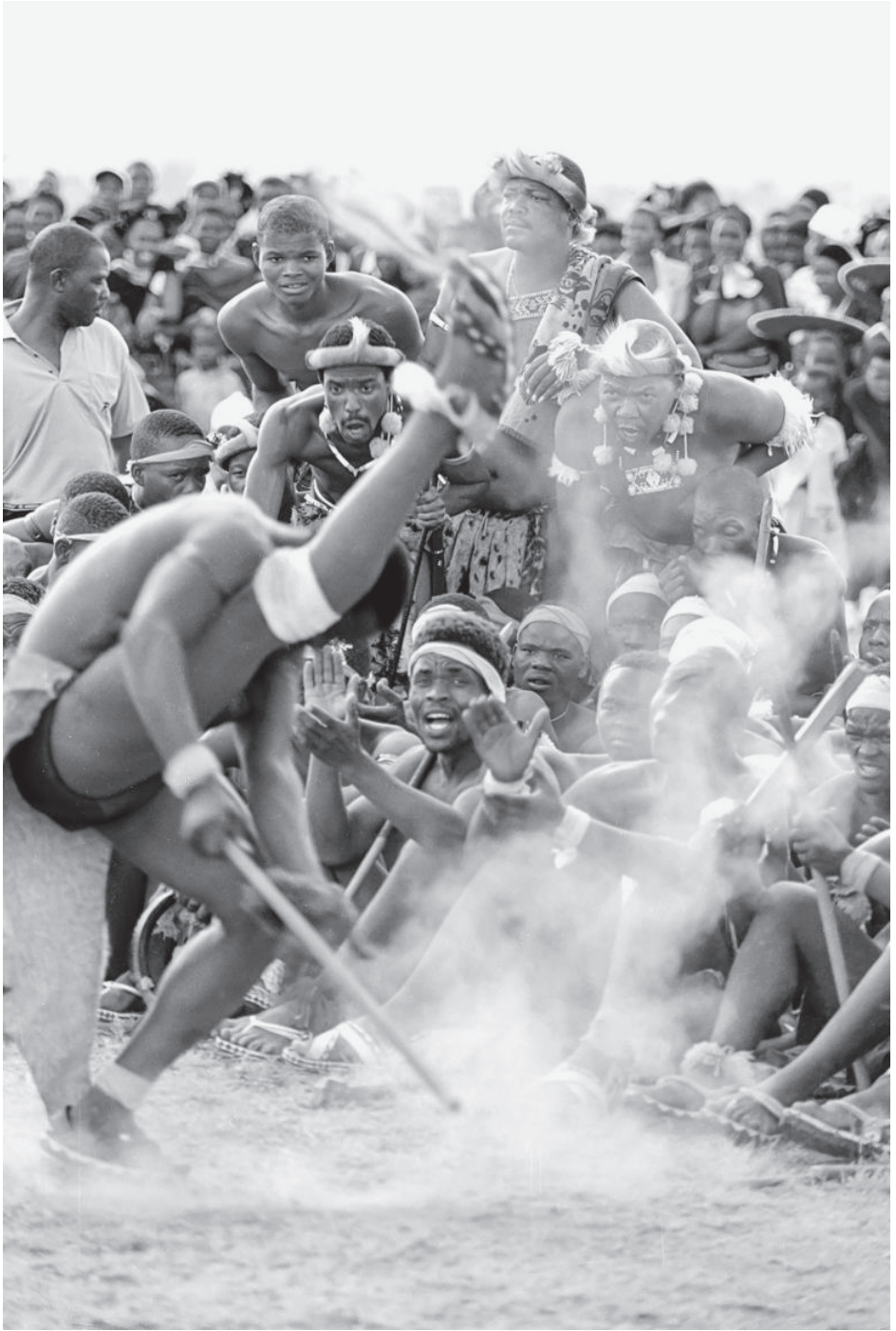
While the body is provoked into unwavering action by the voice, the idea behind the sound of the unwavering lead voice is also reproduced in ways of dancing. That is to say, the values that are sounded in the vocal style are also expressed in aspects of the dancing style. If the internal workings of the body are heard in the voice, the dancing makes dramatically visible the effort of the body at large. In such times, the dancing body is the voice in motion.

Extensive effort is required to dance in a style built around bursts of highly concentrated energy. That effort is visible in the immense physicality of the moves, whether in the kick and stamp, the improvised preparatory moves that escalate in complexity as dancers compete sequence for sequence, or in the sequence-ending move.

For the kick and stamp—the focal point of a sequence—the dancer puts all his energy into a consolidated moment, kicking as high as he can and stamping as hard as he can. This cannot be achieved without registering signs of effort, whether in facial expressions or taut muscles, stretched limbs, or in the look of complete focus.

The residue from the kick, the mode of completing a sequence, by its contrast brings attention to the dancer's experience of having just taken his body to the edge. Having kicked as high as he can, and stamped as hard as he can, and repeated this in a poetic series of intensifying drama, the dancer has spent everything. He falls backward, as if throwing away waste. Having used everything of value, he throws himself, his body, away. He falls backward like dirty water cast out of a bucket or like vomit purged from the body.¹³ The artfulness of falling dramatizes the demand made on the body by the kick that precedes it. In playing up the feeling of release, the dancer flies upward, backward, high, fast, furious. He falls to the ground exactly on the beat, no hands to soften the impact (until the last moment), no feet, no buffer between his flying body and the ground. Fans, aficionados, and fellow dancers watch the move with interest, and evaluate the skill of its expression. How does he prepare the fall? How high can he fly before hitting the ground? What are his symmetries? How is his balance? What is the angle of his body? How does he time the speed of his fall in relation to the feeling of his sequence? How does he recover his posture? When does he choose not to fall, but rather to saunter off the stage with a flick of the shoulder, a nonchalant backward nod, a swagger, a wipe of his face to taunt his opponents with the promise that they will sweat if they meet him again in dance?¹⁴

And when is a dancer just finding ways to avoid taking the fall? Designed to look like wanton abandon (or like the consequence of an opponent's final blow; Clegg 1984), this move makes its own strenuous demands on the body. Without skill and technique, injury could easily occur (as is the case also with the pushed-up voice).¹⁵ Furthermore, the surfaces upon which the dancers perform make for daunting landings. In Johannesburg, dancers perform recreationally in the street, usually outside the men's hostels. They dance on the tar. They fly upward, fall backward, high, fast, furious, downward exactly



EsiPongweni, 28 December 2000. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Bafana Dlamini, esiPongweni, 28 December 2000. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Kulula Zulu, esiPongweni, 27 December 2015. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Siqhandolo Mzila, esiPongweni, 27 December 2015. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

on the beat (or the offbeat), no protective hands, no feet, landing on their backsides on the tar with a feeling of limbs flailing in the air. One holds the pose of the fall, breathing heavily. Another bolts up and freezes his glare, then snaps out of it, stands and saunters off as the next dancer enters the fray. In rural dance venues, the teams dance on uncultivated ground. Dancers fall backward without protection from the sharp stones, spiky grass clumps, scattered pebbles, uneven pockmarked earth. To fall as if with wanton abandon is a masterful performance of expended energy. For a dancer to announce that he has just pushed his body to its edge in the kick and stamp, he artfully controls the sign of release, even while pushing himself to other physical limits in the fall.

Belief in the Throat

The moment of being in the dance takes total concentration, the full commitment of the dancer. Siyazi equates two seconds of dancing with three minutes of soccer, so intense is the experience. It is an experience, as he describes it, during which a dancer is so much in the moment that he cannot fully articulate what he is doing. He is “paper in a river,” taken away by the dance, too small to counter its flow. When he saw a dancer that he suspected was unprepared and unfit to dance break out into the arena to participate, Siyazi rushed up to him, clamped the dancer’s body down in a firm embrace to stop his movement, and led him back to join the singing team. Siyazi could see, he said, the look in the dancer’s eyes. He could see the dancer was already “out there” in a zone beyond comprehension, a zone of intense body commitment. As a responsible igoso, he had to bring the dancer back. He could have dropped down dead in the night after that, for example.

To gather the resources needed to attain this intensity, a dancer draws on multiple sources at his disposal to optimize his potency in the execution of the dance. First, he draws on the sound of the voice and the experience of singing. The lead voice inspires and instructs the dancers. Collective singing prepares the dancing by stoking the dancers’ affective engagement, cultivating the cohesion of the collective, and formally introducing the dance-focused sections of a performance event. In the lead-up to a public performance, dancers sing together indoors, getting themselves into the spirit of ngoma before they initiate the dance.

Second, preparatory purging rituals that cleanse the body, and other rituals that strengthen the body by ingestion, also help the dancers to prepare

their bodies to cope with the stress of exertion and to get themselves into the feeling. On big dance days, some dancers begin with the private ritual of purging their body systems through vomiting early in the day. In the seclusion of the house where they gather and prepare for the dance, most dancers share a bottle of brandy, beer, or *mqombothi* (traditional millet beer). They pass their feet and dancing sandals over the fumes of a burning herb. They drink a kind of *muthi*, an herbal concoction, that enhances their strength and instills fear into their opponents. Through this belief, they exploit an external source of power, literally taking it into the body in order to enhance their personal power.¹⁶

“We are consulting the herbalist, who is throwing the bones,” calls out Zuma in his rasping voice.

When the ngoma singer-dancer goes out to dance, he is at work on multiple fronts, from courting to self-representation to fierce competition to supporting his teammates, all of which concern his manhood, and all of which *muthi* has the power to enhance. According to Berglund, the reasons for taking *muthi* include “to give a young man courage and handsomeness when he courts, to give a person in a position of authority the dignity he requires to execute his duties, to give self-confidence to those who are to face difficult situations, to give majesty to those who are to represent the nation/clan, to give fearfulness to those that are to fight and thus frighten the enemy on sight, etc.” ([1976] 1989, 297n32). In circumstances such as these, “manipulated correctly and morally, the power embedded in material substances can be used to encourage and support the powers embodied in men” (Berglund [1976] 1989, 257).¹⁷ Dancers call upon external powers to bolster their own resources so that they might perform to their edge, where *ulaka* materializes best. In turn, through the experience of sensing anger at that deeply emotive edge, they enhance their sense of power. They are made more formidable.

To believe in the throat is also to trust that, in part, *ulaka* makes men. It is a culturally scripted presumption setting up the condition that those possessing *ulaka* have the right—and the responsibility—to act, whether to speak out or to hold one’s silent countenance. The demand and passion of *ulaka* calls on men’s judgment to know how and when to push to the edge, when to ride the edge, when to test their control. This pertains as much in the moment of dance as it does in responding to breaches in the ordinary sociality in and around ngoma.

To Be Summoned into Competition

To dance, Siyazi says, one must be angry. A father would not dance against his son, for this requires that each activate anger and direct it to the other.

Johnny Clegg tells Siyazi he's angry, so he wants to dance. He rises at dawn in Johannesburg on 26 December 2006. He flies to Durban. He hires a car, drives three and a half hours to Keates Drift, to dance in the afternoon and to depart early the following morning. He is angry enough to make great efforts to participate in a two-hour dance event, during which he (like most others) dances one-one only three times.

When Mbusiseni dances furiously well one afternoon, an onlooker praises him by telling him that the dancing had provoked his anger. Compelling him to find a way to act, the onlooker gifts Mbusiseni with a cash token.

Part of the skill of the team captain (and vice captain) lies in how he generates productive affect within the team, controlling the dancers by means of his voice while using his authority to shape the large-scale architecture of the event. By delineating beginnings, transitions, and endings, he decides the overall proportioning of the performance. By controlling the timing and by his technique of flowing between singing and dancing, and among full group, subgroup, and individual action, he plays a key role in stoking the feeling and shaping the dramatic contours of the event. Essentially, the captain needs to produce the camaraderie necessary to support individual dancers and to give coherence to the form of the event. At the same time, he needs to bait dancers, to roil their competitive spirit, to mobilize their anger. He plays with the tension between the power of group solidarity and of inspired individual expression. He pushes the group solidarity to its limits by exciting individual dancers, prompting them to break out of the group to express their heightened feeling. Both order and outburst are dramatic: the power of ordered collective action, strained by its containment, is impressive. The outbursts of individuals challenging that order are exciting and precarious, for their actions threaten the integrity of the social body.

With the inspiration and aid of his unwavering voice, the igoso works at building the collective intensity in multiple ways in order to enact a flow from group singing to competitive dancing.¹⁸ Incrementally intensifying the timbral quality of his voice, the feel of the groove, and the density of the texture together affect the kinetics of the team. By holding the cohesiveness of the group very close to the breaking point, the igoso provokes the dancers

to challenge his authority. He frustrates them, for example, with a fake beginning to the dancing; they respond with interjections. As he gets ready to move to individual dancing, dancers burst out of the seated cluster and run into the arena, and he herds them back with his whip. In effect, the igoso works at the organizational tension between consolidated energy of teamwork and individual personality penetrating vocally and kinetically through that collective. A dancer breaking free from the tightly packed group to strut his stuff bursts the seams of the group; being forcibly recontained by getting disciplined with a whip and herded back into the group formation reassembles the group solidarity. In the constant playing at that edge, the captain reproduces the idea of the unwavering voice in the performance of the team.

The idea behind the unwavering voice is also stylized in the competitive practice of trying to outdo your dance opponent in alternating rounds of dance sequences. A dancer pushes his opponent progressively to his edge as he raises the stakes in his own dancing, building on the sequences he has introduced and challenging his opponent to beat him at it. This series of provocations enhances the dancers' productive anger. In this way, they are pushed to do their best, thereby presenting a fine spectacle. At the same time, other gains can be made: an igoso can make a point by how he directs a competition; the overall form of a performance event can be redirected; and the competing dancers can be held to being responsible men, accumulating stature, learning a way of being in the world, and building their masculine personhood.

15 November 2006, Johannesburg

During a Sunday afternoon dance outside Jeppe hostel in Johannesburg, Mbusiseni and Khethukuthula are sloppy in their moves. ("We were only rehearsing," Mbusiseni said to me later.) Siyazi stops them. He disapproves. Where's their commitment? What kind of a show is this for the people who have gathered to watch? Where is the discipline of these young men, one of them his son? Neither is Siyazi pleased to see the team as a whole being lackadaisical. Their leader is even somewhat inebriated. Siyazi, a teetotaler with little tolerance for the effects of alcohol, says nothing. (Angered, he holds his silent countenance.) He simply takes over the helm and demands better attention by introducing a high-stakes formal procedure. He calls for two judges from the gathered crowd. He instructs Mbusiseni and Khethu-

kuthula to move out to the front of the team. “Ukuzwa, yini?! [Ukuzwa, why?!]” exclaims a dancer, egging Mbusiseni on in anticipation, calling him by his dance nickname.

“Moliva!” calls Siyazi, marking a new section in the event.

“Shiya! [Leave it!]”

“Kuyinja, kuyini? [It’s a dog, or what is it?]” bellows Siyazi.

The team repeats this insult. “You’re a nothing,” they taunt their competitors.

The team sings a few lyrical lines. “My brother-in-law, why do you not intervene for me?”

As soon as the drum begins, Mbusiseni and Khethukuthula’s age-mates leap out, kick, fall. They posture. While expressing their engagement in the pending spectacle, they are following the conventions of the form that allows openings for unsolicited individual expression that in turn serves to build the dramatic tension of the event.

Siyazi has redirected the event by inserting a judged competition, an unusual decision for an ordinary Sunday afternoon practice/performance. In doing so, he is making a point. First, he picks Mzwenkosi and Mbongiseni to dance the usual choreographed sequence as a curtain raiser for the staged competition that is to come. Mbusiseni and Khethukuthula watch, waiting, from the side. After the curtain raiser, they mark the start of their competition with a choreographed kick, together, before swaggering off to the sides.

“Wo ye wo ye,” sings the lilting team, clapping along with the drumbeat as they cycle through the sung vocables.

Mzwenkosi shoots out to kick.

Mbongiseni follows his solo. The drums are pulsing. Siyazi whistles. He whistles again, directing the dancers and adding a sonic effect to the texture.

“Mad bull!” exclaims an excited dancer.

“Ye bi ye hhe!” calls another, using vocables that express “Hey, you’re in trouble!” to the competitors.

“The sun is setting!” interjects another, urging them to pick up their pace. Siyazi gestures to the team to tighten up their clapping.

With the team engaged and attentive, the form prepared, and the excitement heightened, the competition begins.

Mbusiseni opens with a posturing move to show his style. He knows Khethukuthula’s style and he knows Khethukuthula has some moves that require a body flexibility he doesn’t have himself. So he jumps in to set the stage so that his opponent will be the one put in a position of having to react. First he

kicks. Then, holding his dancing stick vertically, he pulls it toward his chest, shifting it from the left to the right rhythmically. This combined with quick alternating footwork and a back-and-forth body motion is signature Mbusiseni.

“Yes! Yes! Yes!” shouts an onlooker as Mbusiseni hurls his dancing stick like a spear to the side where Khethukuthula waits and watches. Mbusiseni kicks and falls.

Khethukuthula moves stealthily into the dancing space in front of the team to respond with his brief opener that will mark his identity. Swiftly, he kicks. Then, as if flying, he dives forward, landing on his hands, feet in the air, torso C-curved backward. Like a feather, his body floats down to the ground. The second his feet land, he hurls his stick from his horizontal position on the ground to the side where Mbusiseni waits and watches. He’s provoking Mbusiseni, upping the ante on his moves, challenging him to return with a comeback, thereby forcing his opponent to push himself further to his edge: can he be more imaginative, more artful, more virtuosic, more strenuous? Khethukuthula bolts upright, kicks furiously, and slips away from the center stage.

“Young boy!” exclaims an onlooker, approving of Khethukuthula’s introduction.

That’s not so dangerous. That’s not the strongest action I know from him, assesses Mbusiseni. So he introduces a more dangerous move from his own repertoire—more difficult to execute, more elaborate, and more unique—to see what Khethukuthula will do.¹⁹ He edges into the center, as if on the prowl. He kicks with power and dignity. Then he lifts his knees like a runner running in place. He steps backward. He skip-hops a step forward. Standing upright, he C-curves his torso backward, arms outstretched sideways while crossing his right leg over his left. Then, as if by counteraction, he rolls down into a forward somersault and suddenly he’s standing again, ready to kick in the center of the arena. “Gqi!” He falls back, takes the impact, and quickly gets up to move out of the way.

Khethukuthula doesn’t miss a beat. He’s kicking. He falls with his legs shooting high into the sky. He flips onto his hands, low to the ground, like a push-up in motion, using the flip to get himself into a half-horizontal backward C-curve in the air with his feet flying toward the curve of his lower back. He counters Mbusiseni’s signature standing backbend, not by provocative imitation but by introducing variation that takes agility and artistry to execute. Additionally, he plays with direction to introduce another form of

variation. For his kick he was facing Mbusiseni. Now, having turned his chest to the ground, he is facing away from his opponent. Once his feet flip back around to the ground, he somersaults. The roll takes him away from the center, whereas Mbusiseni's had rolled toward the center. He is in conversation with Mbusiseni's performance, making something different of it. Khethukuthula shoots up, kicks, still facing away. A flying body, he falls to the ground at the edge of the arena.

Three styles in one move: a flip, a backward stretch, a somersault! Danger met with more danger! *Ha! You think I'm scared?* taunts Mbusiseni with his body stance. *My mind is quick. You've thrown this dangerous bomb at me—do you really think I would have to stop and think what to do?* Mbusiseni is ready with his own bomb, his own heavier, fancier move. He takes to the floor without hesitation, for a delay would be a sign of fear. Besides, he wants to get Khethukuthula into trouble by leaving him no time to think.

Mbusiseni edges forward. He kicks. He asserts himself by dancing a version of his signature action, this time without his stick. He stretches his arms out forward, bends them to place his hands behind his ears, turning his head as if nonchalant. Following the beat, he again stretches his arms forward, then bends them to place his hands behind his ears, all the while keeping the running-on-the-spot action of his legs and torso in motion to the drumbeat. He is warning Khethukuthula with his hands-behind-his-ears gesture: *You're making me crazy [angry]—I'll need to come with another bomb. Beware, I'm going to finish off this competition now.* Then he pretends to throw something at his opponent with his right hand, before kicking with a power so intense it is almost out of balance. Mbusiseni has pushed himself to the edge of balance.

Khethukuthula reacts to the quick warning with an equally brief display. He kicks clean and fast, like spitting oil in a pan. Stealing a move Mbusiseni created, he somersaults while kicking his bent legs in the air like a baby does when lying on its back. He stands up, kicks high again, falls, springs up, and leaves the ring with a cheeky bounce in his gait.

Too short a sequence to be dangerous, thinks Mbusiseni, *but he's wasting my weapons.* He calculates that Khethukuthula is aiming to reduce the effect of his opponent's moves by introducing them himself while he knows that he is safe from like retaliation: Mbusiseni can't do splits, Khethukuthula's ultimate bomb. Mbusiseni decides to ignore the taunt. He surmises that if he were to do the baby kick roll, it wouldn't attack onlookers—have an impact on them—unless he performed it superbly. Besides, these onlookers from the hostel would think he was dancing in his opponent's style, since most

are unaware of who owns the move. So Mbusiseni takes another tack: he presents a bomb made dangerous by its length and complexity. Whereas near the start of the competition Khethukuthula had raised the stakes by responding to a one-style move with a sequence that blended three, now Mbusiseni challenges him back with a three-style sequence after Khethukuthula's most recent short one.

First, after an opening kick, he dance-walks, crossing legs over each other as he steps as though he's drunk. Then he jumps lightly and flies down onto his hands, where he balances momentarily with his chest close to the ground, his bent legs flying up over his back as he curves his torso, floating back down to the ground as he straightens his torso out again. Then he somersaults in a flurry of movement. He stands up tall, kicks with power and focus, falls.

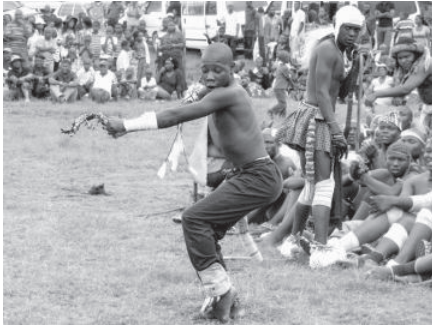
"Ukuz'ukuzwa!" yells an impressed dancer, using Mbusiseni's dance praise name.

Khethukuthula edges forward, fully focused. He raises his leg to kick. But instead of stamping down, he introduces his ultimate bomb. From a leg raised fully vertical he descends into a split. Stretching his balancing leg out backward, he lowers his body close to the ground and balances on his hands.

"Uyizwile induku! Uyizwile induku! Uyizwile induku!" chants the team, supporting him with the sound of his praise name. Next he lowers his torso almost onto his front leg, moving in time to the beat. A formidable move, he does it again. Then, as if this wasn't enough, he raises himself to twist his body around to face the opposite way and to flip the direction of his hands and feet. He lowers himself into a full split again. Quickly he stands, runs a few paces, kicks, falls.

Siyazi whistles. He brings the drums to a halt, for the competition is complete. Ndedezi steps forward to offer a banknote to Siyazi, a token that nullifies the competition before the judges can pronounce publicly on the winner, thereby identifying a loser and cultivating bad feeling in the team. This leaves an opportunity for the two competitors to conclude with displays of their signature virtuosity, each thereafter slipping back into his place among his teammates. Nkululeko takes the floor to dance.

No one in the team designates a winner. "Hhayi, niyagida! [Hey, you two can dance!]" they praise. Khethukuthula "is the most dangerous one," Mbusiseni confesses to me. "I'm afraid of him." Yet he and his friend Khethukuthula would never concede defeat to each other in talking together, even though each knows that the other is the one that "disturbs" him in dancing. Matched well in style, age, and ability, each can push the other to his limit,



Mthobeni Dladla and Baya Dladla trade sequences, Madulaneni, 26 December 2014. The overlapping entries and exits of their sequences are shown. FROM VIDEO TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR.

artistically and physically. The knowledge of the challenge each presents to the other—a challenge that is never publicly resolved—keeps each on his edge, at his edge.

Mbusiseni was proud of his performance. The affirmation of being called out to dance and of living up to the challenge is part of a process of learning to generate anger that can be used as an expressive resource. It is a component of advancing one's manhood, of accumulating toughness and being in control of its expression (for there should also be sweetness just as there is hitting). In staging a challenge, Siyazi obliquely criticized the state of the team's performance and improved it. He gained the dancers' attention and indicated the degree of his disapproval by raising the stakes unusually for a Sunday afternoon. He cultivated an opportunity for young men who had shown laziness, an antithesis of *ulaka* (Berglund [1976] 1989), to better represent themselves.

Ngoma's lead voice sounds out *ulaka* in stylized singular form. This is a voice that commands attention. It is appreciated aesthetically; it demands response, and it calls forth action. Crucial to the politics of the voice, *ulaka* is developed further in the kinetics of the dance and mobilized in competition. Sounded in the voice and experienced in the body, it is made public in performance while it is cultivated as a feeling that is cosmologically coherent—a recognizable feature of Zulu personhood—but pertaining to the moment. It is put to work not so much as an “inner’ phenomenon,” but as “a way of being-in-the-world, a relationship between oneself and one's situation” (Solomon 1984). It is put to work as a politics in the collective practice of the dance team, rendering captivating performance, meaningful relationships, and intense feelings of social well-being.²⁰

To Be Angry While Smiling

Dancing as an enterprise provides an arena, a site of play and experimentation, in which a masculine quality locally considered to be innate can be brought to the surface of the body, developed, and given expressive shape. It is made public while it is given singular character in the style of a singer-dancer. The voice in motion, skilled dancing produces a positive feeling of being in control at the edge.

“To be angry and smiling,” like Mboneni when he dances, is ideal, Siyazi says. When a dancer artfully commands this stance, he is respected for managing the vulnerability of his position and revered for his fearlessness. He is praised as “dangerous” and he is entertaining. His eloquence, or grace, lies in

the ambiguity between the simulation of deep affect in performance and the achievement of that affect itself.

Similar interplay between representation and presentation are evident in other aspects of ngoma that likewise tie the ngoma body-voice to the social world of men. When Zabiwe's team introduced new uniforms in December 2007, they commissioned *isiketi* (dance skirts) in new colors. They replaced their orange dusters used as headbands with sweatbands striped in red, yellow, and green. And they bought spanking white *amanikhephu* (knee caps or guards), wrist guards, and gauze bandages. Most of the thigh, knee, calf, ankle, wrist, and foot bandages, and muscle guards and knee guards that dancers wear are just "styling" (Mbusiseni's word). They protect fake injuries. They are signs of bodies pushed to their limit and of commitment and ability to still dance some more.

At the same time, real physical injury does occur, and dancers can exploit the effect. See the dancer who kicks, "Gqi!", and limps back to join the seated singing team; the dancer who hobbles home with his stylish bandages unfurling down his calf, the dancer who shuffles on his right foot the day after a big dance, who sits in the back row of the team at the *ipasi* (men's engagement party) of his friend two days later, who hopes the igoso won't call upon him with his whip, who slips out to dance only once, or who participates in the team choreography while avoiding one-one competition. There are Mbongiseni, Fano, and Philani walking asymmetrically, standing up carefully, at the *ipasi*. "No, no," gestures Mbongiseni to iphini Mpiliseni when he tries to call him out to dance one-one. Mbongiseni points to his shin and calf muscle, wrapped in a bandage. "No, no!" There are Bheki and Mbusiseni, who come in plain clothes to sing while their injuries heal. There is Mphiliseni, sprawled out on the dance ground at the close of an *ipasi*, turning his head and wincing while three dancer-friends pull on his injured leg "to correct it." Young boys watch.

Displays of injury, when appropriately timed, bring attention to the stress dancers' bodies endure and can provide the dancers an opportunity for bravado.²¹ So too can evidence of fatigue. Shaluza Max, a pop musician, is visiting esiPongweni from Johannesburg. We have all returned from the dance arena at Madulaneni, the ward across the river on the other side of the valley. Darkness has fallen. A candle lights the house. We are satiated with good food. Eventually Mbusiseni returns home, having walked the footpaths. He steps inside to greet Shaluza Max.

“Ah!” smiles Shaluza Max. “How are you feeling?” he jokes with the dancer.

“Eyi, just like a tomato!” Mbusiseni exclaims with belabored exhalations, while leaning on his dancing/fighting/walking stick. He is proud to have danced so hard. His exertion has left him as soft as a ripe tomato. He chats briefly. He washes, eats, sleeps. In the morning, he confesses to me that his feet are sore, his toes raw. He asks to see my video of yesterday’s dancing.

Mbusiseni’s toes are raw from scraping the stony ground as he kicks up the dust, but he scoffs at the proposal to take a break by refraining from dancing at the next day’s event. Limping Fano will be kicking tomorrow at the ipasi, for sure. Mphiliseni’s leg will be corrected by his teammates, and he’ll be at the next event. The hoarse lead singer keeps singing. Mbongiseni comes out to dance anyway, after his emphatic “No, no!” He hobbles into position, hop-walking, barely putting weight on his left leg. Then he hits the dance full on to compete against his brother. He puts all his weight on his injured left leg to raise the right high. He kicks, stumbles. Khethukuthula responds with a daunting kick. Mbongiseni, Khethukuthula, Mbongiseni, Khethukuthula, Mbongiseni, Khethukuthula. They alternate kicks drumbeat for drumbeat, hard, high, furious. Then Mbongiseni blasts forward further into the arena, arches his back, balancing on his right leg, full focus in his face, arms stretched up in preparation. His injured left leg flies upward for a mighty stamp. The drummer accents the dancer’s hit. Mbongiseni falls backward with all the drama and control he owns. Khethukuthula follows suit. He lands, wincing. The bravado of going back into the dance is a commitment to pushing the body to its limit and of demonstrating that you can retain your artistic form while you ride the pain.²²

Bandages as styling coupled with the public signs of stressed tendons, torn muscles, and fatigue relay a sense of the accumulation of work a body has accomplished. A subject of attentive interest, they make visible an invisible scar, summarizing a history of body work. As images of exertion, bandages index work that in turn stands in for the manly experience of being a migrant laborer. At the same time, they raise the stakes on aesthetic ambiguity by blurring the lines between pain and styling, and between care for the body and bravado about its limits.



Fanile Zulu, esiPongweni, 25 December 2003. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

Ulaka in Struggle

The unwavering voice sets the dancing body in motion that then reproduces unwavering principles. It also commands the collective body into unwavering action. Ngoma performance animates both a metonymic and metaphoric relationship between voice and body, and between the individual body that senses ulaka and the collective body that transforms ulaka into action. These multiple and various relationships tie the politics of the voice fundamentally to its aesthetics.

28 December 2000, esiPongweni

At a big interdistrict dance — so big that youths perched in rows on the school building roofs to get a glimpse of the dancing — the most senior dancers were captivating the crowds. One by one each danced his best in his most striking finery. One by one each took his turn for a second round of sequences. Siyazi crouches, flutters his hands stretched out front, begins to move his torso and to step. From nowhere, Zabiwe appears, racing. He kicks right in Siyazi's path, cutting off his senior's sequence. In a blink Zabiwe has blended into his place among the seated dancers. Surprised by this and publicly in-

sulted, Siyazi shakes his head and walks off. Zabiwe was struggling for autonomy in a generational handover of the team. By trouncing his senior in public, he made explicit his struggle, his ambition, and his anger. While he met with some disapproval from the elders for his action, he also gained political ground in the process. His action opened up the matter for subsequent discussion. Veritably insulted, Siyazi retreated holding his countenance, as was appropriate to the situation. (This was not simply a performance of an insult, like Mbusiseni hurling his stick in Khethukuthula's direction to rile his opponent in the context of their judged competition.) Thereafter he temporarily limited his investment in the excellence of the community team. By the time relations were mended, Zabiwe was better established as the new igoso.

To live at the edge is not to live on the surface, but to push to the edge of awareness through deep and skilled performance. At this edge, where strategic performance, sensuous experience, and value are momentarily fused, belief in the throat is realized. The eloquent expression of anger renders that anger accurate and appropriate. Ulaka maintains its positive valence because it is kept in control by the requirement that it also be eloquent. By submitting its deeply emotive force to the order of an art form, that force is kept as potential. As understood in local terms, it is held in check against the trajectory of erupting into violence. At the same time, by having to work at the skill of expressing ulaka, by having to mold ulaka into a new form each performance, ngoma counters laziness. Ulaka is a temporary and contingent source of power gathered in artistry.

The valorization of the voice in motion, of the authorial body sculpted out of an idea of anger, of good sociality vitalized by competition, is crucial to the contemporary formation of Zulu masculinity. The unwavering voice is a form of authority that must be worked at in order to be maintained. It is put to the test in the presence of bodies injured or weakening, in the presence of the silenced voice. It can dissipate in the high summer afternoon wind, or it can be compromised through failure in the throat.

25 December 2005

At the celebratory ngoma on Christmas Day, the team is seated in two long rows facing the dance arena and the gathered crowd. The opening collective dance has been completed, and the team has just ended a song. An elder motions to the igoso and to the older dancers that something is to happen.

They wait. The crowd chitchats.

Soon the white-bearded Loli, an austere former igoso who is now a respected community elder, walks up to the front of the team. Mboneni follows, slowly, falteringly. They kneel, both leaning on their walking sticks. Loli prays.²³ You have to strain to hear his words. Mboneni rests his head on his hands on his stick. I hear a dancer breathe heavily, sniff. Loli ends his prayer, lifts his head, explains what they are here to say. He doesn't mention tuberculosis or HIV/AIDS, though he references "sickness." He reports to the dancers that Mboneni is here to retire officially from ngoma dancing. He announces that Mboneni will speak.

Pause. Silent pause.

Mboneni does not speak.

Instead, his shoulders begin to shake. He doesn't lift his head from his hands, from his stick. He wails. In front of his teammates and the gathered crowd, Mboneni, Sadl'isiwula, so strong he breaks everything in his path, he who dances angrily while smiling, wails. I had never witnessed a Zulu man weep in public. Loli helps him up from his kneeling. Each with their walking sticks, Loli accompanies Mboneni out of the arena, guiding him gently by the arm.

In the back row, Mboneni's age-mates cry quietly, bending their heads into their hands.

Silence is suspended over the team, except for involuntary voiced inhalations now and then. Wind blows.

The young dancers in the front row sit, wondering, waiting. The crowd chitchats in the distance.

Zabiwe and his iphini Ntibane confer on how to proceed. They mumble, then Ntibane walks over to his friend and age-mate in the front row, Mbusiseni, and taps him on the shoulder.

In a moment of artful sweetness and brotherly care, Mbusiseni initiates a song. "Kukhona okusidubul' emaweni [They shoot at us from the cave]," he sings softly in his upper register. "Maweni," answer his teammates in the front row, softly, with vocal ease, in their chest registers.

"Oh you, mother Shabalala."

"You, mother Shabalala, we received the message you sent yesterday [with the girls]."

Mboneni's age-mates are still. Ntibane hunkers on his haunches, cupping his face in his hands a while longer.

Soon Zabiwe, igoso, stands and moves to face the team. His voice rings out over the team as he resumes the lead in song. In making an effort, he

pushes his volume. What of his pitch? Zabiwe wavers in the fraught action of his friend. He can't reach his usual pitch. He sings about a major third lower than usual. It is a sign that bears witness: things are not all right.

He leads the dancers through repeated song cycles until the men in the back row have gained their composure and joined the singing. He signals to the drummers. Young dancers break out to kick.



Siyazi Zulu as igoso, esiPongweni, 25 December 2003. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Ma Soshangani Zulu dancing around the team, esiPongweni, 25 December 1997.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

3 / / / FEET OF THE CENTIPEDE

Military Aesthetics and the Politics of Reconciliation

Othulini lweZulu isigodi impithimpithi nyawo zesongololo mageza ngobisi?
(Who are you, Dust of the Zulu ward, you who are the confusion of the feet
of a centipede, [so beautiful] you wash with milk?)¹

4 May 1992, esiPongweni

A vendetta still rages between esiPongweni and Madulaneni, the isigodi (ward) across the Mooi River. After dark, Dudu Ndlovu, acclaimed dancer of esiPongweni, is called up the road. Some advise him to ignore the call. He goes. He is tricked. The other side shoots him.²

At Dudu's funeral ceremony (*umsebenzi*), the men of his family and community snake in and out of his houses, dancing in a line, waving their dancing-walking-fighting sticks, singing together. They call Dudu's spirit back to reside at his homestead and to meet his ancestors.³ They name Uzowotha, a dancer from Madulaneni, in their songs.⁴

26 December 2003, Madulaneni

Over ten years have passed, and four izigodi are staging a collective dance to entertain their communities. Uzowotha steps out to dance. The air is electric. Women ululate. Dancers rush out, kick. Another, another. The igoso darts back and forth, herding the dancers back into place. A dancer paws the earth at the edge of the arena, a bull angered.

Uzowotha is regal. He is a full-bodied man. He watches as the igoso from

his Madulaneni team calms the dancer-soldiers from Uthuli lweZulu's team, gesturing to them to stay seated.

The igoso selects Zabiwe to dance against Uzowotha. Zabiwe dances with all his power, Uzowotha with all his grace. See Uzowotha's light foot-swivel from a heavy soldier, his dart across the dance space, a potent focused kick, a fall as though in slow motion. Watch Zabiwe's agile curving body, his rhythmically nodding head, his humorous skyward fling of a sneaker. His kick. His pause. Suddenly, a flash of a kick again. A fall, cascading down.

The crowd is abuzz.

"I am surprised that you danced against Uzowotha," I say to Zabiwe later.

"We are brothers," he tells me.

"I am surprised," I say to Siyazi.

"Well, Uzowotha got lucky," he tells me. That is all he says.

"Zabiwe danced against Uzowotha," I say to Falakhe.

"Yes, they danced," he says.

"Who won?" I ask.

There were no judges, they say.

26 December 2004, esiPongweni

Nkosi (chief) Simakade Mchunu comes to watch the dancing staged by three of his izigodi. The team from Nxamalala has excused itself. (They are burying a dancer.)

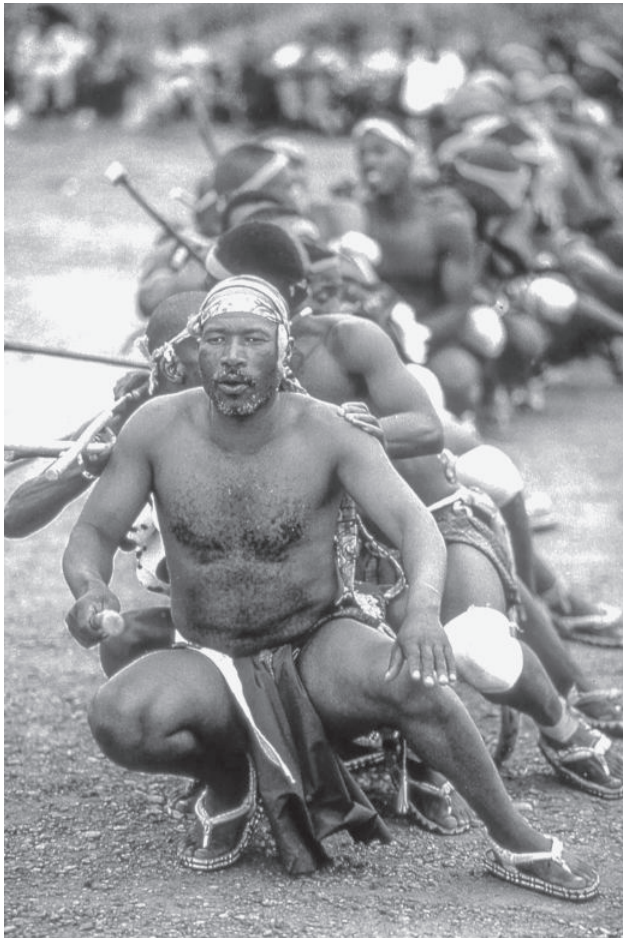
Uthuli lweZulu's team is performing in the heat, waiting for the team from Madulaneni to join them. Nkosi sits under an umbrella, sweating. The crowds gather.

Three more minivan taxis arrive. It's the team from Madulaneni.

Singing and marching close together, the Madulaneni dancers file through the crowd that circles the arena. They greet Nkosi. "Bayede," they incant as they bow their heads, respectfully holding their hands open alongside their faces. Then lined up, singing, pumping their arms and their horizontally clasped sticks like moving pistons on a steam train, they drive forward again to encircle the Uthuli lweZulu team. Uthuli lweZulu's team keeps drumming and dancing and singing their own songs. Drums clash, voices overlap, songs intermingle, the two choreographies as if competing and uncoordinated.

How beautiful is the confusion of the feet of the centipede.

Uzowotha is here to dance with his team. He hasn't danced on Uthuli lweZulu's soil for over fourteen years.



Denga Zulu in the position of *ifolosi*, esiPongweni, 25 December 1992. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

26 December 2005, Madulaneni

Uzowotha steps out to dance. There is no to-do, though there is good dancing by all four teams.

Socializing afterward, Zabiwe and Uzowotha hold hands with men's affection. Zabiwe introduces me to Uzowotha.

"My sister, this is my brother." We shake hands.

I was surprised when Zabiwe danced against Uzowotha (2003). Childhood friends and age-mates, they had landed on opposing sides of a deadly rivalry in which Uzowotha had been singled out as an alleged culprit. Over ten years after a truce had been declared, what enabled their dance? Here I consider the relationship between reconciliatory politics and good aesthet-

ics. To do so, I focus on the military aspects of the ngoma aesthetic that inflect ulaka in a particular way. How is the ngoma dancer as warrior-soldier a figure of masculine respectability? How does he put ulaka to work, instrumentalizing the ngoma art form for social ends? To what extent can the warrior-soldier mediate a past injustice (as locally understood) through the eloquence of ulaka? In considering reconciliatory politics, I do not equate reconciliation with social or interpersonal healing, nor with resolution. A politics of reconciliation is a socially productive practice that offers a community the capacity to accommodate difference, even in heightened forms.

Aesthetics, Ambiguity, and the Warrior-Soldier

Multiple reminders point to the fact that ngoma is not real violence but in part an artful representation of the possibility for violence, tied to other artful representations of that possibility.

The team has danced for their community on Christmas Day, 2007, on 26 December in front of Nkosi Mchunu and a huge crowd from the district, and on 27 December at the house of Khethukuthula's father for Khethukuthula's ipasi (engagement party).⁵ Before they disband, Zabiwe reminds the dancers of their obligation to support the rites of passage of their brothers and friends: there is another ipasi tomorrow, and another the next day.

Five consecutive days of performance challenge the strongest of men. "Well," explains Siyazi to me, "that's the work of a soldier [*isosha*], and that's why he has to be strong. When there's work to be done, there's work to be done. So they must just go and dance, that's all." To demonstrate endurance is necessary; to be supportive of your teammates' life passages is honorable; and to be responsible to the demands of your job is a sign of the discipline of a soldier.

The commitment of a soldier is also demonstrated in his participation in the preparations for a dance. Zabiwe doesn't want his young dancers visiting their girlfriends the night before the Christmas Day event. Instead, they gather at his house. They sing, imbibe, and dance together. Sometimes they "camp" (*bakhempa*), sleeping together. In the morning, they eat, they wash down at the river. They dance playfully. Age-mates practice their group choreographies. They dress in their uniforms (*amayunifomu*). They rest in the shade of thorn trees, or in the cool of a thatched house. They banter. Small boys arrive in bands to check out the scene through the doorways and windows. Neighboring little girls join their brothers. The team sings and dances indoors. Some whistle. Someone calls out his friend's dance name,

egging him on: “Dubul’sayitsheni! [Shoot the sergeant!]” They strengthen themselves with *muthi* (herbal medicine). They focus. Eventually, they file down to the dance arena to do their heroic job. Hear their cowbell *amadondo* (awards) jangle around their waists as they walk.⁶

That the dancers call themselves *amasosha* (soldiers), that they camp, that they mark their status with awards, and that they give themselves as rank and file over to the heady authority of an igoso or ikaputeni (captain) and iphini (vice captain): these are narrated organizational components of the umzansi aesthetic trope of militarism.⁷ Dancers perform other military components, while they may not specifically identify them in military terms.

Zabiwe paces up and down between the two lines of his seated dancers, eyeing the symmetry, swapping the position of a dancer here or there, inspecting them, instructing his dancers to close the spaces in their ranks. He carries his *sjambok* (cattle whip). His whistle dangles around his neck. When performing this part of the dance, he is stern, a disciplinarian standing over the ranks of his men.

The team sits in two rows, everyone facing the audience. Senior dancers head and bring up the rear in each line. The front row consists of the younger *amasosha*, including the new migrants—who have recently left school—dancing at home as team members for the first time. The experienced dancers make up the back row. In the center of the front line, two up-and-coming dancers are positioned to initiate the next choreographed section with a coordinated display.

Zabiwe calls out to the team in his strident unwavering voice. They sing back.

He paces back and forth.

He paces out into the arena some distance from his seated team, surveying his soldiers from a distance.

“Moliva!” he calls out from afar, like a sergeant sing-shouting the name of his battalion.

“Like the military,” Siyazi says, a dancer balances his stance with opposing movements as he prepares his kick: right arm swings forward against the left backward step; left arm swings forward against the right backward step.

In a line, ranks tightly closed, each soldier’s chest almost touching the back of the soldier he follows, the dancers circle the dance arena in a march-dance.

The drum beats a steady groove. It is a repeated pattern, music for dance-marching, whether slowed for sections of the full team’s choreographed *isipani*

sections, whether quickened for the subsequent choreography, or whether differentially accented for improvising dancers.⁸ Drummers periodically add a fill at the end of a phrase, or leading to another section. Hear the idea of marching.

Hear the idea of marching, played on a marching bass drum with plastic heads discolored in the middle from use. Plastic heads give a harder sound than skin heads. That is the soldiers' preference. However, for staged performances at which Umzansi Zulu Dancers felt they were representing Zulu culture to the outside world, whether overseas or at multiracial festivals, they substituted a drum with skin heads laced in place over the frame with leather thongs. This drum, which they consider the traditional Zulu drum, is modeled on the marching drum of the British armies who fought ferociously against the Zulu (Kirby [1934] 1968). It is, historically, a military drum imported from Europe, standing in for the contemporary plastic-headed equivalent played in the community.

"Moliva!" Zabiwe calls to his cluster of seated dancers, readying themselves for song.

"Washiywa! [You are being left behind!]" the team retorts to their imagined opponents while raising their left hands to their foreheads.

"Washiywa!" Zabiwe repeats.

"Washiywa!" retorts the team.

Six times leader and team trade the call in rapid-fire succession, the team saluting up-down, up-down, up-down to their vocals.⁹

Falakhe wears a fluffy tiger on his back. Designed for teenagers who attend raves, the backpack was purchased in a Johannesburg market. Mhlonishwa's is an elephant whose trunk bobs up and down with his dancing body. Zama wears a white cow with black patches and a bulbous belly. Muddy dancing after a rainstorm one day turns Nqafu's leopard into a puma.

Falakhe, Mhlonishwa, Zama, and Nqafu dance their choreographed sequence. They circle around Mboneni's ululating granny. They integrate her into their dance, comically imitating her bobbing head. The crowd guffaws. Before they kick and finally fall, they reach into their rave bags and toss candy to the kids. Teenage girls shriek, and people wave, cheer, and laugh. Ululations express mothers' pleasure. Children storm the dance arena, scurrying in the dust in their brand-new Christmas outfits to rescue the candy.

A tiger or a cow backpack—a youth fashion bag—is the gear of a soldier. Next to Zama in the isipani line, Mpiyabelungu wears a canvas satchel, the old-style accoutrement added to his uniform. Mdo's black backpack sports



Denga Zulu, Falakhe Zulu, Mbono Zakwe, esiPongweni, 25 December 1992.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

badges of soccer teams. Fanile uses a tote bag strung vertically on his back using the handles as straps. These are signs of militarism: field satchels, soldiers' gear as dancers' uniform.

The salute, the call of the captain with a brisk collective return, inspection, and (mock) punishment with a whip, the drum, the dancer's right-left swing of his arms to his left-right legs, the salute, components of the dancer's uniform, the nicknames that reference guns and military rank: these dance gestures taken from state spectacle and knowledge of the army are appropriations for aesthetic purposes of the modern power these symbols represent (Argenti 2007).¹⁰ Furthermore, ngoma dancers seamlessly blend state gestures with forms that many soldiers understand as a continuation of traditional historical Zulu warrior practice. This reclamation, continuation, or reformulation of the iconic warrior image borrows its authority not only from an imperial Zulu history, but from contemporary usages of those symbols by officials in positions of power—the Zulu monarchy, some Zulu politicians, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)—even while the dancers consider their art form separated from party politics. Postapartheid, the cultural cachet of tra-

dition and heritage on the cultural tourism market continues to promote an idea of authentic Zulu warrior culture.

The amasosha have entered the arena and formed a line facing their leader. Zabiwe has inspected the spacing and positions of his dancers. He whistles to initiate a slow drumbeat. Together, the thirty men rise. With precision the line of men bends and arches. They kick and stamp, repeatedly, together. Their amadondo jangle sweetly. Feel their concentrated strength. Synchronized stick movements decorate preparatory footwork. Bodies curve, stretch, balance, and shift in a spectacle of steady coordinated effort. Four times more they kick. Hear the thud of thirty Zulu sandals hitting the ground at once. (How beautiful are the feet.) While the heaving men lie on the ground, two selected dancers, Mbusiseni and Khethukuthula, break away from the line. Behind the two rows, they posture. They settle into a ready pose, arms outstretched holding their sticks, legs bent, heads cocked, bodies taut. Mbusiseni wipes his face to show they're hot. Khethukuthula flicks his shoulders to cue Mbusiseni and they rush forward, past their places in the team formation, to the front. As a synchronized pair they dance a high-energy sequence that ups the pace and cues in the team's next choreographed section. Breaking away from the ranks to display prowess like this references the *ukugiya*, the individual improvisation of the warrior breaking from his *impi* (battalion) to dance his preparedness for battle (Clegg 1982, 67; 2005).

26 December 2006, esiPongweni

The dancers are gathering themselves for their second set. A group of senior dancers starts to fuel the drama. "Kwagijima iphoyisa, iphoyisa emasangweni liyaphi? [The policeman is running, running up and down in front of the gates. Where is he going to?]" chants Sikeyi gruffly, as he paces back and forth in front of his teammates, hitting two dancing-fighting sticks together.¹¹

"Kwagijima iphoyisa, iphoyisa emasangweni liyaphi?" respond the men. Sikeyi performs a Zulu warrior's frenzy, hitting his sticks together, rushing back and forth, kicking, performing his felt empowerment, his possession of *ulaka*, his preparedness for danced battle.

That this *isibongo* (praise chant) criticizes the police for their absence in moments of crisis and for arriving too late at crime scenes is not of direct consequence here. No on-duty police are present, and there is no expectation that they should be. The text of the chant has some impact as a provocative expression of power, for amasosha, Siyazi contends, do not like the police.

Nor do they trust them. “They arrest you. They have a lot of power. They shoot you. If amasosha are cross [angry], they don’t want the police to come and cut those powers. The police are the ones who can cut their powers, and they don’t like that.” Also pertinent is the way that the act of chanting an isibongo cultivates a feeling of empowerment for the warrior-dancer and his team. Older dancers understand the chant as a historical battle cry reinvigorated with contemporary text. “I don’t know what it means,” young Mbusiseni says. “It’s traditional, for war — ask my father. We, the amasosha, just say it. It makes us feel powerful.”

“Sishaya amaphoyisa! Sishaya amaphoyisa!” chants the team as Thengu Mdlalose dances to his nickname. “We hit the police! We hit the police!”

Just as soldiers distinguish themselves in their personal style of dancing, so too do they individualize their uniforms and voices, sometimes introducing decorative references to other positions of power, authority, or acclaim. Sifiso wears a signature men’s necktie. Bhekiseni dances to the name of a soccer star, striker Siyabonga Nomvete. Mbono often interjects provocations and taunts. As different versions of the mix of warriorhood and soldiering are foregrounded in personal preference, so too are they for different circumstances and audiences.

The Sports, Arts and Culture Department of the provincial government of Gauteng has sponsored a historic event this Saturday, 26 October 2006. A stage closes off Khumalo street in the township of Vosloorus just outside Johannesburg. A white tent shades the dignitaries. People from the township and the adjoining hostels gather to watch scores of song and dance groups — Zulu, Sotho, Pedi, Tswana, adult and children’s groups. They perform on a stage in Khumalo Street, the infamous killing street, the war zone that divided the township residents and the hostel dwellers during the conflicts of the transition period, 1990–94. In her speech, the Gauteng councilor remarks on the symbolic erasure of past violence with present performance. Here, billed alongside other heritage and cultural groups, Umzansi Zulu Dancers appear on stage in skins, the iconic Zulu warrior outfit: *ibheshu* (back apron), *isinene* (tassled front apron), *injobo* (tail hung from the side of the waist), *umqhele* (headdress), *odabuluzwane* (sandals), *amavolo* (calf bands), *amabhande* (armbands), *imbatha* (skin collar), and beads.

Later they head to Diepkloof in Soweto, where an urban Zulu woman — a Soweto resident — is marrying a Ghanaian man. The bride’s family has hired Umzansi Zulu Dancers as entertainment. They dance in their iconic Zulu

warrior outfits while chic wedding guests in shopping-mall high fashion shoot home videos of their performance.

The blend of military styles, sounded, gestured, adorned, personalized, and differently figured in various contexts, marks the soldiers' performance of violence as performance. Amasosha creatively employ a designer selection of warrior-soldier components for dramatic effect. At times, such selection by layering and juxtaposition and mixing intensifies the seriousness of the expression, and consolidates the idea that ngoma is warriorhood. Yet in other moments amasosha treat their art with playful whimsy. When dancers with army satchel-rave bags as props perform a comedy routine conceived around Mboneni's ululating granny and a surprise shower of candy, they momentarily call into doubt the proposition that ngoma is an expression of the competitive threat of violence.

Warriorhood as a Zulu male register is expressed in ngoma aesthetic form. Umzansi ngoma's resonances across other local contemporary Zulu performance practices make it possible to generalize ngoma as another play with warriorhood. This intertextuality aids the interpretation of ngoma as culturally coherent. Participants use their familiarity with one context to make sense of another and to evaluate its qualities.

Ngoma uniforms identify a dancer's specific team as well as the genre in which he participates. But other combinations of men's military fashion are the appropriate garb for ceremonial parties, especially weddings and girls' courting and engagement parties (*omemulo* and *ukuqoma*).¹² Here, camouflage fabrics and fragments of police, army, and private security firm uniforms mix with skin *amabheshu* and *izinene* (back and front aprons), peaked caps with *omqhele* (headdresses), spats with *amavolo* (leg bands), heavy boots with *odabuluzwane* (sandals), badges and buckles with *amadondo*, *amabhande*, *amambatha* (cowbells, armbands, skin collars), and beads. Punctuating calls from a battered bugle alternate and overlap with blasts from a cow-horn trumpet. A stuffed gun holster and handcuffs are strung to a belt like the *indondo* and *injobo* (cowbell and tail).¹³

The umzansi ngoma kick and styles of dancing and singing are specifically identifiable. At the same time, men's song and dance styles and displays of rivalry at ceremonial occasions and parties share broad features of ngoma. For example, some of ngoma's movements with sticks derive from *ingoma yenduku* (dancing with a stick, literally, dance of the stick) that "in a way" displays a man's "ability to handle a weapon" (Clegg 1984, 68).¹⁴ *Ingoma yen-*



Men at a wedding near Keates Drift, 26 December 1991. Nduku Mchunu is featured, with Denga Zulu behind him. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Ndluthu Mchunu dancing at a memulo, esiPongweni, 23 December 1992. Note his spats. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

duku in turn relates to stick fighting displays at weddings, and, in its most organized form, at the interdistrict ceremony called *umgangela*. Such displays, while articulated as men's "play" (Jonathan Clegg 1981), can result in serious injury, or erupt into dedicated fighting (Carton 2001).¹⁵

There is also stylistic continuity in song and dance styles historically. The raised-leg stamping, the choreographed line dancing, the overlap with the martial art of stick fighting, the choral singing, and warrior dress carry traces of past styles and performance practices. Most traceable due to the history of documentation practices and the preservation possibilities of materials is the stylistic continuation of the dress of the warrior figure, captured through graphic illustration and then photography over the centuries.¹⁶ Early Zulu anthropology describes warrior dances that are wild, flamboyant, ferocious, and that include energetic solo outbursts, kicking and stamping, and singing or chanting. While these accounts are too general to get a sense of the formal details, they suggest some continuation of an aesthetic treatment of warrior-dom.¹⁷ Past documentation of ngoma itself as well as analyses of historical records show continuities in the style.¹⁸

The history of using military aesthetics deepens the value of the semiotic coherence across styles. Together this long history and the shared stylistic features produce the military aesthetic as culture, as simply the way things are done, blending chronologies, blurring pasts. While the invitation to question ngoma's relationship to material acts of injury is always present, the history and cross-genre features help to maintain the diffuseness and generality of ngoma's militarized interpretation. The aporia of ngoma performance is likewise perpetuated in the act of identifying the specific genre and recognizing the accomplishments of individual artistry, for in so doing, ngoma dancers and fans direct attention onto ngoma as an art form and onto the artistry of its execution, and away from any entanglements in material violence it may have. Ngoma figured as merely representational offers rhetorical room to maneuver around its potential implications in the world outside of the dance.

When Uzowotha and Zabiwe dance an arousing round of competitive sequences eleven years after Dudu's passing, they skillfully draw on the military resources of ngoma to execute a moment of intense drama that is valued for its artfulness. The heroism of the soldier lies in his ability to render his art with angry excellence. "Yes!" exclaims Mboneni, reviewing Zabiwe's kick and stamp on my video, his pause, his flash of a kick on the offbeat again, his fall cascading down. Mboneni clicks his fingers to match the masterfully

surprising timing of Zabiwe's final stamp. He rewinds the video for repeated viewing.

When Nicholas Argenti argues that masquerading youth in the Cameroonian grass fields reenact the structural inequalities of the master-slave relationship, inequalities that in turn are reproduced in a big man–youth cadet relationship in their own time, he proposes that the long past animates the present. The past resonates in a dance performance, even if the masqueraders do not articulate this in verbal discourse. The past that Cameroonian masqueraders repeat is evident, for example, in the “awkward single-line shuffle” by masqueraders that recalls the march of chained slaves toward the coast. At the same time, that single line reproduces the caravan of porters and forced laborers trekking from the interior during the colonial era (Argenti 2007, 156). Destabilizing a sense of chronology, the effect of which is that the past is never laid to rest, makes the dance “indeterminate and aporetic” (Argenti 2007, 250).¹⁹

While the danced relationship to the past animates performance but obscures its significance, the line between “mock violence and real violence” in the act of competing might also be kept ambiguous (Lewis 1992). Lewis describes this blurred relationship in capoeira by drawing on Kochman's discussion of “strategic ambiguity” in African American verbal challenges (Kochman 1986, in Lewis 1992, 208). In such verbal sparring, a good competitor makes the tone of his challenge ambiguous. Upon reading the addressee's response to the utterance, he determines whether to deliver a playful or aggressive comeback. In capoeira, Lewis says, “the line between mock violence and real violence is easy to cross, and defeating one's opponent in a martial contest without violence is very difficult indeed. The ambiguity of capoeira depends on maintaining a constant balance between extremes like attack and defense, competition and cooperation, and achieving this balance is the measure of mastery. It is this ambiguity of the encounters, dancing on the knife-edge between oppositions, which makes capoeira so expressive and also so difficult to perfect” (1992, 208). Lewis suggests this strategic ambiguity is a feature of African-derived forms of play.

Ngoma reenacts warriorship of a long past, a colonial past, and an apartheid past in its blended military aesthetic, but obscures the chronology. At the same time, ngoma blurs the line in the realm of affect between the performance of ulaka and its deep evocation. The case of Uzowotha and Zabiwe's dance raises the question of lines blurred also in the realm of action: in performance that obscures the difference between “mock violence and real vio-

lence,” is one acting upon the world, in response to social dynamics outside of the dance, or not?

A dance about violence does not inevitably become new violence, when based, as Argenti proposes, on a history of structures of violence. What keeps the dance on an aesthetic plane, as Lewis proposes, thereby securing the potential for repeated performances in reworked forms? What if ngoma dancers and their fans at times have been embroiled in the conflicts of Msinga, which in turn are interlaced with the politics of South Africa’s bloody political transition? The issue I encounter is whether contemporaneous struggle heightens the stakes around competitive military aesthetics, or qualitatively changes the relationships to past violence present in the dance (Argenti 2007) and to real violence inflicted within the process of performing (Lewis 1992).

Violence, Injury, and the Management of Danger

In 1991 and 1992 a major faction fight erupted between Uthuli lweZulu and Madulaneni, two wards (izigodi) on opposite sides of the Mooi River. Thirteen men were killed on one side, forty-five (they said) on the other. While skirmishes had occurred in the area intermittently, none had seen such a devastating altercation between two communities since the late 1950s.

The course the altercation took was shaped by practices of migrancy as well as by national political factors, local histories of internecine struggle, and possibly by personal grudges. Because men lived in the city—Johannesburg for most of them—and the rural homestead, and traveled frequently between the two places, so did the fighting. While both wards were IFP identified, as was the chiefdom as a whole, the national conflict between the African National Congress (ANC) and the IFP could be exploited for local purposes. Thus an assassination at a train station in Johannesburg, which looked like a revenge killing in the ongoing train vigilante attacks between IFP and ANC supporters, could in fact be an assassination in the dispute between Madulaneni and Uthuli lweZulu: an ANC hit man hired by IFP-identified men to kill an opponent in the opposing (IFP-identified) ward of the same chiefdom.

The vendetta rekindled an old animosity of times that had passed but that had not been forgotten. Men who as children had had fathers jailed for participating in the fight of 1957 now as adults found themselves caught up in a new altercation. But the vendetta was also prompted by other struggles. For example, conflicts between taxi fleet owners over turf in metropolitan hubs could spread along the network of transportation routes. While not all taxis

were linked to the major fleet owners, the ways that stark differences were sometimes settled between major fleet owners became at times a model for the violent behavior of others. Minivan taxi drivers and owners, who ran the staple public transport nationwide, had their own entrepreneurial struggles, some of which were waged violently.²⁰ So it happened that a struggle over the control of a local taxi route flared up also into a factional altercation between these two izigodi, sparked by the bullet that hit Dudu.

Some local taxis were owned by men who also happened to be policemen, or who were friends of policemen. Thus it happened that law and order were not equitably maintained when it came to local public transportation and the protection of citizens' various interests. This didn't appear unprecedented to local community members, for, fomented through years of apartheid state practices, some police became incorporated into a culture of corruption (and so the ngoma chant that voices suspicion of the motives of the police). Other police learned to turn a blind eye to criminality that supported their cause: the violence fomented by avid IFP supporters during the transition period was fueled and backed by state support, including by colluding police.²¹

On the ground during this torrid transitional period, 1991–92, in this pocket of the Mchunu chiefdom, the erupting conflict between the wards of Madulaneni and Uthuli lweZulu made the everyday precarious.

A gunshot, in the early morning, aimed at Zanaso's house. He escapes through a window. Nothing happens.²²

A gunshot, fired from somewhere, from over there, in broad daylight, 30 August 1992. Kids scurry for cover under the thatched eaves of the nearest round house.

Dusk. A pink tracer colors the sky but fizzles and fades like a firecracker that failed to burst into a sparkling chrysanthemum.

Pitch darkness, 17 April 1992. We drive to a nighttime engagement party (ukuqoma) over the hill, across the way from the other izigodi. The road is rotten. Dust, stones, rocks, clumps of grass—it is a semblance of a home-made single-lane road. We don't turn the headlights on. The car leading the way is carrying rifles in the back, I learn later.

At the party, teenagers squeeze into a round house. A single candle glimmers. The boy and his brothers bring gifts from his family to the girl and her sisters. The sisters tie beads around the boy's neck, a red band around his head. Boys and men take turns to dance in a space just big enough to lift a leg, to kick, and to swivel. There is singing, laughing, clapping of a groove

for dancing. By the time of the return journey, the moon has risen, making it easier to see the road.

At a nubility rite (*umemulo*), 19 April 1992, girls sing and dance in the radiant sunlight. Mothers look on. Men interject chants. Friends socialize. From the top of the hill above the house a guard scans the valley through binoculars. Halfway up the hill, four young men watch, their rifles propped up against the rocks. They stand guard in shifts. A couple wear trench coats. One sports a fedora cocked low on his brow.

A woman visits her natal kin across the river. Her father-in-law demands that she stay there, then, till all this ends. Might she not otherwise return with dangerous muthi (herbs) from the other side?²³

Another four men are gunned down near the trade store, the bottle store, the tea room, the gas pump, the taxi rank, on the main road. One today, one last week, one yesterday, one ten days ago.

The police at Tugela Ferry are doing nothing, Enoch says. The police at Greytown are doing nothing.

Mothers keep vigil for their fallen sons, wives for their husbands, 28 August 1992. Women wrapped in blankets for the wintry cold, sitting on grass mats around the circumference of the room, waiting out the passing of the dead. *Impepho* smolders on a plate, its fragrant smoke showing the spirit its way. Denga, the sentry, a rifle slung over his shoulder, closes the door as we leave. It is already dark outside.

We head up the road to Siyazi's house, where the family has gathered in the kitchen. Siyazi's father, veteran of the 1957 altercation, sits on a chair just inside the doorway. Ready, he holds a spear, its blade pockmarked with rust and indentations. His knuckles are bulbous; his hands crevassed. "Welcome," he says, the guard inviting us in. His family is warming themselves in the kitchen, where the hearth fire flickers and crackles, and lights up the room a little. Its stinging smoke hovers under the blackened thatch roof. His daughter-in-law is cooking. The girls are helping. The boys are watching the fire. "How are you, father?" I ask the old man. His eyes are troubling him, he says, not much vision left. His cataracts are clouding over his pupils.

In Johannesburg, Muzi is killed at a train station; someone targets Enoch as he enters the factory premises; the gun fails to fire. Men lose their jobs. (You stay away when they hunt you.) Some men temporarily move their residences to other Johannesburg locations. Six men walk in the city, two by two by two. A gunman follows them.

A stranger rings the doorbell, 11 November 1992. He's carrying an acoustic guitar case. "Who are you? What is your name? Where do you come from? Where do you live?" asks Siyazi. The stranger wants to visit the renter in a room in the backyard. Siyazi insists that he open his guitar case. There is a guitar inside.

The team from esiPongweni stops dancing outside Jeppe hostel on Sunday afternoons. One evening Siyazi calls a meeting: let's dance. The young men want to resume, same time, usual place (more or less), they say. Once or twice a trickle of a team practices outside the hostel.

Siyazi alights from the taxi at the bridge rather than at his final destination, George Goch hostel where he sometimes stays. He walks around to slip in at the back. Another man alights from a taxi just before it reaches the hostel. He is shot. Zanaso ventures out to check who the victim is.

Two independent faction fights are raging through the hostel. Groups of men sleep armed, I'm told.²⁴

At Diepkloof hostel in Soweto, Mthandeni's brother is shot in the leg. Perhaps it was a hit from the other side. Perhaps it was a *tsotsi* (good-for-nothing petty criminal).

A free music festival in a downtown park, 26 September 1992.²⁵ Army security has parked a hippo (armored vehicle) adjacent to the crowd, in case of unrest in this time of political transition. Umzansi Zulu Dancers takes to the stage. Siyazi steps up to the microphone, raises his arms, and resolutely sings his opening phrase. It is out of tune. His voice wavers. But everything turns out to be all right. After their appearance, they leave. Gone. They don't use public transport. I'm told later that men from the other side had waited at the taxi rank.

En route from a city hostel to visit a township, Sifiso and Langa carry their pistols. The police begin to arrest them for carrying illegal firearms. They pay the police and continue on their journey.

Siyazi and I idle downtown while the guitarist runs upstairs to fetch the concertina player, 23 November 1992. "Please park across the road under the lights," requests Siyazi.

At Downtown Studios, producer West Nkosi postpones the recording sessions for Umzansi Zulu Dancers. The receptionist reports two women came asking for Siyazi. "Beware women," Siyazi says. "They sometimes reconnoiter for their men."

Four men in a Mercedes pull up at the hostel. Siyazi is speaking on the



A woman offers condolences by adding coins to a plate, esiPongweni, 1992.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

pay phone at the hostel entrance. He fires in their direction. He hits a hubcap. They leave.

Friends and fellow musicians Thembiseni and Siyazi share a room in a Plein Street flat, eight stories up in downtown Johannesburg. One Sunday Siyazi comes home. The flat is bare. Thembiseni has suddenly cleared out. Even the bag of bullets is gone. Friends from another isigodi burst in. "Come now," they say, "right now, hurry." In the street downstairs Uzowotha is already positioned on one corner with his pistol, while a second sniper waits at the other. The friends from the other isigodi escort Siyazi out. They drive him to the suburbs. They deposit him outside his brother's house. "Our job is done," they declare. "One more thing," he says from the sidewalk. "Give me your gun." It is passed through the car window. They zoom off.

You know Thembiseni is from Madulaneni. (How would you handle the pressure?)

Nkosi (chief) Simakade Mchunu calls a meeting, 1 March 1992, as he has before in times of trouble. He travels from his homestead in Msinga to Johannesburg. The chairman of the headmen's council (*induna enkulu*), the head-

men (*izinduna*), the city representatives of the headmen, heads of households (*iziqongqa*), the ngoma leadership (*amagoso*), dignitaries, and men of authority who are resident in Johannesburg gather in a hall in a hostel.

Nkosi Mchunu had good reason to worry and wisdom to draw upon. He understood deeply the potential for devastation, given the histories over which new violence played during his decades-long chiefdom. Through the 1980s in Msinga's Thukela Valley, struggles for local power were waged as clan warfare, and this clan warfare, undergirded with struggles for access to space and resources, intersected with state violence (Capfarm Trust reports 1975–93, in “All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016; Jonathan Clegg 1981; Malan 1990). While fighting was once waged through direct confrontation, with the proliferation of guns in the area, by the 1980s “roving bands of assassins” fought with firearms and by means of arson (Clegg 2010). With the valley roiling from violence and tensions simmering, state powers intervened. In 1984 the minister of police established a special police unit in Msinga, posting a riot squad at Tugela Ferry, 16 kilometers north of Keates Drift; a year later the minister of justice, the Natal judge president, and Msinga's magistrate flew over the area to assess the devastation (“All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016; Creina Alcock, personal communication). Homesteads and in some places communities had been razed. With tensions still high two years later, the South African Defense Force moved into the area for two months in an attempt to stop further turbulence (“All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016).²⁶ Patrolling helicopters flew overhead. Helicopters were also used in subsequent flare-ups to rout out trouble makers (“All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016).²⁷

This 1980s volatility rekindled former animosities, stemming from histories of difference in which Nkosi Mchunu held a stake (“All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016; Jonathan Clegg 1981; Malan 1990). In 1957 a clash between the Zulu and Mchunu clans culminated in a shoot-out on the Keates Drift bridge, where eighteen men lost their lives (Clegg 1984); in 1944 the Mthembu and Mchunu had fought over tribal boundaries (“All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016).²⁸ Both these struggles can be traced back to a bitter dispute over the succession to the chiefdom in 1935, which temporarily rent the chiefdom in two. Men had also fought over regency claims to the Mchunu chiefdom in 1922. In addition, in 1922 Tembu-Mabaso and Tembu-Majozi altercations set a precedent within Msinga for an ideology of vengeance and a mode of intertribal political interaction, especially concerning land disputes (Jonathan Clegg 1981).

From the Union of South Africa through the apartheid era, internecine fighting as well as managing the related problems of encroaching white agriculture and then intensifying segregation policies meant that Msinga had long been “one epicenter of conflict” in KwaZulu-Natal (Carton and Morrell 2012, 50).²⁹ There were various repercussions, one being that guns became readily accessible in Msinga through the twentieth century, making it a “center of the [illegal] gun trade” (Capfarm Trust Report, May 1983, in “All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016). In fact “considerable numbers” of firearms have been in the possession of the Zulu since the 1870s (Laband 2009, 174). Not only have guns been brought into the region, but Msinga has produced its own illegal stock. It has been known for its manufacture of homemade single-shot weapons (Clegg 2010).³⁰

On 12 July 1992, Nkosi Mchunu summons the men to a second meeting.

Death, injury, escape from injury, and weapons are a component of the everyday; danger, the threat of violence, and fear and bravado are “ordinary affects” (Stewart 2007) woven from the threads of everyday life in zones of conflict (Das et al. 2000). When official institutions designed to control violence are insufficient, when the reach, degree, spread, integration, and mobility of violence, as well as the multiplicity of its sources, networks, and forms, leave the state incapacitated, citizens develop practices of danger management through alternative institutions, communal organization, and personal commitments. Citizens implicated in violence manage the threat to their sense of moral order and to the order of their daily lives through discourse about violence, through performance, and through action.

For seven years (1992–99) after a truce mediated by Nkosi Mchunu, the teams don’t dance together at home at Christmastime.

By the eighth year, key culprits in the assassination of Dudu, prize dancer, are no longer present in the community. One is jailed. Two have died. At Johnny Clegg’s prompting, the teams stage a collective dance in the school grounds at esiPongweni, 28 December 2000. Johnny has gifted springbok pelts as matching amabeshu (back aprons) to ten senior dancers. He travels down to dance. He brings a film crew. The crowd shimmers with excitement. The dancing is magnificent. Uzowotha attends. He mingles with the crowds, socializing discreetly. He is not dressed to perform. Some man appears with a gun. He is run off the premises, and the festive event continues.

In the ninth year (2001) and the tenth year (2002), the teams don’t dance together at home at Christmastime.

In the eleventh year (2003), after much discussion, persuasion, diplomacy,

and negotiation among the team captains, the teams stage a collective dance on the grounds of Madulaneni. Eleven years after the altercation and Dudu's assassination, on 26 December 2003, on his home turf, Uzowotha steps out to dance. Uzowotha is a "floor-crosser," some say; he was paid off for information on the whereabouts of people targeted for assassination in his former ward, some say. At one time a resident of esiPongweni, he moved away from his family to live in Madulaneni. Because he grew up with Zabiwe and their age-mates, he knows the ins and outs of their community. He knows who is who, where is where. His finger can accurately point out a target.

Upon his success in Europe dancing with Johnny Clegg and Savuka in the later 1980s, Dudu purchased a brand-new truck.³¹ He erected a towering green water tank at his homestead. He installed a generator. He bordered his property with a fence topped with rows of barbed wire. He built square brick houses with tiled roofs and gutters for two of his wives. Alongside the gatepost he pinned a metal sign: "Paris." He married a third time. Once a destitute child, then a youth with only a mother for family, then a young man with the barest minimum of property, now Dudu, prize dancer, flower of the community, friend of many, the emblem of a better future, the sign of overwhelming success, brought his wealth back home. Hear the jangle of his indondo (cowbell). Hear the women ululate. Why was he not forewarned? Why the absence of a tip-off? Did jealousies leave him unprotected? Is Dudu's success as a dancer implicated in his assassination?

After fourteen years of absence, when Uzowotha steps out to dance, staged pandemonium breaks out around him. In a split second, Bongiseni from Uthuli lweZulu breaks out and poses, kneeling center stage with his stretched right leg and stick pointing forward, dead still, tensed and ready to compete. Zabiwe follows suit. He rushes out, postures. Kneeling, stick held erect, upper body as supple as a reptile, he wipes his face and chest in a gesture marking that he's hot as a dancer. He's made his point and he retreats. Uzowotha is still holding his pose staunchly in front of the team. A dancer stamps his feet from his seated position in the front row of the team. Women pitch piercing iterations, taut jittering vibrations, liquid warblings, and shout-outs into the arena. Mboneni rises to his haunches, watching for an opening. Langalakhe attempts a quick kick and stamp. Igoso Shezi prevents him. With Shezi busy, Uzowotha kicks. Zabiwe zips out again. Soldiers are calling for Zabiwe, jabbing the air with their index fingers. "Gqogiya bahaye!" they shout, using his dance name. While rubbing his chest he mock-begins a sequence, withholding the kick, artfully taunting. Thabo tries

to break in from the left side. Sizwe darts in from the right side. Igoso Shezi zigzags from side to side, pushing the posturing dancers back into the mass of the team, blasting directives on his whistle, pointing “no” to dancers out of his immediate reach. Dancers rupturing the order of the team push its coherence to the limit. Shezi is countering their provocations with vigilant austerity, trying to clear the way for a one-on-one encounter.

Uzowotha steps out when his own team’s igoso is in charge. Shezi lets the captain of Dudu’s former team dance: Zabiwe dances. Shezi holds the space open for Uzowotha and Zabiwe to dance. It is a good match, for Zabiwe and Uzowotha are age-mates who used to dance with one another. Furthermore, a good leader is “attuned to local . . . politics, he can use this to advantage with the dance aesthetic, he can push the dancers to the utmost extremes before they’ll actually fight each other, because he understands who doesn’t get on with you and he’ll *qhata*’ [sic] them, he’ll bait them. He knows that so-and-so hit so-and-so . . . and he says OK and gives them a chance to symbolically fight it out, and he’ll put them in, he’ll *qhata* them” (Clegg 1984, 68).³²

Zabiwe takes up his position on the far right of the team, Uzowotha on the left. Both teams are providing the soundtrack to which the dancers dance. Dudu’s friends and former teammates chant the pariah Uzowotha’s praise name to solicit a better performance from him, just as they do for Zabiwe. Uzowotha saunters some distance from the team. He kicks as if warming up. He rolls up the leg of his shorts on his left (kicking) leg. Zabiwe is watching him from his side, pacing about, sticking out his chest, playing also to the audience. He edges forward. He increases his speed. He’s dancing in the middle of the arena, center front of the team. A left kick and stamp, a spin, the preparation for a right kick. But no, he surprises. He lifts only his knee, shoots his right arm skyward instead, falls backward as if in slow motion. Uzowotha drives forward, a bulldozer with oiled gears and greased wheels, a massive engine humming. (He is pitting his power against Zabiwe’s cunning.) He half-raises a straight leg. The ground shudders as he stamps even with half the height. He swivels, stamps with a bent leg, swivels. He omits the final kick and stamp. He already seems low to the ground and he’s moving fast. He falls.

A cheeky light-footed youth shoots out from the back of the team to take to the floor. He kicks and stamps. Amasosha shout at him to get out of the way. Shezi whistles, sends him back. Shezi holds his hand up to stop his dancers who want to take to the floor. His vice captain assists him on the left flank, where amasosha are bristling to break in.

For his second sequence, Zabiwe starts from a new position, right next to the drums, right in front of the team, on Uzowotha's side. As he gets into position he cocks his head, holds his ear and gestures: *Do you hear what I'm saying (with my dance)?* In rapid-fire succession, he kicks high and stamps hard three times. He jumps, knees high. He dives forward, catching his fall on his hands. He bounces up; his biceps are springs. As his body floats to the ground again, he rubs his chest in the dust. He hits the ground with his hand as he gets up. He stamps the ground with his foot as he kneels. He stands. He kicks. He stamps. He falls. Quickly he gets up to move away. It's a fake. Like a flash he turns and slices the air with a final offbeat kick. Yes! A cascading fall.

Uzowotha delays not a moment. He kicks and stamps with the power of thunder, delays a second kick with footwork and a turning body to kick and stamp with the right foot. Two more left kicks and dense stamps, another extension, another turn, another right-foot thwack. He falls fast and hard.

Mndeni leaps up and races forward to dance. Makheyi charges in from the side. Iphini (vice captain) Ngongoma struggles to control him, but Makheyi will have none of it. Zabiwe has posed on his knees again out in front of the team to hold his place in the competition while dancers jump in to try to take the floor. Shezi whistles, zigzags, points, gestures. Young men from all three participating teams are breaking loose. Shezi borrows his iphini's sjambok. Under his flicking whip, the youths reseal themselves. But Makheyi is still fired up at the edge of the arena. He paws. He puffs out his chest. He fixes his gaze. He stamps. Iphini Ngongoma notices. He admonishes him. Still Makheyi attempts to retake center stage. Shezi blocks his way. With the focus of an eagle, Zabiwe is already swooping into the center from his side of the arena for his third sequence.

Zabiwe clasps a sneaker. He begins the forward curve of his torso that cues a kick preparation, a hint of a movement to come that he instead curtails. He backs up, he moves in for a furious lightning kick and stamp, a second one (Bafo is charging in from the side again), a florid turn (Bafo is preparing to kick). Zabiwe hurls the sneaker into the sky (Shezi blocks Bafo with an arm-wrestling lock from behind). Zabiwe cascades down.

Uzowotha is a spinning top, turning between his three left kicks and stamps. Then he pumps his arms like a boxer — right, left, right — he quarter-turns and races away from the team toward the audience. He kicks with all his bulldozer might. In a blink he's flat on his back on the ground. He rises. He saunters back to join his teammates.

Shezi whistles long calls. He draws the dancers' attention. He gestures to



Zabiwe Makhanya, Madulaneni, 26 December 2003. FROM VIDEO TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR.

them to sit, tight, close. The dancers are noisy. The crowd is noisy. Shezi begins a song to end the set.

Zabiwe's encounter with Uzowotha is a responsible act of manhood as understood in local terms. To dance against Uzowotha is in part an act of regularizing social relationships. Uzowotha got lucky, some said. He escaped injury or incarceration during a faction fight that ended before his opponents could avenge Dudu's death. With a truce declared, there was no point in targeting him, for it would only start the fighting up again, some said. So it was simply "not his time." He remains a member of the community at large. Dancing against Uzowotha reintegrates him into the multiteam dance and thereby into the fabric of the larger dance community. "Well," says Zabiwe three years later, "as igoso [of esiPongweni's team], I must make him welcome," so they danced, just like they used to dance together. In the midst of struggle, life must go on (Das and Kleinman 2001). Community members must find ways to live together.

The seeming nonchalance of recognizing that Uzowotha got lucky—and now we will dance with him—is not a redemptive move in which his former opponents leave their anger behind and forget an injurious past event. Rather, the dance offers an opportunity to activate anger within the space and the practice of a dance that draws upon the generative and creative form of ulaka and on the military aesthetic of the warrior-soldier. In a dance in which aesthetically strong performance draws from the dancer's reservoir of anger, dancing with Uzowotha ignites something of the past feeling. In so doing, the dancers do unnamed, unspoken memory work. Zabiwe's dance memorializes Dudu within the safe confines of a competitive aesthetic practice that is about warrior-soldiering but in which there is no apparent judging and no public declaration that this is in part a performance about the past. The performance activates the tensions of the past as a memory in the present. A temporal punctuation in an otherwise blurred warrior-soldier chronology, and biographic specificity within a collective history, this insertion into the present enhances the drama of the aesthetics of the dance moment while at the same time making it possible to live with a person who some felt had done them wrong. Argenti proposes that the way that the past animates the Cameroonian grassfields dance in the present guarantees the "perpetual return" of the past, "its futurity." This futurity "transform[s] the claustrophobic oppression of the past into recurring experiences of possible futures," by creating "forms of ecstatic, liberatory revelation" out of "incorporations of past

terror and violence” (Argenti 2007). Ngoma’s dance is less a revelatory case than an opportunity to manage the present in order to secure a better future.

When the scale of violence reaches a level within which the law cannot (or does not) always take its full course and order is not necessarily equitably maintained, men on the ground use their own forms of authority to sustain their community: everyday life must proceed with as much normality as possible in abnormal conditions of violence and struggle. The dance leadership allows the Uzowotha-Zabiwe competition to happen, and they facilitate and control its process, drawing on the principles of dance organization.

Is this a process of reconciliation by means of the arts or simply a moment of good aesthetics? In the end, one can’t be sure, at least not for everyone participating in the moment. And this is part of the point. Ambiguity that appears to be a problem analytically is in fact the point politically. The fact that the memory is there, hovering in the present, animated but unnamed; the fact that the moment is kept in balance as an aesthetic moment, always with the potential for spinning out of control as a social moment; the fact that Zabiwe’s is a responsible act of manhood, for he memorializes his brother, and also a daring move because he refuses to forget: the presence of memory, the risk of imbalance, and the potential for ethical masculine anger to turn heighten the drama of the event. Yet only the uncertain interpretation of these dualities makes it possible to present the politics at all. Is it not just a dance? Is it necessarily memorialization? Is it really in control? That there is no requirement for anything to be said and that these dualities remain unarticulated enable the transformation to take place. In other words, with the capacity of the dance to be always at once variously interpreted, it can fulfill the role of reintegrating Uzowotha into the dance community.³³ To reintegrate him in a context where there could only be a singular interpretation of the moment would ask too much compromise of his opponents and friends. To narrate that this is an act of reintegration, for example, by framing it with public rhetoric or in fact with discussion at all would likely disable the process. The significance of the moment must remain up for grabs by being presented seamlessly, as if slipped into the flow of things, worked into the groove of communal life, by no one in particular.

A politics of reconciliation avoids reproducing violence in the moment while it enables enough healing to move forward, to deal with the present, as it is and will be. The aporetic of *umzansi ngoma*, fleeting and opaque, enables such reconciliatory politics within an aesthetic that is animated by the

principle of accepting (and savoring) nonresolution. If competition without final judgment cultivates *ulaka*, its irresolution enables the use of *ulaka* for social ends. The ambiguity in the public outcome produces a positive form of silence. This is not silence as secrecy, but silence as an enabling necessity. The instrumentalization of the arts in the interests of recovering ordinary social relations is not compromised by the semiotic ambiguity that aesthetics presents (Samuels 2004). Indeed, perhaps such instrumentalization is rather made possible.

Ulaka can become a fully lived quality of a responsible man. A few years after the conflict ended—after the time *Siyazi* came home to their inner-city flat to find that *Thembiseni* had cleared out—*Thembiseni* moves to a hostel in Soweto. *Siyazi* shares a room with him again. Irresolution enables the continuation of affective male relationships against the odds.

When *Uzowotha* and *Zabiwe* dance, the significance eludes the attention of the film crew. A two-person team is filming a feature on *ngoma* for broadcast on SABC TV, with *Siyazi*'s narrative as the film's hook (du Plessis 2004). The team leaders and members of their teams are delighted by the crew's presence for the exposure national television promises. No one points out *Uzowotha* and *Zabiwe*'s dance to the film crew.

25 December 1996, esiPongweni

Young boys in their new Christmas clothes sit on their haunches, as close to the dance team as they can get. They edge their way closer and closer as the afternoon proceeds.

The newest team members have danced one-one.

The young team members have danced one-one.

The next peer group dances.

Some boys parrot the dancers' movements on the side, learning their sequences.

Then come the senior dancers.

First *Khetho*, then *Funise* flashes and thunders.

Dust. *Mndeni*'s sandal flies skyward.

The boys on their haunches scrunch their faces up. They wipe the dust out of their eyes.

Then *Funise*, *Mhlonishwa*, *Zama*.

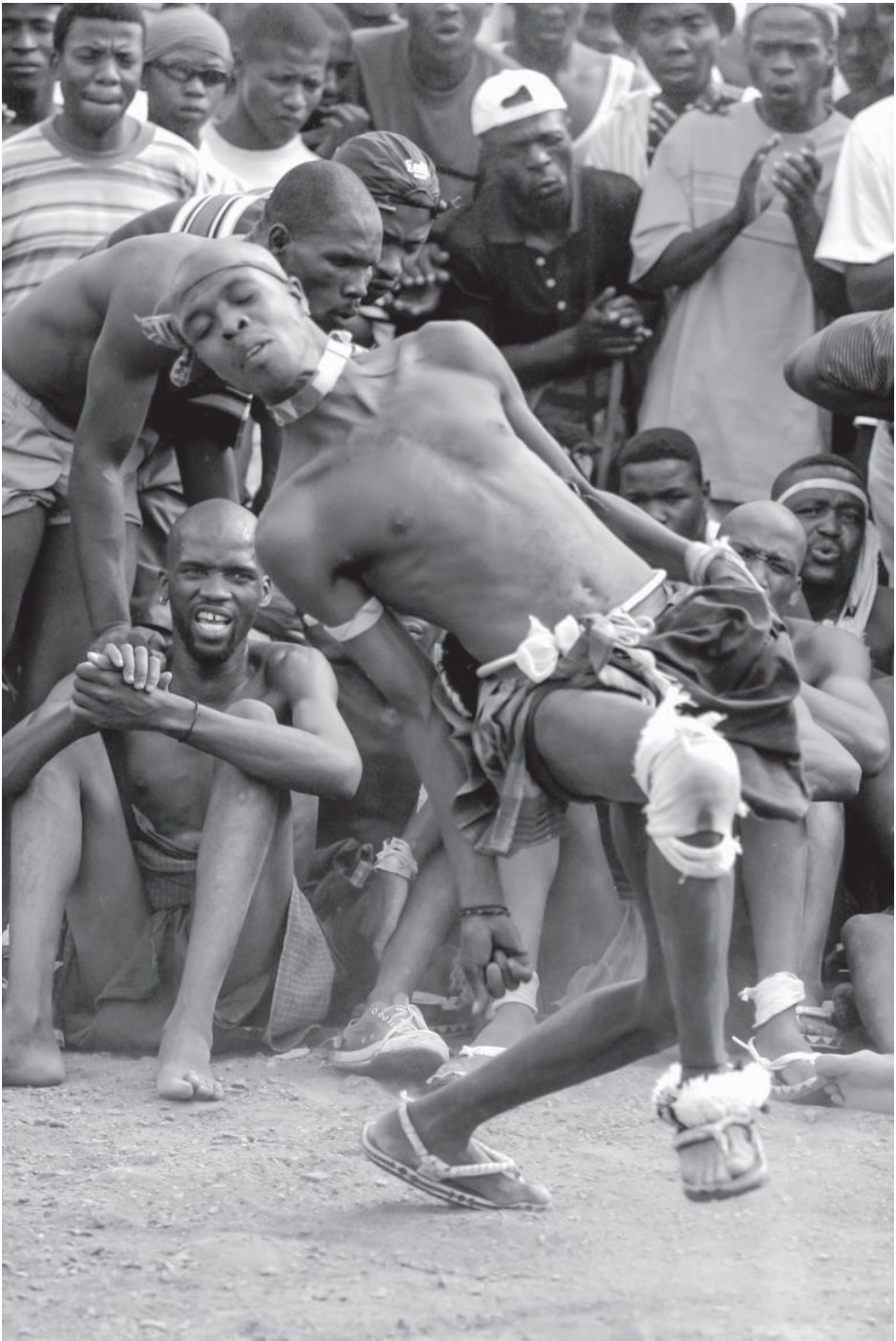
A temporal gap.

Igoso *Siyazi* spots *Sono* among the boys. He pulls him into the arena to

dance with the men. Young Sono dances. His spindly legs fly about. The team chants the dance name of Dudu, Sono's late father: "Usizi, we Usizi, Usizi! [Destitution, hey, Destitution, Destitution!]"³⁴ Sono gets the beat right. Siyazi pats him on the back as he leaves center stage.

Khetho thunders again. "Gqi!"

Dust.



Fika Zulu, esiPongweni, 25 December 2003. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Mpando Mdlalose dances *umqashiyo* at a *memulo*, 27 December 1992.
PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

4 / / / TO QUELL THE DANCER'S DUST

Singing Violence during South Africa's Transition

Sometimes, you lessen your pace and diminish your stridence, telling a story in order for it to be heard. Sometimes you drive toward dancing.

25 December 1991, esiPongweni

Zabiwe begins to rev the team up, checking this, trying that, preparing for one-one competition. First, a line of a song considered a standard: “Ngizwile mina ngizwile le,” he sings. The chorus answers.

Zabiwe repeats the heralding call, and the chorus extends the line, adding upper harmonies as the phrase descends in contour. “Ngizwile besikhomba phesheya besibuza indlela we mantombazane [I hear we are pointing over there on the other side; we are asking the way, young girls].” This song fragment repeated twice is Zabiwe’s emblematic entry, for its soaring melody displays his spectacular ringing voice. He has announced himself. Now where will he take the form?

Without missing a beat, he introduces contrast: rhythm, register, phrase length, and lyric direction shift. “Ashay’i-AK-47 [They are firing an AK-47],” he sings, throwing in an offbeat accent.

“Ashay’ i-AK-47,” rejoins the team.

Zabiwe moves on. He must work the song form until it topples over into a dance groove.

“Let us go home. Let’s go home to our fathers,” he calls in Zulu.¹ The cascading melody reproduces the pitch register and phrase length of the open-

ing, lending melodic variation within an evolving form. A constant underlying pulse seams the song fragments together. His team completes the sentence: “because there is too much danger in this place.”

Next, while word repetition creates musical asymmetry, a feeling of the phrase tripping over itself, the text emphatically develops the theme. “Sizohamba phezu kwegazi, kwegazi [We are walking over blood, and over more blood],” they bemoan.

It is December 1992. Madulaneni and Uthuli lweZulu’s faction fight has just subsided, and the politics of South Africa’s transition is producing turmoil in the streets, especially around the hostels. What might this violence add to ngoma’s grace, to the art of necessary improvisation?

“Cool down, *malume* [uncles]!” the dancers continue.

“Let us go home. Let’s go home to [the safety of] our fathers.”

“Uncles” references the amaBhaca, who split from the Zulu clan when they fled from Shaka early in the nineteenth century and settled south in an area that became the Eastern Cape. Hence the reference to relatives. AmaBhaca represented a complicated political subject at Keates Drift. As Zulu kin, historically, who were living in an area of the country strongly aligned with the ANC and amaXhosa, they appeared antagonistic to Zulu migrants while they were also like them. To some, amaBhaca were betrayers who had turned on their own people in the ANC-IFP struggle.

Elders interrupt Zabiwe with an organizational matter. Frustrated soldiers fill up pauses with shout-outs to their song leader, using one of his dance names. “Two pull! Two pull! Two pull! Two pull!” ricochets around the group with mounting agitation.

With the elders’ matter settled, Zabiwe exploits the dancers’ spontaneous polyphony for musical effect by singing out over their calls to him: “Someone gave you a pumpkin but you don’t have a cooking pot.” The fragment is not from their core repertoire: a new melody and a fresh ephemeral turn. A textual allusion from a proverb redirects the narrative and references to violence disappear.

Zabiwe snatches another line from the opening song: “Hey, girls, girls.” He is spicing the familiar with the new, grounding the new in the popular.

“Ushele uqonywe masakazi [Woo someone, and you will be accepted as a lover],” Zabiwe sings.

The gendered formula is a passing gesture. Overlapping with the teams’ response, Zabiwe returns to the narrative stridence of “Ashay’i-ak-47.” Equal

in length to the preceding line, “Ushele uqonywe masakazi,” and rhythmically similar, the phrase effects a seamless musical transition. He repeats the phrase a few times, overlapping with his team’s responses, till the dancers rock their torsos side to side and swivel their shoulders with the beat. A catchy groove has clotted perfectly. The choristers ride it for a while.

With a contrapuntal melody rippling over the groove, Zabiwe addresses the present directly:

Zabiwe: Ayadubula amaZulu [Zulus are shooting]

Soldiers: *Ashay’i-AK-47*

Zabiwe: Ayadubula amaZulu

Soldiers: *Ashay’i-AK-47*

Zabiwe: Ayadubula amaXhosa [Xhosas are shooting]

Soldiers: *Ashay’i-AK-47*

Zabiwe: Ayadubula amaXhosa

Soldiers: *Ashay’i-AK-47*

Zabiwe: Ayadubula amaBhaca [Bhacas are shooting]

Soldiers: *Ashay’i-AK-47*

Zabiwe: Ayadubula amaBhaca

Soldiers: *Ashay’i-AK-47*

“Half White!” exhorts an animated dancer, acknowledging Zabiwe with another of his nicknames, as they keep repeating the above call-and-response pattern.

Eventually the dancers begin clapping to the beat of their sung cycle. The drummer kicks in with the pickup. Soon invigorated singer-soldiers whistle through their teeth, their shrill polyphony spearing the throbbing texture of the clapping and drumming. Zabiwe has effectively stoked the team for one-one dancing. Cowbells clang as competitors rise and rush out of their cluster to stake a claim on the dance floor.

Singer-soldiers insert remarks on current events into the stream of a narrative in the course of building an aesthetic form. Referential and formal processes are often simultaneously at work. When a phrase repeats, creating a groove, dancers might listen or half-listen to its narrative content, or perhaps they apprehend the cycle as a component of a musical form, disregarding its semantic reference. Experiences of violence are present in the flow of things, embedded in the dance groove. *Ashay’i-AK-47*. Politics bleeds through into performance and seeps into the texture of ngoma sound.

Performances of pugilistic aesthetics contain a tension between repre-



Mfundiseni Dlamini, esiPongweni, December 1991. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

senting the difficult social worlds from which they arise and contributing to the aggression within those worlds. Is ngoma's dance arena, like capoeira's *roda* (play space), the boxing ring, and the wrestling gym, formative or potentially transformative for those who find passion in participating? Do these "pugilistic vocations" represent a "school of morality, in Durkheim's sense of the word" that disciplines men for better living (Wacquant 2004, 15), a retreat but with an osmotic relationship to the world of the streets (Wesolowski 2015), or a "phenomenology of commemoration" that reminds performers of a (violent) past (Downey 2005, 116)? As "meaning making" practices, they might help people "mediate the injuries of racial, class, and gender hierarchies" but without changing those hierarchies (Trimbur 2013, 147), or they might create a space of possibility "open to the future, since it can be continuously defined and redefined in conformity with new cultural needs" (Lewis 1992, 219). The relationship of the world of competitive camaraderie in performance to the tensions of the world around the dance arena, specifically national political violence, hinges on the experience, expressivity, and agency of the singing dancing body as a warrior figure. I focus here on how performers finesse the inevitable imbrication of national politics in ngoma by means of the techniques they select and nuances they improvise. The shape

of statements they choose lends insight into the resonance of the analyses of Wacquant, Wesolowski, Downey, Lewis, and Trimbur for ngoma.

Dancing into Violence

While multiple factors remind one that ngoma is not real violence, it is by force of circumstance implicated in processes of violence. National politics, waged violently during South Africa's transitional years through noisy mobile bodies, and ngoma performance, expressing in motion and sound the experiences and perspectives of its practitioners, were at once intricately and loosely connected.

16 October 1992, Johannesburg

Commissioner Street, cutting through the center of the city, pulsates with singing dancing men, and a few women, moving from the migrant hostels in the east to John Vorster Square in the west. The resonance of male voices in chorus hovers between the high-rises. The throng seethes toward John Vorster Square, waves of Zulu song overlapping with other songs, bands of men surging forward. Hear the buzz of a moving crowd, of people way behind and far in front, the buzz under the hovering resonance; in between, the presence of individual voices passing by in song; the sound of feet accenting beats, now driving forward, now dancing on the spot, then driving forward again; the crack of each marcher's stick hitting his tough leather shield as he punctuates the sound between sung phrases; the strident call of a lead singer.

"We, Mandela loyo [Hey, you, Mandela]," he sings out.

"Wakhipha wathi unezinsizwa woza! [You say you have strong soldiers, well then, come!]" sings the band of men he leads.

"We, Sisulu lo [Hey, you, Sisulu]."²

"You are being obstinate. You say you have men—come then, you prostitute, come!" challenge the men in their repeating cycles of song.

Ululations reverberate. Whistles cut through teeth; higher, lower, far, near, long, clipped; shrill spurts dart across the soundscape. An *icilongo* (bugle) call announces the next band of men in the rear. Trilling metal whistles quiver. Yelping calls of a spirited marcher ring out from the middle of the crowd.

"The station commander of the police is fleeing; we are Inkatha Freedom Party; were you present when we were slicing off the balls of the leader [of our opponents]?" sings the next *impi* in Zulu.³

Coming up from behind, another lead singer, high, unwavering, doubled

in fourths, and echoed by his men: “Even though it’s difficult, we’re holding steadfast; we agreed because we are men, we agreed [that we have to go out and fight, holding steadfast].”

“Move on!” shouts a marcher in Zulu through a megaphone. “You’re holding up those following you — my men, move forward!”

Behind him, men chant percussively as a marcher rushes about in the space between the *izimpi* (bands of men), hitting his shield with his stick, performing frenzy, kicking and stamping.

His impi chants a traditional battle cry repeatedly: “Bayozila njalo, bayozila njalo, wathinta thina bayozila njalo.”⁴ Interjections pepper the sound. Exclamations spur on the next soldier rushing out, performing the warrior’s preparedness for battle. As ngoma adds grace to national politics, is its grace contaminated or reduced by violence? Is this an inescapable cost for the amplification of ngoma’s voice?

“Push forward! Hurry up!” a marshal orders.

Singers surge ahead. I greet a *maskandi* (Zulu guitarist) I know from DownTown Studios, singing, flowing forward faster than I. I greet Bongani, the organizer of a music show that had been staged in George Goch hostel the previous night. I greet Sydney from Uthuli lweZulu, who lives in the suburbs of the city, as he dances by in his warrior outfit. I greet others as they lunge into my microphone to sing a lyric fragment at it.

“A person has died,” a passing band sings.

“But he still shakes,” blurts one marcher into my microphone.

“Touch his eye, [check if] he is still blinking,” he sings, blending back into his team as they dance onward.

Another chant arises, one incanted in moments of felt empowerment. Tight, fast, gruff, bass drama: “Kwagijima iphoyisa, iphoyisa emasangweni, liyaphi? [The policeman is running, running up and down in front of the gates. Where is he going to?]”

“Liyaphi? Liyaphi? [Where is he going to? What is he coming to do?]” reiterates the group as it toyi-toyis forward, a fast-paced dance-marching with the rhythmic sounds of feet slapping the street, and sticks hitting shields adding percussion to the chant.

The leader calls.

“Liyaphi? Liyaphi? . . .” flows the group, as they march.

The men carry traditional weaponry (shields, knopkieries, and sticks) on this march through town to the infamous John Vorster prison. A marcher brandishes an iron rod. Another clutches a short spear. I see an axe. Many

men wear skins, headdresses, components of security guard, army, and police outfits. The marchers' goal is to deliver a petition against the pending state ruling that would ban traditional weapons in public and erect fencing around the hostels. The ruling had been prompted by public outcry against the recent killings and injuries by pangas, axes, and other sharp implements in rampages and riots that erupted out of rallies, political meetings, funerals, and protest marches.⁵

Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, leader of the IFP, marches alongside preachers in robes and *izinduna* (headmen) in ceremonial skins, at the head of the swarming dancing singing throng.

As a Zulu men's choral song and dance form that presents a military aesthetic, ngoma shares some stylistic features with Zulu political song and rally dance-marching. Lending ngoma's grace to national politics embroils performers in struggles, but it also potentially heightens their performances' affect in nonpolitical arenas (that is, performance contexts distinct from stagings associated with IFP institutions) and circulates ngoma's resonating presence beyond its core constituency. Yet violent outbreaks framed by performance may compromise ngoma's grace. These relationships among features of grace and forms of violence are neither direct nor inevitable.

6 September 1992, Johannesburg

TJ Lemon and I head out to a township where there is an IFP protest march in response to an ANC attack on an Inkatha funeral, of victims of ANC aggression in response to an Inkatha attack. We are still in the city when we run into returning Inkatha ralliers scurrying down the road. They carry shields, spears, fighting/dancing sticks, and an array of sharpened implements. There are guns. There is commotion. Three hundred meters down the road, a white civilian raises his pistol at the ralliers. Positioned beside his idling truck, he isn't noticed much, except by his son. It is a long moment until police come, then go again as the ralliers rush back into their two minivans. The police don't follow them back to their hostel.

We pass a soccer game as we follow the ralliers. TJ notes that this will be their next target. They charge the field, then the stands. (Later we learn they killed people.) They charge across the road to the trade store. A shopper is stabbed. (Later we find a bored army man guarding the corpse.) They rush back into their idling vehicles and head back to their hostel. At the hostel, women ululate in the courtyard. The band of men sing and dance.⁶



Inkatha Freedom Party march, Pretoria, 7 January 1994. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Inkatha Freedom Party rally, 1992. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

Inkatha had not always been a violent player, nor a political party, nor a presence in the areas around Johannesburg. It was conceived during the early 1970s as a cultural movement, not a political body. But it was puppeteered by the apartheid state into a deadly political program. The strategy was to generate a counterforce to the popular resistance aligned with the ANC / South African Communist Party–led liberation movement.⁷

In the 1980s, Inkatha's relationship with the state became increasingly formidable and structurally integrated, and its relationship with the ANC soured drastically. It turned to focus on regional consolidation and the production of Zulu political consensus, engendering that consensus rhetorically while also seeking it through physical threat. Over the course of the decade, the movement became inextricably and violently linked to state security organs. From these institutional ties it drew financial support, training, personnel, and protection while its members actively confronted the state's domestic opponents.

Concurrently, Inkatha leaders and supporters defined their opposition in increasingly ethnic terms, their rhetorical correlation between Xhosas and the ANC being the most prevalent essentialism. However, the enemy named by Buthelezi and the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelethini included Zulus who rejected Inkatha. Zulu Inkatha dissidents were hounded as traitors and witches (Maré 1993). As Buthelezi announced in a speech, "No one escapes being a member [of Inkatha] as long as he or she is a member of the Zulu nation" (quoted in Maré 1993, 75).⁸

Fueled by rhetoric and backed by the deadliest state institutions, Inkatha-related violence escalated dramatically. In Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal), rural areas were aligned with the IFP. Urban areas were ANC strongholds (Piper 2009). Confrontations, injuries, assassinations, arson, and rape occurred throughout the province. "Mayhem," "civil war," "wastelands," reported journalists, social scientists, and observers of the Natal midlands that bordered Msinga (Aitchison 1989; Howe 1993; Minnaar 1992).⁹

In the mid-1980s, the Natal midlands had the most drastic conflict. But by 1990, the worst violence spread onto the Witwatersrand. Here "the township war," as it was termed, raged predominantly between male hostels (which had become IFP strongholds) and informal settlements (ANC strongholds). Eventually it spread into the city centers of Johannesburg, and Durban and Pietermaritzburg, the major towns in Natal. Violence on the Witwatersrand was at its most drastic from 1991 to 1993.¹⁰

At the same time, the transition years from the release of Mandela and the



Funeral for members of the Inkatha Freedom Party, KwaZulu-Natal, 1992.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

unbanning of the ANC and other wings of the liberation movement (1990) to the first democratic elections (1994) was a period of intense political negotiation centered on the drafting of a national constitution for an interim government and vying for the support of the South African citizenry. The IFP mobilized Zulus in support of a political program through spectacular utilization of cultural symbols and expressive practices, as well as of traditional sociopolitical structures.¹¹ Inkatha political leaders sought to legitimate and increase their authority by authenticating their links to the leadership of a distant Zulu past. They cultivated a constituency by championing Zulu tradition and performance practices, especially those linked to warriorship (de Haas and Zulu 1993; Hamilton 1998; Harries 1993; Maré 1993; Mzala 1988).¹²

The IFP became a voice to be reckoned with at the negotiating table in the run-up to the first democratic elections in 1994, while it had also developed into a formidable state-sanctioned military force. Over six million Zulu-speaking South Africans were faced in the early 1990s with having to decide whether and how to align themselves politically. This meant refiguring their sense of self in relation to a dramatically charged and mobilized Zulu-ness. Inkatha, by the early 1990s, had made a claim on quintessential Zulu-ness. “Soon you will speak isiZulu like Inkatha,” a musician complimented me, encouraging me to reach fluency.

Many ngoma participants consider themselves apolitical or nonactivist, and staunchly reiterate that in ngoma there are no politics. Ngoma, they say, is for the pleasure of everyone. Yet in the transition period, individuals living in struggle were implicated in Inkatha's claims (and hence embroiled in violence) by circumstance, their place in life, locality, or status, by the force of their personality, talents, and endeavors.

For the authority he carries and the able-bodied young men he directs, the igoso stands as a mediating figure between ideologues or activists and those whose support they wish to gather, and between youths and empowered men. At home in Msinga, Siyazi calls some young men together. He urges them to honor life and respect political differences. He protects his brother who dares to support the ANC in this Inkatha stronghold. "Get him locked up behind bars if you must," he urges the angry youths, "but if you kill him, you will get life [imprisonment] yourselves."

Back at the hostel, elders call Siyazi to a private meeting. The head of the IFP Youth League is present. They coax Siyazi to take up arms for Inkatha. They intimate that as the leader of the community dance team, he could encourage the participation of his team as well. He refuses. They have guns in the car. He obliges by going to view them. He fires shots into the air. He makes jokes. He doesn't say he won't cave in to their pressure.¹³

Inkatha supporters in the hostels try to mobilize dancers working with Johnny Clegg, who leads a music band, Savuka. Clegg reports that the mobilizing strategy was to call for rural solidarity against the urban black politics of the ANC. As perceived by these hostel dwellers, township residents were comfortable and prosperous in relation to rural dwellers who had no residential services (Coplan 1993, 340). Mobilizing amasosha borrows their acclaim. It bargains on their performative reputation as amasosha, ngoma soldiers, being convertible into action as izimpi, battalions of warriors, fighters for the nation. It also holds the promise of incorporating persuasive entertainers with stages, audiences, microphones, and megaphones. In part a form of mediated violence itself, the ngoma body-voice appears ready for instrumentalization in the service of violence in the streets.

The IFP requests Umzansi Zulu Dancers to perform at a rally. They offer no payment. But we are professionals, Siyazi says. (They have recently returned from the French festival circuit.) He leaves it at that. They don't play at the rally, though he never says they won't. ("No politics, no politics in ngoma!")

Bleeding into Performance

Rhetorical themes and forms of presentation carry over from ngoma expression to other practices of warriorhood. And so also sounds, lyrics, and ways of dancing move easily between IFP rally and ngoma performance. “Kwagijima iphoyisa, iphoyisa emasangweni, liyaphi? [The policeman is running, running up and down in front of the gates. Where is he going to?]” chants Sikeyi gruffly, as he paces back and forth in front of his teammates, hitting two dancing-fighting sticks together, dancing the day after Christmas in esi-Pongweni. “Liyaphi? Liyaphi?” chant the Inkatha ralliers responding to the same call as they march-dance through Johannesburg’s streets. One darts out into an open space. He kicks and stamps. “Move on!” shouts a marshal. Such circulation of style from body to body and voice to voice is not surprising in overlapping social networks, and in circumstances in which the political leadership exhorts its supporters to champion their tradition. But the shared style is not by performers’ strategic choice. Rather, similar versions appear because they feel right during the moment when performers deploy them. They appear in public through the sense of things in a moment, as a body-voice improvisation.¹⁴

While some forms drift from one practice to the other, so too might the specter of violence (Feldman 1994; Whitehead 2004b).¹⁵ The mobility of violence coupled with the ambiguity of aesthetics makes for opaque boundaries.¹⁶ On the one hand, a rampage ends in song and dance. A protest march is song and dance. Warrior performance co-occurs with IFP activism and sometimes precedes and follows violent acts. On the other hand, ngoma champions the warrior figure and plays with it. The mobility of violence is entangled with ngoma’s aesthetic ambiguity (its indeterminate and aporetic relationship to the past and to political agendas for which it is sometimes mobilized).

Signs of the experience or the threat of real violence appear through the feel of things. “Ashay’i-ak-47” is a sung riff that, repeated, becomes a liting groove that prepares men to dance. It is a sound, with Zabiwe’s rippling counterpoint, that spurs men to move their bodies to the beat, together. They have fun. It is a body-centered pleasure in terms that ngoma defines. Ulaka is a provocation to dance.

The sound of the riff and its reference to soldiering are normalized in ngoma, just as song and dance are part of IFP politics and the brutal actions

of some of its constituents. Ngoma makes this ravaging violence into ordinary musical material. “Hey! This is how it is, boys of the dance!” interjects a voice in Zulu on an Umzansi Zulu Dancers CD.¹⁷

Song lyrics speak to the concerns of ngoma participants and fans: love, courting, gendered relationships, the socialization of youth, consumption, migrancy, labor, households, homesteads, dancing, leadership, government, corruption, fighting. Positions are debated, pleas and proposals sung. Advice is offered and behavior evaluated. Violence as a historical condition and as an unsettling challenge to contemporary moral order inevitably enters into song texts in a genre performed by men who call themselves amasosha.

Remarks on how violence squanders opportunities and romanticizations of a less brutal past circulate in song. “The beautiful people of Africa are dying, the black nation is disintegrating. We must return to the sticks of our grandparents, forget the sticks of Europeans [guns],” lilt Umzansi Zulu Dancers in a song that identifies futile violence as a form of cannibalism.¹⁸ There are exhortations to youths to live up to the moment. “What’s happening in Johannesburg? People say I must leave ngoma and take up the gun of my father,” sings a character in “Maningi Amacala [Many law cases].” “But I am so young, so very young; what am I going to do with these law cases [for I will land in jail], my God?”¹⁹ Provocations addressing ineffective leadership are voiced: “Can you understand this headman who says we are not in control of our young men, that we are leading cowards? Headman, as our leader you are the one who can call us together [to end these affairs]. You are provoking this fighting. How can you make peace between contending parties when you, sir, are baiting us by calling us cowards?”²⁰

Umzansi Zulu Dancers insert pleas for peace and call on the ancestors for protection and guidance. “I am happy for those who are sleeping in peace [for the dead don’t endure these troubling days]. I make my plea on behalf of those who are yet to come,” sings Siyazi in a final verse of “Ubuzimuzimu [Cannibalism],” and in “Mnta kaBaba [Our fathers]”: “We ask our grandfathers to protect us. May our fathers, those who are sleeping in peace, also lend us protection. Some people are looking askance at us. What have we done to them? We don’t know what our crime is.”²¹ Pleas are coupled with reminders that respect and respectability are requirements of responsible manhood. Siyazi composes the message in Zulu terms: “They hit you and you pee on yourself, with the arm belt of your herbalist [*inyanga*].” You have so much faith in the protective medicines couched in your armband that you think you are invincible. Then “they hit you and you almost go to cut the

grass [die]; you almost go to watch over the ducks, though you fastened the belt of that herbalist of yours. I've warned you to respect people." Don't think you are superior and so immune to injury.²²

Living in struggle, men embroiled in the savagery of national politics gone awry seek pathways through the immorality of violence to seize the moment and to rectify a past damaged by apartheid. Some perspectives are spoken to a world beyond and including the ngoma team. (Umsansi Zulu Dancers are addressing multiple audiences when they record CDs: those at home, a broader Zulu market, and, at least for their first two recordings, an international world music market.)²³ "Hear the hissing of the snake who bares his fangs," incants Siyazi self-referentially in rapid-fire soliloquy style in a bridge passage between verses. He breaks the musical convention of further elaborating the self-praise and pivots to address his Zulu-speaking listeners: "You are killing them, why? Are you going to eat them? Hu!" The chorus picks up the moral lesson: "Let's stop being cannibals. Let's leave cannibalism behind," they sing in repeated cycles transitioning between verses.²⁴

"Let's stop being cannibals. Let's leave cannibalism behind," sings esi-Pongweni's team at home, repeating the phrase to form a groove, readying dancers to dance.

The subject of violence and the struggles of political transition offer material for song lyrics (McDonald 2013; Ritter and Daughtry 2007); singing lyric fragments produces a soundtrack for dance. Because performers are utilizing this particular material at the time when "Ayadubula amaZulu [Zulus are shooting]," Xhosas and Bhaca are shooting, the implication of the lyrics is up for grabs. Should ngoma's amasosha (dancer-soldiers) also be amabutho (warrior members of an impi)? Dancers set themselves apart from warriors or military fighters (amabutho), their Anglicized nomenclature amasosha marking them as performers. They form a team, not a battalion (impi) in a regiment (ibutho), differentiating their soldiering from the uncontrolled violence of the streets.²⁵ Yet the shared military and performing indexes of the dancer-soldier and the dancing warrior leave open the possibility of equating them, for performers, political activists, and the media alike.

Violence and the dominant form of its global mediation raise the stakes on ngoma. The representation of warrior violence is sensationalized in the course of its mediation, subsequently returning in sensationalized form to those it represents. As violence spilled out onto the city's streets, it captured the attention of the news media, to whom performances of warriorship offered spectacular images and sound clips. As a result, the media "assisted



Inkatha Freedom Party supporter at a march, 1992. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Inkatha Freedom Party supporters at a march, Johannesburg, 1994.
PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

in confirming the stereotypical image of the Zulu warrior by sensationally dwelling on Zulu men in traditional dress at political rallies or in the course of vigilante activities” (Laband 2009, 169), as they also utilized the sound of singing and dancing that dominated rallies and marches.

With stakes on warriorhood raised, and concomitantly on ngoma’s potential for professional circulation (its presence having been amplified by violent politics), dancers select a repertoire for their audiences. Some professionally recorded ngoma-style songs are ignored by the community team. Likewise, some compositions are reserved for live performance at home.

25 December 1991, esiPongweni

Siyazi is at the helm, directing the seated dancers. “Sleep with me quickly, my friend [while your boyfriend isn’t looking]; please give it to me” coaxes Siyazi and the singing team to open the set. As they move on to another image selected from another song, they continue the flirtatious topic. “I’ve heard, I’ve heard, we [men] are pointing to the other side over there. We are asking the way, young girls.” But the underside of this flirtation elicits suspicion in this roiling 1991 context of national and local violence, for what are their motives for traveling there? Playfully obscuring the indirection of his message—for the moment—Siyazi throws in a comical favorite: “Hey, hammerhead bird, what are you doing? You build nests [that look] like people’s houses?” Then he makes explicit his prior indirection, drawing at length from a song he had recently composed for Umzansi Zulu Dancers’ second release:

Come together, act as a unit, you who are of the Mchunu chiefdom.

Put your assegais down, put your guns down,

you who are of the Mchunu chiefdom.

Our chief said he dislikes this business, so you must stop it.

Nkosi Mchunu said this is rubbish.

Act as the collective you are, maChunu people.

“Oh mother, oh mother,” he cries, “shame shame.”

Assegais are in hands.

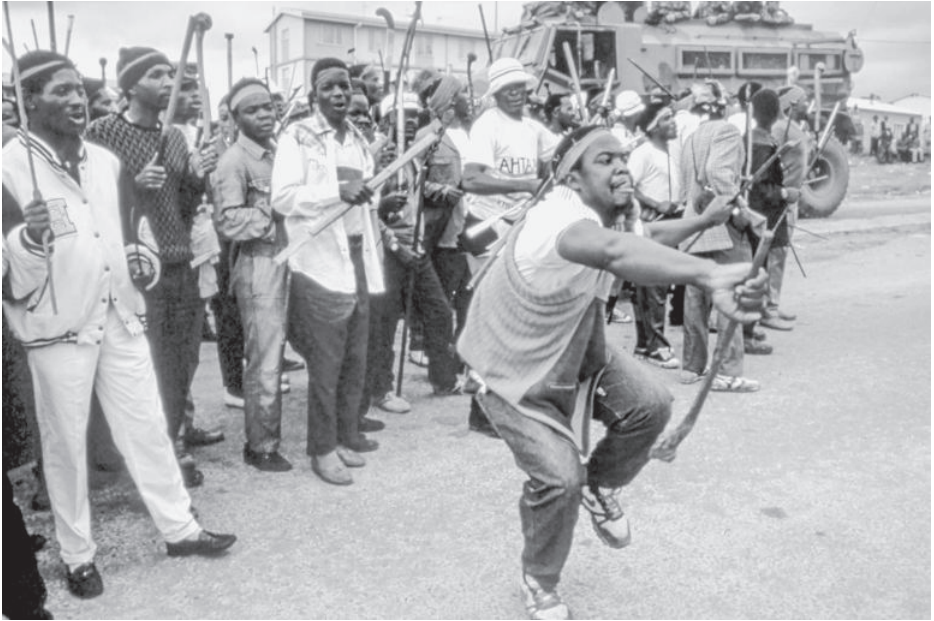
People are stabbing one another.²⁶

He sets his pace for textual clarity and good enunciation, singing sweetly to draw listeners’ attention to the text. He interrupts the flow of his song to locate this narrative in their district within the Mchunu chiefdom. “Mooi-liva,” he yells, eliciting the practiced emphatic response from the team. Now

he goes off the record: he would never record this composition. Tracks on CD exclude name calling, calls to arms, and songs goading men to violence. They record responsible lyrics that criticize acts of injury and impulsiveness. But at home, 25 December 1991, with only his community team staging the event, Siyazi is more explicit. He addresses Gatsha Buthelezi, prolonging his theme: “Those people are talking behind our backs. Watch out, they are troublemakers who will provoke you to fight. Hey, those people who are fighting, tell them to come and see us, for we want to talk to them” face to face. He shifts into the past tense to jump forward in the story. Fewer men came to talk than were fighting. Ha! They are pretenders about peace. “The black calves are coming, Mr. Gatsha [Buthelezi],” he warns. “They are coming, the black calves,” those youths you won’t be able to control once they start fighting, Mr. Gatsha. It is an eloquently angry lyric, a provocation sung at the edge, aired while held just in control.

By juxtaposing textual fragments of past songs to create new coherence in passing, leaders make current statements in song. Violent tension between esiPongweni and ekuVukeni up and over the hill had made 1996 a troubled year. Two families, the Zulu and Majola, were at odds with each other. Some feared that the tension might escalate into an altercation as bloody as that of 1992. “Children of God, what are you doing going back to purgatory?” sings Siyazi as he leads the dancers down to the dance arena, 25 December 1996. “Why go back into purgatory?” the dancers are called on to reply. “Put down your sticks, put down the assegai of Shaka,” calls Siyazi, quoting a second song. “Put down the assegai of Shaka,” rejoins the team. The descent to the arena, the circling of the dance space, and positioning of the team center stage for the start of the performance requires extensive repetition of the short call and response with dancers still in reflective repose, just beginning to warm up for the show. “Short songs, but the meaning is big,” Siyazi remarks on listening to my recording. (He is pleased with what he hears.) Pleasure lies in how a good leader composes a story on the fly, situating song texts in the present by weaving them together into an event.

Efficacy lies in the pleasure of eloquently told truths sung in public, aided by the principle of aesthetic ambiguity. (“No politics, no politics in ngoma!”) Ngoma’s principles are pushed to the edge by explicit political reference. Men are provoked into doing so by the simmering danger that circumstance and their passion and skill for dance necessitates they confront. Pushed to the edge, they are called on to assess whether and when to embrace it. “Gqi!”



Inkatha Freedom Party march, Alexandria township, 1992. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

Fighting as Culture

No one currently living within the Mchunu chiefdom has had a violence-free lifetime, and neither had their parents. Everyone has experienced its effects in multiple intersecting forms. “Fighting is culture,” says Siyazi, arguing on historical, not ontological, grounds. He runs through the dates: “1944, 1957, 1960, 1980s all the way to 1993, 1996.”

1 March 1992, Johannesburg

“Bayede,” the men say in greeting as they bow to Nkosi Mchunu at the start of the meeting he convened in a hostel to discuss the violence besetting the chiefdom, and especially the trouble between the two izigodi (wards).²⁷ Once exchanges of respect have occurred, Nkosi Mchunu gets down to business. An astute leader, he first acknowledges the men before him as *omnumzane* (homestead heads), then calls on them to be responsible. He starts with mundane requests: fence your cattle in, cultivate crops, save your assets. He builds to his key point: don’t buy guns, and “Please, don’t kill. Why shoot rather than talk?”

He introduces a new appointee, a young headman, to watch over young

men in Johannesburg, and he reminds those assembled that “it takes two thumbs to kill a louse.” If you seek special favor, remember that your opponent will do the same. (The chief is renowned for his humor and impartiality.) In the midst of an urgent matter, men have occasion to laugh.

When the chairman of the Council of Headmen welcomes the new headman and echoes Nkosi Mchunu’s call for restraint, he alludes to the potential for the conflict to spread. Factional violence is mobile and intricate, imbricated in other tensions, drawing on experiences of the past, spilling over.

“Bayede,” respond the men.

The Council of Headmen’s secretary takes the floor to acknowledge the new headman with gracious words.

“Amandla!” salute the men, using the invocation usually reserved for political rallies. As talk progresses about the everyday violence, how to manage its consequences with dignity, and how to curtail it, the political slogan “amandla” slips in, substituting for the ceremonial greeting “bayede.” Talk about violence related to national politics and community matters merges.

Next, when the chairman offers a vote of confidence in the new headman, he also announces a regional meeting to be held at Nancefield hostel (in Orlando, Soweto) to address the ghastly dangers they face, the anger, frustrations, threats, injury, killings, destruction of property. He recognizes the passing of a friend of many in the room, a victim of violence in the city. “It’s a shame what’s been happening,” he cries.

After extensive discussions, Nkosi closes the meeting by imploring his men to avoid arguing when angered.²⁸ “If you’re provoked to fight, say no. Before you discuss a matter of concern, get witnesses. This is a winning strategy. If you have a problem, take it to the police. Use your common sense.” He advises them to alternatively bring the matter to him.

As he is preparing to take his leave, Mr. Majozi stands up, clutching a letter. He wants Nkosi Mchunu to deliver it to the Council of Chiefs. The letter requests solidarity across chiefdoms being rent apart, and hopes that other chiefs will follow Mchunu’s lead in calling a Johannesburg meeting. “The chiefs will listen to you because you are also a chief,” Majozi says.

“Bayede,” salute the men.

Nkosi Mchunu promises to raise this concern with Mr. Mthethwa, the executive chief appointed by Gatsha Buthelezi. Mthethwa, a political appointee, will be in attendance at a caucus meeting of a customary body, the Council of Chiefs. Not all chiefs are expected at the caucus meeting as some will instead attend an IFP meeting, but Nkosi Mchunu confirms that he will

hand deliver the letter. “Please, my people, don’t let this violence succeed. Thank you for the letter. Someone is thinking very nicely.”

“Bayede,” acknowledge the men.

More men stand to speak and raise still more concerns: an announcement of a meeting to resolve an altercation in Diepkloof hostel, where competing claims to ownership of a cassette tape had resulted in a shooting; confirmation of the formation of a strategic committee to deal with the current violence around hostels across the Witwatersrand; an observation that lack of unity across Msinga is a problem; a request for the support of the people of the Mchunu chiefdom from a man whose home is farther north. A man recounts an incident in which two men — one from his area, one from Msinga — were jumped and shot by people carrying AK-47s (a code for alleged ANC supporters). He hurried back to the city from a funeral at home with the sole purpose of attending this meeting.

“Amandla!” chant the men.

Finally Nkosi Mchunu takes his leave from the men of his chiefdom and the headmen in attendance from the greater Council of Headmen. The multiple sources and sites of violence, the overlapping motivations of its perpetrators and their mobility, have intensified the dangers in Johannesburg. He no longer sleeps in the city.

“Fighting is culture” when multiple forms of violence are entangled. Men exploit the intersections and exacerbate the consequences. Resolutions to violence are also entwined. Men seek pathways to collective safety together via whatever networks present themselves.

A history of conflict that citizens and communities (selectively) claim also contributes to the idea that fighting is culture. For some, the conflicts of the present appear to repeat the conflicts of the past, or to reconstitute the idea of fighting as a socially ingrained way of being. If apartheid’s Zuluness involved fighting, so too did colonial incursion produce violent struggle. The deeply researched, popularly marketed, and widely taught history of Zulus in the nineteenth century stands as an example. The imperialist Zulu king Shaka’s rule came to an end with his death in 1828. Through the 1830s, Africans in Zululand were embroiled in intensive warfare. The Afrikaner *voortrekkers*, forging their ways through the interior from the Cape colony, constrained the movements of Shaka’s ruthless successor Dingane, and after a year of battle (1838) one group of voortrekkers annexed half Dingane’s kingdom.²⁹ In turn, through warfare the British annexed this land from the Boers in 1843 to form the colony of Natal (Laband, 2009).

Relative to the 1830s and the bitter conflicts of the later nineteenth century, the midcentury decades were fairly peaceful (Carton and Morrell 2012). The colony of Natal had drawn its boundary; Dingane had died in 1838, leaving a more pliable Mpande in charge; and his regiments were periodically deployed as royal labor more than as fighters (Carton and Morrell 2012). A relatively weak Swazi kingdom to the north offered raiding opportunities to Mpande's forces in the 1840s and early 1850s, but the Boers and the British then bolstered the Swazi, stabilizing their kingdom. Likewise, other raids to secure cattle and commodities were curtailed by encroaching colonials, though not without creating violent flashpoints.

In short, nineteenth-century Africans were caught in the competition between colonial powers, having struggled against both Afrikaner and British encroachment and subjugation. At the same time, rivals within the unstable kingdom struggled against one another. The British at times stoked rivalries internal to the kingdom in order to neutralize threats to themselves. It took the Anglo-Zulu War in 1879 with its notoriously bloody battles at Isandlwana, Rorkes Drift, and Hlobane, and "civil wars and anti-colonial struggles" that persisted from 1883 to 1888, for the British to succeed in annexing Zululand north of the Thukela River (Laband 2009, 170).³⁰ By 1897, the whole region of current-day KwaZulu-Natal was incorporated into a single colony. By the late nineteenth century, colonials had constrained the movement of Africans living in Zululand, imposed taxes upon them, and subordinated their once formidable customary figures of authority.

In addition to the long and short political histories undergirding mobile violences of the present, ngoma as a pugilistic aesthetic and a competitive social practice reiterates that fighting is culture. At daybreak, 26 December 1999, a man calls a greeting from Siyazi's homestead gate. He has come to apologize. Twenty years ago he and others had rushed into a dance to disrupt it. A fierce stick fight ensued. He wants to shake his prior bad behavior off, now that he is following Christianity. "Praise God, amen, and please, Mr. Zulu, Baba, I ask your forgiveness." He prays, loudly. Siyazi's mother answers and echoes his tremolo gospel voice. After hospitably quenching his thirst, he trundles down the hill.³¹

Christmas homecoming, 1991. The taxi conflict is under way. No interdistrict dancing, declares Nkosi Mchunu, for safety's sake.

Christmas homecoming, 1981, a party: two teams claim to be the winner of a dance event that had been held in a Johannesburg hostel. The argument kicks off a fight between the teams' communities in the Thukela valley. The

fight runs into 1982. Five people die (C. Alcock, Capfarm Trust Quarterly Report 1982, in "All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters" 2016).³²

Ngoma was also implicated in surges of ethnic hostility and in resistance to the apartheid state's labor practices earlier in the twentieth century (Erlmann 1991a; Marks 1989; Marks and Trapido 1987). In 1920s Durban, faction fights erupted after ngoma dancing regularly enough to prompt the Natal Code to make provisions to limit attendance at labor union meetings (Marks 1989). What began as a concern grew by the late 1920s into a conviction that ngoma needed state supervision. It was linked in Durban to criminal gangs, and to faction fighting "perhaps sparked off by competition over jobs" (Marks 1989, 232). In 1929 the native administrator was opposed to ngoma proceeding at all. After intense rioting and resistance instigated by the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), ngoma was banned, among other activities, until 1932. Then, in 1933, the native welfare officer allocated an open-air space for official dance competitions, held under the presence of police. Through the 1930s, sporadic fighting still accompanied ngoma within the Durban work force (Erlmann 1991a).³³

Conclusion

Dancing has sometimes spun out of control into fighting; violence sometimes impinges upon ngoma expression. The warrior aesthetic is cultivated and its excesses animated in the encounter with a domineering state that deliberately produced ethnic tensions in order to exploit them. Such circumstances present young men with challenges of how to position themselves in the face of threat, how to protect family, friends, and one's moral integrity, as well as how to celebrate a Zulu heritage represented in the warrior figure.

In moves from ngoma expression to other practices of warriorhood, rhetorical themes and forms of representation recur. These shifts wed communal concerns and local histories to the unfolding of national politics. "When will these things be over? When will this business of aiming guns at us be over? Houses are on fire. When will these things be over? Things are against the black person. When will these things be over?" implore Umzansi Zulu Dancers in song.³⁴ Participants' agency to repeat forms, and those forms' repetition, varied by contingency in artful improvisations, create drama, while the vivid presence of violence keeps the warrior alive in the soldier.

Dancers personalize feelings about the violence of the everyday in their sensorial body-voice via the poetics of danced song and singing with the feet; they draw connections between a continuing state of violence, their experi-

ence of violent events, a Zulu military history spectacularized by the media, and ngoma aesthetics. Dancers keep those connections animated.

Ngoma's artistry, like its practice, cannot be understood without its relationship to mediated violence: ngoma reflects upon violence; its dancers imagine it through feeling in performance; ngoma circulates ideas about violence and carries them into the entertainment industry through recordings and professional performances. Ngoma mitigates violence and can spur it on. Its aesthetic ambiguity or open-ended polysemy can facilitate the mobility of violence, and it can in turn be served by that mobility. Violence can amplify ngoma's presence, but constrains the dimensions of ngoma's voice. The dance arena, like the *roda*, the boxing ring, and the wrestling gym, is a school of morality, a space of possibility, a commemoration. Artistry lies in how dancers ride the osmotic relationship of the arena and the street. Sometimes ngoma lends grace to politics; sometimes its grace is reduced or contaminated by violence. Dancers finesse their encounters with violence through ngoma, and on behalf of their art.

25 December 2003, esiPongweni

The drum sounds over the simmering valley, signal bursts of the beat resonating from up on the hill at Zabiwe's house where the team has been preparing. Down at the arena, spectators gather. A truck rambles and creaks over the veld to park. Its jovial load alights. A woman tosses reverberant greetings into the soundscape of the gathering. A boy flirts with the newcomers. Girls spar, laughing back at him. A minivan taxi arrives, blaring *kwaito* music. The event's *amaphoyisa* (caretakers) scan the ground for glass shards, yank out thorn tree saplings, and toss pebbles to the side while women saunter along the road socializing under their umbrellas. A youth lugs a bucket of water, ready to quell the dancers' dust a little. Periodically the sound of the drum rolls out over the valley from the hillside.

The team treks down the footpath in a singing line, a centipede descending. In the front, youths—team fans, future *amasosha*—carry the drums on their shoulders. To the side, the new *iphini*, Ntibane, watches over the dancers' progress down the hill. He sings the call; the team responds in overlapping cycles. Song and singers work their way downhill to the dance arena.

Bathi ngengane zobaba, ngengane zobaba

With our fathers' children, with our fathers' children



Mbono Zakwe
after the dance,
esiPongweni, 25
December 2003.
PHOTOGRAPH
BY TJ LEMON.

Mhlaba kawunoni ngengane zobaba, mhlaba kawunoni
The earth is not growing fat [and healthy] with our fathers' children
We ntuthwane ezodla thina, we ntuthwane ezodla thina
Hey, maggots who will be eating us,
The earth is not growing fat with our fathers' children
Zonqunywa amakhanda we ntuthwane ezodla thina
Your heads will be cut off [if you dare to come out of the ground], hey
maggots who'll be eating us
With our fathers' children, with our fathers' children
Your heads will be cut off, hey maggots who'll be eating us, your heads
will be cut off

Hey, maggots who will be eating us, hey, maggots who will be eating us
With our fathers' children, with our fathers' children. . . .

Step by step the singing team arrives and snakes around the arena, their sticks held like pistons pumping them onward. Zama is not in his place in the line, because Vusi is not there. Khetho is not in his place in the line, because Vusi is no longer there. Funise is not in his place in the line, because their brother Vusi is gone.³⁵

Dancers were feeling pain, Mbusiseni said, for they were missing Vusi, who was jumped earlier in the year by armed thieves while returning from his night duty as a security guard in the innards of Johannesburg. They were missing Mdo, who died of illness. They were worrying about Bonaliphi, who disappeared while driving a taxi. They suspect a carjacking. They can't find his body. They felt the absence of their friends this first Christmas since Vusi and Mdo's passing and Bonaliphi's searing disappearance, so they sang that song on the way to the arena and to open the dance.

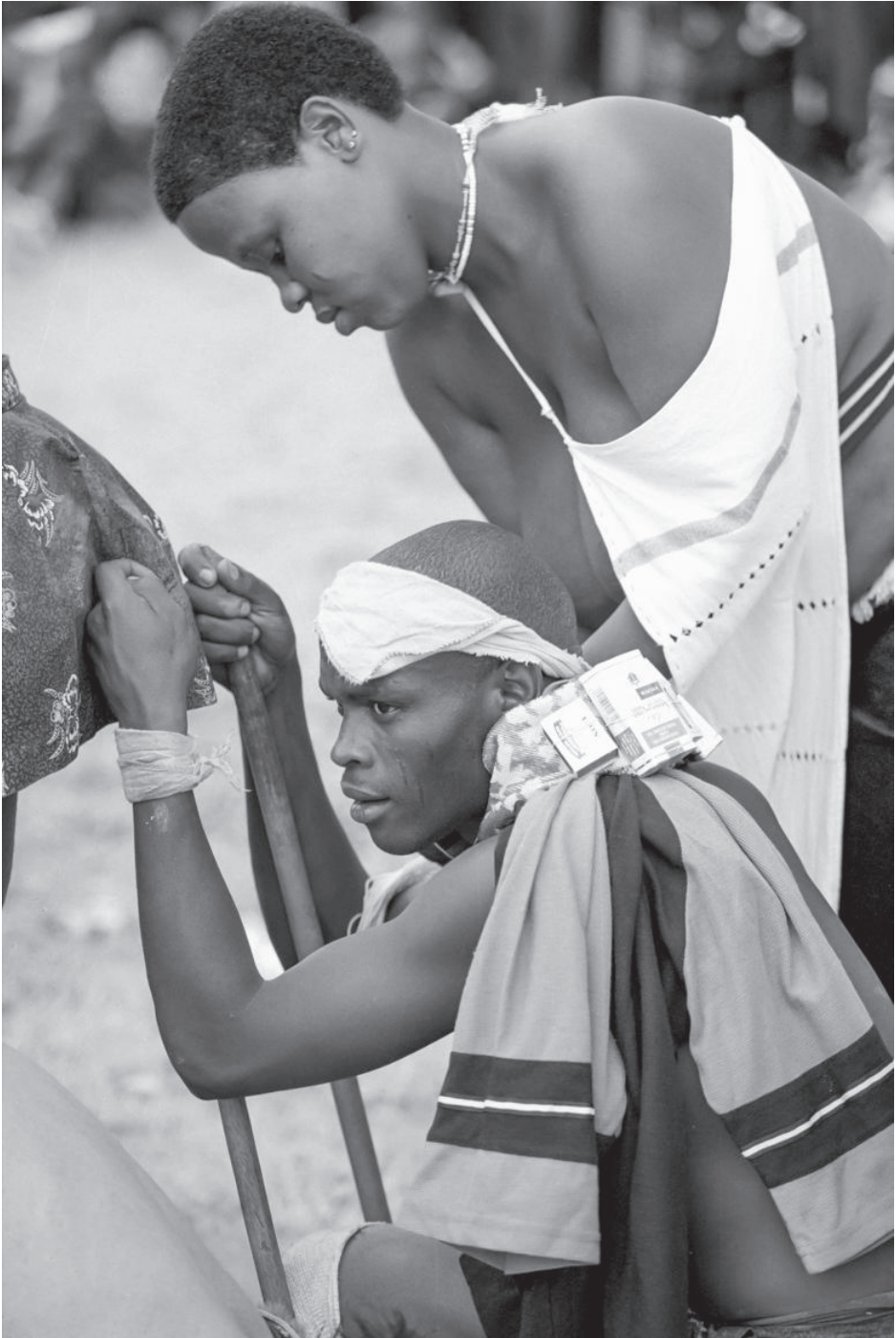
"The earth is not growing fat [and healthy] with our fathers' children," sing Umzansi Zulu Dancers. Titled "Mhlaba [World]," on a CD titled *Ama-Afrika* (African people), the song arose in the wake of the fighting that flared up between esiPongweni and ekuVukeni in 1996, that followed the grueling transition years, that followed the ravaging 1980s (Mzansi Zulu Dancers 1998). A song composed then became a gift to the team when Vusi and Mdo and Bonaliphi left them.

3 November 1991, Johannesburg

An ngoma team practices outside George Goch hostel. Percussive praise name chanting amplifies their danced improvisations; clapping marks their footwork. "Gqi!" An IFP impi returning to the hostel toyi-toyis past. Their dance-marching feet accent beats under their call-and-response rally singing. Voices overlap, toyi-toyi and ngoma. Soon another impi follows.



Bafana Mdlalose, esiPongweni, 25 December 2000. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Sweli Ndawo's sister-in-law presents a gift to him, Madulaneni, 26 December 2003.
PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

5 / / / THE CROSSING

World Music and Ngoma at Home

1 August 1992, esiPongweni

At Dudu's *umsebenzi* (a funerary rite), a line of men snakes through the houses at Dudu's homestead, coaxing his roaming spirit back home. Sikeyi sings and dances in his place in the line.

Dudu's mother and three wives sit indoors with visiting women. The talk is whispered, the space dark. Pauses seem to fill up the room. Sweet fragrance of the burning *impepho* herb drifts into the whispers. The smoke guides Dudu's spirit home.

While clan praise is incanted in the kraal outside, Dudu's mother asks for silence. Listen to the lineage of Dudu. In his fine kraal, a goat, then three cows call to the *amadlozi* (ancestors) as men do the work of slaughtering.

Armed sentinels on the hillside keep watch.

After feasting, Sikeyi and Siphso Mchunu, his musical partner from the duo Juluka, hold a meeting with Dudu's wives.

As darkness encroaches, I travel with others back to Johannesburg in Sikeyi's minivan. Mashiya hitches a ride the long way around to his isigodi, to avoid Madulaneni. He wants us to detour in order to drop him at home, but Sikeyi says, "Heyi, I see that bulge on your hip. You can walk the last part." We drop him on the road. Sikeyi is exhausted.

He doesn't visit Keates Drift to dance again for eight years.

28 December 2000, esiPongweni

At Sikeyi's prompting, the teams stage a collective dance at esiPongweni. Sikeyi has gifted springbok pelts as matching *amabheshu* (rear aprons) to ten senior dancers. He travels down to dance, accompanied by a film crew. The crowd jitters with energy. Youths line the ridges of the school roofs to get a better view. The dancing is magnificent. Sikeyi addresses the crowd through a megaphone. Ululations. Conforming to an older practice, he is challenged in front of two judges, a rite of passage through which he will retire from dancing into elder status. He wins the challenge. Cheering soars. He and the film crew stay overnight at Dudu's house, where there is a *braai* (barbecue) and joviality. Many arrive to greet him.

Sikeyi danced "like lightning." Others agree: "You won't beat Johnny!"

Christmas, 2001–2015

"Where is Sikeyi?" inquire locals from here, there, the next isigodi, from way over the river, when I visit. "Will he be dancing tomorrow?" they ask hopefully, as though I would know.

26 December 2006, esiPongweni

Sikeyi has told Siyazi he's angry so he wants to dance (even though he has officially retired from the team). He rises at dawn in Johannesburg, flies to Durban, hires a car, drives three and a half hours to Keates Drift, coats himself in sunscreen. In the afternoon he performs with the team. The television news hears about it. (Did he tell them?) A crew traipses up from Durban to shoot enough for a news slot. They interview him. Siyazi presents a local opinion. Dancers are pleased they will be featured on television.

Girls tie towels decorated with matchboxes and candy around Sikeyi's waist. So he gives thanks by dancing with the girls' youthful brothers.

The teams gear up for their second set. Sikeyi gathers senior dancers to start to fuel the drama. "Kwagijima iphoyisa, iphoyisa emasangweni, liyaphi? [The policeman is running, running up and down in front of the gates. Where is he going to?]" he chants gruffly, leading the pack in call and response as he paces in front of them. He demonstrates a Zulu warrior's preparedness for battle, hitting his sticks together, rushing back and forth, kicking and stamping, performing his possession of *ulaka*. The TV cameraman rushes to catch the drama.

No one gets louder cheers, more densely overlapping ululations, than Sikeyi when he solos.

Sikeyi stays at Dudu's house, a homestead he has visited for thirty years. There is partying into the night. He departs at dawn the next day.

26 December 2008, Madulaneni

Sikeyi comes to dance, with a film crew. Get those red *izigqoko* (married women's hats), so brilliant in this light, he instructs the cameraman.

Nkosi Mchunu attends. Sikeyi bows to him with his teammates: "Bayedede." He bends and kneels alongside the amagoso (team leaders) while he converses with the chief. I'm told Nkosi Mchunu expresses appreciation of Sikeyi's participation and invites the dancers to perform at his homestead sometime. The prospect pleases the amagoso. This conversation might not have happened without Sikeyi's presence. Mchunu thanks Sikeyi for what he has done for ngoma, raising its profile around the world.

But he is dancing with pain in a shoulder. He leaves once the film crew has its shots.

Who is Sikeyi, Johnny Clegg, for ngoma artists? Ngoma at Keates Drift has helped Clegg to become Johnny, the South African musical crossover icon with a celebrated global image, *le Zoulou blanc* in France. What investment do his ngoma associates have in Johnny? To understand the course ngoma has taken around Keates Drift, the values it has come to encapsulate for its participants, and the promise it holds for them, one must understand the development of Clegg's career and creative work. Of course ngoma dancers would have sustained their interest in the form irrespective of Clegg's participation. Other aspects of ngoma that make the practice dynamic include a long-standing interest in its artistry and the wide competitive terrain of ngoma performance in the region. Postapartheid, the celebration of heritage and the mobilization of culture as commodity also animate the practice. However, aspects of ngoma at Keates Drift have been crucially in dialogue with Clegg's diverse artistic career. Clegg's story is entangled with the vitality of ngoma practice.¹

The scholarship considering the politics of global cross-cultural collaborations—world beat (Erlmann 1999; Feld 1996a, 2000; Feld and Kirkegaard 2010; Hayward 1999; Keil and Feld 1994; Novak 2011; Taylor 1997; White 2012, and others)—especially addresses patterns of circulation; questions of form, voice, and representation; the challenges of fusion; the dilemmas



Johnny Clegg and Zibuse Zuma, esiPongweni, 28 December 2000.
FROM VIDEO TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR.

of cultural heritage as it intersects with the concept of intellectual property; the misunderstandings, limited understandings, and oversights of musical relationships across social and aesthetic divides; and the problems of creative maneuvering within a global entertainment industry. With this work informing my thinking, I consider the obligations and intimacies hidden in the politics of world beat in the context of a racialized history of oppression. I position Clegg as a world music figure in order to view that figure from Uthuli lweZulu. Ngoma's context of violence and its celebration of the warrior-soldier place particular demands on musical collaborators (white and Zulu). Their choices to collaborate creatively can have enormous consequences, whether as considered outcomes or repercussions. Collaborators negotiate social well-being, physical safety, the inspiration of play, and the pleasures of relating across difference. They figure out their dynamic positions always in the intersecting contexts of mediated violence, struggle politics, and a global music market.

If Clegg shares some characteristics with global cross-cultural pop icons, he is not their equivalent politically. He is not a colonial figure. He sounds Zulu in song and speech. He dances with ulaka, the appropriate anger of Zulu men. He did not work through middlemen to encounter Zulu musicians. He has sustained his interest in Zulu music and ways of being from his teens through to maturity. He has neither expediently skimmed the surface of Zulu aesthetics nor abandoned his race and class privilege and gone native. "So what if Johnny makes money?" a dancer said. "He feels ngoma in his body."

From a young age, Clegg came to embody Zulu aesthetics and affective warriorhood by apprenticing himself to musicians and dancers. He learned guitar from maskandi Charlie Mzila and then Siphon Mchunu, with whom he went on to perform.² Mzila worked as a cleaner in the city, Mchunu as a gardener in Johannesburg's white suburbs. (Neither of their homesteads was at Keates Drift. Mchunu's home district, eMakhabeleni, is about 60 kilometers away, outside Msinga.) Mzila introduced him to the hostels (see, e.g., Shahin 1990, 84), where he encountered ngoma dancing and joined first an isiBhaca team associated with Charlie Mzila's home district, then (in the early 1970s) an isishameni team from Mchunu's district that danced at Wemmer hostel. Mchunu and Clegg started their own team in the city, but this soon petered out (C. Alcock, unpublished interview, 3 March 1988, Johannesburg). Switching to umzansi ngoma (1977–78), Clegg trained at George Goch hostel as a member of the esiPongweni team. His commitment to learning to dance



The esiPongweni team dance-marches into the arena, esiPongweni, 28 December 2000. Dudu's oldest son, Sono Ndlovu, follows Sikeyi. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

and sing artfully necessarily included a commitment to Zulu language proficiency. With a growing network of personal relationships, Clegg moved with dancers between the hostels and their rural homes through the turbulent 1980s. Mchunu's home was his principal destination until 1985; thereafter Dudu's esiPongweni homestead became his anchor through the late 1980s.³ Dancing with an umzansi team regularly for about a decade and with ngoma teams more broadly for about twenty years, his apprenticeship rendered art.

"He's *my* soldier," claims elder Loli, who captained the team at the time Clegg danced regularly. Loli claims the prestige, while articulating his authority over Clegg on local dancing matters. "He's *my* soldier," he reminds team members in 2000: respecting him is respecting me.

Clegg the Musician

As Clegg's engagement in Msinga deepened, he also emerged as a public figure in South Africa. He rode to fame through his sounds. First, as a duo (1969–76), he and Sipho Mchunu developed a unique sound that blended maskanda (a guitar- or concertina-based Zulu singer-songwriter style), Zulu traditional sounds, and folk music. Expanding to form the band Juluka (Sweat, 1976–85), they transitioned to folk rock. The Zulu components, for example, included a bowed *umhuphe* mouth bow, Zulu vocal timbres,

occasional vocal lines imitating the harmonics of the Zulu bow, glissandi between notes that ornament sung phrases, diatonic harmonies in major keys, and parallel lines moving in fourths and fifths with the thirds of chords omitted.⁴ They also incorporated maskanda song structures that begin with a solo instrumental flourish (*intela*), maskanda guitar tunings, and melodic bass guitar lines.⁵ They sang in English and Zulu, primarily with texts narrating aspects of men's migrant and working-class life, some of which thereby criticized apartheid.⁶

Juluka incorporated some ngoma aesthetics but principally turned to ngoma's allied genre, maskanda, in their experimental fusions, and to *mbaqanga*, the township jive popular in the 1970s and early 1980s. As their style developed, they included some ngoma dancing, initially in the isishameni style, eventually adding one or two dancers to the backing in live shows. (In Juluka's later years, Dudu Ndlovu danced with the band.) The group's choral backing vocals also referenced ngoma singing. Most notable are the vocable motives with strong backbeat pickups sung in repeated cycles by the backing vocalists in introductory, concluding, or bridging components of the song forms. Occasional rhythmic grooves and bass drum patterns indexed ngoma dancing. Call-and-response incantation followed the practice of ngoma events. Some lyrics described warriorship; others expressed feelings about Africa in general ("Africa Sky Blue," "Scatterlings of Africa," "December African Rain," "African Shadow Man"); and still others referenced dancing. Ngoma sound especially supported songs with these themes.

"Impi! Wo 'nans' impi iyeza, obani bengathint' amabhubesi? [War! Here it is, the war is coming. Who can touch the lions?]" sings an a cappella chorus of men with a chesty timbre in primary chords missing the thirds, to open the song "Impi" (Juluka 1981). A bass drum cuts into silences between their phrases to accent the fourth-beat pickup with ngoma's dotted eighth motive, while the chorus lands heavily on the first and second beats. The four-measure phrase repeats, now with a full band texture. It returns as the chorus between Johnny's solo English verses. "Impi! Wo 'nans' impi iyeza, obani bengathint' amabhubesi?"

"Eyi'shi!" exclaims a voice over the final chorus riff in "Ibhola Lethu" (Juluka 1984), indexing a solo display of a kick and stamp. The instruments drop out and the choral men's voices cycle through a vocable riff till the song fades out. Ngoma drumming opens "Mantombana" (Juluka 1983). In the song's choruses, male voices sing over a running drumbeat, the sound of two ngoma drummers interlocking. Lyrics transition to rhythmic humming ("eyi hmm

hmm hmm”). A vocal interjection signals the start of a solo kick. Clapping accents every beat, the sound of teammates egging on their soloing friends, while at the bottom of the mix the bass drum pulses on.

Clegg’s next band, Savuka (We have risen, 1986–94), pushed ngoma dance into the limelight in staged performance. In Savuka, Dudu Ndlovu moved to the front line as Johnny’s dancing partner, and joined the band as percussionist and backup vocalist. Siphso Mchunu left the group and returned to his homestead.⁷ On stage, the band developed the spectacular element of their show. Extra dancers from Keates Drift traveled with the band to showcase a choreographed ngoma dance line and solo display. Three in Paris, ten in Réunion, Mauritius, Ireland: the number was a question of feasibility and balance. In addition, dance breaks in Savuka’s songs featured Dudu and Johnny while more sophisticated lighting effects dramatized the moment. Audience participation peaked in these moments. Seas of waving arms. Flickering lighters. Roars, cheers, whistles. Bursts of applause as Dudu springs, kicks, stamps (cymbal crash, shimmers rippling out), and cascades down; roars as Johnny flicks his shoulder and saunters from center stage and Savuka’s drummer, like a yoked ox, drives the groove on.

South African dance, mostly ngoma, is present in almost all of the group’s promotional videos. For “Great Heart,” successive color shots of Dudu and Johnny dancing onstage flash between black-and-white concert footage, showing the progression of a dance sequence. The elephant, giraffe, hippo, lion, and buffalo, all on the move, alternate with the ngoma performance images (Clegg 2003). In the band’s “Third World Child” video, Dudu and Johnny dance in a Johannesburg market, maneuvering between fruit stalls. They dance in a street, gathering a crowd on the pavements. But these are staged contexts, even if they are local. As the video ends, they dance outside Jeppe hostel with their Keates Drift home team, in their home team uniforms, in the regular dancing spot on a Sunday afternoon. It is a glimpse of Dudu and Johnny playing ngoma as ngoma dancers do. Mashiya and Mthatheni drum. Onlookers fold their arms and watch. Slow motion calls attention to Dudu and Johnny’s grace, the energy of their flowing bodies, the height and coordination of their choreographed jump.

Savuka also developed the acoustic role of ngoma in the band’s sound. A bigger rock sound with higher-quality sound production could use—and emphasize—the weight of ngoma: the blended but gritty men’s homophonic chorus with its preference for a heavy bass, the prized hard attack of the bass drum, the feeling of the drum’s size and of the acoustic space in which it reso-

nates, the emphatic backbeat and the heavy landing on the first beat, short vocal cycles that form a riff with percussive offbeat accents and bass resonance, lead call and choral response incantations. For example, in “Warsaw 1943” (Clegg and Savuka 1989), a long introduction combines the resonance of blended Zulu men’s voices with lush synthesizer strings, each Zulu phrase ending with a hum. This combination reappears in a coda with Johnny’s high English-language solo voice overlaid. In a song about Nazi resistance and betrayal, Zuluness is present as a musical resource, bearing no direct relation to the lyrics. “Too Early for the Sky” (1988) translates into English a Zulu concept of being “ready for the sky,” that is, of accepting one’s destiny. (The lyrics narrate a near-death experience.) Clegg’s solo verse ends by interspersing exclamatory vocables into his text (“Oh halala, I’m home; looks like I’ve made it, oh halalo!”) while the drummer shifts his patterns, highlighting through accentuation a dotted eighth bass drum motive. The backing male voices pick up Johnny’s line in a call-and-response cycle.

“Baleka uzohaqwa! [Escape before you are injured!]” shouts Sikeyi to his men, initiating “Human Rainbow” (Clegg and Savuka 1988). (On stage, he must be pacing up and down in front of the ranks.)

“Uyahaqwa! [Too late, he is injured!]” answer the soldiers with the stock response of this Zulu battle cry.

Baleka uzohaqwa!
Wahaqwa!
Baleka uzohaqwa!
Wahaqwa!
Baleka uzohaqwa!

The soldier-singers set up the rhythmic groove with their chanting. Backing instrumental tracks accumulate, producing a wash of synthesizer sound around the chanting.

“We baba sice! impilo [Father, give us life; save our lives],” pleads Clegg as he shifts into a gentle soft voice for his first sung lines. Under Clegg’s singing, the chanted riff fades slowly to the background, like retreating men, to return briefly in the bridge to the first full verse.

On “Moliva” (Clegg and Savuka 1989), Sikeyi marks his relationship to Keates Drift directly, and to specific esiPongweni teammates whose isibongelo (praise names) he calls out over the instrumental break. Mastafeni (Dudu)! Usizi (Dudu)! Khulukuthu (Siyazi)! Masalisa (Mashiya)! Usikhwishi (Mashiya)! Dancers of the igoso Kwini! Sung entirely in Zulu, the song

is a tribute to the “people of the Mchunu chiefdom” and recounts the event of his wedding hosted at Dudu’s homestead.⁸

Clegg blends ngoma sound into his compositions, using it as a component to enlarge and excite his sound. At the same time, he broadens the range of resources for his experimental fusions. In Savuka, he imagined his composition as a blend of several African styles and rock, especially that of rock musicians engaged in their own fusions, such as Jethro Tull’s Celtic interests, the Police incorporating reggae, and Peter Gabriel’s world music intersections and collaboration with Senegalese musician Youssou N’Dour. Clegg saw his work in parallel terms but with “a different kind of mixture” (“Cultural Driftwood” 1987).⁹ He also extended his harmonic palate beyond “three cord [*sic*] music in a cyclical format” (“A Marginal Man” 1987), sang more English lyrics, and moved further away from Juluka’s early folksy image and sound (Shahin 1990, 87). Ngoma was one element in a diverse mixture, but a critical one to Clegg’s global musical distinction.

Johnny and Sippo, Juluka and then Savuka enjoyed a Zulu following. Everyone at Keates Drift could recognize their hit songs.¹⁰ Juluka also had an early following in the townships and the towns, and Savuka subsequently benefited from this popularity and expanded it. Nationally they were a phenomenon, widely followed by students and liberal youths as well as by migrant workers. From the early 1980s they also enjoyed an international career with marked success in France from the later 1980s to the early 1990s. Clegg’s ninth release (Savuka’s first recording), *Third World Child* (Clegg and Savuka 1987), broke international sales records in France, Switzerland, and Belgium.¹¹ Clegg’s tenth release, *Shadow Man* (Clegg and Savuka 1988), sold over a million copies in France.¹² A year later, two Savuka recordings topped the European album charts as numbers one and two, at the same time as two of their songs reached numbers one and seven on the singles charts.¹³ In 1991 Savuka had the biggest-selling world music album in Europe.¹⁴ Compact disc sales were coupled with a strenuous international touring schedule. Among his multiple honorary recognitions in France, Clegg was made a Knight of Arts and Letters (Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres) by the French government.¹⁵

As he broadened his fusion, reaching wider audiences, particular sounds came to typify Johnny Clegg. With Clegg feted as le Zoulou blanc, these sounds at once stand as representations of Zulu in his eclectic mix, indexing the place and body habitus from which he reaches out to the world. Whether as introductory, transitional, or concluding material, whether a cappella or



*Shadow Man LP/
CD jacket, 1988.*

with instrumental tracks, whether forming a dance groove or a sound effect, “Ji oyi hmm, oyi hmm hmm,” repeated to form a cycle, became Juluka and Savuka’s iconic vocables: a choral bass, heavy on the beats, accents the pickup “o” with a strong backbeat and upward melodic leap, dropping into blended resonant humming on the strong beat at a slow tempo. If Juluka’s first recordings introduce these vocables, in later Juluka and especially Savuka the musicians develop the sound and enhance their thematic prominence in the song form.¹⁶ In Juluka’s (1982a) “Scatterlings,” the vocables introduce the song and become a motivic theme, and they are timbrally darker than in earlier songs. When Savuka rerecords “Scatterlings of Africa” in 1987, the mix is pared down to create more space in the track, and the bass drum sound is enhanced. It is a huge sound, made more resonant by the temporal and pitch space that surrounds it. The high end of the Juluka version’s busy mix (high hat, shakers, snare) is dramatically reduced in its quantity, volume, and placement in the acoustic space. This new sonic environment that focuses on the bottom and lower midrange enhances the sense of weight in the vocable cycle, which is itself also heavier, bassier, than its 1982 version. Additionally, a verse is omitted, shortening the original by almost a minute. The verse selected for omission is the only one of three that ended without the vocable cycle. In other words, the vocable cycles are kept in place in the form (as the introduction,

between the two remaining verses, and in the coda) in the editing process, raising their relative prominence in the song. As in the Juluka version, in their final instance, the vocables contrapuntally interweave with a contrasting vocable cycle (“O lala, o lala”), tinged with Clegg’s high-pitched voice. It is an intensely vocable-driven groove.

“That song is my slave!” jokes Clegg from the stage, with the racialized irony that he has the license and the bravado to use. He recounts how the song has brought in earnings for him, while like its master he sits back and watches it work.¹⁷ First, it was a Juluka Top Forty hit in the United Kingdom in 1983. Next, Savuka’s 1987 version rose to the top of the charts in France and other parts of Europe. By 2010 a major communications company was looping the chorus riff while callers waited on the line. During his thirty-year retrospective show, the audience sang along, “Ji oyi hmm, oyi hmm hmm,” bodies moving to the rhythm while singers set up a dance groove. Juluka-Savuka vocables have come to stand also as a global signature of ngoma.

Clegg the Activist

Had Clegg the musician not had a struggle history, his career as a South African artist during the apartheid era would have taken different turns domestically and internationally. His struggle history likely contributed to the success he enjoyed, for many who supported the idea of a nonracial future embraced him. Among others he provoked controversy, and the debate heightened his media presence.

Clegg’s motivation for crossing musical boundaries as a youth was aesthetic. He describes it as a “cultural journey, an adventure in the context of a crazy political system,” prompted by a curiosity and attraction to the music and a search for a way to play it (Coplan 1993, 312). But from the outset of his personal journey, he encountered apartheid’s petty regulations, which he had to defy to engage with artists.¹⁸ As he became a public figure, he became a musical icon in the resistance movement, though not an uncontested one.

As performers, he and Mchunu, and subsequently Juluka and Savuka, refused to play in whites-only venues. They struggled against the Group Areas Act, which among other things in the 1970s and 1980s required that whites acquire permits to enter the townships and blacks carry passes in areas designated as white. They came up against restrictions on multiracial performance venues. They found ways around these: playing in alternative private venues in which it was harder to close down a concert—university and church halls, for example, and in the homelands (Clegg and Drewett 2006). On tour and in

performance, police harassed them and kept them under surveillance (Clegg and Drewett 2006).¹⁹

As songwriters, Juluka initially relied on cultural innuendo in their lyrics, but they increasingly addressed politics, and Savuka did so more explicitly than Juluka. While Clegg's songs cover a range of topics, many speak to injustices. During the liberation struggle, some tackled the apartheid state directly. Savuka's "Asimbonanga" (We haven't seen him; referring to Mandela and other imprisoned leaders) became an unofficial anthem of the struggle, much like Peter Gabriel's "Biko" did subsequently. In addition, from Johnny and Siphos first hit single in 1976, "Woza Friday" (Come, Friday; that is, the end of the work week), Clegg's songs fluidly mixed languages, especially Zulu and English. In the context of apartheid's policy of separate development, mirrored in the single-language radio stations of the SABC and the censorship board's policing of these boundaries, Juluka and Savuka's language play was in itself subversive.

Clegg also worked as an activist on behalf of musicians, assisting in the founding of the South African Music Alliance (SAMA) in 1988 (Coplan 1993, 309).²⁰ This organization, which supported the rights of musicians in the music industry, was aligned with the liberation movement. As vice president of SAMA, Clegg was involved in getting local musicians a say in the cultural boycott, a strategy of the international antiapartheid movement, and in pointing out the contradictions and discrepancies in the boycott policy. For example, South African musicians who performed for the United Democratic Front, the internal umbrella organization of the liberation movement, were banned under the cultural boycott from playing overseas (Clegg and Drewett 2006).

By the late 1980s, when Savuka had established a Europe-centered international presence, Clegg had also globalized his political activism. He joined the Human Rights Now! tour, with Sting and Bruce Springsteen in 1988 (Freeman and McCoy 1988), and he played at the Amnesty International concert in Abidjan (West 1989).²¹

Clegg's musical activism and the media debate his transgression provoked heightened his public profile at home. From "Woza Friday" on, Clegg's groups were plagued by radio censorship of their songs, even after the laws relaxed in the later 1980s, which brought him notoriety.²² During the 1980s, as Inkatha's ethnic nationalism became an increasing force, and an increasingly disruptive and violent one, Clegg became a contested figure within the liberation movement, but this debate also fueled his media presence.

As Coplan notes, his embrace of Zulu aesthetics and of relationships with Zulu migrants tainted him for some leftist activists as a promoter of tribalism (Coplan 1993, 308) at a time when the liberation movement based its solidarity on shared class and race experience, not on ethnicity. On the basis of the first Juluka album, *Universal Men* (1979), he was “accused of being a cryptotribalist romantic” (Clegg in Coplan 1993, 324) for his imagery drawing on rural cultural symbols, and some of this line of criticism persisted through the apartheid years.²³

Internationally, his activism from within a pariah nation won him favor. He demonstrated that nonracialism was possible and interesting (when white people are willing to do the work of learning to relate to others). For the French, he became a “symbol and spokesman of ‘alternative South Africa’” (Colborne 1988), as he did for other Europeans, North Americans, and for many South Africans. “A staunch opponent of apartheid, his songs relentlessly invoke the brutality of life in South Africa and urge the South African regime to change its ways,” explained *Newsweek* (Lerner 1988). In the United Kingdom, the response was contrary, where the market was constrained by the British Musicians’ Union, Anti-Apartheid Movement, and Artists against Apartheid. These entities refused to support Clegg and Savuka performing live in the U.K. while the cultural boycott was in place. On one hand, he was expelled from the British Musicians’ Union for performing in South Africa (Freeman and McCoy 1988). (His British passport made him eligible for union membership.) On the other hand, the union denied him permission to perform at the 1988 Free Mandela concert at Wembley Stadium (Clegg and Drewett 2006; Coplan 1993; Freeman and McCoy 1988). It took remonstrations from a then internationally revered political figure like Winnie Mandela to reverse their decision. These contradictions, which were a frustration and sore point for Clegg (Feldman 1988), animated public debate and kept Clegg the activist in the media.

It is difficult to divorce Clegg’s charisma as a popular music star from his positioning within an apartheid history. He has charted a nonracial pathway through the morass of segregation and the politics of the liberation struggle to garner international standing, while speaking and singing as a South African musician. Clegg’s fan base celebrates him for these qualities and the pleasure they derive from his music. For ngoma fans at Keates Drift, he is a hero for his social and political transgressions that enabled their friendship and for his key role in bringing their ngoma to the attention of the world.

Clegg the Advocate

At Keates Drift, Clegg is not only valorized as an advocate and friend, and for his ngoma artistry, but also for his commitment over his adult life to fluency in Zulu language and aesthetics and to understanding Zulu cultural practice—and this, gathered during and despite Msinga’s violence of the later 1970s and 1980s. From at first carrying the name Madlebe (Big ears) as a novelty isishameni dancer and Sihluthu (Big hair) when he turned to umzansi dancing, he became Sikeyi (the peg through a yoke that secures oxen in position, from Afrikaans *juskei* [yoke]), referring to his capacity as a formidable dancer to hold his stand. With deepening poetics and recognition of his developed style, he also accumulated the names Nkunzi akayihleli (a bull who won’t sit down, but will fight to win) and Izibankezo (risk taker). In France he might be touted as le Zoulou blanc, but for those at Keates Drift he is “real Zulu”; he knows “deep Zulu,” that is, cosmological, philosophical, and social practice as locally understood to come from the long past.

Keates Drift friends and fans celebrate Clegg for representing Zulu ways of being to a broader public, for whom he often plays a pedagogical role. In fact he studied social anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand, writing a thesis for his BA Honors on Zulu migrant dance styles (Coplan 1993, 307) and teaching at the university part time for a period thereafter. His ethnographic knowledge has lent him another kind of public authority—academic expert, “Mr Jonathan Clegg of the Department of Social Anthropology at Wits [University of the Witwatersrand]” (Clegg 1980). At first he stood as a spokesperson for Zulu ways of being against the backdrop of apartheid’s construction of ethnicity, and the Zulu nationalist violence it provoked. For example, in a 1980 newspaper editorial he explained the history of factional feuding in Msinga (Clegg 1980). Clegg’s informed analysis provided insight into a spate of hostel killings that had just occurred. Papers on Zulu aesthetics that he delivered at conferences were transcribed by others and published (Johnny Clegg 1981, 1982, 1984, 2005). In these often-cited papers, popular Zulu styles as performed in the everyday rather than as mediated through the music industry were the focus. Later scholarly interviews made his analyses of rural and migrant cultural politics accessible (Coplan 1993), as did the archiving of some of his thesis work at the University of the Witwatersrand (1979), subsequently published in an edited volume (Jonathan Clegg 1981).²⁴

In this output, Zulu people are presented as historically specific politi-

cal agents thinking and acting from within a complex moral worldview, as ingenious artists, and as working-class cosmopolitan South Africans negotiating an urban-rural divide. As a mature musician onstage and in his documentary DVDs (e.g., Clegg 2007, 2010), he frames his songs with storytelling and explanation. In CD booklets and on his website he makes his lyrics available, frequently including translations of the Zulu lines. He translates Zulu ways of being into legible forms for his middle-class audiences. (Most of his current South African audiences came of age during the liberation struggle.)

In the Theater of Marcellus, 17 December 2010, Johnny is setting up his song “The Crossing.” He explains aspects of Zulu cosmology, naming male appetites (smoking and drinking), male spaces (a shebeen or bar in Johannesburg), male signs of prosperity (cattle and wives), and detailing the process by means of which his late friend Dudu’s material body is transformed into an absent presence. Here, and more explicitly elsewhere (Jonathan Clegg 1981), he teaches about Zulu men’s body habitus and Zulu ritual.

“And this brings us to death rituals and rituals of mourning,” Clegg expounds through his stage microphone while the band readies itself in the shadows. “It’s important for the living, but it’s also important for the dead to know that they’re dead.” The mostly white, middle-class audience chuckles. “That they’re not in a dream,” he explains. “So one of the key things is that Dudu would always see his wives dressed in black. Always. And those rituals—and other mourning rituals which the Zulu uphold which he will see [from his position as a spirit roaming around] from time to time, will be these clues being fed to him: ‘Guy, it’s over for you!’ And the Zulu believe that at some point the spirit is in a situation of acquiescence. It doesn’t agree, but it’s ready to accept. It takes about a year for all of these things to transpire. At the end of that year or so, a ritual is performed to take the spirit and officially instate it as an ancestor. And this is called *ukubuyisa idlozi* [also referred to as *umsebenzi* (sing.), *imisebenzi* (pl.), the general term for sacrifice]. An ox is slaughtered, or two or three, depending on how wealthy the man was.” Such pedagogy happens while he alerts the audience to his compositional inspiration, his lyrics, his code-switching, and to his fusion of musical styles.²⁵ The song is “about Dudu’s crossing and it’s also about us [as a new democracy].” A single drum. Spare percussion. Mandolin, strumming. Guitar, strumming, a Celtic feel. Johnny’s first verse. The chorus:

O siyeza, sizofika we baba noma [We are coming; we will arrive soon,
father and mother],

O siyeza, O siyeza, siyagudla lo mhlaba [We are moving across this earth],
Siyawela ngaphesheya kulezo ntaba zimnyama [We are crossing over those dark mountains],
Lapha sobheka phansi konke kuhlupheka [Where we will lay down our troubles].

Later in the show he breaks from his own songs and his own band's performance to feature — briefly — a lineup of young dancers from his community team, the cultural roots of his music. He calls their genre “umzansi war dance.”²⁶ On stage he also draws attention to the distinction of ngoma as vocal sound, as well as to aspects of the musical structure. He teaches audiences how to listen not only to his own music, but to the Zulu aesthetics that inspire him, even while he sometimes perpetuates images that have currency over more precise representations. Umzansi is a war dance when it could simply be a dance, or a migrant worker's dance.²⁷

Clegg the anthropologist has been an advocate for ngoma artists and their communities, and a documentarian of their traditions. (Get those red isigqoko [married women's hats], so brilliant in this light).²⁸ At the same time, he has been pressed to serve as the gateway into understanding Zulu cultural politics and ways of life by South Africans and the world at large. For some, access to his deep Zuluness is not only about comprehension but also about a desire for connection. “I would give them descriptions of what I did and the feelings that I had when I was doing it, but it was never enough, I was just describing; I wasn't giving them *the secret*, which they want cheaply, you see,” Clegg told fellow anthropologist Coplan (1993, 321). Turning his critical anthropological lens on white South Africans, he highlighted the effort of his investment, of embodying Zuluness, while reminding them that the desire for an alluring Zulu presence without also a quest for explanatory knowledge and relationships on the part of the (middle-class, probably white) followers to whom he refers is politically problematic.

Clegg the Businessman

Clegg is also a businessman. He himself recognizes his business savvy (Raphaely 1995). He has benefited commercially from his proprietary status as real Zulu. The circulation of his deep knowledge — and the talk about it — sustains his knowledge as currency. For example, he has appeared as the narrator-anthropologist in a thirteen-part television series (*A Country Imag-*

ined 2010) featuring visual artists from around the country as they address the landscape in which they live.

Once successful internationally, with huge sales of Savuka recordings and performances to stadium-sized audiences, Clegg shifted into other kinds of business as well as further diversifying his sound and show.²⁹ “The life of the foot stomping Savuka star is in transition. His tendons are ruined, his knees are ‘packing in,’ his pelvis is skew and his vigorous dance routines have a limited shelf-life” (Raphaely 1995). First he established a record label and company, Look South Records (Raphaely 1995), “under which he reformed Juluka, licensing the band’s latest album to Sony and Arcade in Europe,” and set out to produce new South African artists (Attorneys, Merchant Bank 1998). A year later he established MTV Africa in a fifty-million-rand deal that provided “South Africa with its own 24-hour music and actuality television station” (in reruns of eight-hour slots) and in which he held a 25 percent stake.³⁰ As MTV has an international reach (sixty-four countries), MTV Africa’s material is added to a pool that other MTV stations can source. In turn, the worldwide pool provides the South African station with international content to balance the local. In addition to recognizing the possibilities for circulation of South African music, Clegg was astute in recognizing the potential for advertising on a youth-oriented station, in a nation of youth.

To obtain a South African business license, MTV Africa needed a component in its business plan “directed at righting some historic imbalance” (Clegg in Raphaely 1995). To fulfill this criterion, Clegg set up a Music and Youth Development Trust, designed to “support a music school and a set of educational modules which will feed into the reconstruction and development programme and be used by schools” (Clegg in Raphaely 1995). The trust holds a 5 percent stake in MTV Africa.

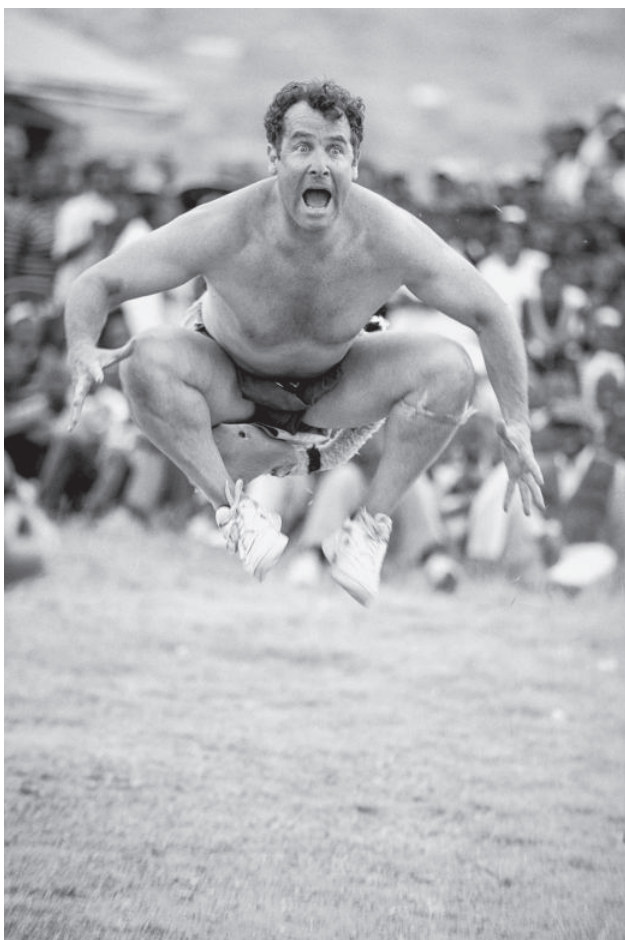
Next, in 1998, Primedia Entertainment established a music entertainment division, Primedia Music, and in the course of doing so acquired various businesses, including Johnny Clegg, Real Concerts (an artists and events management company that manages Clegg), and CSR (a production company with studio facilities and an independent record company specializing in local dance music). They also established a film division. The idea: as a major independent music group, “Clegg will be empowered to grow and expand his work as an artist, producer and creative force both locally and internationally, adding value to the already powerful catalogue of Johnny Clegg, Juluka and Savuka material” (attorneys, Merchant Bank 1998).³¹ This

integration of Clegg's creative and commercial interests is, in effect, the culmination of a diverse career.

Clegg also went on to develop business interests that tied the national postapartheid imperative for black empowerment to his own sense of responsibility to those upon whose culture his creative career rested. With others he founded Vuthela Services, a black economic empowerment company specializing in investment.³² Vuthela forged links to the Makhabela tribal authority that encompasses Siphso Mchunu's home. Its enterprises employ members of Mchunu's eMakhabeleni community. For example, in 2004, African Sky, an e-waste recycling company named after a Juluka song, opened in Benoni, near Johannesburg, with Clegg as director. African Sky ships components to the world's largest corporate e-waste processor in Singapore (Citiraya). Vuthela owns 52 percent of African Sky (Le Roux 2004).

Even in characterizing his business interests, Clegg stories himself to the media in deep Zulu terms, though readers have insufficient detail to understand the specificity of the concepts. "Most business deals require stamina, which I have. . . . It was shaped by my early exposure to stick fighting and other disciplines which upheld the ability to keep fit under all conditions by focusing on resources deep down. Part of my Zulu upbringing has been the emphasis on willpower. You can have a big picture. It'll go out of focus for a while, but if you hang in it'll come back. In business you need 'inkani'—a stubborn determination and inner focus. It's a warrior philosophy which you need at times when your vision is lost" (Clegg discussing Primedia Entertainment, in Raphaely 1995). Once a warrior, always a warrior; umzansi is a war dance.

While engaged in these multiple business interests, Clegg continues his artistic work. In the new millennium, he has sustained an international touring schedule. Since 2004 this circuit has included the United States, after an eight-year hiatus. The aesthetics of his performances require the integration of Zulu musician-dancers. At the same time, the inclusion brings material benefits to some ngoma dancers. Young Unikwa Dladla from Galibasi isigodi and Bhekiseni Ndlovu (Dudu's son) traveled overseas with his band in 2007. Khethukuthula toured alongside them in South Africa. Others joined the stage in showcase moments in the Johannesburg area, when feasible—a tribute to the "cultural roots that shaped me and gave me a whole new window onto life and the world—and enabled me to fill the Civic Theater" (Clegg 2007). Sometimes Umzansi Zulu Dancers secure gigs through Johnny: a



Johnny Clegg's signature jump, esiPongweni, 28 December 2000.
PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

tour with him to Réunion (15–24 December 1999) and to Ireland (December 2000). More recently, they have showcased ngoma in Clegg's bigger local shows. In Dudu's time, Muntu Nxele and Mgonothi Zulu danced, as did Nthengesakhe Ndlovu, Dudu's brother. Dudu bought a generator, a water tank, a brand new *bakkie* (truck). He installed gutters and expanded his homestead. He pinned up a sign at his gate: Paris. Following Dudu in Savuka, Sixaxa danced. When a new branch of African Sky opened, Mphindo, Bheki-seni Ndlovu, and Khethukuthula Dladla moved to Durban to work there.³³

For ngoma singer-dancers, Clegg has authority because he has listened outward from South Africa into the world: the success of his global Africa-centered mix proves this. Having had experience in the global media industry

as an internationally successful Afropop musician and an entertainment industry businessman, he knows what they like to hear overseas and in middle-class white South Africa, and this knowledge opens access to international networks. He has demonstrated that he understands how to work those networks, and he has secured diverse and empowered contacts within them.

On a conceptual plane, Clegg's success converts ngoma drumming and dance into the category of popular world music. Sound heard and marketed as Zulu drumming and dance would never circulate as widely on its own. As traditional African performance it would circulate minimally as archival documentation or as field recordings, whereas Clegg's successful fusions translate ngoma into terms that are legible within the global popular music industry. In rendering its dancing spectacular while bringing attention to its musical features, and demonstrating how it can partake in an (international) rock fusion conversation, he articulates ngoma as music for international listeners and for music industry brokers. Enabled as music, specifically as a form of global Afropop, ngoma can then do the unpredictable work of resonating out there as a sound, separated from its source and from dancing bodies. Someday, ngoma singer-dancers hope, they will benefit from some feedback. They don't want the corrective, stabilizing kind of feedback that would keep them in their place. They want the kind that will take them up in an experimental loop (Novak 2013).

Clegg the Story

During the late 1980s, as apartheid oppression and international resistance to it created a pressure cooker, Johnny Clegg and his band Savuka were at the height of their popularity in France. French pop musician Renaud befriended Clegg. Renaud's leftist class politics and musical borrowings from regional working-class French dialects shared some ideals with Clegg's fusion of rock and Zulu migrant aesthetics, read in Europe as a resistance aesthetic.³⁴ Renaud featured as Clegg's interviewer and travel companion in a French television documentary tracing Clegg's musical roots.

In it, Savuka's French stage performances alternate with interview footage of Clegg. (Clegg's band members are not given a voice, though each contributed distinctively to the sound.) From her Johannesburg living room, his mother shows early photographs and tells of his youthful escapades crossing the color bar and dodging the authorities as best he and Sipho Mchunu could. The film contextualizes Clegg's lyrics through his political framing in the interviews and through images of working-class Johannesburg epitomized

by African men and their street life, juxtaposed with images of white wealth epitomized by conservatively well-dressed women. Images of Clegg and Dudu dancing with their community team on the pavement outside Jeppe hostel bring depth and detail to their commodified global stage performance. An establishing shot of the group in the place they practice on Sunday afternoons. Then, close-ups. Fast camera work. Shifting angles. Bodies. Clegg. The drum head. Fighting-dancing sticks. A pan out to the long row of people watching from a roof in the distance. Flicking limbs. Song. Action. Closeness. Clegg. The heart of the matter. The street. Clegg. Renaud watching.

Renaud watches and listens throughout the documentary. You never hear him speak or see him respond—a wispy reflective French presence to whom Clegg explains Johannesburg, the hostels, migrant life, South African struggle politics, dancing. At Maimai Zulu market he shows him traditional weapons—a sjambok (whip), a stick. African strangers greet Johnny and stop to chat. Their conversations aren't translated. (Representations of Clegg invariably highlight the rarity of his fluency in isiZulu.) Johnny is taking Renaud around, showing him the background to Savuka's lyrics and dancing.

Fast edits, shifting camera angles, and close-ups, with ngoma's dense soundtrack, give the footage drama and an illusion of intimacy and presence. There are virtually no full body images, complete dance sequences, or panned shots of the group. The film places the viewer in the sound in the midst of the group, at the heart of the matter for an alluring moment.

With its high production quality and dual stars, the documentary aired a few times on French television. Such repeated airing was unprecedented exposure for an African musician. Clegg the story captivated audiences, viewers, and readers. Other media circulated related narratives, including a 259-page French biography, *Johnny Clegg: La Passion zoulou* (Conrath 1988). South African narratives construct a mythic figure in similarly singular terms, presenting him as immersed in Zulu culture and always defiant of petty apartheid regulation that stood in the way of understanding and good nonracial relationships. Clegg is the figure who we all should have been, wish we had been, who had the passion and bravado to cross over, and the commitment to sustain and develop the links.

However much Clegg makes good of his story as currency, talking back to the public story with his self-representation in a feedback loop, its wide circulation has enabled ngoma.

Clegg as Value

Clegg is not a broker, actively opening avenues for ngoma dancers and safeguarding their route while absenting himself from the stage (though he has passed performance opportunities on to Umzansi Zulu Dancers). Neither is he a curator (though he points fans to musicians he likes through links on his website, johnnyclegg.com, and he has compiled and performed classic maskanda songs for dissemination [Clegg 2010, disc 2]). Through his intersecting roles as a friend, musician, dancer, activist, advocate, businessman, and narrated figure, Clegg becomes a prompt. His story sets other stories in motion.³⁵

South African music producer West Nkosi was touring Europe with mbaqanga band Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens when the Renaud documentary aired in France. A French promoter eyed the dramatically filmed ngoma dancers on the video. He asked Nkosi about them.

Nkosi left the Mahotella Queens tour, ran home, and assembled a ten-person group from the community team: Umzansi Zulu Dancers, with Siyazi as igoso and Mashiya as iphini. From late April to early June 1987, the team performed at Festival d'Angoulême, the premier world music festival in France, on a tour led by West Nkosi. Next he ushered them into a recording studio and called John Lindeman to the console, the engineer with whom he recorded the Mahotella Queens' first international releases, as well as many of his other productions. He set up a contract for Umzansi Zulu Dancers with Gallo Africa, South Africa's major record company. West prized Siyazi's poetic lyrics, and he fingered Zabiwe with his ringing voice as lead singer for the recording. He used the recording techniques he had developed in the course of producing twenty-two records for Zulu male isicathamiya choir Ladysmith Black Mambazo (1973–86) and recent LPs of the close-harmony homophony of the mbaqanga group the Mahotella Queens. He created a resonant blend through double, triple, or quadruple-tracking the voices, "making a shadow" through a miniscule delay on the overdubs, rendering the tracks slightly out of phase to excite the sound, and adding reverb to some but not to others.³⁶ For Umzansi Zulu Dancers, he opened each track with an a cappella introduction, as in live ngoma performance. To "Sisi Nomvula," the lead track that Siyazi thought of as having a pop beat, West added shakers, rattles, whistles, toms, and snare and bass drum. But for the remaining songs the group's voices were only coupled with a spare percussive accompaniment: an ngoma bass, whistles, and cabasa (beaded wooden

spool). West produced Umzansi Zulu Dancers—for this first recording—as a representation of live rural performance, that is, as quintessentially “African” (Meintjes 2003).

West differentiated the timbre of the two interlocking bass drum players (electronically reproduced), separated them through panning, and placed them low (in volume) in the mix. He inserted the sharp trills of a metal whistle, as well as the swoop and warmer flutter of a wooden version, to demarcate formal transitions or to add effects. A hint of cabasa lends each track a highlight, each distinguished by subtle variation in the cabasa’s rhythmic placement or motive. Here and there cowbells (amadondo) jangle.

To the men’s call-and-response singing, West overdubbed various kinds of vocal interest. Dancers’ praise names chanted percussively in a bridge representing one-one competition contrast with blended singing. Zabiwe’s shout outs over the cycles of the chorus identify the team and their place. He praises. He boasts. On the title track, West added his own exoticizing imitation of Swazi sangoma (healer) vocal effects, air pushed rhythmically from the diaphragm rushing through the throat, and alternating with whoops in the head register. Siyazi’s strident lead in a call-and-response incantation initiates the final song on the record. “Oyithi!” he calls. “Yithi!” the dancers thrust back at him, before percussively spitting out the stock phrase that follows.

A year later, May–June 1988, Umzansi Zulu Dancers were back in France, appearing on summer festival stages in Montpellier singing and selling *Bayekeleni*, and touring with Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens, while black South African radio deejays broadcast “Sisi Nomvula” to the nation. Tours to French colonies followed: a month-long tour in 1990 of Mauritius and Réunion (now a French overseas territory) with popular bubblegum artist Chicco Twala. Japanese promoters were coming, West said.

Meanwhile, West saw an opportunity to fill a gap between the a cappella sounds of Ladysmith Black Mambazo and the female-fronted mbaqanga dance music group the Mahotella Queens. These two South African groups were electrifying listeners across Europe and elsewhere. West wanted to enlarge Umzansi Zulu Dancers’ market appeal by making it possible for foreigners to groove to ngoma in dance clubs while still retaining the rhythmic patterns and feel of traditional Zulu dance. So in a second recording with Umzansi Zulu Dancers (1991), he again foregrounded the ngoma vocals and buried the bass drum. He created space in ngoma’s dense acoustic texture by representing one drummer, omitting the interlocking partner. (Ku tung!

Ku tung! Ku tung! Ku tung!) He added maskanda guitar (played by Them-biseni), concertina, and bass guitar (played by Mzwandile David, who had backed Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens). He Africanized the sound by adding programmed percussion instruments.³⁷ He enhanced vocal interest by featuring different singers as lead on various tracks. He retained insertions of exclamation and praise, as well as whistles, and his own Swazi chesty vocal effects. In his words, he wanted to do with ngoma what Paul Simon had achieved with isicathamiya.³⁸ Along with *Bayekeleni, Emzini* (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 1991) sold better than any of their subsequent releases. These productions became their signature sound.

West's production of Umzansi recordings includes aural traces of Juluka and Savuka: the integration of maskanda sounds with Zulu male choral singing, the overdubbed exclamations and praise name chanting, the male vocal blend recorded like Ladysmith Black Mambazo but sung like Juluka and Savuka, the extended choral introductions, sometimes chanted in unison. West used techniques for Umzansi Zulu Dancers' musical arrangements for which Clegg in part had set the terms.

"Eyi hmm oyi hmm hmm," repeats Siyazi in a rhythmic cycle with a heavy backbeat kick, in all three bridges between the verses on his title track of *Khuzani* (Umzansi 1994), released after the esiPongweni-Madulaneni violence had subsided. "Hmm eyi hmm," add Umzansi Zulu Dancers' choral backing underneath his solo voice. "Eyi hmm oyi hmm hmm," they repeat together as the song fades out. On track two, "Inkululeko," Moses Nzuzza's floating lead voice undulates, imitating the contours of the Nguni bow harmonics, following the melodic idea of Juluka's "Inkunzi ayihleli ngomisa" (Juluka 1979). On the next track, they sing to a slow beat and heavy ngoma groove, the dotted rhythm of the bass drum's motive prominent in the mix.

Umzansi Zulu Dancers is a product of the inspiration of West, the influence of Clegg, the prompting of a French promoter. It is a group rooted in a vibrant community practice that Clegg's music making energized through his embodied endorsement and by opening up a new direction. Members of Umzansi Zulu Dancers found themselves in a new position of self-representation to a world beyond themselves, learning their way around the politics of narrating themselves as ngoma dancers to others.

In the story Umzansi Zulu Dancers tell about themselves—and their recording companies tell on their behalf—they work at keeping their story connected to Clegg's. From both *Bayekeleni* and *Emzini's* liner notes: "When GMP producer West Nkosi was in Paris in 1987 he was approached



Bayekeleni
LP jacket, 1988.

by a French Jazz Festival promoter who asked him to track down a group of Zulu dancers he had seen featured on a Johnny Clegg video.” “I think you know them,” West Nkosi said to me in 1991. “Those are the people who trained Johnny Clegg.”³⁹ Still, always, as they work at sustaining their reputation, they tie their and Clegg’s stories together. “Siyazi Zulu, Johnny Clegg’s former lead dancer, brings the now internationally known Umzansi [*sic*] Dancers to Grahamstown,” touts the National Arts Festival billing in 2005.⁴⁰ In 2008: “Don’t miss the guys who taught Johnny Clegg to dance—Mzansi Zulu Dancers—fabulous South African entertainment!”⁴¹ When Umzansi receives a gift to build a website, the young designer writes on their homepage, “Nationally & abroad. Umzansi Zulu Dancers has thought [taught] many famous musicians the cultural zulu dance like Johnny Clegg & many more.”⁴² The website includes images of the covers of a Clegg DVD (Clegg 2003) and of Juluka’s *Scatterlings* (1982a). When Umzansi Zulu Dancers apply for funding for cultural programs from the National Arts and Culture Department and a Norwegian NGO, their biography claims Clegg as their student, as does their proposal to register as a nonprofit organization. When a film crew stays overnight at Siyazi’s homestead while filming ngoma, he regales them with Clegg’s history in the community. Clegg’s celebrity is a form of currency, and it is confirmation of ngoma’s social value.⁴³ He is their

student and product, their jewel and precious enabler, their global icon and contact. They accumulate authority as his teacher and promise excellence as his associate.

What, then, are the measures of an equal bidirectional authority that would place Johnny, West, Siyazi, and Umzansi Zulu Dancers on the same footing in a world music domain? That is, what kinds of success would accord them the same degree of cosmopolitan respectability, albeit perhaps in different terms? By his race and class position, and with the burden of the crossover star, Clegg faces a presumption in the discursive politics of cross-cultural global music making that his relationship to ngoma is to some degree a violation. His nonracial musical relationships are also, at first, cast into doubt by the measure of being a white South African who has benefited from apartheid's privilege, while playing crossover music in oppressive times. Apartheid's physical violence intensifies the presumption of symbolic violence. Clegg's response, measured against this discursive position, occurs at the conjunction of music practice, activism, advocacy, academic authority, and global marketing savvy. The interplay among these components of Clegg's career and his attempt to balance them is a search—and an improvisation—as a respectable cosmopolitan, for a “necessary ethical response to all forms of injustice” (Feld 2012, 114).⁴⁴ For West and the Umzansi Zulu Dancers, reaching for “overseas” (Meintjes 2003), reaching for “world music citizenship” (Feld 2012), the question arises, what is up for grabs? Is Clegg's version of Zulu sound also automatically theirs to weave back into their sound on the basis of Clegg's cosmopolitan obligation, or their cultural rights, or by historical precedent? For Siyazi and Umzansi Zulu Dancers, respectability, in turn, hinges upon their possessing (Zulu) culture on the one hand—it is a marker of their singularity and so it is also their commodity—and knowing how to make one's way into the world of professional performance as working men.⁴⁵ It is also about having relationships, as citizens in the world, across difference. Against the institutionalized racism of South Africa's past and its enduring legacy in the present, friendship with Clegg and professional engagement with his work on and offstage is compelling. The terms of engagement at any moment are not necessarily shared among participants, even when the pleasure of the engagement might be. Neither are such terms fixed. The flexibility that this ambiguity creates can be mutually enabling.⁴⁶

As artists and ideas, Clegg and Umzansi Zulu Dancers are crucially vitalized by their ongoing relationships to ngoma practice in the Keates Drift

community. These relationships are each grounded differently in obligations and intimacies derived from personal histories set in apartheid.⁴⁷ They are authenticating relationships and exchanges of inspiration, while they share and circulate their creative material. On 25 December 2000, Mdo, iphini, is at the helm, stoking the dancers' energies for the next one-one through song. He pulls fragments from forgotten composers, from the public domain of ngoma, from proverbs. "The pumpkin has no pot to put it in"; "Sosobala, where do you get that aeroplane?" Next he brings in *Bayekeleni's* opening track, "Sisi Nomvula," still a favorite twelve years after the LP's release (always, still, "Sisi Nomvula," even twenty-five years on): "Sisi Nomvula, why did you run away? What if we were to pay lobola with a red cock [trumping the bride price proposed by the suitor from whom you have fled]?" Later during a lull, Denga initiates a song from within the ranks. "You proposed. You proposed," he calls, snatching a line from an *Emzini* track.⁴⁸ The team completes the story: "You proposed to a girl next to the donga [erosion ditch]; why do you propose like this [so inappropriately]?" Mdo wrests leadership from Denga, quoting a song picked up from a Bergville team, 50 kilometers away, which they had heard in performances at Johannesburg's hostels: "Zanele, can you tell me what's wrong? What's the matter between me and you?" He moves on to Umzansi Zulu Dancers' 1997 recording, *Amabhande*: "Who is the diviner [*inyanga*] who is carrying the bag [of lethal goods]?" "We ask," responds the suspicious team, "who is the diviner carrying the bag?" When Zabiwe's turn to lead comes around, he belts out a phrase snatched from a *Bayekeleni* song to initiate his set. Meanwhile, on Umzansi Zulu Dancers' recordings, Siyazi inserts ululations, whistles, and exclamations reminiscent of a live home event, while he borrows locally circulating poetic material and stock ngoma incantations for his lyrics.

A trace of Clegg's sound also returns to the dancers at home. "Ji oyi hmm hmm," they sing, swaying their upper bodies to the beat. Clegg himself brings heightened pleasures to an event. Hear the fevered pitch of the cheering crowd when Sikeyi trumps his competitor with a crafty move. Meanwhile, on his recordings, Clegg calls out dance names of team members: "Khuluthu! Usizi! Usikhwishi! Mastafeni." On video, snippets of the home team enhance his distinction. On his stage, S'thabiso, Nkululeko, Bhekiseni, Mbongiseni, Khethukuthula, Zethemba, Mphindo, and Unikwa share their youthful virtuosity so he can honor the cultural roots of the music he plays.

Clegg and Umzansi Zulu Dancers' relationship is also significant. Beyond the influence of pleasing musical ideas, Savuka's intertwining with Keates



After the dance, esiPongweni, 25 December 1997. PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR.

Drift ngoma is a seed for fantasy for Umzansi Zulu Dancers. (And is the group a proxy for Keates Drift dancers at large?) Savuka's intertwining invites the dancers to envision world renown for themselves, with independent cosmopolitan relationships, and to imagine attaining sustainable, wealthier living through their art. It underscores dancers' multiple reasons to attend to ngoma's vitality. Savuka quickens dancers' dreams about the possibility of a full crossing, as if the terrain were even (Feld 2012). It is the crossing that Clegg made in becoming Sikeyi.

O siyeza, sizofika we baba noma [We are coming; we will arrive soon,
father and mother] . . .

Siyawela ngaphesheya kulezo ntaba zimnyama [We are crossing over
those dark mountains].



Bhekiseni Ndlovu (partially obscured), Neli Mbongiseni Dladla, and Phumlani Zulu, esiPongweni, 25 December 2003. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Ma Zakwe and Ma Gidion at an ngoma performance, esiPongweni, 27 December 2015.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

6 / / / DANCING AROUND DISEASE

Silence, Ambiguity, and Brotherhood

Every year at Christmastime, I visit a dancer at Galibasi, the isigodi on the other side of Madulaneni. One year he tells me that *impilo* (life/health) has no guarantee.

28 December 2000, esiPongweni

Sikeyi travels down to Keates Drift to dance. The crowd jitters with energy. Youths line the school roof ridges to get a better view. Magnificent dancing ensues. Sikeyi addresses the crowd through a megaphone. Like other amasosha (soldiers), he is silent on AIDS, though the epidemic is raging.

December 2006, esiPongweni

On a rusted oil drum dumped outside a gate: “DJ Zola DJ Dezzi HIV AID *ndakwaLuzu* [*sic*, at the place of the Zulu].” Splats of red paint. Boys had been conversing there, prompted by a fictional drama they read in school. Had kwaito music star Zola’s HIV/AIDS activism struck them? Had his forthright media talk unsettled them (Steingo 2011)? Perhaps Zola, like DJ Dezzi, was simply a character in a story to them. They have painted each letter of their accusatory graffiti attentively, like a writing exercise.

December 2002, esiPongweni

Amasosha and young men love this, a mother says, pointing to her breasts to intimate youthful lust. And they refuse condoms, she says. How are we to protect our beautiful daughters?

26 December 2009, Muden, 30 kilometers from Keates Drift

The Provincial Department of Arts and Culture is sponsoring another ngoma event, and scores of groups have gathered. A tent shades the dignitaries relaxing on plastic chairs. A PA system amplifies the speeches across the field of dance teams and their fans. I meet a former igoso from over the way who has chaperoned his team to the event. Scars pockmark his face. He is lean but healthy again. He asks me why his friends from esiPongweni haven't greeted him. (His words are less a question than a troubled remark.) But his friends shading themselves in the tent have not yet spotted him at the event.

As the body is an expressive resource for those who sing and dance, so is it a captivating text available for interpretation for those who witness the beauty of its form, the depth and range of its expressive capacity. Exclamations rustle through the crowd. How young Sono is growing. Zethemba is learning to style—how strong he will become as isosha! Those sisters gifting Mkhumbuleni come from Nyoneni. See the Wild One somersaulting, Pretty doing the splits. Look, Mbusi has been watching Mboneni—see him adopting the feeling. How Cele and Bhekani make us laugh with their antics. That one, I wish he were my son! He should be my boyfriend. Why is Bheki not dancing today? Hehee! Mbono has become big—he is heavy these days! (We will beat him dancing.) And Miselakhe, always so slender? Khethukuthula, why is he missing? A soldier must work when there's work to be done.

Bodies are interpreted by their style for their character, their course through life, and the status of their relationships to others. Bodies are also read for signs of well-being. Bheki was missing in the lineup that day because a cow kicked him, he said, and his shin was too tender to dance. Khethukuthula? He was disrespecting the team, some think, lazy others say, too big for his boots perhaps? An elder admonishes him. (He dances the next day.) Mbono so nice and fat, how his wife is cooking for him! How one is thinning. Hear, is Mdo's voice not weakened? Why, another is coughing. Bafana, such a short solo! Skin. Marks. Faltering moves. At home, diarrhea. Well-being is

noticed and monitored, always, and with heightened trepidation and verbal evasion in the presence of HIV and AIDS.

I do not wish to condone or criticize the choice to remain silent when speaking up about HIV and AIDS might make a difference. Rather, I wish to understand how silence comes to feel necessary and how community members, especially soldiers, friends, fathers, and brothers, organize around it or through it in order to cope with the reduced physical capacity of men, especially of men who perform ngoma. That their limitations arise from a sexually transmitted disease, that it is born out of forms of intimacy, ties these struggles over changing bodies to the politics of relationships around Keates Drift. It is in part a concern over the preservation of men's respectability.

In *Love in a Time of AIDS*, Hunter (2010) attends to the changing ways that men and women in KwaZulu-Natal relate in the context of intimacy. Building a homestead requires that men (and their families) cultivate relationships of reciprocity and obligation to a network of kin. Families dealing with illness encounter new demands on their resources and reduced capacities to accumulate wealth, and so they face new challenges with regard to entering into the reciprocal relations that enable the reproduction of their domestic life. As traditional reciprocal practices become less reliable, individuals seek out alternative modes of material support, such as through sustaining relationships with multiple extramarital concurrent partners who provide variously. (Sugar daddies play a key role.) In turn, these circumstances exacerbate the epidemic (Hunter 2010).

When confronted with diminishing capacities that represent a failing or compromised social life—whether of families, individual relationships, or the ngoma team—how do men perform their responsibilities to other men? Whether such failing capacities are articulated as a fault of women, as a consequence of masculine excesses or the follies of youth, or as fallout from racialized global conspiracies that render Africans as victims, how do men care for other men in an appropriately masculine way?¹ In her ethnography researched with home-based carers (volunteers who go to the homes of AIDS patients to tend to them) in Okahlamba, KwaZulu-Natal, Henderson (2011) reports that HIV support groups are predominantly women's spaces. She couples this with the observation that the ways that men carry themselves in public preclude expressions of vulnerability, and so when they speak out about HIV in roles of leadership, they do not speak in personal terms. In addition, current interpretations of the discursive practices of Zulu re-

spect—*hlonipha*—preclude direct talk about sex in mixed-gender contexts and of others' illness in public (Black 2013a).²

In this context, how do men's institutions like ngoma teams and ways of expression like ngoma performance accommodate and articulate the struggle with the virus? Ngoma camaraderie combines the competition of dance with bonding of friends and brothers. This kind of camaraderie is muddied by disease. As able-bodiedness and well-being diminish into vulnerability and bodily struggle, some principles of ngoma's brotherhood require refashioning. For athletic bravado, crucial to ngoma play and a cause for celebration, can easily facilitate stigmatization of its opposite. Yet brothers look out for brothers, ngoma dancers for their teammates. "If you're going to mess me around, I don't care, for my extended family [Umzansi Zulu Dancers / ngoma dancers] is here; they can come and pick me up anywhere. I don't care [if you cause me trouble], for my people are here [to look out for me]," sing Umzansi Zulu Dancers on "Ifa" (Inheritance/estate; Mzansi Zulu Dancers 1998). Amasosha face the necessity of caring for their fellow amasosha at the same time as the heavy stigma of HIV pushes their relationships to the limit. I argue that ngoma's poetics of ambiguity enables the management of an affective camaraderie in these anxious circumstances.

Africanist writing about the relationship of the arts to HIV/AIDS intervention and education is plentiful. Much focuses on the arts as expressive media that offer a window into the interiority of individuals who are either carriers of the virus, inflicted with disease, vulnerable to contagion, or living in close proximity to it. Directly, or by implication, many of these studies promote an argument for the liberatory or cathartic consequences that engagement in the arts can sometimes have (for example, Barz 2006; Okigbo 2016).³ Studies focusing on the intersection of the arts with health professionals and NGOs emphasize the instrumentalization of the arts, whether for health education, to access memories in order to ease trauma, or to illuminate on-the-ground experiences in order to better understand the utilization of health and welfare services (and so to improve them).⁴ In their arguments, both foci tend to privilege analysis of lyrics or dramatic texts when dealing with performance, often taking as transparent the relationship between interventionist lyrics and changes in behavior (a point McNeill [2011] criticizes). The organization of performance institutions, such as a choir as a support group (Okigbo 2016) or a ritual practice as a site of education (McNeill 2011), and the poetics of support group talk (Black 2012, 2013a, 2013b) are also given attention.



Amasosha, esiPongweni, 25 December 2013. PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

These scholars contribute studies of how the performing arts are deliberately brought to bear upon the HIV/AIDS blight in struggling communities. Gunner's (2003, 2006) study of Zulu *isicathamiya* lyrics and performance practice brings attention to the ways in which genre can lend moral authority to a controversial issue like HIV/AIDS. Alongside Gunner, I add an analysis in the everyday, outside explicitly AIDS-related arenas. This I hope can tell us about ways of relating around HIV, in the presence of HIV, as it is articulated in performance that is not designed as HIV education or HIV-related support. I address the quality of relationships under duress, in order to consider the intimacy of friendship and camaraderie in relation to stigma. In other words, I attend to the relationships around struggling individuals. I include analysis of relationships to the stigmatized and struggling, but I want to bring significance to how the politics of the intercorporeal relationships

around them shape the quality of the relationships with them, and so affect the management of suffering.

Silent Brotherhood

With silence about HIV, HIV can become a “disease without boundaries” (Steinberg 2008, 215). It infuses itself into communities and passes into bodies. How is one to know who carries the virus (until someone becomes sick)? The healthy and the contaminated appear interchangeable. This is the “muted yet powerful presence” of the virus (Henderson 2011, 42).

“We know,” replies a dancer when I query his unwillingness to broach the subject of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs with a friend, “but we can’t say for sure.” Why not tell your fellow soldier, your friend, your relative, to go to the hospital or the clinic? Why not talk to him about *amaphilisi* (ARVs), for you know why he is sick? “We know, but we can’t say *for sure*,” he says, leaning on the end of his phrase. He sustains ambiguity, even in the face of certainty.⁵ In the process of reading the body, a poetics of ambiguity that maintains the sense of unboundedness of the virus is worked at. I’m visiting a dancer who is struggling with his health. He spent weeks at a hospital in the area, recovering from tuberculosis. This is the context in which he comments, “Impilo ayigaranti [Health/life is not guaranteed],” obliquely letting me know all might be less well than it seems, but never saying it is so. His wife had heard Siyazi wasn’t well. “Is he healthy?” he asks skeptically, and hopefully, twice.

The unboundedness of the disease is also a site of high-stakes play. At the hostel in Johannesburg one Sunday I ask Mbusiseni if he is to dance in the afternoon’s event. “No,” he says, pointing to his kidneys, “I’m sick.” (Later, he dances.) Have you visited the doctor? “No,” he says. “Eyi, he has AIDS!” teases his friend. Mbusiseni points to the fleshiness of his slender, muscular body, youth at its peak. They laugh. It is a fraternal joke that recognizes the possibility that a fit friend could be a carrier. The joke perpetuates ambiguity around the boundaries of the disease. We know, but we can’t say *for sure*.

While the wisecrack acknowledges the feasibility of being a carrier, Mbusiseni’s gestured assertion of health and the shared laughter of the friends place the disease elsewhere, in other bodies, not theirs. Steinberg (2008) relates a story of a woman who displaces the cause of her illness to the spirit world. In public she holds to the explanation that she has been bewitched even while she visits the clinic for medication. Many who are ill obscure their secret and displace the cause of their illness onto other things. Mboneni, like

others, displaces his illness to the past. “Thanks to God, I have woken up. I am resurrected,” he asserts upon greeting me at a community party just before Christmas in 2006. Mboneni had retired from dancing the previous year, too weak from illness to participate in such a strenuous art. Now he relates his triumph to me. A staunch traditionalist, he had sought out the expensive healing powers of an *isangoma*, a medical practitioner (diviner), and an *inyanga*, herbalist. He stuck with these healing powers alone until he felt he was facing death. Then he supplemented his isangoma doctor with a visit to the Church of Scotland hospital. He checked in. He took his pills “exactly” morning, noon, and night, exactly on time. “People are afraid to test,” he tells me, but look at him—all he had was TB, just TB. He tested one week, two weeks, three months. All the tests: “green,” clear. He is no longer taking pills, he says, as he is healed. He constructs what might be a false boundary (his sickness/health) and then undermines it by his actions: when darkness falls, exactly, he leaves the party. I greet a dancer, Christmas 2009. “TB,” he says, to preemptively explain why Khetho is driving him around when most walk sociably, why he looks so gaunt and speaks in a strenuous hush. Like many others, he displaces the possibility of the virus by identifying TB as his only affliction.

“You, AIDS, go back to where you came from,” sing Umzansi Zulu Dancers in “Ingculaza [Blood, a pseudonym for AIDS],” composed by Siyazi. This repeating chorus resonates with contemporary xenophobic discourse against migrating African laborers and work seekers, whom some accuse of robbing local Africans of their livelihood. It also reproduces by insinuation the theories that then president Thabo Mbeki circulated about the origins of AIDS, conspiracies about AIDS as another imported white strategy to disempower Africans as early colonial epidemics had (Steinberg 2008), and theories about the virus having crossed species further north on the continent and being brought south by immigrants.⁶ But Siyazi explains his personification of the disease and the sung threatening directive—“you, AIDS”—differently. The chorus of “Ingculaza” deploys the rhetorical device in order to cast blame collectively, diffusely, and elsewhere, on no one and beyond the community. Then, only then, could they raise the name of the disease in song. “You, AIDS, go back to where you came from.”

To name the disease places it here, Steinberg says, in your body, your household, your community. But the dancers never sing “Ingculaza” at home, for Christmas should be made celebratory through song and dance for the pleasure of friends and family. By circulating the song as recording without

ever singing it at home, the placement of the disease within the community remains opaque, even while the lead singer addresses the youths directly in his verse. “Who is going to be in this world? No one will be left to sustain life if you boys don’t listen,” he sings. “You are told all the time to wear jackets [condoms] when making love. Things are as they are [because you are being irresponsible]. AIDS is your problem. The youth are being decimated. The nation will come to an end.”⁷ In addition to the critical distance enabled by a recorded sound, the AIDS reference is kept present but ambiguous at home also through the melodic aspect of the song. Composer Siyazi borrows a portion of the verse melody and tweaks the accompanying words from “Ubuzimuzimu [Cannibals]” (Umzansi 1997), in which he had warned that violence will destroy the black nation. “Ubuzimuzimu” in turn had borrowed from an earlier song in which the dancers boasted that their overseas success reduced their competitors to nothing. Voicing this melody as a song fragment inserted into live performance without singing the most recent AIDS lyrics, singers point to multiple possible references at once.

Recasting the disease or its explanation in relation to multiple elsewhere ensures that its placement remains vague, while not denying its presence. These vagaries enhance the ambiguity of the boundaries around the disease. Relationships to the world of the ancestors further complicate the issue, for the boundary between the physical body and the spiritual world is permeable and fluid. First, in the case of a timely death (i.e., from old age), a person moves fluidly and naturally into the realm of the ancestors. It is in a sense a continuation of living (Berglund [1976] 1989, 79). An untimely death is a rupture but, appropriately managed through ritual practice, the spirit will join the ancestors. Second, spirits of the dead can move in and out of material bodies. Indeed, in the event of a death, a sick person should stay away from the homestead of the dead, for the spirit of the dead person may come into the sick person, Siyazi says. Whether a spirit is in residence or not is speculative, as is whether someone is a carrier of the virus. Like a virus, a negative spirit can sicken a person. To substitute one for the other as an explanation of illness is an easy step to take. What was Khethukuthula suffering from? “Just from the *amadlozi* [ancestors].” That’s why he didn’t dance.

The Secrecy of Infection

Ngoma dancers’ poetics of ambiguity concerning HIV are set in part by the state’s response to the virus. There has been remarkable change from tardy recognition of HIV and AIDS as a potential epidemic during the tran-

sition period and Mandela's presidency (1990–99), through a policy of radical denialism during the Mbeki presidency (1999–2007), to a current program directed by the health ministry under Zuma's presidency (2007 to the present) that has transformed South Africa into the nation supporting the highest number of people on ARV treatment in the world.⁸ The activism of the Treatment Action Campaign drove these changes, especially during the Mbeki years. Key achievements include the legalization of generic drugs (a campaign begun in 2000), institutionalization of a government rollout program providing ARVs (nevirapine) to HIV-positive pregnant women in 2004 (Cameron 2007), and of a broader revised government program in 2009.

On the ground in impoverished places like Keates Drift, this translated into a shift from having no access to drugs, to the option of taking handfuls of pills three times a day, to taking a couple “seven o'clock, seven o'clock.” Parallel to this pharmaceutical reality, people in Keates Drift moved from presuming HIV meant certain death, meant being “finished,” to seeing that life could be extended, and more recently to encountering the possibility that an HIV-positive life could be lived in good health with medication.

Ngoma dancers and their families and friends have had to find their ways through these changing but challenging health politics as they are implemented around Keates Drift. At hand they have a local clinic (Ethembeni Clinic) and a provincial hospital (Church of Scotland hospital) in Tugela Ferry 16 kilometers to the north.⁹ In cases of dire need, community members are sent to the hospital in Richmond, 125 kilometers south. The hospital in Tugela Ferry is understaffed, underresourced, and overextended. Alarming HIV prevalence rates are coupled with high rates of TB infection, including extensively drug resistant TB (XDR-TB).¹⁰

Around 1995, HIV/AIDS became a presence in the local hospital system. By 1996–97, patients with opportunistic infections inundated the hospital. With national political inaction, the HIV/AIDS and TB situation in the hospital escalated into a “disastrous” situation by 2000 (Oppenheimer and Bayer 2007). While the management of HIV/AIDS and TB around Keates Drift through the hospital (with the clinic at Keates Drift as a supplementary resource) is now under better control, these diseases remain the predominant drain on hospital resources.¹¹ Other repercussions also linger around Keates Drift. First, in terms of sheer numbers, the Mbeki AIDS policy exponentially increased the prevalence rate. Second, the numbers combined with the radical physiological effects in the absence of medication made more visible the gulf between healthy and disintegrating young bodies. Third, the increased

presence of bodies marked by frailty raised the stakes on the value of being abled-bodied among the youth. I therefore focus this chapter on the Mbeki years.¹²

Mbeki's health program dramatically slowed the delivery of medication, muddled medical explanatory discourse about the disease, hampered prevention efforts, limited hospital resources, constrained medical protocols, and increased stigmatization of the sick.¹³ Hospital workers were constrained in how they could approach AIDS prevention and treatment by national policy and dogma that filtered down through the provincial health department. Among these constraints were the procedures for the management of patient confidentiality.¹⁴ In a discriminatory social climate, a patient's right to privacy may be a protective measure. These were the terms in which the health department articulated the intention of the order. But for local doctors, the order was a gag rule that compromised the caring process and privileged individual confidentiality over the need to prevent further contagion (Oppenheimer and Bayer 2007). Even in the operating theater, the Church of Scotland's Dr. Tony Moll "was not allowed to tell the theater sister that this person was an HIV patient. So it wasn't even 'shared confidentiality' that was allowed. . . . We were not allowed to write 'HIV,' 'immune compromised,' or anything like that on death certificates. . . . You certainly couldn't talk to family members about the diagnosis, so that family members understood the cause of death as TB, pneumonia, chronic diarrhea" (Oppenheimer and Bayer 2007, 89).¹⁵

Coupled with troubling state health policy, aspects of contemporary ways of living around Keates Drift, burdened by an apartheid legacy, leave community members easily vulnerable to infection. First, this is a migrant, patriarchal, polygamous, patrilocal community that has no history of condom use or of circumcision, and a practice of multiple concurrent sexual alliances.¹⁶ The area is plagued by a high incidence of rape. Second, for many people, the hospital is a secondary recourse in times of illness. For some, Zulu medicinal practices either substitute for the healing offered through the hospital, or they are prioritized. Some supplement Zulu healing practices with hospital resources, while for others Zulu healing is secondary. Many use the hospital intermittently; few use it consistently. Some use both resources concurrently; others move between them, but few people exclusively rely on the hospital and clinic.¹⁷ Furthermore, men have been more reluctant than women to use hospital services and to return to clinics.¹⁸

How these dual options are used is tied into two histories. On the one

hand, Zulu medicine is a long-standing practice in the area, and it takes seriously the interconnected cosmological participation of ancestors, a factor that aligns with the worldview of most in the community. Its best practitioners (*izangoma* and *izinyanga*) enjoy renown and social prestige. The highest-quality healing services on offer are those available at home or accessible through regional Zulu networks.¹⁹ Rural hospitals, on the other hand, are seen as second-quality institutions at best (and as Christian). That is, locals know that the best medical resources are retained for the rich and the urban (despite the experience, knowledge, and dedication of many of the staff, the groundbreaking research conducted, and the world renown of some of these rural institutions). Rural hospitals, in part because they are backwater versions of the urban ideal, also operate against a history of local suspicion and in the context of the circulation of conspiratorial rumors. Many Keates Drift people conflate scientific medicine with the state on the basis of the history of public health and scandalous epidemic management in South Africa (Fassin 2007). First the apartheid state promoted racist health and welfare policies.²⁰ Next an ANC-run state represented a movement that many in this IFP-identified area had struggled against. In an “economy of resentment, whereby the past constitutes an inexhaustible reservoir of painful memory and an economy of suspicion, whereby the present is interpreted through the lens of an intense mistrust of anyone making any claims to authority” (Fassin 2007, xix), the local worry over hospitals concerns whether they aim to regulate local ways of being and to discipline the social body, even while community members turn to their services in times of need.²¹

At the same time, doctors face their own challenges concerning how to intersect productively with Zulu healing practices. Some hold suspicions about Zulu medicinal practitioners. Some worry about the social effects of freely available condoms. Because key staff members believed on religious grounds that condoms promote promiscuity, the Church of Scotland did not advertise the availability of free condoms. To obtain condoms that by state decree were free, people had to know they were available, and then come into the hospital reception area and request them. (Compare, for example, Emmaus Hospital at Bergville, 150 kilometers away, where the staff attached a box of condoms to the hospital gate so no one needed to enter the grounds to access them.)²²

The state’s denialist policy filtered through the health system into patient care, where by silent practice it was further circulated into the community as an appropriate, if hegemonic, response to the disease. Patient care practices



Watching ngoma, Madulaneni, 27 December 2009. PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

regulated by the health ministry's policy set up ways to relate to the ill. They modeled a relationship to this new illness.

This was not the only channel through which national discourse on HIV/AIDS reached into community conversation and practice. Fueled by the debate and activism that the state's controversial positions provoked, the news media spread the discussion and the skepticism. For one, Mbeki questioned whether HIV caused AIDS and clung to this position in the face of much alternative evidence, produced confusion, and presented a position amenable to those who were already skeptical of scientific medicine and of their backwater hospital up and over the hills.²³ Community voices of denial or doubt looking for rhetoric to support their positions could simply refer to the president or his health minister, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang. Likewise, the health minister's statements that foods such as garlic, African potatoes, olive oil, and vegetables would delay the onset of AIDS in HIV-positive people (while she suggested that AIDS drugs may be toxic) continued to have a rhetorical life long after the statement had been debunked.²⁴ This statement offered a convenient belief that provided some — even some who knew it was false — with a means of reasoning against going to the hospital. Eat healthily, eat garlic and your vegetables, and then you might not need the hospital.

Practices of patient care constrained by state policy promoted a culture of silence around the diseased. At the same time, government statements on HIV/AIDS, and the media debate that these statements promulgated, engendered a discourse of ambiguity around the facts of the disease: its origins, genealogy, biology, treatment, and prevention. Consider a culture of silence and the ambiguities around the facts of the virus on the part of institutions and communities at large, coupled with a fear of discrimination and an affect of shame associated with a sexually transmitted infection (Cameron 2007; Steinberg 2008) on the part of individuals and families: these intersecting dynamics produce conditions in which forms of intervention would require that individuals take high risks, whether placing themselves in a position to be stigmatized or further stigmatizing another.

The Risks of Vulnerable Men

On the main road, the promenading place, billboards appear in the mid-1990s. “Born Free. Take Back the Future,” the slogan shouts, while in the image a young woman raising a power salute grips an AIDS banner licked with flames as if life itself were burning. “Get attitude” and “Love life,” exhorts the campaign. At the taxi rank, “Abstain, Be faithful, Condomise. Protect your family and your loved ones from the risk of HIV/AIDS.” The back of the billboard repeats the message in Zulu. The twisted red ribbon is stamped on both sides, and the Provincial HIV/AIDS Action Unit help line number runs along the base: 0800-012-322. Across the road: “Strong. Ijuba Special [millet beer].” On the billboard three bulging musclemen glisten beside the beer carton.

In the media, pop stars responded to the epidemic. Working in Soweto and Johannesburg with kwaito youth (who were the postapartheid “Born Frees”), Steingo (2011) reports that Mbeki’s voice on HIV and AIDS was relatively inconsequential to how these youths formulated positions on HIV. Celebrities, especially kwaito stars, were their dominant influence. DJ Zola spoke out. Khabzela revealed on air that he had tested positive. Yet he refused ARVs. DJs appeared as characters in some HIV education at the school in the new millennium, but around Keates Drift, popular culture’s dialogue on HIV had an erratic impact on an area not yet electrified. While reaching the youths, the kwaito dialogue did not clarify the issues even though the rhetoric of public intervention had arrived.

But on the ground, everyday life must go on. From 2006, the year after his retirement from the dance team, having woken up, thanks to God, Mbo-

neni participates as a drummer here and there at the Christmas dance events. He joins the supporting men wrapped behind the cluster of dancers, leaning over them, egging them on with interjections and whistles. He claps and sings with the team. Perhaps he will be moved to dance just once. At Khethukuthula's ipasi (engagement party) in 2007, men, youths, boys take their turns, slipping in their sequences when they can. It is an informal festivity at the homestead of Khethukuthula's father. Mboneni drums, watching for his moment. Young Oli, so lithe he can fly, readies himself. Mboneni shifts off the drums and lunges onto the dance floor. Having lost some of his form and struggling a little with his balance, the admired dancer pits himself against less experienced youth. Mboneni. Young Oli. Mboneni. Young Phumlani. Oli. Mboneni. (He falters a little.) Oli. They alternate kicks, one for one. Ntibane sets a sandal out in the dancing space, inviting Mboneni's signature move. Mbongimpilo enters the fray. Mboneni holds the floor, extending his performance to dance against this second competitor. He executes his signature dip to pick up the sandal with his teeth in midsequence and hurls it over his head with a flick of his neck. He alternates kicks with Mbongimpilo, one for one (a falter), till the captain directs him back into the chorus and the women ululate and cheer. He has held the floor a long time, matching three young men who have in turn danced between his sequences. A year later, in 2008, Mboneni joins his age-mates in their choreographed sequences. He had not danced in uniform with them since his strength had left him in 2005 and he had retired. But this 2008 event is massive. A hillside has been bulldozed to dust to function as the dance arena. Cows have been slaughtered, carrots and cabbages finely shredded, a tent for the dignitaries raised. Porta potties ring the hillside like blue sentinels. Security arrives in buckles and badges with leather holsters. Women ululate as a helicopter splutters down through the sunshine to deposit the representatives from the province's Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism. A film crew treks in from Soweto, builds tracks for a moving camera. Jerry Mofokeng, the director, will film from his throne constructed on the roof of the van. In the afternoon, thirty to forty ngoma teams showcase their styles, each dancer a moving part in the dizzying texture of the singing hillside. Mboneni performs with his age-mates. There is only time for a couple of choreographed sequences from the line of age-mates kicking up the dust together in the uninterrupted flow of this huge event. He has the strength for this truncated performance with his friends.

Through astute selection of the right opportunities to participate, whether for their form (drumming, clapping, singing), low stakes (party, junior com-

petitors), or duration and safety in numbers (the massive showcase event), Mboneni finds ways to blend into ngoma's sociality and to contribute to the art of the team, while he demonstrates the commitment of a soldier to the dance and to the dancers. Yet choices like his implicate his teammates. They in turn must manage and respond to the changed situation of a fellow dancer (Goffman 1963).

If, as Zabiwe says in the context of reintegrating Uzowotha into the dance, "we are brothers; I must make him welcome," is the same required in the case of a dancer compromised by disease and shame rather than by military notoriety? Ngoma aesthetics celebrates the soldier who represents strength, agility, and endurance even though ngoma does not sanction violence. But the corollary does not hold in the context of disease. Young bodies weakened by illness trouble ngoma aesthetics, even though ngoma does not sanction impropriety.²⁵ (They were sharing a girlfriend. You see what happens?) Compromised able-bodiedness limits performing options, yet you must make a soldier welcome. At risk is the exposure of the social limits of camaraderie. A register of ngoma masculinity hangs in balance.

On 25 December 2002, the team has entered the arena to begin their display. They are seated in two long lines, ready to sing. First, vice captain Mdo inspects his soldiers' ranks, strutting up and down between the lines, admonishing any slouchers. Next he sings the team into song, pacing in front of them. He walks to the edge of the arena, where the crowd gathers to watch. There he stands erect atop a rock, surveying his soldiers from afar. "Moliva!" he calls out to them. "Shiya!" they respond, saluting him from the center of the dusty arena. He paces farther out of the arena. Where is he going? (As a lead singer, he always struts, commandeering the dance arena by pacing while singing instructions to the team. But he has never walked this far away.) He saunters back to the rock. Unusually, he is stretching out the pauses. He sings out, lines rich in masculinist metaphor and innuendo, drawing on the poetic reservoir of home and displaying his verbal agility. "Yeyi, black bull, come and surprise me!" he sings, as if provoking a good dancer into a challenge. He stalls a moment, surveying the scene. "Thank you, my children [dancers]. Respect yourselves," he shouts. "Yes!" he exclaims, before rattling off stock phrases that reference the district: "I tell you, if you respect yourself, even your dancing will respect you and your dance will get respect. Never, never, never [that is, don't make any mistakes]!" he incants, though only those in his proximate vicinity hear him. Ululations fill the space like sonic filigree. "Hey, father!" calls a woman from his family, addressing him with respect.

Soon he resumes his strut, following the arena's circumference outlined by the watching crowd, while women ululate and he sings and the dancers answer him from the center. He circles around to the back of the team, way back from the dancers, and even farther from the crowd. Mdo works against the acoustic constraints of the outdoor event to render his signature singing, risking his power, playing with his control at the edge. He pushes his voice to its acoustic limits. Exacerbating the acoustic difficulty, he paces to the limits of the arena. Mdo takes his own style to the extreme.

"Did I not notice," a dancer said some years later, "that Mdo didn't dance that day in 2002?" He did not insert a single virtuosic solo dance, usual for leaders. When dancing on that day exceeded Mdo's capacity, he instead focused his authority in his voice. Mdo asserted undisputable leadership by means of a vocal performance made dramatic by his use of space and his poetic language, even with a weakened voice. He used the resonance of open vowels to throw his voice though he couldn't fully sustain his tone and pitch. He switched to the rasp of his throat for contrast. He shifted the form, adding variation and interest by inserting incanted praise from his distant rock. ("Never, never, never, people of esiPongweni!") He made his sitting dancers wait, just too long, till they called on him to let them begin, texturing the event with their interjections. He thereby commanded the team and directed the flow of the event. In turn the team honored his new limitations by refraining from exhorting him to dance yet admiring him with shout-outs of his dancing praise name — Two bullet! — while he strutted around their cluster. Nothing was spoken. Mdo's vulnerable condition was publicly articulated and his reduced capacity managed, while the team sustained their ordinary social relationships, including with their friend. (It turned out to be Mdo's last performance before he passed.)

A politics of silence coupled with a poetics of ambiguity enables people to take care of others socially while each figures out his or her relationship to the affliction and so his or her plan of action. In other words, practices around silence and the avoidance of definition provide a pretext to keep things as they are. Public relationships can retain their normality, the everyday remain seemingly ordinary. Communal life can go on, including for households and individuals who perhaps carry the virus, and for the dancers' brotherhood. This would be revealed as a "phantom acceptance" upon which a "phantom normalcy" rests (Goffman 1963, xx) — a game of pretense — or as a form of public denialism were it not for extraordinary moments in which shame and humiliation do indeed surface and in which friends speak out.²⁶ When

boundaries are marked or made by naming, by curtailing participation, by emotional excess, or by those who dare to transgress, registers of masculinity are destabilized, provoking commentary or critique of ngoma manhood.²⁷

When Mboneni comes before the team to retire, 25 December 2005, at the height of the state's AIDS denialism, and his shoulders shake and his friends weep and Zabiwe's pitch wavers because things are not all right (chapter 2), the rupture with traditional practice is extraordinary. The transgression of ngoma performance practice, and Mboneni's courageous transgression to come before the team, are met with others also exceeding the social limits. As he and the elder, Loli, kneel before the dancers, Loli announces their mission: "We are here with Mboneni in front of friends and dancers. You know where the sickness is coming from and where it is going. Friends and dancers must appreciate that."

Under the acacias, the adult men complain among themselves. Why is Loli bringing him in front of the team? For what? Why doesn't Loli simply report on Mboneni's behalf? It spoils everything! Why is he making us upset?²⁸ But Loli is there because "you know where the sickness is coming from and where it is going." He uses his overriding authority as a former team captain to transgress.

He elaborates for the dancers that Mboneni has asked him to tell them they will no longer see him dancing. Keep strong; keep dancing. He will be there with his spirit, with them, always. This, Loli says, is what Mboneni wants him to convey.

When it is Mboneni's turn, he weeps. So too his friends.

As Loli leads him from the arena, Zabiwe confers with his iphini (vice captain), Ntibane. The spirit for dancing has expired, pff! But the dancers can't retreat, for they are already in position on the dance ground. "So let us play [perform]," Zabiwe decides.

He instructs Ntibane to get things going. Ntibane passes the buck. He taps his friend Mbusiseni, the soldier who often adds an upper voice to the bassy chorus. Hear the sweetness of soft singing. Hear the front row of soldiers singing as if humming in response to Mbusiseni's call.

But they pause—or do they dwindle—two phrases in.

Wind washes the passing time.

"Be like men," stammers Zabiwe to his soldiers as he steps up to the front and belts his call, pitched low.

He picks up Mbusiseni's song, tweaks it, and quickly moves on to another. Snatching fragments from this song and that, he hastens through song clips

in an effort to rekindle the spirit of dancing. He works hard at it. (His voice wavers a third too low.)

Soon, young dancers break out to kick.

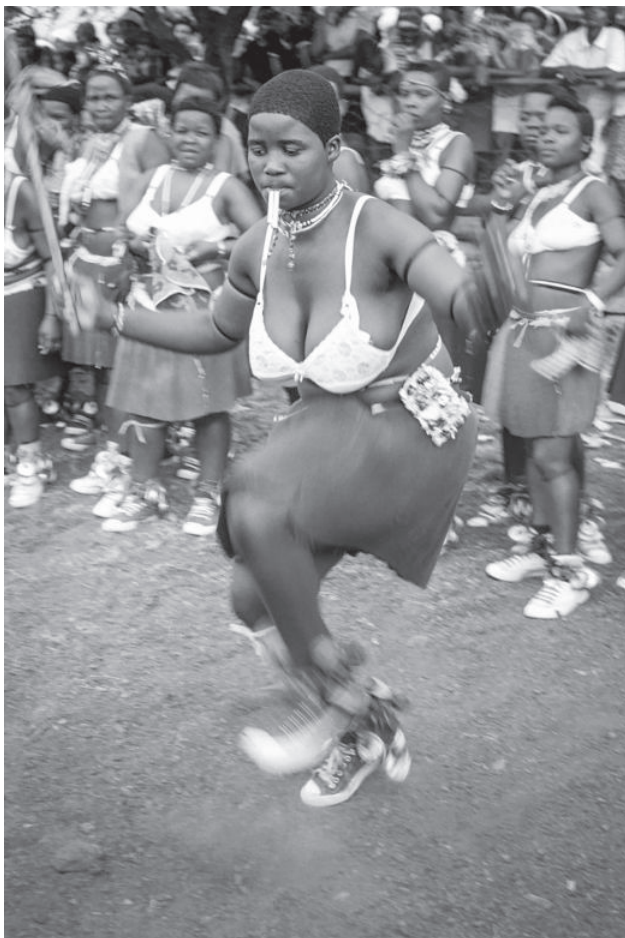
Zulu men in this community do not cry in public, nor do they express vulnerability. In the act of coming before the team, Mboneni publicly acknowledges the prospective consequences of his illness, as well as his emotional frailty. In the affect of his friends and age-mates, there is a public expression of the loss that seems to lie ahead.

Such an extraordinary breakthrough takes a strong personality to enact. The dancers' personal responses in this moment are about Mboneni, a prized dancer, an admired personality, and a friend to many on the team. But the moment is also about the loss of others, whose memory heightens the emotion of the event. Perhaps we are witness to an emergent masculinity that can accommodate the public recognition of vulnerability.

With Mboneni's appearance having ruptured the ngoma performance, it is of course necessary to regain the flow of the event. This is artfully accomplished.²⁹ First, with vocal sweetness and brotherly care, the young men endeavor to support their older teammates, the age-mates of Mboneni, and ease their process of recovery by taking the lead in singing. Then, Zabiwe as captain takes control and they cycle through songs until everyone has regained their composure and rejoined the chorus. He chooses lyric fragments that narrate normalized gendered social relationships and manly exploits. With the group cohesion resutured, the event continues as if there had not been an intervention at all.

In taking control, however, Zabiwe marks his own affective vulnerability. His voice, in its reduced capacity to sing out at the top of his modal register, makes public the social drama of the disease and the new relational vulnerabilities that come with a teammate's failing capacity. The rupture in ngoma performance practice exposes the new demands on improvisation facing the team and new demands on their relationships. Eloquently meeting and mending that rupture, an unanticipated circumstance, saves their collective respectability. Soldiers do not retreat.

Transgressive actions identify that something is at stake. They mark that there is an issue and they point at difference. In the case of Mboneni's shattering retirement, Zabiwe and his team work hard at recovering their camaraderie: regaining their countenance, suturing the ruptured form of the event and getting the performance back on track, reinvigorating the spirit of the occasion, and rekindling their own collective energy. In this process, their



Zanthombi
Zulu dancing
umqashiyo at a
memulo near
Keates Drift,
December 1997.
PHOTOGRAPH
BY TJ LEMON.

attention focuses on one another's responses. The leadership negotiates a tack for their recovery. The younger dancers carry their seniors to recovery. Zabiwe's admonition—"be like men"—remarks on their failings. While they monitor one another, the capacity of the group to reclaim their performance depends on everyone reinvesting in their camaraderie.

Caring and Stigma

Just as there are moments of transgression that call on respectable men to sustain normality, there are others that mark the difference of bodies in struggle, facilitating their exclusion or ushering it in.

Within a year after his emaciated retirement, Mboneni has filled out

again, his muscles contoured, his complexion emanating renewal. He has woken up, thanks to his trek to the Church of Scotland and his disciplined ambition to recuperate his health with the help of medication. It is sweltering in the shade, shriveling under the sun, 26 December 2006, but the three teams are as energetic and flamboyant as ever. Though no longer a uniformed participant himself, Mboneni joins the supporting friends who crowd in behind the seated dancers, leaning over them, singing with them. He eggs his former teammates on from the sidelines. When the drumming begins to wilt, he commandeers the drumsticks and hardens the sound, tightens the groove.

Soon Mbono, Mkhumbuleni, Zama, and Fanile step out to dance a sequence they have choreographed. They are perfectly lined up facing the audience, and equally spaced. They step out their sequence in sync. Their arms move like mechanical balances to their steps. They kick left right left right left. They swivel and turn together, kick left facing their teammates, swivel and turn, kick right facing their teammates, raising their legs as one. Together they swivel to face the crowd. Suddenly they change from their slick synchronicity: the line splinters as they race two bounding steps, each in his own direction. And yet, they time the final kick and stamp precisely together. “Gqi!” Emptied out, they rain to the ground. In a blink, Mboneni has broken out of the supporting ranks. He is dancing center stage, wiping his face because the moment is hot, readying his steps, slapping his back because no one can touch him in dancing. His torso is swirling from side to side. He who dances angrily while smiling is preparing to launch a blitz of a sequence to celebrate the performance of his friends. But the team captain, Siyazi, races toward him and locks his roiling body in a fireman’s grip. He cramps Mboneni’s dance and drives him back into his place behind the team.

The next group is already somersaulting into position for their sequence while the drum groove pulses on. Mboneni rejoins the supporters, clapping them a sound track.

Mboneni’s snatching of the stage for a moment of dance is in keeping with the performance practice. It is a way that an individual signals his intent to mount a challenge, while expressing appreciation of the performance under way. In this instance, it is the dance of his age-mates to which he responds. In previous years he had been part of their lineup. As well as a gesture of appreciation in the form of a challenge, this is a triumphant moment for him as he puts his restored health on display. His impromptu performance is a declaration of masculine able-bodiedness and the right to inclusion. He dances that his TB is cured.

The team captain stops Mboneni's performance short, even though his danced interjection is appropriately timed according to the aesthetics and etiquette of the event. When Mboneni shows signs of zoning out that suggest he will render ngoma beauty, his participation is curtailed. It is a stigmatizing moment that excludes and marks him. It calls his restored health—and tuberculosis as the only diagnosis—into question in the moment that he begins to show he can get the dancing absolutely right. To limit his dancing is to say “we know.” From one perspective, this moment represents a public declaration of disapproval, of a loss of some respectability through contamination; the public outing of the consequences of supposed mismanaged sexual relationships, a refusal to believe, even in the face of renewed well-being and able-bodiedness.

Danced narratives that risk breaching the limits of sociality—here by stigmatizing the dancer—are held in balance with others that are at once on display, and that cultivate and regenerate relationality among the singer-dancers. First, from the captain's perspective, to stop Mboneni was a responsible act. He could see in Mboneni's eyes, in his face, in his stance, the intensity of a dancer moving into that other zone, where a good dancer is so deeply into the moment that he “doesn't know what he is doing.” “You are like paper in a river” when the dance takes you over. Say Mboneni dropped dead in the night after such energy expenditure, the captain said to me: it would be on his shoulders. He acts with cautious responsibility and with care.

Second, stopping Mboneni recognizes his virtuosity. A brilliant dancer, he could quickly dance himself into that zone where you are like paper in a river. When Mboneni shows signs that he would dance well, the captain uses his authority to protect him. Mboneni is stopped before he overreaches, and thereby fails, or before he has to stop himself and so make obvious his reduced capacity, his new limitations. In this sense it is a form of care for a vulnerable body, an improvisation to cope with an individual's frailty (albeit presumed frailty), while it is at once a public confirmation of his acclaim as a dancer. (And does Mboneni perhaps take the risk of his dance knowing he is likely to be stopped? Does he go into it with the expectation that someone will provide a safety net? What is the wager? Who has the comeback?)

Because even stigma in performance can be ambiguous, there is an opening for a comeback. Mboneni persists. Each year he participates in some form. Some years he can't. One year he is in the hospital. “Take my picture,” he says, sitting on his hospital bed. He wants a record against which to measure his recovery.



Nanazi Zakwe and Thobani Ndlovu end their two-two choreographed sequence in a pose, esiPongweni, 27 December 2015. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

As an aesthetic that values pushing to the edge and playing at the limit, and that socially takes advantage of the dance form's ambiguity, ngoma enables the unspeakable or the inappropriate to surface. Concerns about which dancers choose not to speak or sing in live performance can be brought into public with the protection of the interpretive ambiguity of ngoma dance. We know but we can't say *for sure*.³⁰

An expressive form of skilled kinetics, ngoma is a finely tuned vector also of other aspects of embodied presence. To draw the gaze of a captivated audience is a primary ngoma objective; good audiences scrutinize bodies and voices. In the process, states of well-being, whether physiological or affective, are acutely on display. Mboneni's falter. Zabiwe's voice, pitched low. Mdo's voice, weakened in relation to years past. A captain's ambivalent feelings about compromised participation and about contamination. Mboneni's brilliant timing, his claiming a relationship with his friends, and his courage to push at the limits.

The options that roil or comfort comrades are improvisations that cramp or reinvigorate ngoma style. Such moments of improvisation implicate competing ideals about the respectability of men, all worked on at once in the dance arena: the authority of the captain; the dignity of his dancer; the rights of individual amasosha to participate (a soldier must work when there is work to be done); the moral propriety of fellow men who disavow the impropriety of mismanaged sexual relations.

Suffering and Friendship

In ngoma's performances, we witness the dancer's management of his disease. But not only this: others' management of the dancer's disease is also under way as they calculate and respond to the dancer's physical limitations. These calculations of the dancer and his others are dialogically entwined. At the same time, the dancers are managing and responding to the muted yet powerful presence of HIV, represented as a social relation in the form of stigma. This dance around disease—dancer around dancer, and brothers around stigma—utilizes a poetics of ambiguity that ngoma aesthetics makes available. In a hostile (nationally disseminated) political environment that sets the terms for a silent collective habitus, a play with ambiguity enables dancers to answer to their friendships, whether by “making a context of support for their practices” (Berlant and Warner 1998, 164) or by acts of will that in themselves speak out.

I am not arguing that ngoma camaraderie inevitably mitigates the excruciating suffering that ensues as bodies disintegrate and HIV becomes full-blown AIDS, which for many is coupled with alienation, exclusion, and humiliation generated by stigmatizing processes.³¹ (A teenager tests for HIV. He hangs himself.³² We are afraid of AIDS, married women tell me in their kitchens. What will happen to our children? Silence, wind; a widow. Stillness and settling.) Neither am I arguing that ngoma performance always has the power to transcend the negativity of HIV, or to fully resist the politics. Indeed, under such pressures, dancers and their friends can at times reveal limited capacities to combat its crushing presence. When Falakhe is shot (they say there were jealousies over stealing a woman), is the anger of the gunman pushed over the limit in part by his fears of contamination? A boy runs to find his big brother because his sister is socializing illicitly with youths who drink—are drinking—down under the acacia trees near the river. She is beaten with a dancing-fighting stick. Because those good-for-nothing boys will kill her with their infection. Say that happens. Outside the per-

formance practice, when dancers know but they can't say *for sure*, they hold their silence. Yet a weakening friend would do better were he to seek medication. In the high public event at Muden when a former igoso is troubled by the missed greetings of his friends in the dignitaries' tent, perhaps some among them have spotted him.

Ngoma offers a window into the way that life goes on in spite of the presence of HIV, and in relation to HIV, and sometimes it is reduced by HIV. Moments of dancing around disease during ngoma performances fortify the ordinary in the face of struggles that compromise the ordinary. In these moments in the performance arena, as ngoma dancers work at maintaining normalcy, the ordinary is made hyperreal. This is the work of the soldier, isosha.

When Mdo's seven-year-old son slips his hand into Siyazi's during a set break on Christmas Day three years after Mdo's passing, Siyazi holds it there while socializing. It is a glimpse of loss and camaraderie intertwining and extending beyond the team.

When dancers or their friends are too sick to stay in Johannesburg, *amagoso* intervene. They play organizational roles in sending the sick home to their mothers, wives, sisters. It is a use of the captain's authority and a consequence of the network of team relationships that extends beyond the performance arena.

When Bafana is weak and ill, Siyazi, his captain, visits. Bafana wants him there when he discloses his status to his mother.

After his parents pass away, young Phumlani develops his passion for dance. If his interests had lain elsewhere and ngoma was a secondary preoccupation, now at Christmas he is tightly clustered, singing, shooting out to dance one-one.

With the prospect of disaster, whether collectively or for an individual, ngoma offers a way of holding things, albeit pushed to the edge and almost out of balance; of refusing to have the normal compromised or, for some, delaying the onset of new limitations. In this lies an effort to keep horizons expansive. Still, Mboneni wants to dance overseas. In telling me so, he is working against the fact that his horizons might be limited. This is not a form of pretense but an effort to refuse the contraction. "Take my picture," he insists.

Negotiations in performance around changed capacities call attention to issues that usually reside at the limits of the social, and that sometimes spin out of control. Limits, as social and aesthetic categories, are made evident when physical limitations are reached, and they are muddied by the intimacy of friendship. Questions concerning social acceptability or appropri-

ate aesthetics are challenged when admired dancers push back against their reduced physical abilities, or when friends push back to accommodate one another.

Some moments of performance are at once moments of struggle about illness that are waged by means of dance. These instances of heightened awareness enable play and risk taking. They are experiments in rendering beauty according to the aesthetic principles of ngoma while managing vulnerability and protecting the intimacy of friendship. They are about figuring out how to champion an aesthetic of the effortful body in the face of the weakening of that body. They are likewise struggles over how to instantiate care through ngoma, a structure of brotherly camaraderie, when dancers are compromised by the consumption of an uncaring state's discourse. When the captain stops Mboneni from dancing, he recognizes Mboneni's limitations and imposes a limit on him. When Mdo sings hard but doesn't dance, the team stands by his leadership. They recognize his limitations and set limits on themselves. When Mboneni retires and social and aesthetic limits are transgressed, everyone's limitations are revealed, whether to hold their countenance as men or to render the stridency in song that marks a respectable man. The actions of caring and revealing are tensely interdependent within ngoma practice, and stigma lurks at its edges. These actions stem from the politics of life registered in state discourses and practices in rural KwaZulu-Natal that are reworked by ngoma and its community of fans, refusing to compromise their horizons.

29 December 2002, esiPongweni

"Love life!" calls Mbongiseni, waving to Mbusiseni, who is heading back to Johannesburg. "Look after yourself, my cousin."

23 December 2005, esiPongweni

When Mboneni hears we are going to the hospital to visit Mhlonishwa, his age-mate and fellow dancer, he asks to join us. "The car is full," someone says. The car is obviously not full. It is not good form to take a sick person to visit the hospital, for seeing his future will hasten his own death, or perhaps a departing spirit will target him. I intervene on Mboneni's part, though at this time he is frail and weak. (It is the day before he retires from the team.) He folds himself into the car and floats down onto the backseat.

At the hospital, we find the TB ward where Mhlonishwa lies. We file past beds and beds. It is silent, and sweltering. There is an empty bed. Mboneni

inches along with the aid of a walking stick. Young men lie somnolent, skeletal forms knotted at the elbows and knees. Does he look at them as we scan the rows for his friend?

We find Mhlonishwa in the farthest corner of the room. His sister watches over him. He is happy to see us, especially Mboneni. Mhlonishwa wants the window open wider in case it is cooler outside. Pain burns in his feet, he tells us in a raspy whisper, the effort of the dancer made audible.³³

Across the way a boy fans an adult with a damp face cloth, too slowly to create a breeze.

25 December 2003

“With our fathers’ sons, with our fathers’ sons, the earth is not growing fat with [eating] our fathers’ sons,” sing the dancers, remembering Mdo (and Vusi gunned down, and Bonaliphi missing, and Mhlonishwa terribly sick) as they filter down the hill and into the arena, dance-marching.

24 December 2011

Mboneni volunteers that he has instructed a friend to take his pills. “Every day,” he insists, “seven o’clock *ekuseni* [in the morning], seven o’clock *ebusuku* [in the evening],” so the friend’s TB can be cured, like his.

2003, Selby Park hospital, Johannesburg

“I stand with the bull of the valley, wo!” calls Siyazi on an *Emzini* song praising Thembiseni, his guitarist on the 1991 recording.³⁴ (Soon thereafter, they had shared a flat downtown, and then the trouble with the taxis and the police and the izigodi and the ANC and IFP and the vigilantes had flared up, and Dudu had been killed.)

Now Thembiseni is dying.

Siyazi visits him in the hospital, before he is to be sent home to Madulani. The friends chat, with pauses.

“May you stay long in life,” Thembiseni bids Siyazi. Siyazi hears the acknowledgment, remembers the suddenly empty room. What happened to the bag of bullets? They are dancing around the truth.

Thembiseni disappears into sleep, drifting toward the ancestors.

Soon Siyazi slips away.

Dust settles.



Neli Dladla and Phumlani Zulu, esiPongweni, 25 December 2003.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Nomanini Zulu decorates Sibongile Zulu's hair in the style worn by engaged women, esiPongweni, 24 December 1997. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

7 / / / THE DIGITAL HOMESTEAD

Having a Voice and the Sound of Marginalization

22 December 2007, Keates Drift

I drive from Johannesburg to esiPongweni with returning men and a car loaded with their Christmas goods. Umzansi Zulu Dancers' *Zindala Zombili* has just been released. We play the CD on repeat for five hours.

The sun is stinging at Keates Drift in December. On the local roads we drive with the windows down, even though the car has air conditioning. We are a *Zindala Zombili* megaphone.

Whenever, always, Johannesburg

I dub Umzansi Zulu Dancers CDs for Siyazi. Old ones. Recent ones. The latest. *Khuzani. Ama-Afrika. Khuzani* again. *Zindala Zombili. Amabhande. Emzini. Amabhande. Khuzani. Bayekeleni.* Amasosha borrow them. Or they take them. They never bring them back.

"Am I throwing away my luck with these bones?" sings Siyazi on his first self-produced CD.¹ He brings to mind a sangoma (diviner) casting her bones to find truth in the patterns of their fall, as he queries the risks of staking a future in musical instruments, "bones." He calls out praise to his bass player and guitarist, during his fervent self-praise between the verses. Yet the lyrics of the song repeatedly ask, "Am I throwing away my luck with these bones?"

After three recordings produced and released through Gallo (Africa), South Africa's major domestic recording conglomerate (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 1988, 1991; Umzansi 1994), and subsequent to West Nkosi's tragic

death, Siyazi turned to self-production for Umzansi Zulu Dancers. For his next seven recordings, he hoped to use the major companies to distribute his CDs, and on the first three occasions secured contracts with them — EMI in 1997 and 1998, Gallo (Africa) in 1999. For the first two releases, he followed *Emzini's* and *Khuzani's* model by adding maskanda instrumentation. EMI refused a third CD. For the third, Siyazi then reverted to *Bayekeleni's* spare percussion and a cappella singing that had worked so well in France. He highlighted a topical issue with its title song, “Ingculaza [Blood, i.e., AIDS],” and Gallo picked it up.²

Affectively cultivating a sense of self-reliance in a precarious context is a tenet of good Zulu manhood in rural and migrant working-class communities. In its contemporary register, this requires of artists such as Siyazi that without work (in the form of employment), they nevertheless continue the practice of working (as a gesture of effort). They pursue cosmopolitan relationships in acts of musical laboring. Their engagement is premised on the hope of experiencing the enchantments cosmopolitanism offers (Olaniyan forthcoming): visibility and audibility beyond the homestead, dignity despite contending with living conditions of decrepitude, equitable encounter and exchange beyond the community, and the standing of responsible men at home. Effectively, they respond as self-reliant respectable men to an unresponsive state, to the failed promises of a new democracy. I show below that recording studio practice enables these ngoma artists to perform and produce men's respectability, at once engaging the professional world and cultivating the sociality of Zulu men in the process of using studio technology. And yet being in a studio ratchets up the stakes associated with ngoma for its singer-dancers. For by means of studio recording, the pleasures of ngoma and its community politics meet the mediation of ngoma's body-voice in the market.

Looking at the social play and musical relationships in two recording sessions, at Shirimani Studios and Black Eagle Sound, I consider how the musicians manage these lived tensions in the course of their creative practices. These two studios are symptomatic of the marginalization of small-scale homegrown enterprises in South Africa's neoliberal rationalization. Yet they are also a sign of new forms of empowerment in the postapartheid music industry for African entrepreneurs, studio personnel, and musicians. Shirimani Studios is perfectly situated for its working-class clientele, above the taxi rank on a crumbling edge of inner-city Johannesburg. Close to transport, but above its din on the eighth floor of an office block, the studio is adequately equipped (more or less) for run-of-the-mill digital production. Joe Shirimani

has put few resources into the look of the studio, or its upkeep in this dark and grungy building, save for a coat of strawberry pink paint and a security gate. But the enterprise is there, with Shirimani's silver discs hanging on the wall from his past glory days as a Shangaan disco artist. Two young African house engineers cater to Shirimani's clientele. Black Eagle Sound is stuffed into the innards of the State Theatre in Pretoria's inner city. It is an entrance off a back passage into a jumbled little office leading into a soundproofed room. There is no recording booth, for Black Eagle is the old live sound box for the auditorium. Like Shirimani, the enterprise is staffed by two young men with minimal gear, earnest interest in developing their profession, and as-yet limited sound-processing skills. A trophy-like bronze-colored eagle sculpted in the moment of its imminent landing has been dumped on a rack above the console. Leaflets lying around advertise their business. Sound system rentals for public events is the primary service Black Eagle offers. Other "service specifications" include "catering" (providing and running the sound system) for the "World of Performances, mainly Indoors and Outdoors." For musicians who are trying to make do and also still to make their art, marginal studios like these offer an opportunity even while they limit artists' range of sound production and professional possibilities.

What are the affective dimensions entailed in working toward a future at the turn of the millennium? That is, how do traditional Zulu musicians like Umzansi Zulu Dancers take hold of the promises proffered by a new democracy while struggling under the burden of an increasingly rationalized state? An established homestead that has the capacity to expand is the homestead of an *umnumzane* (mister), that is, of a mature man who has standing, dignity, and authority (Hunter 2010). Underlying the newer constraints inflicted by the AIDS epidemic is a trajectory of diminishing wage labor set in motion in the 1970s by South Africa's depression, and which increasingly destabilizes the position of *umnumzane* (Hunter 2010). Ngoma dancers face a changed industrial landscape with the giant success of Savuka in the past, and Umzansi Zulu Dancers' thrilling international experience as inspiration. At the same time, they face a changed social landscape at home with diminishing options for generating prosperity and weakening men and women for whom to care. In these circumstances, how does one find an intrepid pathway to the future?

Migrant Zulu men who sing and dance in the ngoma and maskanda styles struggle and play from positions of political and economic marginality in relation to the contemporary South African state.³ Siyazi and his compa-

triotis—the musicians in the studio sessions—speak of themselves as politically marginalized, unrepresented by an African National Congress that has failed to create jobs, to improve health, and to deliver anticipated resources in their home area.

Such musicians are also marginal to a star-driven music industry. They are catalog artists playing in styles considered by musicians and industry alike as traditional, rather than pop icons who are feted and branded. That is, they are professionals who have enjoyed some past success, and who have a regional market of consumers who mostly live in poverty. Umzansi Zulu Dancers is not unusual in having once been contracted to a record company. (No one in these Shirimani and Black Eagle sessions is currently contracted.) Once riding the wave of South Africa's strong presence on the world music circuit in the mid-1980s to mid-1990s—tailing Johnny Clegg and Savuka, the musicians of Paul Simon's *Graceland* album, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, and the Mahotella Queens—and now struggling to sustain local musical careers or to find alternative employment, Umzansi Zulu Dancers are like the many wage laborers who have become expendable to the South African state.⁴ They hover beneath the radar of the national culture industry, hustling for performing and recording opportunities. Trying to live as responsible breadwinners while sustaining city life and mobility, they hope for a professional break and work toward it.

This predicament is not unique to Umzansi Zulu Dancers, nor to South African musicians at large. Global cultural production has itself rationalized. The vertical and horizontal integration of its multinational industries has increasingly excluded most world music and Afropop musicians from international networks (Feld 2000; Garofalo 1993; Guillbault 1993). The sense of failed promise may be heightened for South Africans. At the time when the lifting of apartheid's racist restrictions opened new opportunities for Africans, the restructuring of the global and domestic music industries further curtailed access for many musicians. Not only this, but the industry's streamlining followed South Africa's dramatic flourish on the international stage that Paul Simon's (1986) *Graceland* album had catalyzed. Zulu musicians perhaps felt the decline especially acutely, for Zulu-identified musical styles and Zulu musicians (Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens, Johnny Clegg and Savuka) had dominated the South African roster overseas. And for Umzansi Zulu Dancers, who had experienced adoring European audiences in 1988 and 1989 and who had a close relation to Savuka, the knowledge was immediate and visceral.

Sidelined by the new state and the changed (global) industry at the millennium's turn, Siyazi and his studio compatriots live, earn, and create music in a provisional space. I want to better understand the production choices such artists make as they settle for poorer quality recorded sound than necessary in this provisional political space. In part, this is an aesthetic issue: Why settle for representing your musical ideas with poorer quality sound than necessary when alternative choices available to you could result in higher fidelity? Why make production choices that compromise the clarity of sound that makes close listening rewarding? Why not spend your resources on fewer hours in a more expensive studio and thereby work with more experienced studio technicians? These choices also have implications for expanding their markets: better fidelity—coming as close as the musicians could to major industry production standards—would enhance the chance that professional opportunities would ensue beyond the reach of their own relationships. Better fidelity would facilitate their (re)entrance into the network of the major industry that Brian Larkin calls the “official highly regulated forms of media trade” linked to the “official world economy” (2008, 218). Whether through borrowing, negotiating, or otherwise scaring up the money, these artists expend scarce resources to record in a studio. Yet for comparable cost, they make decisions about technology and studio practice that involve goals other than getting the best sound they could have.

Changes in the city's studio landscape enabled by advances in recording and sound processing technology influenced the musicians' choices. With developments in digital sound technology and in gear designed and marketed for home use, small studios popped up here, there, and everywhere, including in the townships in the early 1990s. While the premier recording studios associated with the parastatal South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and the major or multinational recording companies offered state-of-the-art professional studio space, some of the small independent production sites proved that they could also produce hits. The explosion of home and small recording studios is a global phenomenon, the rise of which predates South Africa's political transition, but Zulu migrant musicians largely view them as part of the postapartheid musical landscape, offering new freedoms from white rule. While the big companies carried the baggage of apartheid's labor relations and of white capital, many of the new independents were black owned, black run, and staffed with black expertise.⁵ They offered black African musical professionalism, at an affordable rate. To access

a recording booth, small-scale musicians no longer needed to work through company gatekeepers—A&R men (artist and repertoire staff), in-house producers, or established independent producers. Indeed, they could work their own social networks to access the necessary resources to record. They could extract favors, call on obligatory relations, offer cuts, make deals, request loans, and expedite processes on the basis of promises to their friends and affiliates who themselves were working the margins and building alternative networks.

For most of his independent projects after West's death, Siyazi picked coproducers. In one instance he chose the black engineer working on the recording, in another a fine bass player who played as a session musician on many locally popular Zulu albums. For the Shirimani recording he chose as coproducer Philemon Hamole, drummer from the Makgona Tsohle Band that backed Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens as they toured the world, and for the subsequent Black Eagles project a seemingly well-networked cameraman who worked at the SABC. Siyazi also picked his musicians, Zulu maskandi (singer-songwriters) who could add instrumentation to support his lead ngoma vocals and the backing vocals, some of which were sung by Umzansi Zulu Dancers.⁶ To realize these recording projects, having lost his access to the major companies (like many other local musicians in this rationalizing industry of the new millennium), he secured backing capital, albeit precarious, for each recording from small-scale black entrepreneurs with whom he was acquainted. Enoch Nondala, once a salesman in the apartheid music industry and now an independent producer-promoter, backed the Shirimani project. The SABC cameraman, Victor Viyane, found funds for the subsequent recording by writing a grant to the provincial office for arts and culture and drawing on the favor of a friend who managed Black Eagle Sound (and so Siyazi appointed Viyane coproducer for that recording). Stanley Dladla, a politician-cum-businessman who lived in a neighboring chiefdom and who had entered the entertainment industry, backed another. Siyazi was set to do his own projects his own way.

The Hi-Fi Sociality of the Studio

"Sing, men," instructs Nothi Ntuli, maskandi guitarist and session musician, spurring the Shirimani recording session on, on the first of three day-long sessions, 24 July 2002. Fellow musicians laugh, for Nothi is picking up a phrase in the lyrics and addressing it to his friends. Sing, men.



Shirimani Studios, Johannesburg, 24 July 2002. FROM VIDEO TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR.

“Soyishela kanjani intombi ephuza ugavini? [Who would woo a girl who drinks liquor?]” sing the backing vocalists, Pat and Mkhize, to the rhythm tracks emanating from the speakers in the control room.⁷

Lahl’Umlenze is comping on his concertina. (Today he is a session musician for Siyazi, though he is a celebrated recording artist in maskanda circles.) He inserts a trickling treble run here and there. Nothi complements his concertina groove, adding cyclical guitar riffs. Pat and Siphwe are learning the backing vocals. Composer, producer, and lead singer Siyazi is singing along. Coproducer Philemon listens, joining them in their circle of moving bodies in Shirimani’s tiny control room. (No one wants to use the recording booth.) They are enjoying themselves. The sound engineers are working at the console programming a rhythm track. Guided by the feel of the singing, they are layering bass drum, snare, tom, and high hat lines to create the basic groove. I am recording them recording.

“Uyaphuza ayabhema uyadakwa [She drinks; she smokes; she gets drunk],” the musicians sing in close harmony.

“Soyishela kanjani intombi ephuza ugavini emakhaya? [Who would woo a girl who drinks liquor at home?]”

Nothi complains. It’s an old-fashioned lyric Siyazi has written, citing the girls alone. Add in the men, he prompts.

Siyazi experiments, hooking the word *amadoda* (men) onto the end of the phrase.

“*Madoda!*” states Pat approvingly. He likes the way Siyazi is singing it, with a high tone in this tonal language. “*Madóda!*” others copy, chuckling.⁸ They are enjoying the reference not just to “men”—with a straight tone—but to a large group of men standing together, adult men in solidarity, citizens. Themselves, now.

“So you like ‘amadoda’ [sung with a high tone]?” Nothi is seeking Pat’s agreement.

Collectively they try “amadoda” as the end to the chorus’s line, shifting the lyrics from a call to all citizens to stop the actions of girls, to one to curtail irresponsible men as well.

While figuring out the finesse of these lyrics, Nothi also coaches Pat and Siphwe to sing in a more fashionable style, not “kicking the voice hard” like Siyazi does. He proposes they sing with less stridency, bringing out the sweetness of Pat’s upper line and the blend of the two, and ensuring that their phrase end, “amadoda,” won’t clash with Siyazi’s overlapping lead. A different timbre will differentiate the two in a busy arrangement.

“We can always cut ‘madoda’ off [edit it out] if it isn’t feeling right,” Nothi advises them, momentarily taking charge of the recording process as they work on their arrangement.

“She drinks; she smokes; she gets drunk,” they sing over and over, all of them together while the concertina and guitar riff on.

“Who would woo a girl who drinks liquor at home?” they continue.

“Don’t sing like you’re from the township!” shouts out Lahla over the dense sound of playing together. He demonstrates his preferred glissandi (ornamental pitch glides between two notes of a melody) by swooping his index finger up and down as his voice slides up to key pitches and off others, in traditional Zulu vocal style. Soon Pat and Sipiwe have shifted their singing to match his, in their sweet timbre.

“Now we are on the right track!” Lahla affirms, getting in position to dance. But it is time for a concertina run, so he swings the instrument into place and squeezes his way back into the song.

As the playing winds down and Pat and Sipiwe drop out of the groove, having grasped their parts, coproducer Philemon picks up their melody and tweaks the lyrics to sing a sexual joke.

Umzansi Zulu Dancers recording sessions are long, boisterous ones. Without a company producer whom they would have had in an apartheid studio or would have were they recording in a premium studio, all the musicians arrange and rearrange their songs.⁹ They improvise their parts, coconceive of the backing tracks, and dance to their creations in the studio’s control room. Without a white engineer, isiZulu becomes the lingua franca. In the midst of the camaraderie of madoda, men, madóda, men of the world, these musicians finesse their songs. Distilling the difference between singing a high tone on a single syllable and maintaining a level pitch through a fast-moving utterance (a distinction that will be hard to hear on the recording), or tweaking the meaning of the lyrics with a phrase extension, or inflecting the timbre of the backing voices for sweetness and contrast, or working on the glissandi, these musicians attentively craft the details of their recording. They collectively negotiate a sound drawing on their repertoire of Zulu gestures associated with the city and ekhaya, and on new and old styles. In the process of settling on a sound, they voice changing generational ideas and reference values of contemporary manhood. These debates are embedded in the resulting sound while positions on them are staked out among the speakers. For example, Siyazi is criticized as outdated in how he genders his lyrics. With discourse about rights circulating nationally, and the earnings



Parading on the main road, Keates Drift, 24 December 2014. PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR.

of young mobile women supplementing the domestic shortfall within the homestead (Hunter 2010), the musicians modify his lyrics that single out girls' immoral behavior. At the same time, the backing vocalists are castigated for the fashionable township sound in which they sing those lyrics, a sound that forgets the rural homestead.

There are two kinds of work being done: the work of recording a song and the work of cultivating sociality (that is, Zulu, contemporary, male, and migrant) in the studio. These two processes become one and the same thing, with seamless shifts in register, when "madoda" in the song becomes self-referential, or the lyrics are tweaked into a male sexual joke after the song ends. Likewise, criticism of a township-sounding vocal becomes an assertion of a self that incorporates rural, migrant affect along with the urban and wider world consisting of the township, the city, and the studio. Such moments create a sense of home in the song: home as city, homestead, and street, home as having mobility through these spaces. Simultaneously these moments play a role in shaping personhood in the studio through ways of relating to the music and to one another. The cultivation of this Zulu, con-

temporary, male, and migrant sociality not only happens in the studio; it also becomes *of* the studio. The musicians make their way of being together into a local studio practice.

At other times during the session, artists privilege the work of cultivating sociality over the professional task at hand, at the expense of recording efficiency. When Jabu the bass player arrives, he doesn't have a plectrum.¹⁰ "Ah! I forgot he played with his fingers, like for jazz," laments Nothi, who has proposed Jabu for the job. They send him off to purchase a plectrum. Maskanda needs the clipped and percussive sound of the attack a plectrum produces when it strikes a string, not the longer (and hence gentler— weaker in these musicians' terms) onset of a note that a fleshy finger produces as it pulls the string. With Jabu's plectrum in place, the musicians start to coach him in the bass lines they want. He is a stranger to most in the group, and he doesn't know their songs. They play with his trials, sing with him, vocalize his lines. It takes forever, but they persist. "If we all play with him," Lahla proposes, "he'll get it." "No," Siyazi says, "it's his work. He should be able to play alone [as a professional session musician]." They want the bass amp miked. It has to be amped and miked. Maskanda must be amped and miked, they say.¹¹ They send him into the recording booth. Set your sound on your amp, they say, otherwise the engineers will take control of it. There is extraneous noise on the bass. They need the engineers to isolate and remove the glitch. They wait. They wait. They wait. The young engineers call Joe Shirimani to help them solve the problem. The engineers can't figure it out. Well, we'll do it DI (direct inject, plugging the bass straight into the console rather than using an amp), the musicians agree in the end, because it is only a guide bass line.¹²

So much attentive crafting, for a line that will be replaced for the master recording. Later in the week, bassist Robert Bhengu (Bukhalimbazo [The sharp axe]), will lay down the final version. Yet the musicians attend precisely to Jabu's melodic lines, glissandi, and rhythmic patterns, even though he is a stand-in for Bukhalimbazo. They spend studio time shaping the sound of his bass, and they articulate strong preferences about the right recording process to render the ngoma/maskanda sound till a glitch prompts them to compromise.

In the way these deliberations unfold, the musicians perform their professional experience with recording to one another. (They make it evident to their peers that Jabu's ineptitude as a session musician in this style irritates them.) Amadóda. But collectively conceiving of Jabu's bass lines in this

way takes up hours of studio time. In other recording processes, this would probably have happened in a rehearsal room. For laying down a temporary bass guideline, other musicians might not have spent studio time refining the sound, nor worrying about the technique of recording them (DI or through the amp). They could have directed the time and money to finessing sounds that would become fixtures in the final project. Laying the guideline in this arduous collaborative way provides the musicians with the opportunity to compose, arrange, and rehearse. It is a creative process through which they perform competence to one another as fellow musicians, as ngoma and maskanda artists with studio experience, and as friends. The process puts them in charge of the control room space and the pacing of the session.

Against the backdrop of the programmed percussion, Jabu and Lahla are playing along while Nothi records his guitar part. Siyazi, Pat, and Siphwiwe dance together. Lahla dances with his concertina.

Siphwiwe tries to imitate Siyazi's footwork and dance turn (the preparation for a kick and stamp). There is much joviality.

"Ah, so you turn like that, do you!" Siphwiwe tries while Siyazi shows him how.

"Hey, madoda," Nothi calls out over his guitar riff. "Hey, you young men," he calls again, "you're disturbing me. I can't manage to avoid you. You're too close to me."

"I noticed you thought about stopping," Philemon says to Siyazi, who with an eye on the recording process under way had hesitated in the cramped dancing space.

"Okay, sorry, we'll leave it," says Siyazi, folding his arms and stepping back. "It's the armbands that are waking up!" he jokes, using a Zulu-specific reference that deflects responsibility onto the spirits for spurring him on and, by implication, onto the music for evoking the irrepressible feeling in his body to dance. Traditionally, a belt fastens an herbalist's pouch onto a man's forearm, giving him extra power and surges in spiritual energy.

"You can dance next time," proposes Nothi with a gesture of easy dismissal.

"But then you people must also stop playing such nice music!" Siyazi quips back in the spirit of friendly, unremitting sparring.

The problem was that Nothi was drawn to following the dancers when he should have been playing straight, laying down a rhythm track, Siyazi reflected later. The dancing in the cramped space that day hindered the record-

ing process, potentially compromising their end product. Yet such dancing, improvisational and competitive in style, is a form of ordinary male sociality.¹³

There are other ways, too, that the musicians bring forms of appropriate sociality into the studio, which compromise the performance being recorded. When Siyazi, a teetotaler (who has promised session fees to the musicians), criticizes the musicians for wasting time on liquor and by his disapproval constrains their time for consumption, they make a plan.

“We’ll go back to Jeppe [hostel],” to have a quick drink, prompts Nothi.

“Now there’s the problem starting!” quips Siyazi.

Pat intervenes with indirection and polite address: “Malume akazame [Uncle, Nothi must try (by his own means)].” He addresses Siyazi as “malume,” mother’s brother, instantiating Zulu ways of relating in the studio. Pat’s mother is of the Zulu clan. He implies that Siyazi, as host, should provide them with beer, as would be expected of him were they at home. Pat makes the studio into the homestead, with the lead and owner of the project, Siyazi, as *umnumzane*, head of household.

“Get someone else to go and get it. It’s not far to Jeppe,” instructs Siyazi, compromising.

When the drink arrives in a plastic shopping bag, Siyazi makes the gesture of a host: “Those who want to drink,” he says, “there’s the plastic bag.” It is a gesture of goodwill though he believes that alcohol dulls the attention needed to produce a tight project.

Musicians also at times privilege the pleasure of relating through music over the demands of the task at hand, another choice that compromises the potential for the best sound quality on the final product. Nothi is bobbing and rocking in his seat as he plucks out runs on his guitar. The engineer stops him to correct a setting on the console. When Nothi chides the young engineer for interrupting, he is reprimanding him for breaking his groove. He is skeptical that the engineer has a good reason for doing so. Later the engineer holds up his hand, because the programmed drum is erroneously offbeat and he wants to fix it. No one really attends to his sign though it is standard in the industry. No one stops playing, because they are into their groove. When Lahla flatters the engineer for a moment of good listening that enables quick identification and rectification of a mistake, Lahla is being attentive to studio efficiency. But he is also after the sociality that a less disrupted groove can produce.

In ethnographies that focus on the expressive practices and related entre-

preneurial endeavors of men elsewhere on the continent, the reliance on intense sociality to produce useful networks is a shared theme, as is, in some cases, the easy dissipation of alliances (Hoffman 2011; Perullo 2011; Shipley 2013; Weiss 2009; White 2008). Marginalized men are necessarily often hustlers, making do in order to make good. The mercurial, the ephemeral, the ironic, and the possible are conditions that coproduce the struggle to accumulate that which facilitates the life process of making good, and they are qualities that are also drawn upon in attempts to override that struggle. Maneuvering from within the global shadows (Ferguson 2006), whether with sweat and through danger (Hoffman 2011), or playfully and creatively, they work as cosmopolitans engaged with the world beyond the state, but on an uneven cosmopolitan terrain (Feld 2012). They are expendable bodies in the global and national order of things, perhaps, but they are not disconnected. Feld's tracing of transatlantic connections and postcolonial entanglements through Ghanaian artists' storytelling and Hoffman's on-the-ground accounts of the intricate Sierra Leonian and Liberian mercenary and military networks dramatize the ephemerality of futures, reputations, and relationships, unless one works on them.

In Shirimani Studios, voiced or performed assertions in favor of pleasurable grooving are forms of relating that are facilitated by the new forms of empowerment in the postapartheid democracy, in particular by the changed demographics in the studio. The sound engineer is young and African: it is easier to openly disregard his instructions and to reprimand him than it would have been in an apartheid studio where the engineer was middle class, usually white, usually expert, and usually older than the youth at Shirimani's console. In contrast to apartheid-era studio sessions, in these sessions difficult professional relationships across language, race, and class lines are erased (although participants point to ethnic difference at times as explanation for differing knowledge bases). But in their place are contentions on the basis of age and practices of respect. In addition, in apartheid studios, musicians like Siyazi and his compatriots did not learn how to ask for the sounds they imagine. Now, they are ill equipped to coax a desired sound out of an engineer.¹⁴

The house engineer at Shirimani Studios learned his trade as a fan of kwaito, a 1990s form of electronic dance music. With friends as mentors, he taught himself how to use sound-processing computer programs in order to create kwaito.¹⁵ He knows the basics of the digital recording process—how to cut, paste, sync tracks, boost the bass, set the volumes, add some reverb,

compress the vocals, equalize a little. When he discusses components of the recording process, he gestures to the computer's screen. His hand and finger movements mirror the moving bars of the graphs and the visual waves of the sound being recorded. He works visually, relying heavily on computer graphics to identify the detailed makeup of the sounds. He has yet to develop an engineer's hearing acuity and the technological skills to translate the musicians' poetic lexicon into the language of digital science, though his dream is to apprentice with the renowned producer Quincy Jones. The musicians notice, correctly, that he has a lot to learn at the console, even while they acknowledge their own lack of technological expertise. ("This computer, I don't like it—it has so much brain!")

In Shirimani Studios, the musicians are playing along, not paying much attention to the console, where the engineer is recording the guitar track.

"Everyone, please start at the same time with the clicks," requests the engineer. He is trying to synchronize Nothi's part with the rest of the tracks by tying all to a guide pulse, a click track, and to keep a steady pulse throughout the song. Really, it is Nothi to whom the request is addressed.

Nothi exposes him. "You mean me?"

"Yes."

"Wayithela," responds Nothi without missing a beat. Nothi's deference—we'll do it right away precisely as you'd like it—confers authority upon him as the engineer. At the same time, his exaggerated response (made humorous by its excess) undermines the engineer's status in the room on the basis of his youthfulness in a Zulu men's hierarchy, in which younger men do not directly tell older men what to do.

Naming play is elaborate and often clever within a context in which there are practices of respect based on men's seniority and with regard to kinship, and in which individuals are subject to multiple terms of endearment and forms of address. Flattery and insult circulate in friendly masculine sparring. Forms of address are strategically employed—or misemployed—to social effect, whether to cultivate camaraderie, to specify its hierarchical terms, or to get preferred sounds recorded. Musicians joke using age-inappropriate or standing-inappropriate forms of address for Zulu men, as they do sometimes using denigrating forms of endearment. "We Mjita [Yo, dude]," Nothi risks addressing Siyazi, who is older than he is. "The black person's ox can really play guitar!" teases Siyazi later, with double-edged flattery of Nothi, at once granting him the power of an ox and denigrating his friend with a racial

slur from the apartheid era. “Take the song out / run with the song, *mkhulu* [grandpa],” encourages Lahla, addressing his junior, Nothi. “Yeyi we nzizwa [hey, you young men], you are disturbing me with your dancing!” complains Nothi, addressing his seniors and age-mates.

“Let’s go, *mdala* [old man],” says Nothi to the engineer, pressing to move on to the next song.

“That young guy [the engineer] is old?” Lahla responds quizzically. “He’s a small one, that one!” he corrects Nothi, unduly diminishing the engineer’s age.

“He’s an old one, this guy,” Nothi insists, nodding his head in the direction of the console. “Can’t you see he’s an *ikhehla* [grandfather, one who wears a head ring]?”

“Let’s go,” instructs the engineer, having readied the console to begin recording the next song. Perhaps he is oblivious to his clients’ banter. Perhaps he is appropriately enduring this hazing from his seniors.

An excluding jab that marks difference can work as an inclusionary move with the help of a successful comeback. “You’re going to be a good teacher for Zulus,” remarks Nothi to Philemon, as he helps Pat and Siphwe learn Siyazi’s Zulu lyrics. “The problem is you haven’t got a scar on your head.”

“A scar for a snake?” A scar for what? Philemon dismisses the emasculating criticism by which Nothi marks Philemon’s ethnic difference from the rest of the group. Were Philemon Zulu rather than Sotho, Nothi implies, he would have toughened up through the boyhood punishment that makes strong men. Whether hit by a stone propelled from a slingshot, or scarred by older boys roughing up younger ones when herding cows, or in boyhood stick fighting, a scar becomes a valued marker of past courage. Here, Nothi undercuts Philemon’s status in the studio as a worldly musician and coproducer by exposing his lesser cultural competence. He doesn’t have a scar. The momentary equalizing move cultivates intense camaraderie in the control room, among the fully adult men.

Sing, men. Hear the recording process of madoda. Hear the pleasure of men relating. Hear their trickstering, the clever bantering, the competitive Zulu poetics; the jostling and joking, the reversals and hyperboles, the expressive displays in a men’s space. The singing of a sexual joke about women that holds the melody and tweaks the lyrics of a backing chorus just learned. Sung vocables that stand in for the energy of a dance step in a space too cramped to dance it out. The armbands, *amabhande*, are juicing me up! Hear

the infusion of the studio's professional relationships with Zulu cultural practices.

"Ikhona intelezi la!" exclaims Lahla, appreciating the way the groove of the song is locking together by metaphorizing the energy of the song with the potency inherent in the protective medicine or charm used to neutralize the power of an enemy. When the bass player is slow at setting up, Nothi threatens an injection to hurry him up. Here the reference is to a Zulu medicine that acts as a laxative (delivered by injection).

Such cultural talk is specific to the world of these migrant men, as are references to cattle, signs of men's standing through wealth, and bulls, signs of virility. Together these are signs of a well-tended homestead that vertically integrates the ancestors (White 2001) in the spiritual world, and horizontally extends its reach through largesse.

"I'm an ox!" boasts Nothi.

Pat tops him with a reference to virility and rage: "I'm a bull!"

"Well an ox when yoked stops dead if you say *wo* to it," retorts Nothi in friendly competition, referencing the endurance and steadfastness of strong men.

The density of this studio camaraderie is, one might say, a form of hi-fi sociality, upon which a premium is placed by these ngoma men.¹⁶ Hear their poetic play against the backdrop of struggle.

The recording process and sound outcome are also demonstrations of another kind of relationship that the musicians recognize and work on, namely that between *madóda* and *madoda*, between the world at large in which they participate as cosmopolitan men and the world at home in which they participate as respectable men. This is always a provisional relationship. "Something might be happening, or it might not be happening," Siyazi says. Potential is always present. (Am I throwing away my luck with these bones?) Respectability at home is enhanced by the signs of work to make it happen.

In fact, the Shirimani Studios project never came to fruition. It remained work that produced affective results, not material ones. Nondala never produced the promised backing money, so the studio retained the master recording. With his reputation in jeopardy with his friends, Siyazi eventually borrowed money to pay his musicians. The Scorpions, South Africa's anticorruption unit (disbanded under President Zuma), raided Nondala's township household, leaving him bare. Shirimani was later arrested and charged with buying stolen studio gear (Mangena and Motau 2003).¹⁷ Siyazi's alternative infrastructure disintegrated, at least for now.



Jeppie (Wolhuter) hostel, Johannesburg, 19 July 2009. PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

Siyazi would gather a group of his musical friends again in another poor studio, Black Eagle Sound, four years later.

In Siyazi and his musical compatriots' ways of relating in the Shirimani session, the affect of ngoma men's studio collaboration is produced and revealed. It is a sparring form of camaraderie in which competition playfully pushes up the stakes of relating to one another. Social hierarchies are revealed when they are a resource for trickstering and humorous one-upmanship. Reputations are worked on, whether to undercut or confirm them. Fissures are irritated, creating ruptures to resuture. It is an affect that is laden with creative energy, but that is also full of social compromises. In working out those compromises, musicians sacrifice some of the professionalism and efficiency of the recording process. It is an affect that produces forms of sociality through which musicians are able to gather resources. (Yet those resources can just as easily disassemble.)

In Black Eagle, I turn from social play to aspects of the musical arrangement and sound. At stake in producing men's hi-fi sociality—and reproducing it in sound—is the recording quality of their product.

The Hi-Fi Sociality of Ngoma Sound

At Black Eagle Sound, Siyazi is recording songs for a project that is to become the CD *Zindala Zombili*, 21 December 2006 (Mzansi Zulu Dancers 2007). On the group's first two LPs, those West Nkasi had produced, the best sellers of their recordings, Umzansi Zulu Dancers are in part represented as a live sound, as the sound of a festive rural event. Siyazi sustains this representation. First, he overdubs specific indexes of the live rural event onto the CD's tracks. Representations of spontaneous vocal and kinetic participation abound—exclamations acknowledging men's prowess and belonging; boastful collective incantations introducing songs and naming their home, and so forth. Siyazi has brought Ma Tshelobani Buthelezi in to ululate into the microphone. She does so for every song. In some parts, ululations overlap with more ululations (all of them stylistically the same, uttered as they are by one woman). Sometimes echoes extend the sounds in time, as long reverbs enlarge their space. Second, he adds the leader's whistle sounds using the two whistles with which he directs performances. The shrill metal one cuts through the hubbub; the wooden one is lower in pitch and warmer in color. Third, for variety they liberally insert electronic patches available in the studio: the battered *icilongo* (bugle); the *uphondo* (cow horn); the cowbell; a second cowbell, higher in pitch; more whistles; birds. Ululations intersect with tooting high-pitched blasts on the *icilongo* quivering on and off pitch, as if themselves uttered in the throat. Inserted whistles shimmer and stutter, darting around the sound stage: panned left, right, toward the middle, slightly back.

Building busy rhythm tracks and overdubbing layers upon layers, the musicians make use of almost all available tracks on the console in order to produce a richly layered and textured sound, filling up the sound spectrum to sustain its dense texture without a break through time. This acoustic density replicates the aesthetic of live ngoma events in the artists' home community. With high value placed on social participation, places are made within the genre for the interaction of professionals and nonprofessionals. Different people express themselves together, finding different ways to fit in with whatever they do best (whether ululating, whistling, shouting interjections, drumming, or dancing). This aesthetic of using all resources is carried over into the studio. Taking pleasure when many tracks on the console are in use, the musicians reproduce in the vertical and horizontal density of the recorded track the social and aesthetic density of a home-style event.

Siyazi is also bringing other influences into the studio. For one, it was

West who first inserted the dual whistles into Umzansi Zulu Dancers' recorded sound. They remind Siyazi fondly of West, and he is after something of West's sound. He is modeling the recording on West's presentation of ngoma performance, on West's representation of Africa as he imagined the world imagined it. In fact, Siyazi out-West's West: he outdoes him in the quantity of inserted whistle signals and ululations, and in the degree of reverb added to the ululations signaling a huge outdoor space. Siyazi's acoustic vision in *Black Eagle* is at once a worldly envisioning.

Siyazi stands in front of a microphone. They are adding layers to the song "iSangoma [healer]." Siyazi tries to imitate West's raspy imitation of Swazi sangoma performance that West had inserted on *Bayekeleni* and *Emzini*. It is a distinctive percussive sound on the early recordings, the stress of West's big body made audible. Bass vocables produced in the chest register, with bursts of air rushed through the vocal cords by a diaphragm release, are emitted in short rhythmical units that each flip into head-register whoops. "Shame for me," wiry Siyazi exclaims, "I haven't got the voice to do this!"

He instructs Ma Buthelezi, a Zulu sangoma, to try. But she doesn't know the sound of the Swazi original, nor of West's rendition. With her headphones on, listening to the already recorded tracks, she lets out rhythmic peeps. We laugh. Siyazi demonstrates, as best he can. "Now add the bass in your voice to that," he advises. Ma Buthelezi puts her headphones back on. The engineer punches her in. She lets out nasal squeaky peeps. Everyone laughs, and she the longest. They abandon the experiment. Nevertheless, ngoma's live improvisatory play and its world music connections are tracked into the recorded sound in other ways.

"Siyabulala," sings the triple-tracked close harmony ngoma backing, resonant men's voices, heavy in the bass, tinged on the top with a little tenor, sounding like a group of men rather than the two at the microphone. The single lyric of the chorus cycles in a melodic loop.

Siyazi solos, ringing out over the top of the chorus.

The chorus retains the melody and shifts the lyrics to hummed vocables: "Ji om o hmm ji om o hmm."

A whistle sounds out, the softer, warmer one West liked, with its two-pitched fluttering.

"Ji om o hmm ji om o hmm," sings the chorus over and over, sliding up to the peak of their phrase, the emphatic offbeat accent of the "o," the resonance of the men humming "hmm," the percussive "ji."

A ululation, rippling above.

“Ji om o hmm ji om o hmm.”

“We are Umzansi Zulu Dancers,” chants Siyazi in an animated boast over the backing vocals. “Ho!” he blasts with percussive aspiration and a bassy rasp, air pushed up from his diaphragm rushing past his vocal cords. “We are the boys of ngoma!”

“Ji om o hmm, ji om o hmm,” continue the backing voices.¹⁸ Under the boast that identifies their name and declaims their renown, they represent Clegg’s presentation of live ngoma. Siyazi is participating as a cosmopolitan in a global feedback loop.

The musical choices made in composition and in the recording process demonstrate relationality, at once pointing home (*ekhaya*), and to a cosmopolitan understanding of home as homestead, hostel, township, city, and overseas (the world beyond themselves), including the movement among these spaces. Hi-fi sociality is also rendered in the manner of the recording process itself. By building multiple layers and inserting effects that create the ngoma texture, the musicians exploit the studio’s resources together. The icilongo (bugle); the uphondo (cow horn). The cowbell. A second cowbell, higher in pitch. The ice cream bell. “Where’s the ice cream bell?” a musician asks the engineer, who is thumbing through sound effects on the digital keyboard. Flute, add the flute here. Now the synth strings, thick and sustained in the lower midregister. Think of the musicians using electronics because they can, re-creating the density of relating in the studio on CD. Building busy rhythm tracks and overdubbing layers upon layers is as much about the sociality of the studio space as it is a representation of the public life of ngoma performance. It demonstrates the intimacy of being together in both places.

Hi-fi sociality is a sociality that is doubly dense: the sociality of the Zulu homestead mirrors and is doubled by the studio’s sociality; in Umzansi Zulu Dancers’ sound that is recorded and mixed, representations of the sociality of home as *ekhaya* and of home as a cosmopolitan idea likewise mirror and double each other, and blend. The sociality among the men mirrors the sociality represented in the sound, while the former plays a role in producing the sound of sociality.

Hi-fi sociality in the studio reproduces the affect of home and cultivates the promise of future movement. *Osiyeza*. We are coming. We will arrive (again) soon. It also at times raises the stakes in live performance events. The struggles in the studio spill out into other social arenas, precisely because of the promise the studio might hold.

28 December 2000, esiPongweni

The tails of the springbok pelt *ibheshu* (back apron) that Sikeyi has gifted to Siyazi flow with the movement of his body as he swoops in from the side, hands fluttering, knees bending, torso lowering, eyes focusing, as he readies himself for a sequence. The event is about to reach its pitch, when Sikeyi will be challenged one on one. All the big dancers are taking their turn, each decorated in his best finery, each dancing at his peak. Three drums, six drummers, drum. No space is left in the seams of the crowd, no pauses in the waves of their sound, now a rush of cheering, a waning, a rush again. Siyazi, master of timing, pauses, then moves into his kick. (It is his second turn to dance a sequence.) He kicks and stamps. “Khulukuthu! Khulukuthu! We Khulukuthu!” chant the teams. He swivels around with the grace of a ballerina executing a move in the dust, and he prepares for another hit. From nowhere, Zabiwe, an arrow in flight, slices across Siyazi’s path, closing him out with a kick and melting back into place in the seated cluster. Caught off guard, Siyazi freezes. He rests his hands on his hips, pauses, shakes his head in disapproval, or is it disbelief? As protocol demands when faced with a taunting insult that is transgressive in its timing and form, he walks off center stage. Zuma is already taking the floor. Behind the struggles internal to the local team that were dramatized within the context of this high-profile district event—Zabiwe was to become the new generation’s igoso—lay another disappointment. Zabiwe, the ringing voice of *Bayekeleni*, dancer in the team the French came to know, was no longer in Umzansi Zulu Dancers’ studios.

The Lo-Fi Sound of Marginalized Men

Good sociality is necessary studio practice, in whatever the culturally specific and genre-specific terms might be. To record is a social event that involves the careful management of relationships to good aesthetic effect. The social challenges vary in form from location to location, studio to studio, and musical style to musical style, as evidenced in case studies in Johannesburg (Meintjes 2003), Austin (Porcello 2005), Istanbul (Bates 2010), and Canada’s northern plains (Scales 2012). All recording sessions involve creative experimentation and some degree of recomposition and musical arranging. Yet some of the choices these musicians make in how to use their studio time are counter to efficient use of their limited resources. But the question is not only one of efficiency. It also concerns aesthetics: the desire

for production autonomy and, once in the studio, performances of authority compromise the possibilities for high-fidelity sound. Indeed, the pleasures of camaraderie and that camaraderie's constant negotiation often result in low sound production values, lessening the chances of a crossover listenership, and so limiting the range of options that a CD might open up.

When the musicians eagerly and liberally use preprogrammed sounds and fill up the sound spectrum, and the inexperienced young engineers lack the skills to finesse the sonorities and to nuance the mix of a preferred dense and busy sound, the sonic result is muddy, making distinctive musical lines and expressive effects unclear. With the technical capacity and aural acuity of a well-trained engineer, clichéd preprogrammed sounds could be remade into nuanced acoustic ideas. As these artists become disembedded from state and global institutions, and increasingly participate in informal and alternate infrastructures, they, in relation with others connected to an informal infrastructure, create “an aesthetic, a set of formal qualities that generate a particular sensorial experience of media marked by poor transmission, interference, and noise” (Larkin 2008, 218–19), by the sound of the recording process's improficiency.

Poor production quality is a constraint with which postcolonial listeners and musicians contend the world over, and which they in turn treat as a resource. I am reminded of Waterman's (1990) account of Nigerian *jùjú* musicians who fed their instruments through cheap amplifiers and public address systems and punctured their loudspeaker membranes, exploiting the distortion to effect a buzzy African aesthetic. In Indonesia, R. Anderson Sutton (1996) was confounded by the use of poor-quality amplification when listeners could hear the music well without amplification. From his perspective initially, Indonesians unnecessarily suffered through loud, distorted playback of recordings or performances with stylistic details muffled and lost. He went on to articulate the circumstances in which such “bad sound” carried social valence for Indonesians. For example, the loud volume of amplification identified a social or ritual event, thereby drawing a crowd, while the noise worked as a means of averting malevolent spirits. When Siyazi and his musical compatriots exploit the electronic resources and the working relationships at hand to effect a dense aesthetic, they are producers repurposing sound technology to render aesthetics in local terms (as in the Nigerian case), and they are consumers making do with poor sound technology and investing it with social value (as in Indonesia). They bring a sound ideal into the studio drawn from their experience as performers and from years of lis-



Masdi Shezi,
Madulaneni, 26
December 2011.
PHOTOGRAPH
BY THE AUTHOR.

tening to Zulu performance at weddings, parties, festivals, ngoma dances, and staged maskanda events. The approach to sound at such events is multi-layered and densely textured. Percussiveness excites the overall effect. At issue in Shirimani Studios and Black Eagle Sound is the degree to which personnel, recording equipment, conditions, and competing desires allow for an artful mix when producing this aesthetic in the studio. At times the difference between being able to hear the interplay of voices in performance and a muddy mixdown that obscures those voices dismays the musicians, as does the discrepancy between the desired sound quality of individual voices and the limitations in communicating those specificities and in rendering them electronically. Where it has seemed possible to him, Siyazi has worked

his contacts to effect some remixing upon review of a master recording. At other times, the musicians listen through the marks of poor transmission to hear and celebrate their sound.

Yet the case remains that such musicians face enormous difficulties in mobilizing the networks that would relaunch them into the official, highly regulated media trade. As the alternative infrastructure produced by Nigerian videocassette piracy attests, media dissemination enables connections to the world—albeit connections that are easily disassembled. But at the same time, the quality of that disseminating media emphasizes the marginality of those it represents (Larkin 2008).

In their reach for an exacting and enduring space, what makes musicians settle for something provisional? Why does an exacting and enduring space seem out of reach? On the one hand, the artists' compromise in their sound's production value enables them to gain some creative control over their own representation, over the mediation of their body-voice. Their willingness to compromise in order to enhance their creative control is a consequence of the history of apartheid in the music industry and of apartheid's studio practices in which migrant musicians had little say. But their compromise is also a means by which they hold onto their agency as they find themselves excised from a regulated economy. The championing of men's social space and working relationships in the studio and the use of the recording process to cultivate the camaraderie of respectable men counters some obstacles to sustaining responsible manhood in the context of diminished wage labor brought on by the neoliberal restructurings of the postcolonial state.

Under the radar of the national culture industry, with the difficulties of regaining access to formal media infrastructure and then sustaining a presence within it, the intense studio sociality of Siyazi Zulu and his compatriots bears significance. Hi-fi sociality is rendered in sound as the sound of low production quality. That the musicians have to make do with hi-fi sociality as affectively dense consolation for lo-fi sound is a consequence of the inadequacies of the state. It is a position to which musicians who are living under postcolonial, postapartheid constraints are consigned.¹⁹ De facto, the musicians' male, migrant, Zulu, cosmopolitan sociality restructures studio practices. Thereby the musicians gain some control over the process of their own representation. It is a way of being at home and in the present. As an ethical stance, hi-fi sociality is a way of holding open the question of better times to come. The musicians call on alternative networks and work at solidi-

fyng them. When those networks fail, there remains the work achieved for the future through the sustenance and animation of their music-making relationships.

Umzansi Zulu Dancers' studio practice is an expression of hardworking principled masculinity: self-reliance even in precarious times, albeit that a provisional political space enables only a provisional sound. If this recording right now doesn't render results (connections, opportunities, money, fame), then perhaps it will later. "And if not—well, never mind." The studio in this case is a site for doing the work of men, namely producing connections to the world including to one another, so that "something may be happening," whether at home, onstage, within a record company, or maybe one day overseas again. Possibility is kept alive in the new South African state. "Sing, madoda," instructs Nothi. Ji oyi hmm o hmm hmm.

28 December 2008, Keates Drift, Msinga, KwaZulu-Natal

Following his acting success in the Hollywood blockbuster *Tsotsi*, Jerry Mofokeng has started a film production company. Siyazi and pop musician Shaluzza Max have negotiated with him to shoot a video of the grand ngoma event that the Department of Arts, Culture, and Sport of KwaZulu-Natal has sponsored (Mofokeng 2009). Siyazi figures on members of each participating team buying the DVD. He's negotiated the filming with the amagoso, and each group will get a cut. Locals will also buy it. In addition, what with the FIFA World Cup next year, tourists will be looking for real African culture, Siyazi speculates, and so he plans to provide it.

Over thirty troupes, some including as many as thirty dancers, arrive singing and dancing. They sit in a collective mass. Each team will get its turn to perform, while all the other groups sing and clap a groove to support them. Prior to the team displays and between them, singers initiate call-and-response songs, a steady stream of textured sound.

Mofokeng has hired a sound team from Soweto, burgeoning young sound professionals. The sound team struggles. Singers spring up from the mass of seated dancers, call out, swivel around, call out again, overlapping with the massive choral response. Suddenly another. Then another. A lead dancer prances back and forth among his team, singing out and over. The sound recordist tries his best to weave around the performers, pointing a microphone in a fluffy jacket on a boom. But he doesn't know who will pop up to sing and where, like oil spitting on a griddle. Besides, when they pop up in the

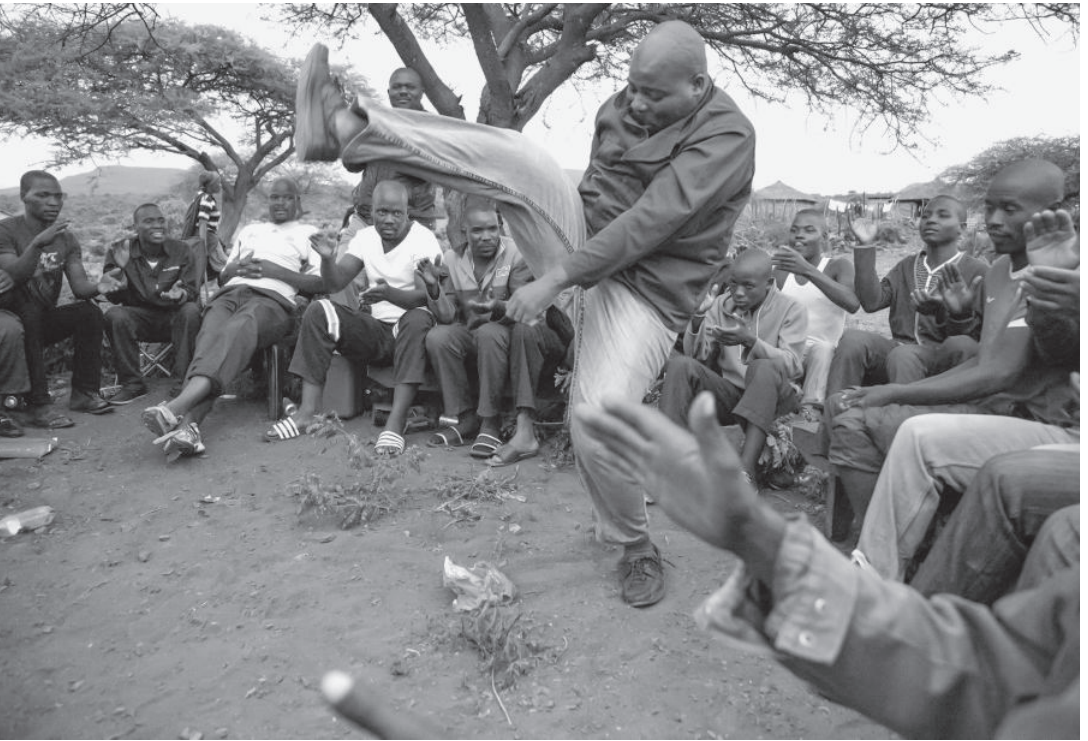


Amasosha from Madulaneni, 27 December 1997. PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

middle or in back of the body-to-body clump of singing men, the boom is far too short to reach them. Next they try a handheld mike for the lead singer. Through the amp system, they implore the leaders to pause, take the mike, sing into it. But the dancers need to dance, and the timing and phrasing and overlapping that produces the densely layered sound textured by interjections wins out over the microphone. Next they try a head set on the team leaders. But it creates delay between teams, and they lose momentum, and others keep popping up elsewhere to sing. The sound recordist backtracks to following the singer-dancers with a boom, even though he gets in the way of the camera crew. So plentiful are the singing teams that before the event ends, the sound team's battery supply runs out.

Despite the lo-fi consequences, the presence of the film crew heightens the event's drama by the crew's own elaborate performance, and the significance of the event by the promise of subsequent circulation.²⁰ In addition, the crew overnights at Keates Drift. Siyazi sets the two vegetarians up at the headmaster's house, for his teacher wife will know how to serve a spread of vegetables. When cameraman Gaddafi hears there is no electricity at Siyazi's

house, at the very end of the road, he opts to stick with light and the vegetarians. Mofokeng zooms off into the dark in his white Mercedes. The rest of the crew and I feast amply at Siyazi's homestead. With hi-fi sociality at home with urban guests, Siyazi enacts responsible authorial manhood. To the region's teams and municipal and tribal dignitaries and to his family, friends, and neighbors, he demonstrates his connectedness out in the world, while he works on it.



Socializing, with Kwanda Zulu dancing, eFabeni, 25 December 2015.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Mothers dancing at a memulo, esiPongweni, 23 December 1992.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

8 / / / BROKERING THE BODY

Culture, Heritage, and the Pleasure of Participation

Twenty-something Mandla Thembu was into fashion. He worked at a clothing store in London, then in hotel security, and he danced for pleasure in the club scene. One day he discovered West African dance and djembe drumming, and he realized he had “found his thing.”¹ Soon he sought out the music of his own African background. Msinga was his father’s natal home; his Xhosa mother grew up to the south; they had left the country in the 1960’s dark years of apartheid. In London, Mandla came upon a recording of Umzansi Zulu Dancers. The music simply spoke to him.

A British son of South African struggle expatriates, Mandla Thembu returns home at the turn of the millennium to get to know his extended family and his culture better, to try his hand at promotion, to get a career going. He wants to take Umzansi Zulu Dancers overseas.

Entrepreneurs, musicians, and politicians who need culture or seek a past turn to ngoma from biographically inflected, historically specific positions. Their quest is personally invested as postapartheid South Africans: they are trying to get by, do good, get ahead, or find a place in their new nation. Most are also driven by a love of the sound. Mandla imagines staging a cultural village with Umzansi Zulu Dancers in Atlanta. A young inner-city entrepreneur wants to inspire lost inner-city youths to return to their moral roots. An immigrant in Europe wants to stay connected with his culture and to help. A Pan-Africanist fusion musician wants to sound more South African, more Zulu, as he tries to reengage the performance circuit in Europe and to find his place at home. An activist needs theatrical material and wants to preserve



Mbusiseni Zulu and Khethukuthula Dladla during an Umzansi Zulu Dancers performance for wedding guests in Diepkloof, Soweto, 26 October 2006. PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

cultural identity, God-given by the ancestors. To expand overseas, a businessman needs African product. Politicians from the IFP, ANC, NFP (National Freedom Party) need a means to connect with their people. Cultural brokers all, they wager on the warrior.

In the context of a new democracy, how do dancers broker the long history of representation of African men's bodies as excessive, irrational, singing, dancing, and drumming, in order to overcome the history of oppression justified by that representation? What are the possibilities for reappropriating the warrior body as fetishized by colonial history and popular global circulation, when this fetishization plays into violences against that very body? Furthermore, if in this juncture of capital's history, culture is so readily realized in commodity form and ethnic identity is "incorporated" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009), how do dancers render their art as more than a representation of cultural identity to others while exploiting openings the market offers for their self-actualization?

First I focus on how South African entrepreneurs interested in working with ngoma and Umzansi Zulu Dancers animate a nostalgic past in pursuit of their dreams. Then I turn to politicians and a businessman who activate the idea of ngoma's long past as heritage and culture to deploy ngoma strategically. Next I narrate how dancers redirect these ideas of the past toward their

own ends, hedging their bets on others' strategic engagements as they seek to benefit from ngoma's exchange value, control its symbolic value, and take pleasure in its affective value. Up for grabs is the question of what constitutes resistance in democratic South Africa's neoliberal restructuring.

Culture as Enterprise

In areas neighboring Msinga, game parks, eco-lodges, and bed-and-breakfasts have arisen despite the region's reputation for being riddled with violence. A new sign on the road from Keates Drift south to Greytown marks the boulder where the Zulu renegade Bambatha staged an ambush of a passing colonial administrator in 1906. An Inkosi Bambatha Memorial Committee has erected a monument alongside the rock (Zondi 1998).² En route north to Tugela Ferry, a makeshift sign advertises African curios. It points to a municipal project, though not a viable one. As labor fails, commodified culture prevails. With little waged work left to generate income and produce futures, ethnic identification in entrepreneurial and creative projects becomes a heightened marketable resource at home. Visitors across South Africa participate heavily in cultural tourism in the new millennium, and enterprises have emerged to meet the demand, especially in KwaZulu-Natal. Branding itself as the Kingdom of the Zulu, the province has produced itself as "a tourist destination, the *ur-space* of tradition in the country at large" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009, 11).³ Ngoma's cultural brokers draw from this prevalent discourse and nourish it with their fantasies.⁴

First Mandla contacts West Nkosi, the producer of the recordings he loves, and West puts him in touch with Siyazi. He sends a fax: "Dear Siyazi . . . I am not expecting to see any unfit warriors with big stomachs when I come home to S.A. When I come I will train the guys personally in fitness and stamina work jogging etc. . . . [ellipsis points in original] anybody not willing to train hard and rehearse will not be coming on the tour. We need Zulu warriors [rest of sentence illegible on fax]."⁵

Jimmy Makhumbila of Blackindex Website Designs moved to the dream city to make it. From a childhood in the rural north, he now works as a bank clerk downtown and has started doing website design on the side. He wants to get on in the world and he wants the new South Africa to become an even better place. His encounter with Umzansi Zulu Dancers, who have secured funds for a website, has inspired him to propose an idea to Siyazi. In collaboration with the group, he wants to recruit and educate "young people from different backgrounds, cultures, race and tribal [*sic*]" in order to reclaim

"*ubuntu* [respect for humanity] and other African cultural values" in the city, especially the decrepit and violent inner city. He is building Umzansi Zulu Dancers a website.⁶ He has also made Siyazi a business card with a silhouetted dancer at the southern tip of an African map as its logo. "Connect with Origin: Umzansi Zulu Dance" the card asserts, as does the website.⁷

These young entrepreneurs do not just reproduce the discourse of the Zulu warrior and of originary singing and dancing. Building on nostalgic forms constituted through a history of mediation, they feed back into that discourse, reemphasizing some aspects and minimizing others. They thereby produce an increasingly unattainable representation of a Zulu past. Consider that Mandla first encountered the group through their most traditional-sounding recording, *Bayekeleni*, which, in turn, West had recorded as voice and drumming with a European listenership in mind.

Mandla's plan renders colonialism and apartheid invisible to depict a pure past (as though that image of the past was not constituted by colonialism), in order to return its richness to the present. He wants to take four South African groups to Atlanta during Black History Month to present the authentic African experience to (African) Americans. "The *theme* of the show will be *amadlozi* [ancestors] as the tour will honour *the ancestors* who we have inherited our rich culture from. So everything in the show will show our traditional way of life, from dance, ritual, song, praise-singing, etc. . . . The stage-set will be a traditional village representing both (a) Zulu (b) Xhosa cultures [emphasis and ellipsis points in original]."⁸ Performers will tour under the banner "Simunye [We are one]." Similarly recirculating the feedback of a series of prior mediations (amplifying the nostalgia; Feld 1996a), he plans to solicit the participation of Goboti Dlodla, performer at Shakaland, the set for the film *Shaka Zulu* that has been reconstituted as a cultural village with an appended lodge. Mandla considers Dlodla an expert "dancer, spear maker and captain."⁹ He forms a company called Shaka Productions. Mandla's vision folds Umzansi Zulu Dancers and ngoma into a tribal type. That is, his view of Zulu culture is cosmologically rather than historically constituted; Zulus are immersed in performance, not politics; and rural black South African sociality is unified in atemporal peace not rent apart by ethnic nationalist difference.

Like Mandla, Makhumbila's nostalgic fantasies amplify the morally centered and culturally enriched sociality of noble Africa, of which he sees ngoma dancing as the epitome. If Mandla hopes for a tribal diorama as representative of undiluted Africa (essentially, from his perspective, a peda-

gological presentation to African Americans of their lost or stolen selves), Makhumbila idealizes the staged musical. Through South Africa's recent history (1950s on), a ream of musicals—*Zonk*, *King Kong*, *Ipi-Tombi*, *Sarafina*, *Umoja*—spectacularized African singing, dancing, and drumming in international blockbusters, launching some performers' careers. Makhumbila wants to reproduce this idea. He envisions a cultural education workshop that initially would run for one year, culminating in a show. First they would hold auditions to seek out talent. He wants to target inner-city youths, many of whom are Zulus.¹⁰ Yet their knowledge of Zulu culture is limited to what they see on television. If African values, especially ubuntu, were to be "morally planted inside them as they grow up, . . . they will be able to respect others." (Siyazi approves. Learn and respect where you are from, he inserts.) Next the selected youths and children would embark on a rigorous song-and-dance training four days a week with Umzansi Zulu Dancers. Education about African cultures "focusing on the South African tribes" would follow each rehearsal. This training would culminate in the development of a musical "like *Umoja*—something similar but more than that."¹¹ If you train kids, you then need to utilize their knowledge. For this reason, their educational programs would culminate in a stage show at the Hillbrow Theatre in the city. Makhumbila thinks participation in the project would also produce material uplift by encouraging youths to follow a dance career. "Because of their family backgrounds some young people gave up on school, sometimes on life itself, saying there is no employment." Additionally, he projects that Umzansi Zulu Dancers could—should—become an umbrella organization for emerging groups.

Siyazi hears him out. "No, fine, I think it's a good idea," he tells him.

("You never know—let him try," he says to me.)

Confronted with the wreckage of apartheid, Mandla and Makhumbila each respond in a reclamatory mode. Mandla from his diasporic position, and Makhumbila from his experience of the postapartheid decrepitude of the inner city, propose ideas that repair the image of South Africa's culture while trying to redress apartheid or other legacies of oppression. Their fantasies of realizing an ideal that would enrich the present with a stable long past and rectify injustices in the world emerge from their experiences of inequality. They fetishize the performing warrior to bypass centuries of colonial contamination and decades of apartheid appropriation.

They also work in a discursive context in which the predominant interpretations of South Africa's musical history in public and scholarly forums

focus on the arts' capacity to compel resistance, further liberation, or manage oppression.¹² Their fantasy projects suggest that they seek a new discourse about culture that is not always, necessarily, or inevitably implicated in resistance or serving political ends. They articulate African identities not defined by resistance discourse and struggle history but by culture, morality, and harmoniously reconciled ethnic difference. Makhumbila titles his project *Cultural Diversity*; Mandla's is equally multicultural.

When the struggle ended, Mr. Zibonele Goodman Bhengu found himself feeling settled, working at a meat factory in Ireland. He has always loved music—Bob Marley, UB40, South Africa's international reggae star Lucky Dube—and he plays piano for his own pleasure. Artists at home in South Africa are crying to those who are overseas for help in reaching the international market. So he is trying to get into cultural promotion, to help a bit and to follow his love of music.¹³ He has established a company called Zigomuzik Productions, and he hopes to arrange a tour for traditional South African artists on the British circuit. In Johannesburg, Shaluza Max, a mutual acquaintance, introduces Siyazi. Is Bhengu's new endeavor in part a means of contact with an unattainable past for which he longs, an equivalent to an immigrant's souvenirs of home (Boym 2001)? In effect, it is like Mandla's faxed claims to inclusion in "our rich culture," "our traditional way of life." Such contact constitutes a form of "diasporic intimacy," that is, a connection that is deeply felt though distant and transient, "a precarious affection" (Boym 2001, 252) that produces nostalgia for a past that cannot be restored.

Mandla's vision of African culture is likewise passionate, blindly so. It shapes his ambitions and what he is willing to notice on the ground. We are conversing at Keates Drift, where for him time slows and history returns to the present. He says every city dweller should visit a "village" like this for a "holiday" if only for a week annually. "It doesn't drain you" like city life does. He criticizes the dancing of the local team on Christmas Day as weak, lacking discipline and character, presumably because it does not cohere with his mediated and staged vision.

Mandla, Makhumbila, and Bhengu's investments in ngoma are markedly affective. Their visions register desires for a future they imagine in the context of their present struggles. Each is trying to figure out how to collaborate with Umzansi Zulu Dancers, to give and take. By affording ngoma symbolic value while utilizing its exchange value, they aspire to shape the dancers' (self-)representation for paying cosmopolitans. Their proposed projects are attempts to get on in the world, while giving back to South Africans whom

they see as needing their help. Capitalizing on the warrior's nostalgic value is a potential means of moving beyond the current circumstances of brokers and artists alike. Drawing on ideas of a past preceding colonial or state violence, nostalgia and fantasy fuse.¹⁴

Mr. Elliot Ngubane, expatriate from the struggle years, knows *Bayekeleni* and *Emzini*. He works from London. He contacts Siyazi. Though he has no experience in cultural promotion, he has the love, and he has the longing. He will cover Europe, and coordinate with Bhengu, his compatriot in Ireland.

Inexperience hampers the chances of success for most of these new musical brokers, equipped with bravado, passion, and a will to experiment. Mr. Bhengu in Ireland is looking for sponsors overseas and for a suitable roster of artists in South Africa. Mr. Ngubane in London asks what contacts I could organize in America. Mandla has moved to Atlanta, where he is trying to promote African performance while working part time. Atlanta's National Black Arts Festival will provide matching funds for a South African group, he says. He knows a grant writer, and he has met a local promoter, someone who worked on *The Lion King*. He will cultivate interest in the larger concept by conducting workshops in Atlanta schools with Siyazi. He intends to bring him over on a tourist visa.¹⁵ For his project, Makhumbila submits a grant to the South African–Norwegian initiative Mmino on behalf of Umzansi Zulu Dancers.¹⁶ He lists the cost at R148,000.00 (about US\$14,800). Two-thirds of this budget he designates for salaries. The remaining third will cover marketing, including a website.

"I believe it's gonna happen. It's gonna happen," Makhumbila impresses upon me, as if willing it into life.

Even when entrepreneurs and artists criticize the warrior icon as a colonial product, and entertain a more diverse perspective on culture and heritage, as cultural brokers they trade in a nostalgia that figures ngoma as deeply African because it is Zulu, or that treats ngoma as a feature of a culturally diverse, multiethnic rainbow nation. Shaluza Max Mntambo grew up in the township of KwaMashu outside Durban and in the mid-1980s moved to the city (Johannesburg, then Cape Town) with an African fusion band. His band JAMA (along with others like Sakhile, Bayete, Stimela, Tananas) represented the sound of the future that fit with the resistance politics of the time. It enjoyed a multiracial following. Musically it represented a transatlantic conversation grounded in South Africa's own jazz history. JAMA and these other bands played club venues, de-emphasizing the significance of ethnicity in favor of an urban African cosmopolitanism. Through the 1990s,

Shaluza's interest in fusion took him far afield musically, into bands that experimented with international jazz (1994) and acid jazz and African sounds (1995–96), collaborations that celebrated South Africa's newfound freedom and postapartheid internationalism. It led him into recording collaborations with musicians from Europe, the Americas, and the African continent, and drew on his skills as a composer, arranger, lyricist, and singer.

Over the years, these projects generated international contacts, performances, and musical relationships for Shaluza. For example, thirty months touring Europe and Japan (1988–92) as the lead male singer in South Africa's smash hit musical *Sarafina*, a staging of the Soweto Uprising of 1976, launched his career. Postapartheid, he spent two years studying media in Germany, training that prepared him to take advantage of the state's Black Economic Empowerment incentives.

When he turned to develop a solo career in South Africa in the new millennium while working in television in Johannesburg, he broadened his local pop appeal and rooted himself at home in a Zulu sound. He borrowed Umzansi Zulu Dancers' "Sisi Nomvula" and covered it, asking Siyazi to rewrite the lyrics for a track on Shaluza's CD *Kusile* (Max 2000). Upon its release, *Kusile's* songs whizzed around the local airwaves and into the streets.¹⁷

(For Siyazi, imagine the sudden roar of success, the promise it held, the hope.)

On 26 December 2007, Shaluza Max cruises to Keates Drift from his new farm farther north to attend ngoma. He does so periodically, for pleasure.¹⁸ This time he visits with good news: a tour to Germany next year. In some places, German crowds three thousand strong had cheered his band on the last tour — three months — he said. At that time, while on his two-year media educational stint, he had taken the opportunity to form an Afropop band with Europeans and Americans. Now, a renewed opportunity has arisen, potentially. This time he wants to include the Zulu sound of ngoma in his fusion band, for he wants a very South African sound for the European stage. And, of course, Umzansi Zulu Dancers would also feature their dancing.

"Very nice," says Siyazi, "that is good news."

(To me he says, "Things can be happening, or not be happening.")

Shaluza's quest for a more deeply Zulu feel in his internationally directed sound plays to his expectations of his audience's nostalgia for an Africa long past. Even if he does not share this anticipated nostalgia, he remediates it. Notice too that the trajectory of his artistic projects over the decades shares an end point with Mandla's and Makhumbila's: from 1980s fusion and the

resistance musical *Sarafina* through celebratory internationalism, to fusion that showcases ethnicity and tradition without the disruption of resistance politics.

Even activist Benjamin Thamsangqa Mfaba reformulates resistance discourse when he turns to culture. He was destined to find a path into the traditional arts, coming from a family of warriors. His grandfather served in King Shaka's army, he tells me.¹⁹ Now, in 2009, working as the projects director for ACUMDA (African Cultural Music and Dance Association), he has become "obsessed with the notion of ubuntu [respect for humanity], 'communal spirit.'"²⁰

As a youth, Mfaba experienced the struggle in Soweto's streets. Nevertheless, he found his way to tertiary education, studying electrical engineering at the time of South Africa's transition. He felt confined looking at wires, especially after his youthful experiences in music, theater, and activism. He switched to a film and television course, specializing in producing and directing. While studying, he freelanced as a project manager. Then he worked at a sound recording studio and at various broadcast stations at the SABC.

With his love of culture and his experience in activism (subsequently translated into project management) and in music, theater, and media, a friend recruited him for ACUMDA.

"Zulu culturalists" had established this arts and culture organization as a nonprofit organization (NPO) in 1994, staging performances representing various traditional and mbaqanga groups, including Umzansi Zulu Dancers. In the late 1990s when Gauteng Province's health department was "unable to penetrate the hostels" where HIV was rife among migrant workers, they approached ACUMDA for assistance. The association developed programs that combined technical HIV information with music and dance. They worked on their choreography to stage exuberant performances. They organized costumes: "Let's dress up without apology. Be flexible while still maintaining the spirituality of your music genre." They knocked at every hostel room door, urging people to come to their show. They extended their work to peer education, training hostel dwellers to take on these roles.

The project developed beyond Mfaba's dreams. The health department funded them to develop four or five language-specific groups who successively shared a stage. ACUMDA expanded its vision and "preached the gospel of multiethnicity." They collaborated with government and NGO entities to stage cultural and heritage festivals, such as the Gwala Gamasiko (Love



Keates Drift main road, 24 December 2014. PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

your culture) festival where “each has a chance to promote their culture and customs.”

Now Mfaba wants to sustain the Gwala Gamasiko festival, staged intermittently since 2004. In the future he envisions a school of traditional music, and he wants, he says, to “contribute to research of our own traditional music of all ethnic groups so we can expose it to the world.” He wonders how to get a history written and how to find genuine artistic collaborators who would be invested in the lives of South African performers, and who would conduct workshops and “exchange talents,” not just take songs. Though Mfaba sustains some of the organizing practices and values of resistance politics, he reformulates them in culturalist terms, producing performances that are available for nostalgic interpretation. He wants to preserve and protect the diversity of culturally distinct expression.

Like their counterparts, Shaluza and Mfaba depend on collaboration with artists, agents, other brokers, institutions, and networks to fully realize their ideals. These musical brokers struggle from variously precarious positions, much like the musicians whom they hope to help.

Heritage as Politics

If some cultural brokers turn to ngoma as culture in an identity quest that is an affective interest and an enterprise, others need culture strategically. They are professionally invested in heritage, whether as a form of currency for a businessman or as an identity representing a constituency for politicians.²¹ Here too the process of making claims on culture amplifies the echoes of already circulating nostalgia.²²

Mags Reddy's AfriCommunications, a Durban-based information technology and communications skills company, is setting up an office and installing a studio in the Johannesburg area, and it wants to break into the international market.²³ When Siyazi was shopping his recording around, through a chance connection he landed up in Mags's office. Mags has links to the Central Brooklyn Jazz Consortium, USA. But the consortium lacks "the culture," he tells Siyazi and me, and AfriCommunications can provide it if they bring traditional African artists into their Indian and urban youth-oriented stable. They need legibly African product. The festival is scheduled for July 2007, in just nine months' time, he says. "See you in America soon!" Siyazi exclaims.

("When I see the contract I'll believe a hundred percent," he says to me later.)

Reddy's projection of Umzansi Zulu Dancers' legibility as African product overseas is not that different from West Nkosi's when he recorded *Bayekeleni* as voice and drums. From late apartheid (West's recording) to postapartheid (Reddy's project), however, the value of culture shifted. On one hand, global discourse around the politics of indigeneity emerged, with UNESCO as one driving force. On the other, South African state discourse changed. Once a liberation movement that rejected ethnicity on the grounds that it was a construction of apartheid, the governing ANC now champions tradition and accommodates a president who is a polygamist. He dresses in skins, carries a shield and stick, and sings and dances at some public appearances in Zulu regions of the country.²⁴

25 December 2001, *esiPongweni*

Mhlasilwa, the headmaster, quiets the crowd. Loli the elder halts Mdo and his team's singing. An IFP councilor from Msinga has asked for the floor in order to introduce the guest who accompanies him. Mr. Ndlovu, a member

of national parliament for the IFP, happens to be visiting the area, so he has just dropped in to see the “services you [dancers] are delivering to the community.”

Ndlovu refrains from campaigning for his party. He simply presents himself, greets the community, and endorses the beautiful occasion. Yelling to spread his words, his gesticulations visible to the crowd, he proposes to the dancers that they could make money were they to develop the event. Start at noon with choirs, then proceed to ngoma, he instructs. Everyone should bring a gift to someone they love: grandchildren for grandparents, children for parents. On top of this, ask for donations: R2 per person attending. You could make a lot of money while helping choirs you invite to participate. Even the provincial Department of Sports and Recreation would assist with sponsorship.

Is this proposal Ndlovu’s fantasy or a strategy, a way of being present by filling the moment with an authorial voice? In his yelled speech, the parliamentarian recognizes the need to augment the community’s means of subsistence. He advocates that they commodify their Christmas sociality. He sees such collective self-sufficiency as an alternative to the failing economy. Concluding his appearance, he defines heritage as an exchange value and culture as their property that is up for grabs: “If you don’t promote this thing that belongs to you, other people will take it and develop it.” (Polite clapping, ululations in the distance.) “Thank you for your time and I hope your performance will be good.” And with that, he takes his leave and the dancers resume dancing.

Whatever their party affiliation, postapartheid politicians mobilize culture in Msinga to present themselves as enthusiasts alongside the voters in their constituencies. They drop in as other fans, community members, and visitors do, as Shaluza Max and I do. Culture is their shared inheritance, the Zulu kingdom their mutual branding (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009). Reddy works culture to connect with international nostalgia; Msinga politicians seek resonance at home. They draw on postapartheid discourses of service delivery, job security, self-help and development, and free enterprise as a form of empowerment. Ndlovu proposes making community members into tourists of their own cultural production.

Other politicians arrive as patrons who safeguard and promote cultural endeavors as traditional patrimony. Through their sponsorship, they enable culture performed as heritage to communities, in grander and grander versions of itself. Tents. Food. Printed programs. Security. Porta potties.

Ngoma's circulation as heritage expands through sound amplification, advertising, radio announcements, banners, speeches, and documentary recording of the event, and by an increasing range of dignitaries who attend and are hosted by Nkosi (chief) Mchunu.

28 December 2011, Galibasi

Flashing blue lights. A siren bleats as a little motorcade parts the way through the crowd for the mayor of Nongoma. Mrs. Zanele Makwaza-Msibi has arrived at Galibasi's ngoma grounds. Ululations. Shuffles and scuffles. A welcoming party of singing, dancing women leads the way to her seat of honor as she parades into the arena surrounded by her armed security and trailed by Mr. Shelembe, speaker for the NFP. In a double moving file, the welcoming women swivel their hips and stamp their feet as they inch forward. Step, swivel, stamp, their dancing arms half-aloft, their voices nasal and harmonizing, they build call-and-response cycles. Mrs. Makwaza-Msibi steps in rhythm with the women.

Mrs. Makwaza-Msibi, once deputy chairperson of the IFP (2006–10), has broken away. Now she heads the new NFP, a splinter group that left the IFP in shambles in 2011. Currently mayor of the Zululand District Municipality 260 kilometers to the north, she is simply passing through Msinga, she tells the crowd. This is not her constituency, yet. She brings gifts for the four ngoma teams gathered for their usual post-Christmas intracommunity performance. Each igoso is presented with a glossy new umbrella and a towel, accoutrements of gentlemen in this stinging sun. Each team receives a spanking new drum and drumsticks with fluffy snow-white heads still in plastic. As the men lift the drums from their factory boxes, the arena shimmers with ululations, lights up with dental whistles, and splinters into clapping. Dancers leap out to parade, kick, stamp, slip back into the cluster. With these perfect gifts, Mrs. Makwaza-Msibi is in sync and culturally in the know. Representatives of the four izigodi (wards) participating in the event reciprocate with gifts of blankets. Mrs. Makwaza-Msibi watches for a while before continuing her journey north.²⁵

28 December 2008, Madulaneni

"Where's Mr. Mofokeng?" calls the ANC MEC (member of the executive council) for Sport, Arts and Recreation for KwaZulu-Natal through her microphone, facing the crowds in beads, an Msinga blue cloak, a fabric imi-

tation of the fluted *isidwaba* (leather skirt), Zulu sandals, and red *isigqoko* (married woman's hat). She has announced that the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism is present at this ngoma extravaganza to promote ngoma dancing. Her department has provided funding, and sent seven cows for slaughtering to offer food to all. (The cows arrived too late, so the community had to use two of its own.)

Mofokeng, the star of the Hollywood blockbuster *Tsotsi*, is installed on the roof of the film crew's van, filming from above. The MEC pronounces that Mofokeng's presence will bring benefits to the dancers in the future, for films and television need talent and, she implies, talent could be spotted right here. "They will use you [dancers], if you have talent," she predicts. She proffers that if people "wanting to take some groups overseas" arise, they in the ministry now "know there are groups in Msinga they can get."

After her speech and that of Nkosi Mchunu, and the community's presentation of gifts to the dignitaries, she dances out of the arena. An entourage of local women in their luminous finery sing and dance her to her four-wheel drive.

While the presence of dignitaries alongside Nkosi Mchunu celebrates ngoma as Zulu tradition, the politicians make strategic gains by supporting local performances. Their rhetoric and gestures cultivate relations of obligation by making the audience and performers beholden to them for attending, sponsoring, enabling hospitality, and promising to connect them when opportunities arise. Such gestures can promote fantasies about a future that is better than the present—a future that appears contingent on materializing nostalgic articulations of the past.

The Pleasure of Participation

Despite haphazard planning, in some cases thin professional experience, and scarcity of resources that make prospects for the future precarious, and despite project designs that fix ngoma in an essential past or an ethnically specified present, Siyazi and ngoma dancers engage—sometimes court—these cultural brokers. They agentively step into the uncomfortable zone of compromise. They investigate the options brokers' projects promise, even when such exploration draws on their scarce resources. When Mandla first arrives from London, he stays with Siyazi in Soweto's Diepkloof hostel, and with him in a high-density inner-city flat for two weeks after that. Siyazi feeds him and teaches him ngoma dancing. Siyazi and Mashiya stretch their resources to foot the bill for twelve pairs of Zulu sandals that Mandla promises to sell

for British pounds, to add to the kitty needed to fund a tour. They host him at Keates Drift at Christmastime. When he returns, they host him again. Siyazi cultivates Bhengu and Ngubane by staying in touch and by putting me on the line to greet them over the telephone. He forms an NPO with Mfaba's assistance, affiliates with ACUMDA, includes an ACUMDA representative on his NPO's board of directors, appears on ACUMDA's website (www.acumda.co.za), and uses their office as his communication hub and official address. He invites Mfaba and Makhumbila to performances around Johannesburg, and Shaluza to Keates Drift. He agrees to the use of another song for Shaluza's 2002 recording, *Impilo*, and Umzansi Zulu Dancers provide ngoma dancing for the video for little pay.²⁶ When Shaluza and his wife bring the good news, they stay overnight at Siyazi's place. Siyazi's wives bring plates of food on trays lined with doilies and covered with netting. On his return from dancing, Mbusiseni stops in to greet Shaluza. Siyazi's younger children are summoned to greet the guests. Shaluza offers them coins from his wallet. There is merriment.²⁷

Similarly, even while politicians exploit ngoma dancers and their audiences as an opportunity, using flamboyant talk (the filming as a talent search, the suggestion of overseas interest, the proposal of an entrance fee for their friends, neighbors, and acquaintances), ngoma dancers are amenable to the politicians' appearances. Sometimes they seek politicians out, as they did to secure funding for the Mofokeng filmed event. Entourages welcome them. Dancers and communities make disparate gains from their visits, such as new drums and bigger events with the accoutrements of festival entertainment. They also gather prestige at home, perhaps visibility beyond the local, or even new prospects overseas. Ngoma dancers participate in amplifying their fetishization as heritage, not only in their commodification as culture.

Beyond the simple economics that oblige ngoma dancers to explore all prospects, what might explain the constant return to engage cultural brokers when failure appears more likely than success? For example, in the context of the upsurge in Togolese charismatic Christianity and the interventions of NGOs following the dismantling of the state after the Cold War, Togolese citizens engage with religious and international charity and development institutions to move away from "relational dependency and the gift to a preoccupation with autonomy and the money/commodity form" (Piot 2010, 9). They are willing "to trade a past for a future still unknown" (16). To be relieved of the burden of the immediate past, dancers utilize an idea of the long past as their currency. They trade on the warrior and gamble on dubious

brokers, risking incorporation (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009) and appropriation in their reach for an undetermined future.

Like the brokers they encounter, ngoma dancers seek control over the discourse of Zulu ngoma identity as singing-dancing-drumming warriors and over culture, heritage, and tradition as key words that appear to be productive for their future. This dual investment they share with artists (and many activists) who seek, from disempowered positions, to participate in a cosmopolitan world. From their positions in a neoliberal market economy, they instantiate a version of the millennium's global politics of indigeneity (Wilson and Stewart 2008). But the postapartheid Zulu version of these global dynamics—of the claim on culture, tradition, heritage, and identity without the baggage of struggle politics—is an attempt also to register control over the discourse of (Zulu) violence by redefining its terms. In the wake of a denigrating recent history of warfare that produced little positive reward, ngoma attempts to reclaim the dignity and wrath of the warrior with shield, stick, singing, and dancing: isosha as principled worker, pushing to the edge, almost out of balance, just in control.²⁸

Ngoma's reclamatory interest coheres with that of the entrepreneurs and politicians in part because ngoma dancers' positions have shifted to accommodate other, emerging discourses. Brokers endorse ideas that are already sanctioned in local terms. Ngoma participants have always considered ngoma part of Zulu culture. Now it is simply also a commodity. Ngoma has a storied history tracking back to Zulu regimental dance. Now it is recognized as heritage. It is rooted in Msinga and is of Msinga. Now it is also tradition. What was naturalized as African now includes components that are "really African." Mediated by brokers' nostalgia for the warrior figure and culture, and sharing the materialized concepts of culture, heritage, and tradition, ngoma dancers mobilize the past, redirecting attention onto how that past exists within the present. Wagering on others' nostalgia for the warrior figure, they gather agency for their projects of affirmation and self-authorship, while hustling to get ahead. Hedging one's bets seems a crucial step toward gathering agency, for a lucky break may set one up for some autonomy in the future. ("And if not, well never mind.")

Siyazi wants a remix of his Black Eagle recording before AfriCommunications releases it. From his side of the sprawling office desk, Mags opposes the waste this would entail. Your best critic is the audience, Mags advises, taking an oblique rhetorical route. AfriCommunications will test the product (he means the Black Eagle recording) by putting it out as a sample in the market.

Next he advises that the market needs a strong logo (e.g., Virgin Atlantic), or a person you can sell as representative of the brand (e.g., Richard Branson). You need one constant figure (you, the group leader) on the cover. That's how it works, Mags pronounces.

"But we are a group," Siyazi explains. Ngoma is impossible as a solo dancer. Siyazi signs the contract, there and then.

By pushing back, Siyazi gets his remix and he gets the recording released. He works to gain agency over his recording though he risks accusations of self-promotion from members of Umzansi Zulu Dancers for the CD cover, which features him alone as the brand. He keeps a noisy presence, and this necessitates a compromise on the aesthetics: AfriCommunications' freelance engineer improves the sound quality of the programmed percussion and thins out the texture by omitting some of the keyboard sounds, but other features of the remix further amplify the group as nostalgic representation. On "Khuzani (remix)," for example, extensive reverb added to the ululation gives it a sense of distance and so of a wide-open space, iconic of the idea of the rural. (A rural dance ground is in fact anything but reverberant.) The appreciative exclamation of the female vocal is raised in the mix, as are the toms, the iconic African hand drum (Mzansi Zulu Dancers 2007). Ngoma's mediated form is more live because of and in spite of the intervention of sound processing.

When ngoma is present as a feeling in cultural brokers' projects, a sense of the long past in the service of others' struggles or political interests, and when their own collaborations further heighten nostalgic renditions, dancers counteract the reductive representation of their art. By unsettling its reduction to a singular long past, dancers insist that their art is in and of the present.

Twenty-something Max Calitz and his girlfriend Carla didn't know where they were being sent as protagonists in this family-swap *Culture Shock* television episode, but, says Max to the camera, this is what they were hoping for: an experience totally different from their middle-class white suburban upbringing, something "tough," something "new."²⁹ She sweeps (and weeps) and carries firewood uphill to Siyazi's homestead. He catches goat kids in the kraal to feed them. They ask how polygamy works really, like, whom do you sleep with when? They criticize patriarchy and worry about how hard the women labor for the household.

On the fourth of five days, Max hauls his gym weights into the outdoor space of the homestead. He prompts Siyazi's middle-aged brother Makhohli: "Here, try these. Can you do it?" He means it as a friendly gesture of reciproc-

cal encounter. Max demonstrates the power of his youthful, leisured upper body as he raises and lowers the weights. Perhaps he hasn't noticed the scars that bear Makhohli's rugged biography.

Makhohli tries. He is unsuccessful. Max giggles. (He can't help himself.) Siyazi intervenes.

"If you can do two or three [lifts], you're strong!" Max explains, pressing Siyazi to lift them next. Siyazi swirls, flexes, kicks, and stamps in a flash. He instructs Max to imitate his dance instead, countering the culturally inappropriate challenge from the young man. But Max retorts, "Anyone can stamp on the ground."

"Yesterday you told me you're a strong man," he reminds Siyazi, "but that does not test your strength! Anyone can stamp on the ground. Look—I just did it!" He raises and lowers his right foot, with bent knee, a couple of times.

Makhohli eyes the interaction askance.

Later Siyazi translates Max's arrogance and unknowing indiscretion into Zulu terms. He reckons to the camera that something had irked the young man and so he wanted revenge in order to show his girlfriend how he loved her. (Makhohli quotes Exodus about respecting your father and mother.)

For the last interaction filmed at Keates Drift for the *Culture Shock* episode, boys have been gathered to dance ngoma. Behind them, the late afternoon sun dips toward the dust. Fourteen-year-old Wunda Boy leads as igoso. The singing is missing the bass of an adult team.

Max towers above the dancing boys, so quick on their feet, so light in the air, brimming with exuberance. He watches while Fihlo and Sibub fly and fall just right, dancing one-one. Next Siyazi and Max move into position in front of the team. Siyazi dances alongside Max, showing him the basic steps. Siyazi steps aside.

"Do it alone," instructs Siyazi as teacher.

Max takes a couple of awkward steps, lifts his leg a bit, and stamps on the beat while the drum pulses on.

"Yes!" cries Siyazi. "Do it again!"

Max stamps.

"Again, and more and more and more!"

Max stamps twice more, fumbling forward as Sibub had rushed before him. He stumbles backward to the ground.

"Well done, well done!" Siyazi applauds. "Thank you! How does it feel?" Siyazi loosely holds Max's hand in friendship while they confer. Max acknowledges the difficulty. Siyazi points out that Max is panting.

“It’s energy!” Max explains.

“You see—it’s energy!” agrees Siyazi, his point proved. “For a man, it’s energy,” he reiterates, missing Max’s implied distinction between strength and energy. He commends Max for trying, as dancing is “part of [Zulu] life.” Then he turns to face the television camera and the world out there and switches into Zulu to praise Max: “He should come and train with our band, because this is how we started with Johnny Clegg [how we trained Clegg].” The remark is subtitled in English.

As the orange light fades and dancers’ kicking actions blur across the screen, the African narrator gibes, “And so the sun sets on Max, the novice Zulu warrior.”

Even while the episode perpetuates the warrior figure as the overriding, identity-determining discourse, Siyazi’s comebacks assert his own interpretation of Zulu practices into the media. He reinterprets Max’s actions and retorts into Zulu terms on his home terrain. He substitutes Zulu forms of strength for Max’s disabling version. He recirculates positive valences of the warrior figure as a worker who possesses the qualities of endurance, steadfastness, perseverance. In his final comeback, he extends hospitality to Max yet demands that Max learn, setting him up in competition with boys who are well his junior. Through ngoma performance he shows Max up. At the same time, he takes the media opportunity to identify his home team’s illustrious global history represented by their student, Johnny Clegg, counteracting the narrow media representation of their rural and historical emplacement, and their poverty.

A group under Mashiya’s direction is performing at a tourist spot: a Zulu kraal constructed at Midrand, between Johannesburg and Pretoria. While visitors eat *ipapa nenyama* (stiff porridge and barbecued meat) under thatched awnings, dancers entertain them. The white proprietor explains Zulu culture to the tourists. The fall of the dancer—his backward cascade—depicts the warrior’s plummet to the ground upon being shot in the Anglo-Zulu wars. This interpretation that reproduces racialized inequalities and represents the Zulu as colonial victims irks Siyazi. “He knows nothing!” (He doesn’t even know if his dancers are good ones.) Siyazi refuses the literal representation of victimhood, reiterated in biweekly performances in the new millennium (2001): out of earshot of the paying guests, he accosts the proprietor.

By sustaining and enjoying irony, while celebrating the beauty and value of the ngoma aesthetic, dancers unsettle the one-to-one correlation between Africanness and ngoma. Siyazi gathers agency and works against the charge

of victimhood by keeping present the multiple dimensions of contemporary Zulu identity.

He whips his new business card out of his wallet, 17 July 2009, in inner-city Johannesburg. Connect with origins: Umzansi Zulu Dance.

“We are *abelungu* [white people] these days!” he teases, knowing I don’t have a card.

“Temporary [card],” Makhumbila qualifies, for he is reworking the design.

They turn to the drum stored in the corner of the room.

“We’ve got an African drum now!” Siyazi exclaims with pride, whimsy, irony, seriousness. In preparation for an appearance on the fringe of the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, July 2009, Siyazi has ordered and purchased a new drum from Mai-mai, the inner-city market where leather workers, pharmacists, tailors, and woodworkers make and sell their Zulu wares. Cowhide heads stretched over a slice of an oil drum and tied down with leather strips make a handsome double-sided marching bass. Its sound is damper than the plastic-headed factory-manufactured equivalent.

For this second time at the annual festival, Umzansi Zulu Dancers are going for “the really African things, not mixing it with the Scotch.” The Scotch one, the manufactured one that here is associated with British military drumming, is “for the amasosha,” as opposed to the professional performing group.

He has also introduced three young women into Umzansi Zulu Dancers, deliberately not from Keates Drift.³⁰ Two are Sowetans interested in traditional dancing, the third from Pomeroy, 45 kilometers north of Keates Drift. They dance alongside the group’s men. Rather than stamping with bent knees, or raising a straightened leg only twelve to twenty-four inches high, and rather than closing a sequence with a sideways hip thrust, a swivel, a low offbeat jump, or a stamp, they stretch, kick, and cascade to the ground. Rather than contrasting gender roles in wedding and engagement performances, the three women dance in the style of ngoma’s men. Last year (middle-class, white) festival-goers questioned Siyazi on gender issues. So in this time of rights and equality he has added variation to the lineup for non-Zulu audiences. (In a hostel performance, the novelty elicits heightened exclamation when they dance, and catcalls after the performance.)

Jimmy Makhumbila is hanging with us. He praises the new drum as cultural.

“That’s how they used to do the drums—not this Scotch one,” he teaches me, parroting Siyazi.



Thokozani Kubeka, Madulaneni, 26 December 2009. PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

“But in December time, forget it!” says Siyazi, brushing away the idea with a flick of his arms. “No one can hear the sound [in that open environment]!”

Here Siyazi (with Makhumbila) asserts control over the definition of culture. The skin-headed drum is cultural and really African. He also asserts control over what forms constitute tradition: he traditionalizes the drum, but he adds women to the male ngoma form. He asserts his right to innovate to meet the expectations of a new audience. He flexibly moves in and out of Africanness. He takes pleasure in the irony that the African version is unsuitable for the very event at home that confers authenticity on the Africanness in the first place, namely the communal practice behind the staged version at the National Arts Festival.

I give DVDs to the amagoso for safekeeping and to enable access for their amasosha, and they use them for review and evaluation of their performance. Audience members ask me how to procure my DVDs. They have enjoyed

watching the event. Ngoma is beautiful. It is our culture. For the history. To remember. They ask Siyazi, where, how, how much, please. Mdo's aunty seeks me out, still in her black mourning cloak. She wants to buy one to keep for her nephew's children. One year Siyazi wants me to know that he has made a plan: he is selling dubs of my DVDs out of the back of my car at the dancing grounds.

Another year, event organizers exercise control over the ngoma space and discourse by regulating the extent of my documentary participation. At a provincially sponsored gathering at Muden, down the way from Keates Drift, 26 December 2009, they deny me permission to film. I may take photographs. Yet a local cameraman is stationed behind his spidery tripod. I had seen him before at two sponsored ngoma events, filming, always quietly filming with his compact Sony video camera. He says he is building a library, for himself, for the history, for the love of it, and this has produced a freelancing job.

By claiming heritage as pleasure, including claiming the pleasure of accumulating an archive, dancers and fans broaden the discourse that others reduce to consumption of a nostalgic past. They resist framing ngoma as a sign of victimhood, whether from poverty or violence, or relegating it to the past. On one hand, negotiations over forms of nostalgia open conversation and allow for collaboration. On the other hand, reiterations of nostalgia risk amplifying existing notions rather than producing new openings. Collaborations are gambles. They are experiments that necessitate compromise and risk failure. Ngoma's sociality intensifies this gamble, at once tightening the aesthetic tension. For if some of ngoma's cultural brokers respond to essentialized notions of the warrior and to their depoliticized fantasies of Zulu violence, the continuous reality of violence sullies these images. Romanticized images that look back on the liberation struggle can narrowly define conflict in black-and-white terms, a struggle of good and evil, just as depictions of warrior action as a form of noble strength and self-respect simplify the violent politics of history. Ngoma dancers who have lived the ghastliness of violence in its multiple forms, and who continue to experience it, are less likely to hold intact a romanticized notion of violence. It is hard work to reclaim the dignity of the warrior, and for dancers it is usually a desirable option.

28 October 2006, Vosloorus, East Rand

Khumalo Street is blockaded, but with a stage. The Gauteng Provincial Department of Sports, Arts, Culture, and Recreation, in collaboration with the



Umzansi Zulu Dancers onstage at the National Arts Festival, Grahamstown.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY TYLA NEL, CUEPIX.

Gauteng Cultural Umbimbi Organization (of which ACUMDA is a member), is commemorating peace. They aim at once to “empower cultural practitioners through capacity development.”³¹ In the early 1990s, men barricaded Khumalo Street with stones, tires, fire. Thokoza hostel, on one side of this thoroughfare, and the township on the other were at war. Ethnically inflected and state-promoted violence exacerbated the taxi wars, union struggles, student activism, housing controversies, and national politics, as they were aggravated by them (Bonner and Ndima 2009). Khumalo Street saw the worst of the transitional violence on the Rand. Now, 28 October 2006, hostel dwellers, township residents, and dancers cheer for an array of groups performing in the middle of Khumalo Street. Through a microphone, a provincial official salutes the changes. A headman and a township dignitary herald a promising future. By noon the stage stings the bare feet of troupes of dancing kids.

All the groups are traditional. A number are youth groups. Umzansi Zulu Dancers are scheduled to dance at the peak. Heritage is enunciated.

But there is no warfare on Khumalo Street.

25 December 2001, Keates Drift

Mandla Thembu, son of the struggle, is visiting Keates Drift from London. He stays at Siyazi's homestead. Seated in the kitchen, by the light of the evening cooking fire, he grips an overturned bucket between his knees like a West African djembe. He drums the ngoma beat while singing songs ("Sisi Nomvula") from *Bayekeleni*, Umzansi Zulu Dancers' first LP. He has learned to imitate the Zulu lyrics by ear.

"Weh heh!" call the mothers of the household as they dance.



Nile Zakwe, esiPongweni, 25 December 2003. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.



Makhahlela Zuma, esiPongweni, 27 December 2015. PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

/ / / **CLOSING**

Ngoma's Masculinity, South Africa's Struggle

19 July 2009, Jeppe hostel, Johannesburg

"We have assembled to wash you with the blood of goats," announces Siyazi in almost whispered prayer.¹ He crouches with others around ritual gifts placed against the back wall of Jeppe hostel's hall (a concrete basement), as if it were a homestead's *umsamo* where ancestors reside: snuff, home brew, a twitching tethered goat.² *Impepho* (herb) burns. He invites the spirits of the departed, of amasosha "who so loved dancing," to come and see the new soldiers and help them grow. He requests that they "report to our [departed] family members" and stand with them "as a unit" behind Umzansi Zulu Dancers. The group had just performed on the National Arts Festival fringe. Perhaps their two-week appearance there would prove to be generative. Perhaps this was their time. It seemed expedient to consolidate the powers in their command.

Others gathered at the *umsamo* echo Siyazi's ancestral greetings, adding their requests. "Myself, I am chair of ACUMDA," Mr. Thusi informs Umzansi Zulu Dancers' ancestors, explaining that he is also appealing to the ancestors of ACUMDA. "Umzansi Zulu Dancers must be a factory so the young men earn money from it. The kids [younger amasosha] should respect their leaders and one another. They must take dancing seriously, as if it were their firm [company]." The hostel headman, Mr. Nyandeni, hopes that the ngoma ancestors will help the dancers bring their plans to fruition, help their dreams to "come clean." Also, please guide the youth away from liquor and the green

cigarette. Mr. Mntambo, a dancer in the isishameni style, expands the pantheon of *amadlozi* upon whom they are calling, deepens its genealogy, and augments the troupe for whose well-being they seek help. “We ask all the leaders, the late Nkosi of the Mchunu people and of the Zulus, all our leaders going back to Shaka, and his successor Cetswayo, to shine light ahead of all dancers from the Mchunu chiefdom. I’m praying for all Zulu dancing, all Zulu culture, that light and luck lie ahead. Let there be firms for all Zulu culture, so that all dancers earn every month. We have no jobs. Help us all to go to Europe, and all over the world. Thank you.”

The women kneeling alongside the crouched men introduce themselves to the *amadlozi* as supporters of Umzansi Zulu Dancers and take their turn. “Remember where you’re from and what you left behind,” Ntombintombi urges the ancestors. “There must be light all over that for which the dancers are searching. Even when they tour they must discover that you have been ahead of them, cleaning things for them.”

“All gates must be open,” adds Ma Buthelezi, “for if luck comes, all our kids will be happy. They won’t think these leaders [you, *amadlozi*] are just playing around with us.”

The dancers slaughter and clean the goat. They set out the lacy stomach lining, a cup of rich blood, the precious gallbladder, and delectable tidbits alongside the snuff and beer for their ancestral guests. Ntombintombi, Ma Buthelezi, and their women friends preside over giant pots of steaming rice, bubbling chicken, and stewing goat, for this afternoon all are welcome to Umzansi Zulu Dancers’ Jeppe hostel performance. A propitious feeling has prompted the dancers to draw on their ancestral resources and at the same time to throw a party, to include their media connections.³

If entrepreneurs seek connection to an unattainable past, treating it as timeless, dancers reach for a generational and recent past and through ritual enact it as a past continuous. That is, they call the spirits of departed dancers, friends, family, and clans into their present. Like entrepreneurs, dancers hedge their bets, drawing on whatever resources seem potentially enabling.

In seeking connection to these pasts, artists also search for an intimate place. After prayers to the ancestors, guests gather and the party begins. In Jeppe hostel’s basement hall, song and exclamation burst and wane over the abundant speeches that ceremonialize Umzansi Zulu Dancers’ performance. The smack of stamping feet bounces off the concrete. Through the afternoon, song, clapping, and whistling of men having fun reverberate. On a bulbous

TV screen duct-taped together and propped on a bench to the side, the 1999 Christmas Day DVD plays casually during the proceedings.⁴ Zama, Mkhumbuleni, Mbono, and others are glued to the screen. Through gray blues, white streaks, flashes, the jitter of distorted images, Zama sees his departed brother. Call Khetho to come and see Vusi! (See the swivel of his foot to the percussive click of his tongue, his torso stretching and twisting to the song.) See Mhlonishwa, Mdo, now Mthetho, Bafana (see his breath expelled, the heaving of a dancer having danced). Bonaliphi takes a turn—there's young Sono and Umfan'omnyama . . . how Falakhe danced! (Feel his soldier's ulaka said to reside in the throat, audible in the vocal qualities of Zulu ngoma singing.) Zama asks me for DVD copies, to have, each for himself.

In the wrecked utopia of Johannesburg, in Jeppe hostel's sameness fifteen years after the transition, in a basement amid broken furniture stacked to the ceiling and shoved against the wall where tattered posters of Buthelezi from the last IFP campaign peel from their place, swirling here, are representations of various pasts brought into awareness and retangled through the practices of ngoma. Noisy management of ngoma—sustaining the sweetness of its pleasures while brokering the warrior body in the presence of violent histories—is a form of masculine resolve. Perhaps it is a form of resistance, however deferred.

In their improvisations, singer-dancers of the subward esiPongweni within the ward Utuli lweZulu of the Mchunu chiefdom tell one history of South Africa's struggle during apartheid and through the transition to the first decades of a democratic dispensation. It is a history sung with the feet, voiced by men on the move, working to participate in a new South Africa that is still unfolding.

By experimenting, risking, and playing through the sense and feeling of ngoma, warrior-workers creatively manage tough circumstances and cultivate the sociality of respectable men. Sometimes they redirect action, working to keep an expansive sense of agency. Their trajectory from the 1980s to the present represents many South Africans, whose precarious becoming and unbecoming is matched—and measured—by their steadfast commitment, put on display on the global stage, in the studio, in the street, and at home. The dynamics of violence thread through ngoma's politics, aesthetics, and mediation, and they assemble in singular performances as a masculine resource. The global commodification of ngoma is never far from the pleasures of participation, even in the dance arena on Christmas Day at home. The history of violent politics, the politics of violent history, and masculine

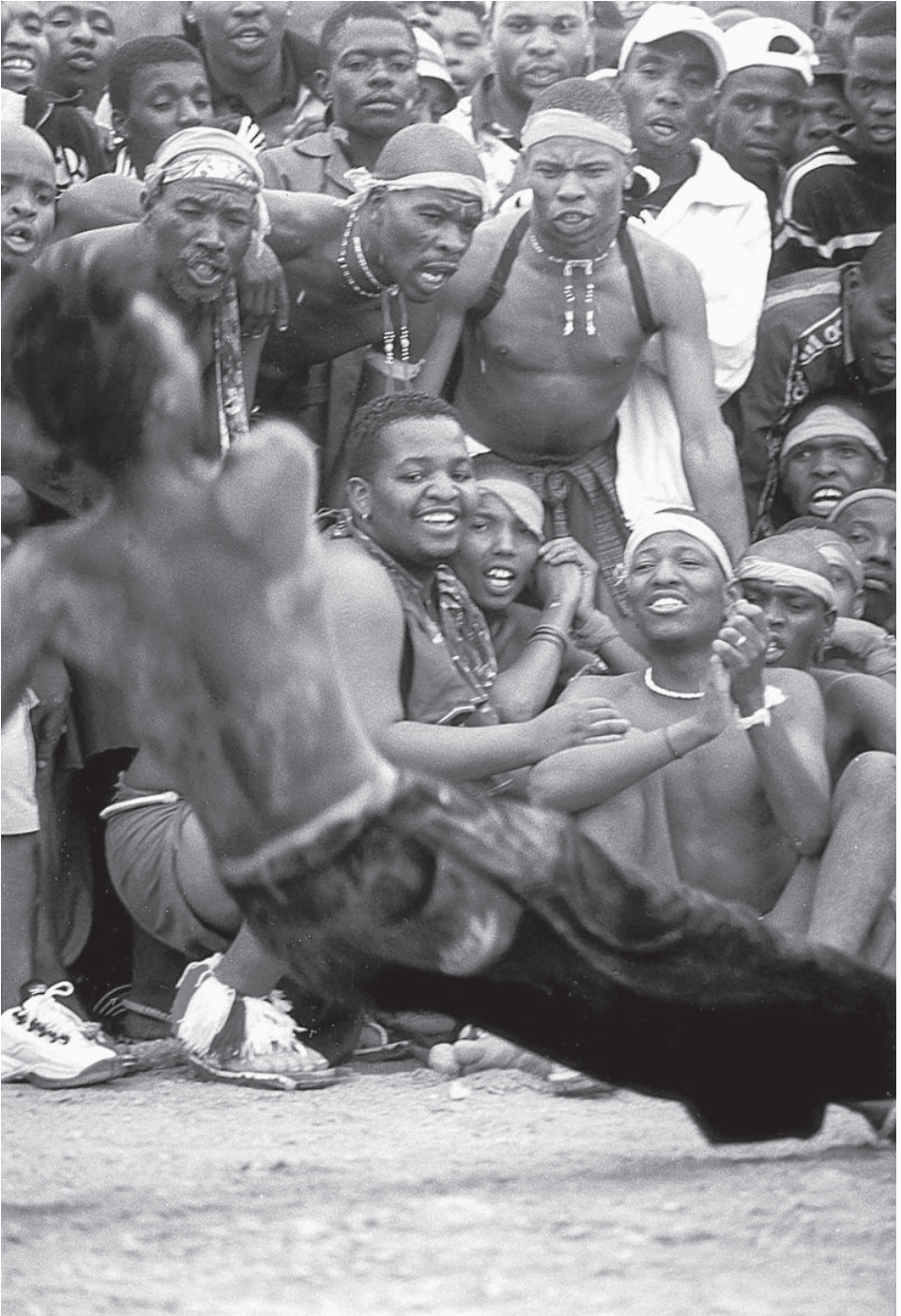


EsiPongweni, 26 December 2008. FROM VIDEO TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR.

affect are conjoined with ngoma aesthetics. The popularized narratives of music and dance as redemptive or resistant tell but a fraction of the story of the nuanced roles that ngoma song and dance play in social life, that ambiguity plays in the mediated and often violent world of singer-dancers and their fans, that grace plays in struggle.

25 December 2009, esiPongweni

Song ends. Dusty amasosha disband. The crowd encircling the arena dissipates at the end of the day. Amasosha greet, mingle, quench their thirst, then amble up the road. Ntibane shouts. He whistles through his teeth, yells again to Mbusiseni and Phindo farther along the way. (They half-wait for him.) Makhahlela's cascading commentary rings out from the pathway to Ma Nxele already at home on the hillside. A teasing retort from a girl echoes the boast that provoked her. A spray of laughter. Chatter. The sonic wash of the wind caresses the intimacies it carries, intimacies of neighbors and families, suitors and friends, amasosha, brothers. In the darkening, a cowbell jangles. Bandages, unfurled, trail.



The team supports Muleki Mdlalose, esiPongweni, 25 December 1992.
PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

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NOTES

Introduction

1. The countless examples include “Day of the Zulu” (an episode in the *Secrets of the Dead* PBS television series, 2002), *Shaka Zulu* (a television miniseries [Faure 1986]), *Zulu Dawn* (Hickox 1979), *Zulu* (Endfield 1964), and dramatized Anglo-Zulu War battles (see Carton and Draper 2009; Hamilton 1998). Zulus (and stand-ins for Zulus) appeared in hyperperformative roles on British, European, and North American stages and in the circus through the nineteenth century (Lindfors 1999). Hong Kong’s crack police unit, the Z Platoon or Zulu Platoon, most likely takes its name from a U.S. Navy SEAL unit that was deployed during the Vietnam War (Stolfi 2002). The Zulu are also appropriated in a celebratory spirit. For example, rapper Afrika Bambaataa’s Universal Zulu Nation championed Zulu defiance, and the New Orleans Mardi Gras Zulu float makes much of regal excess.

2. Gray (2013) calls attention to the entanglement of form, embodiment, and history by articulating fado as genre, distinct from the idea of a genre that compels descriptive contextualization of a musical form. Whether emphasizing narrative circulation (e.g., Sumera 2013), trauma and recuperation (Pilzer 2012), memory and its elision (Schwartz 2012), or propaganda and instrumentalization (McCoy 2009), analyses of music and violence hinge on the visceral experience and the altered (usually heightened) affect violence and sound each provoke. These studies confront questions of uncertainty, whether that uncertainty is due to methodological limitations, semiotic polysemy, the aura of art, unpredictability of mediated reception, or skepticism over the veracity of narratives about violence. Donham (2011, 195) cautions against “succumbing to the apparent certainties” of stories about violence as a form of data; stories hold truth values for those who tell them, though such values may be opaque and ambiguous. Larasati (2013) reminds us that violent histories can lie beneath the surface of forms of beauty seemingly divorced from it, and Nelson (2008) presents artists using that beauty to remember violent pasts.

3. Beginning in 1846, the British administrators of the Natal colony set arid land aside, mostly on its borders, as communal African land, securing the remainder of the colony for the Crown and commercial agriculture (Ballard 1989). Mthembu (1994) chronicles the demarcation of Msinga as a reserve.

4. Zulu history, especially its nineteenth-century military history, is richly documented and fiercely debated. In summarizing Msinga's labor and conflict histories, I draw from Beinart (1992), Carton (2000), Carton, Laband, and Sithole (2009), Guest (1989), and McClendon (2002).

5. Located between the towns of Colenso, Weenen, and Tugela Ferry, Msinga is a magisterial district that lies within the Uthukela and Mzinyathi District Municipalities (Cousins and Hornby 2009). The chiefdoms are Emachunwini, Emabomvini, Emathenjini, KwaMabaso, KwaMajozi, and Engome.

6. EsiPongweni, Okalweni, Emvundlweni, Ethengela, and Esihlabeni.

7. I take this demographic description directly from Cousins and Hornby (2009), who provide the following statistics: 42 percent of the population is five to twenty years of age, as is the national average; 64 percent have lived in the area ten years or longer; 54.24 percent of the population is female, 45.76 percent male; 68 percent is illiterate. Trade and commerce account for 11 percent of economic activity (centered in the two largest towns of Tugela Ferry and Pomeroy, followed by Keates Drift), farming for 18 percent, and manufacturing and construction for 10 percent. As they note, this is a low level of productive economic activity. Cattle are the most important livestock. The number owned ranges with the prosperity of the household from none to a small herd. Most households own between ten and twenty cattle. Neil Alcock and Creina Alcock, "January/February 1981: A Very Curious Omission," Capfarm Trust Report (in "All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters" 2016), offers details about marijuana growing.

8. This poverty line is calculated per person per month. The real 2015 value is US\$136 per month, converted using purchasing power parity rather than exchange rate. My thanks to Katharine Hall for providing these figures.

9. This figure excludes adults over fifteen years who are not economically active (for example, students and pensioners) and is extracted from the 2011 Census by Katharine Hall (pers.com., 28 November 2016).

10. Mandla Thembu (pseudonym), fax to Siyazi, 1999, quoted with Siyazi's permission.

11. Johnny Clegg, thirty-year retrospective show, 17 December 2010, Emperor's Palace, Kempton Park; reproduced on DVD of a similar concert (Clegg 2007).

12. Laband (2009) makes the provocative suggestion that if a southern African people should have earned the reputation of successful warriorhood, it would more appropriately be the Sotho, who adapted to colonial styles of warfare and secured their independent kingdom, Lesotho. I contend along with Laband that it is the particular kind of performative quality of the Zulu warrior that secured his representation as a fighter over his Sotho neighbors.

13. Laband (2009) details how Shaka exploited the system to expand his dominion and his control over his subjects by cultivating their loyalty to the Zulu kingdom

over that to their local chiefdoms. Key to his ruling strategy were fostering regimental obligations (through booty portions) and consolidating regimental functions and living quarters in barracks that fell under royal management. Laband also elaborates on how the amabutho operated as an economic system.

14. Debates about Zulu colonial history and Shaka's *mfecane* (crushing) are revisited in Hamilton (1995). See also Laband and Thompson (1989) and Hamilton (1998). Prior to Shaka, the Zulu were but a minor clan caught up in a three-way struggle for land with the Ndwandwe and the Mthethwa (Whitelaw 2009).

15. Umzansi Zulu Dancers' Amended Constitution, 20 August 2005. Capitalizations in the original.

16. The *isicathamiya* Zulu men's choral tradition researched by Erlmann (1996) shares much with Zulu ngoma in terms of its networks, practices, and places and the communities from which it draws participants. Ngoma tends to draw more traditionalists, *isicathamiya* more Christians.

17. Ngoma also refers to therapeutic practices across the Bantu-speaking region of Africa. The shared characteristic seems to be the use of drumming. In Bantu languages, ngoma refers to the drum. (In Zulu, and more widely, *isangoma* is a healer.) Not all Zulu secular dance ngoma styles use the drum, but my contention is that they are the exception to the rule. Janzen (2000) details ngoma as a healing practice, including its variations across the subcontinent and the linguistic roots, and Van Dijk, Reis, and Spierenburg (2000) examine the social productivity of such ngoma healing and divination practices.

18. Large employers (such as mine owners, Durban manufacturing companies, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) organized dance competitions at least as early as 1921 (Erlmann 1991b). Badenhorst and Mather (1997) give some history of tribal dancing in the mines in the 1940s and 1950s. Donham (2011) summarizes this spotty history of competitive dancing to consider its legacy in a conflict that erupted among miners at a gold mine in 1994. Citing Tracey (1952), he brings attention to the active investment of white mine management in promoting ethnic distinction through dancing competitions. Erlmann (1991b) documents how Durban ngoma dancers, members of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union, were read as militant and feared as potentially violent. As a consequence, they were regulated through rules set by white mining officials in the 1930s. Erlmann argues that this was a form of "domestication" that turned a popular oppositional form into a tourist attraction. La Hausse (1984), cited by Marks (1989), suggests that one reason for the "faction fighting" associated with ngoma in the 1930s in Durban was competition over jobs. He also writes that ngoma was linked to Durban's criminal gangs, though Erlmann qualifies this point, suggesting the two groups may have shared more in dress and organization than in criminal activity. Carton and Morrell (2012) entwine ngoma's history with that of the martial art of stick fighting, which they track back to the late nineteenth century. Like ngoma did later, stick fighting came under anxious scrutiny and regulation, here by the authorities of the Natal colony. Moodie (1994) offers a social history of migrant mine labor, providing context for the dancing, though his text does not engage with performance. Concerning the expressive culture

of migrant laborers, three key music ethnographies of South African migrant labor inform this study. Erlmann's (1996) study of Zulu *isicathamiya* choral practice complicates the distinction between rural and urban space and identifies performance as playing a key role in carving out autonomous migrant social spaces. Coplan's (1994) analysis of Sotho migrant men's praise poetry, *sifela*, shows how eloquence is an achievement that is learned, practiced, and shaped by tough migrant experience. Pedi women domestic workers in James's (1999) study cultivate support networks through collaborative and pleasurable performance groups.

19. Postapartheid, some hostels have been transformed into family housing, though most are still men's residences. Women's hostels were also instituted during apartheid.

20. Erlmann (1991b, 95) also lists *isikhuze*, *isicathulo*, *ukukhomikha*, isiZulu, and isiBhaca as Zulu ngoma substyles. He describes isiBhaca as the dance that became known as "gumboot" dance (100). The isiBhaca to which the umzansi dancers I know refer is different from gumboot dancing. In naming only three substyles above, I follow the practice of these umzansi dancers. As Erlmann (1991b, 101) notes, umzansi is often referred to interchangeably with isiZulu or *indlamu*. Clegg differentiates the three Zulu styles by their kicking as follows. Isishameni dancers hold their bodies upright, stamping the right foot on the same spot "like a hammer." IsiBhaca dancers, when raising their bent legs, direct their knees into their armpits. Clegg identifies the name as onomatopoeic for the sound of the kneecap popping in the armpit's hollow. To build up for umzansi's high kick, dancers make dramatic use of horizontal space (Clegg, stage banter, Thirty Year Retrospective with Savuka, 17 December 2010, Emperor's Palace, Kempton Park).

21. Ngoma is a men's style, to which women's song and dance styles at Keates Drift show some similarities. Girls' singing and dancing is the highlight of *omemulo* and *okuqoma* (nubility rites). Singing solo calls and choral responses, they dance in a line, taking turns to step forward to solo. Weddings feature the singing and dancing of the bride and her unmarried friends. As at *omemulo*, women's dancing emphasizes footwork and stamping, with bent knee raised no higher than the hip. Women past childbearing age dance occasionally ceremoniously—for example, in welcoming dignitaries. Women of all ages of course dance informally, socializing at the homestead out of the presence of men. Those who attend church perform in collective worship, whether within apostolic, Zionist Christian Church, Shembe, or a range of other denominations.

22. Herding is likewise a training ground for BaSotho youths, who acquire the arts that underlie migrant praise poetry (Coplan 1994), and for Xhosa youths, who learn honor through stick fighting (Mayer and Mayer 1970).

23. Masculine sensibilities are shaped in relation to changing ideas about womanhood and to aesthetic expression of the feminine. I focus on ngoma masculinity as voiced and danced by men themselves. It is in the participating gaze of both men and women, youthful and older, experts and fans that these performers cocreate their art.

24. Studies of South African migrant and working-class male expressive practices suggest that performance (music, dance, oratory) is perhaps especially critical to the

formation and expression of changing masculinities in circumstances of oppression (Ballantine 2000; Brown 1998; Clegg 1982, 1984; Coplan 1994; Erlmann 1991a, 1996; Gunner 2010, 2014; Haupt 2001; Olsen 2014; Opland 1984; Qabula et al. 1986; Reynolds 1998). These studies show how men debated ideas about authority, competence, and respectability through the creative process in emasculating apartheid circumstances. Of necessity, men improvised and reworked their positions in the course of managing the improbability of freedom and equal rights during the apartheid era with its ever-intensifying and changing forms of regulation and oppression; male performance genres offered an arena for expression that was under their control. My focus lies in men's expressive forms, but these dynamics were not exclusive to men. James's (1999) ethnography considering the performance practices of Pedi women migrants offers a corollary. Gunner (1979) examines women's composition and performance of a predominantly male genre, praise poetry. Impey (n.d.) details women's displacement and migrant paths after forced removal from ancestral lands in northern KwaZulu-Natal, as expressed in their narrative and song. Steingo's (2016) ethnography of kwaito music shifts the focus to the "Born Frees," the generation who did not experience the struggle and for whom there is little promise of work.

25. The inclusion of gay rights in the nation's constitution and activism has opened new space for public discourse on genders and sexualities, and with this, new masculinity scholarship, largely oriented around urban ways of being (Donham 1998; Reid and Walker 2005).

26. In Feld's (1996a) analysis of the circulation of "pygmy" musical sounds, the increasing distance between the form of the original and of the copies of copies leads him to ask when and how the BaYaka and BaMbuti get to talk back to the copies and those who make them.

27. Clegg (1984) and Thomas (1988) further detail the organization of ngoma dance teams.

28. All dancers sing. I refer to team members as dancers, as they refer to themselves, rather than singer-dancers. Not all voices are equal: participants of course make distinctions among singing voices. To Mbusiseni, Zabiwe's voice is golden. (He strokes his throat while praising his leader's vocal projection.)

29. An understanding of the inextricability of song and dance in performance and with regard to the concept of music itself is foundational in African music scholarship. Bebey (1975), Blacking (1967), Chernoff (1979), Jones (1959), Keil (1979), Merriam (1982), and Nketia (1974) are some classic articulations of this relationship. In articulating song as "danced speech," Lomax (1968, 222) proposed that the metrics of song were drawn from the body rhythms of dance that in turn stylized the body movement of ordinary activities. In this way he roots song style in a thoroughly social and moving body.

30. In other words, by loosening the inefaceable relationship between body and voice, I want to suggest that "embodiment" is not simply the "grain" of the voice fleshed out (Barthes 1977). My starting point is Porcello's (2012) explanation of why the easy presumption that "grain" refers (only) to timbral qualities is a misreading of Barthes. Harkness (2014) subsequently discusses the point.

31. I take inspiration from Lefevbre's (2004) space/time concept that encapsulates the interplay between time and space, not only their sometimes and temporary congealment. The interplay can be uneasy and incoherent. Lefevbre looks for qualitative differences and disruptions between time and space to discern what is at stake, that is, to articulate the politics of place. Migrancy is a space/time.

32. Here I articulate a position developed by Feld and Fox (1994), Feld (1996a, 1996b), and Feld et al. (2004) as "vocal anthropology," taken in a historical direction by Weidman (2006), into affective politics by Gray (2013), and colonial and nation-building sensory politics by Ochoa Gautier (2014). Faudree (2012) offers an overview. Adriane Cavarero (2005) mirrors vocal anthropology in her argument about the uniqueness of the voice. The uniqueness of a voice is essential to its politics. Without singularity, that voice has no materiality. Without materiality, the voice has no politics, that is, no mobilizing import in the world. In effect, without materiality, the voice is reduced to a metaphor. A prevalent turn in ethnomusicology describes the voice as embodied in order to mark musical performance as sensory and affective, or in an effort to bring attention to the fact that musical expression is material. This usage glosses over the polyphonic relationship between the (moving) body and the voice. It also sometimes backgrounds the sociality of vocalizing by foregrounding individual bodily experience or by generalizing embodiment in the figure of the universal listener. Music scholarship focusing on the technical experience of playing points to an intricate (and polyphonic) relationship among the performer's body, the crafting of a performance, and the experience of her or his musical voice: the hands' dance on a keyboard (Berliner n.d.; Gillan 2013; Sudnow 1978); the full-body experience of acoustic feedback (Baily 1995; Berliner [1978] 1990; Chapman 2005); the kinetically gestured interpretation of sung melodies by head, arm, hand, or fingers (Rahaim 2012).

33. Samuels (2004) argues that the ambiguity of indexical relations enables affective play with histories and contradictory everyday experiences that produce "cultural identities."

34. In country music, voice is bound to the word, but it also exceeds it (Fox 2004). By talking playfully about song (using rich reported speech, musical citation, and prosodics), country musicians and fans find ways of relating that are summarized in country music. The process of summarizing is at once a process of expansion in which songs become lived, voices debated, and ideas felt.

35. In profiling three artists, Feld (2012) presents their voices in dialogue with his and with others, close and far, thereby placing emphasis on the sociality of listening as integral to vocalizing. He draws attention to the potential of experimental maneuvering enabled by the interplay of political, spiritual, and musical processes for the musicians about whom he writes. Here, in a perfectly performed moment, voice exceeds the word. Wedded to politics as it is to the word, voice at once also exceeds politics, whether identity politics or other forms of struggle.

36. Here I combine ideas from studies of circulation that consider the violence of representation (Bishara 2013; Feld 1996a; Feld and Kirkegaard 2010; Feldman 1994; Gürsel 2012; Malkki 1997) with others that argue for circulation not as an after-the-

fact channel of distribution but as formative of the ideas that circulate. Circulation coupled with feedback is a site of culture (Lee and LiPuma 2002; Novak 2013). Cusick (2006), Daniel (1996), Feldman (1994), and Whitehead (2004b), among others, consider the circulation of poetic representations of violence in relation to injury itself. One challenge lies in inserting into close aesthetic analysis a perspective on violence that has temporality. When a sense of a continuous state of Zulu warriorhood repeatedly storied into a bellicose essence feeds back into ngoma practice, the history of violence as a series of sporadic events that are produced by multiscale geopolitics is obscured.

37. In studies of music and politics, scholars have approached silence most readily as a sign of censorship (Baily 2001; Davis 2005; Drewett and Cloonan 2006; Korpe 2004) or as symptomatic of trauma (Johnson 2011; Lafreniere 2000; Trezise 2001), in other words, as an absence. Scholars have paid less attention to ways that silence might be a necessary or likely condition that enables some semblance of social life to continue (Ochoa Gautier 2014, 2015) or to its role in the affective politics of listening (Gray 2013), that is, not as an absence but as a sign of intense presence (Schwartz 2012).

38. Feld ([1982] 2012) turns from an earlier emphasis on dialogism and dialogic editing to polyphony, that is, to covocalizing, an intimate intervocalizing in a relational space together—a space that coevolves with the vocalizing—rather than on call and response with accumulating feedback that shifts the terms of the conversation, approached as a form of negotiation.

39. Blau and Keil's collaborations are inspirational (Keil, Keil, and Blau 1992; Keil and Vellou 2002). Hoffman (2011) and Guilbault (2014) experiment similarly.

40. Steve Feld's formulation, for which I am grateful.

41. With low-light, black-and-white images in which the action does not rush out of the frame, Lemon (2010) captures the contrasting performance style and temporality of suited migrant men's late-night fashion competitions in hostels (Lundelin 2001, 71–73).

42. Laban notation in Lewis's (1992) appendix represents capoeira's flow.

43. Since Mead and Bateson ([1942] 1962) there has been curiously little exploitation of the screen shot in dance ethnographies. Noting the absence of the body in dance studies prior to the 1970s, when the focus lay rather on documenting choreographies and historicizing and contextualizing performances, Hahn (2007) remarks that the development of video technology transformed dance scholarship. Like the sound recording, video enables the documentation of extensive performances; repeated viewing (including at reduced speeds) facilitates close analysis of body movements. (Hahn suggests that the expense of film limited its use.) Yet, with the exception of Rahaim (2012), few written ethnographies that draw on extensive use of video in the field have carried their work method through onto the analytic page. Video has been essential to this study.

44. Imagining and acting is Steingo's (2016) formulation, discussing Rancière.

45. When working with Banning Eyre on a program about Zulu music for the radio show *Afropop* ("The Zulu Factor," *Afropop Worldwide*, <http://www.afropop.org/wp>

/6406/the-zulu-factor/) I recommended broadcasting a song about AIDS recorded by Umzansi Zulu Dancers. “I understand why you chose that one,” Siyazi said. “I hope listeners will go and find the other kinds of songs we sing as well.”

1. Turning to Be Kissed

1. Siyazi transcribed and we translated this section from a performance I recorded. Subsequent performance descriptions were similarly derived.

2. Intracommunity ngoma events specific to an isigodi (subward) take place on 25 December, a public holiday. (Christian associations are irrelevant.) Between Christmas and New Year, intercommunity events involving multiple teams happen.

3. Lead: *Sibona thina sibon'inkanyezi / Sibona kancane*. Chorus: *Sibon' inkanyezi / Sibona nabafana abancane baseJemistoni inhliziyoyami imhlophe ithe qwa*. Subsequent songs appear only in translation.

4. With regard to dialogics, I am thinking of Bakhtin's legacy in the musical work of Feld (2012), Gray (2013), and Ninoshvili (2011), and of Butler's in Duncan (2004), Jarman-Ivens (2007), and Johnson (2003), for example.

5. Ngoma and courting are also coupled in other practices. When boys travel the region to dance at *ukuqoma* parties (rites of passage signaling that a girl has chosen a lover or is eligible to do so), weddings, and other ritual events, they also court (Henderson 2011). Ngoma dancing often forms the centerpiece of *amapasi* (men's engagement parties). Likewise, at some weddings, ngoma dancers provide entertainment.

6. “Ibhanoyi,” composed by Siyazi Zulu and Moses Nzuzza (Umzansi 1994). Women travel mostly on foot, in minivan taxis, or on the back of pickup trucks. They usually cook on gas rings or open fires. Electricity was installed in homesteads at the furthest reaches of esiPongweni only in December 2013, twenty years into the new dispensation. For most people it is too expensive for cooking.

7. Market stresses have prompted change. A father customarily pays bride price on his son's behalf, but with intermittent earnings, Siyazi expects his son to contribute. He also wants proof that his son is capable of supporting a family before he marries.

8. Theophilis Shepstone, the colony of Natal's diplomatic agent to the native tribes who conceived of the location system and implemented the policy, moved nearly eighty thousand Africans into the colony's reserves in 1846 and 1847 (Ballard 1989).

9. In 1948, the Afrikaner Nationalists came to power and concocted the Bantu homelands as a cornerstone of apartheid policy. KwaZulu was one such homeland, comprising disparate portions of land north of the Tugela River. Like other homelands, it had a legislative assembly (from 1977); unlike other major homelands, KwaZulu refused faux independence.

10. Agricultural encroachment was especially intense through the 1920s and 1930s; an east coast fever outbreak of 1909 (Laband and Thompson 1989) and locust scourges around the twentieth century's turn are infamous.

11. Migrancy transformed the reserve (Harries 1993; La Hausse de Lalouvière 2009; Wright 2009).

12. The change in state policy (1960) left full-time employees as the only legal

residents on white farmland. When evictions in the Weenen area bordering Msinga began in 1969 (continuing into the early 1980s), twenty thousand people were moved off white farms (Afra Newsletter 14, 1991; Capfarm Trust Report, April 1982; both found in “All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016).

13. Bonner and Ndima (2009) conducted interviews around Nqutu, north of Msinga, but their observations hold more broadly.

14. Construing Africans as expendable, industries referred to retrenched workers in the 1970s as “eliminated units” (Capfarm Trust Report, May 1977, in “All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016).

15. The abolition of influx control in 1986 contributed to the hostels’ disorderliness. (The state’s influx control policies regulated migration to urban areas, where only employed Africans were legal.) Urban violence of the late 1980s and transitional period also played a role in disrupting hostel orderliness. Vast numbers of Zulu women sought refuge inside hostels from the violence. Competition over girlfriends among youths exacerbated existing generational conflicts (Bonner and Ndima 2009). Bonner and Ndima quote a hostel dweller saying that the “youth were no longer submissive” and that they “dictated to elders, especially over war issues” (2009, 377). The fighting produced alternative structures of authority in the hostel system, as “*izinduna* organized regiments, *amabutho*, and collected financial levies to buy guns, displacing the command structure of elders and *isibonda* in the hostels” (377).

16. Gunner and Gwala document a chanted group response during *ukugiya* performances (celebratory praise/dance) as “jibilibilibili!” translating it as “It qui-uu-ivered!” (1991, 230–31). This follows the call “Igaz’lethu! [Our blood!]” and is accompanied by fast rhythmic clapping. “Biki biki biki!” may derive from this. Ngubane glosses bikibiki as “anything of shaky and quivering nature such as jelly” (1977, 60). Siyazi equated the word with Afrikaans *bietjie*, meaning “a little.” Whichever is taken as authoritative, the taunt is one that diminishes the opponent.

17. Once studies of aesthetic coherence had argued for the significance of art forms to the production of forms of power, linking symbolic form and social practice through performance (e.g., Blacking 1973; Becker and Becker 1981; Feld [1982] 2012; Seeger 1987), scholars could draw on phenomenological and feminist thinking to carry the study of musical significance into the diffuse world of sense and into the experience of the body (e.g., Feld 1996b; Stoller 1997; Porcello 1998; Kapchan 2007; Spiller 2010; Gray 2013; and in another vein Moreno 1999), subsequently ethnographically finessing features of difference including gender.

18. “Iqhude,” composed by S. Zulu and M. Nzuzza (Umzansi 1994).

19. Lwabadla uhlupho and Siyazi were dancing at esiPongweni, 28 December 2000.

20. Sound includes voice, drum, team clapping, the dancers’ stamping, vocal interjections, the metal whistle, the wind.

21. The offbeat ending is a 1970s innovation. The exclamation “ji!” began as “Hhash!,” “an ideophone referring to a mistake or an unfortunate occurrence.” Clegg (2005, 31) ascribes this innovation to the dancer Mtiya Zakwe, who introduced the offbeat ending for comic effect. Subsequent dancers adopted it for the improvisational possibilities it offered.

22. Polygamy is a traditional practice.

23. When age-mates dance *isidabulo* (as a self-choreographed subgroup), the team chants the name of one dancer, or they simply clap. *Siyazi* designates praise names as “nicknames” in English, marking their lesser weight relative to practices of chiefly praise.

24. In addition to terms of endearment, women tend to be addressed and referred to by names that mark their status as daughters and mothers, or they are addressed by their marital status, for example, *makoti* (bride to be), *inkosazana* (unmarried woman), or *inkosikazi* (married woman).

25. This version is part of the praise on “Bewukhala” (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 1997).

26. All praise names listed are of members of esiPongweni’s team. Tonal differences that distinguish second- and third-person singular are indistinct in group chanting, sometimes addressing an opponent, sometimes the dancer.

27. Erlmann (1991a) makes the important point that demonstrating competence in performance about Zuluness is part of identity production. I specify his idea further.

28. In a comparable case, Tatro (2014) shows how Mexico City’s working-class punk youths approach performance as affective labor: while presenting an ethos of hard work onstage, offstage musicians and fans create alternative forms of collective self-sufficiency in a depressed labor market.

29. How ngoma valorizes hard work is particular to South African history, though it shares this general quality with pugilistic vocations and pain-riding sports (Smith 2014; Wacquant 2004).

30. “Ifa,” composed by S. Zulu (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 1998).

31. “Ibhanoyi” (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 1998).

2. The Unwavering Voice

1. James Brown’s scream is an example of a falsetto growl. Jenny Woodruff assisted in my understanding of vocal techniques.

2. *Nti* (ideophone), stinging, pricking. It is repeated for emphasis. Literal translation: “You have said ntintinti!” In other words, “You have been badly stung (by us).”

3. Berglund presents both kinds of anger as categories of affect in Zulu “thought patterns” ([1976] 1989, 254–58).

4. Mthokozisi Mazibuko, personal communication, 20 May 2008, Durham, NC. A quality named anger arises in analyses of masculinity situated around the world. Ethnographic work in Oceania has especially prompted the discussion of anger as propriety (Brenneis and Myers 1984; Gerber 1985; Kulick 1998; Rosaldo 1989; Schieffelin 1976). It is an ethical component of masculine vitality that solicits forms of reciprocity and resolution (Feld [1982] 2012; Schieffelin 1976). The angry voice is considered in hard rock, punk, and heavy metal analyses (Purcell 2003; Tsai et al. 2010; Walser 1993), in dub and hip-hop (Collinson 2007), and in pop (Michelsen 2012). With the caution against interpreting (male) stridence necessarily as a sign of anger, these analyses variously demonstrate that “anger” does not necessarily indicate an identical affect cross-culturally or historically.

5. *Ilaka* is the soft palate (Berglund [1976] 1989) or *uvula* (Doke et al. 1990).

6. Henceforth lyrics appear only in translation.

7. As identified and named in classical voice pedagogy, the *passaggi* or bridge points are the two points in the voice where a singer shifts (1) from the chest register and (2) into the head register. Between these two points is a bridge zone. These points are physiologically difficult to negotiate smoothly, and it is difficult to produce a resonant powerful tone in the zone between them. The bridge points occur on about the pitches of F or F-sharp and A or B-flat for many men. Zabiwe's sustained notes at the tops of his high phrases are pitched around A or B-flat. His phrase that drops down into the middle of his chest register circulates at about an F-sharp.

8. Classical vocal pedagogy criticizes this as singing that borders on a yell, that "must surely induce physical conflict" (Miller 2004, 152), that can be "so intense that it almost hurt my ears" (Boytim 2003, 62).

9. While preparing for a dance, during lulls in a dance event (usually at the beginnings and ends of sets), and during set breaks, any dancer can initiate a song. These are opportunities for dancers to showcase and develop their voices. There are also singing occasions outside of ngoma practice for developing lead singer qualities.

10. Singers refer to this excess of air caused by a burst of air pressure as "pressing." When the vocal cords are brought together "with excessive muscular effort," it requires a lot of air pressure to force them apart and get them vibrating. "This results in a forced, shouty quality to the voice, and is very tiring for the singer" (Mason 2016).

11. In 2006 Ntibane moved from esiPongweni. The team elected Mphiliseni as his replacement.

12. In presenting this view, I am not supporting the Jamesian theory of emotions in which mind and body, rationality and feeling are dichotomized, in which emotion is an unarticulated "force within us, filling up and spilling over" (Solomon 1984), and in which emotion is an inner feeling separable from its interpretation. I follow Robert Solomon's position that an "emotion is a system of concepts, beliefs, attitudes, and desires, virtually all of which are context-bound, historically developed, and culture-specific (which is not to foreclose the probability that some emotions may be specific to *all* cultures)" (1984, 249, emphasis in original). It is Zulu men themselves who conceive of a responsible form of anger that has the capacity to turn. I extend Solomon's identification of anger as an emotion to consider it as an affect.

13. In a personal communication, February 2002, dancer Mcabango Zakwe described the backward fall this way, using the verbs *ukuchitha* (toss out), *ukuphalaza* (vomit), and *ukuhlanza* (throw away). Johnny Clegg offers an alternate interpretation: "The off beat [of the final kick] is the killing blow that you might use against an opponent. In killing him you might fall back and show how he has fallen from your blow. You switch identities in the dance, that's another thing you've got to watch, and when you fall back you might actually be saying 'that's what you're going to feel from me if I really get my hands on you, you're going to feel that off beat blow,' which in translation of a real situation would be a kind of blow that is unexpected, in other words, 'I'm full of tricks, I'm full of ideas in relation to the fight, you know, and when I fall down I might even point to you!'" (1984, 68).

14. "The off-beat becomes the supreme moment of unexpected termination of the

dance with a heroic and dramatic fall. . . . Innovative competitive dancing stresses the ability to end dramatically with an off-beat. This means that the dancer has to build his kick stamps into a pattern, which sets him up for a dramatic end. He must do this in an unobvious way. The final beat is ‘ambushed’ (*ukuzuma ibhidi*) unexpectedly and the onlookers are happy with this unanticipated ending. . . . The dancer must use subterfuge like pretending to walk away in the middle of a performance only to quickly turn and end on an off-beat. He may sit or lie down or kneel and signal with hand gestures to the crowd taking their attention away from the next and final kick stamp. Thus the off-beat has become the most dramatic way a dancer can end his performance and at the same time using surprise and other ruses, set himself up for a heroic and aesthetically challenging ending” (Clegg 2005, 31).

15. In conducting workshops in the San Francisco Bay area, Siyazi refused to teach newcomers how to fall. Instead he ended his choreography for them in a standing position. He feared they would hurt themselves otherwise.

16. This practice is part of a cosmology in which *muthi* plays a role in health and well-being. For example, when Mbusiseni injured his knee, he soon abandoned the hospital advice and curative measures to focus on the advice and medication proffered by a *sangoma*, a traditional healer. He regarded the fact of getting injured as a sign of discontent within his ancestral lineage, a discontent he was not yet able to explain.

17. Berglund ([1976] 1989) identifies three channels of power available to traditionally centered Zulu people: power associated with God; power inherent (to men) in a lineage or clan; and power found in material substances, used as medicines. Berglund remains the most detailed resource on Zulu cosmology and on the symbolism of medicinal practices. Ngubane (1977) offers a functionalist reading of some of these practices. Flint (2008) tracks the historical relationship between Indian, African, and colonial pharmaceutical practices, usefully situating the development of Zulu symbolic systems in relation to the colonial encounter. Cousins’s (2012) ethnography updates the understanding of *muthi* in relation to biomedical conceptions of the body.

18. For example, consider Siyazi’s performance discussed in chapter 1.

19. Mbusiseni Zulu’s thinking here, as well as his quoted voice, come from a playback interview with him, Johannesburg, 2 August 2007.

20. Here I follow Cavarero, who writes that “all human beings are unique, but only when and while they interact with words and deeds can they communicate to one another this uniqueness. Without such communication, without action in a shared space of reciprocal exhibition, uniqueness remains a mere ontological given — the given of an ontology that is not able to make itself political” (Cavarero 2005, 196). That singularity is instantiated in specific circumstances. It is time specific. The history and biography carried in the voice and the body, recognized in moments of “reciprocal exhibition,” shape ways of relating to one another. The intercorporeal and intervocal, in motion in time, connect dancers through (shared) affect.

21. While hoarseness is a sign of sustained exertion, that Zabiwe takes over the lead singing role suggests this was an inappropriately timed display, since the exertion

weakened the power of his voice and hence his authority. As a result, group cohesion suffered.

22. Smith (2014) describes how professional wrestlers relate to pain in the ring and the gym, similarly developing skills to mitigate it while riding its symbolic value.

23. In his later years, after retirement, Loli joined the Shembe Christian Zionist church. The majority of ngoma dancers are not members of churches.

3. Feet of the Centipede

1. Excerpt of the *isibongo* (praise) to the dance team of the Uthuli lweZulu ward. It continues, “Olwabamba unogwaja egijima? [Who catches the fleeing rabbit?]” It appears in “Umthetho ushaywa nguwe [The law is being abused by you]” (Umzansi 1994), “Amabhande [Belts]” (Umzansi 1997), and “Umhlokumezi [Abuse]” (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 1988).

2. Dudu Mntowaziwayo Ndlovu, 1957–1992.

3. Jonathan Clegg (1981) and Ngubane (1977) explain this funerary rite, Clegg with regard to faction fighting history, Ngubane in a functionalist interpretation of medicinal practices within Zulu cosmology. A spirit wanders aimlessly and alone until a ceremony and sacrifice return it to the homestead to be integrated into the collectivity of ancestors. At this point, the new spirit reaches its full status, imbued with the power of ancestral spirits, ending the mourning period. Ngubane explains the relationship to other sacrificial rites. Neoliberal precarity has changed mortuary ritual (White 2010).

4. I use a pseudonym.

5. The ipasi has replaced the ritual of marking the status of a courtship with flags. A girl’s sisters would formally announce her acceptance of courtship by carrying a red flag to the house of the courting youth. Once the girl’s family was presented with gifts, the red flag would be replaced with a white one. Two generations ago, no party was associated with event.

6. Amadondo, even though so named, are not won but gifted or purchased. These cowbells dangle from flexible shower tubing tied around the soldiers’ waists.

7. “Igosos” (ngoma leader) is likely derived from “igosa,” referring to a steward or king’s messenger (Doke et al. 1990) or to a military commander (R. Alcock in Capfarm Trust Report, April 1993, in “All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016). The igoso is the “elected leader of the men. In times of peace that makes him chief of protocol, in times of war military commander who must call up the troops” (Capfarm Trust Report, April 1985, in “All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016). African dance practices incorporating colonial and indigenous symbols of warriorship are ubiquitous, for example, among the Beni troupes of East Africa (Ranger 1975), masked dancers in the Cameroonian grassfields (Argenti 2007), worshippers in the South African Church of the Nazarites (Muller 1999), Pedi migrant male performers who like the Nazarites wear Scottish kilts (James 1999), and Tswana worshippers in the Churches of Zion (Comaroff 1985). The *JVC Smithsonian Folkways Video Anthology of Music and Dance of Africa* includes a wonderful clip of Beni ngoma dancers in police-

like uniforms in a brass band formation playing gourd kazoos (Yamamoto et al. 1996). Warriorship is also amply represented in African material culture (Kasfir 2007).

8. Isipani denotes an ngoma team and an ox yoke. The lead positions in the ngoma team's two lines are *amafolosi* (leading oxen), followed by *nesifolo* (next in line). *Amatilosi* (last oxen bearing the wagon shaft) bring up the rear.

9. Clegg (1982) also comments that among ngoma's adopted military effects are marching movements and salutes.

10. Ranger (1975) discusses this in relation to Beni ngoma.

11. Asking where the policeman is going expresses suspicion about his motive. What is he coming to do?

12. An umemulo announces that a girl is eligible for courting, an ukuqoma that she has accepted a boyfriend. The ukuqoma party signals the start of the courting process. *Ukuqonywe*, the passive of "ukuqoma," to be accepted, is the boyfriend's equivalent, which nowadays is celebrated with ipasi (pl. *amapasi*).

13. Some mark their working biography by borrowing the authority of their vocations: a former policeman wears the peaked cap of his professional uniform; a security guard marks his status as trained and employed (or once employed) through his shirt insignia.

14. In *ingoma yenduku*, "you're dancing the stick, you're not dancing yourself. This is a very slow and stylized dance. . . . No clapping, you're supposed to listen to the rhythm and the cadence of the song and place your foot onto the beat . . . where you hear the cadence in the words of the song" (Clegg 1984, 68).

15. I have not heard of a staging of umganga in the Mchunu chiefdom in the past twenty years. Jonathan Clegg (1981) discusses umganga. Similarities to aspects of ngoma are recognizable in discussions of other music and dance styles, such as *amahubo* (Xulu 1992). See Pewa (1995) on the continuity of stylistic features in competitions, Joseph (1983) on women's music, and Rycroft (1957) on men's singing.

16. Among many examples, see Lock and Quantrill (2003) on Anglo-Zulu War images, Webb (1992) on colonial photographs of Zulu, and Knight (1994) on late nineteenth-century military dress.

17. For example, Smith (2005), Krige (1936), Gluckman (1940), Kirk (1951), Bryant ([1949] 1967), Bleeker (1971), and Binns (1974).

18. The most detailed texts are Tracey (1952), which is a photographic book with images by Merlyn Severn, and Erlmann (1991a), which features ngoma in the 1930s. An extended special report by the *Natal Witness* newspaper on the celebration of the reunification of two sections of the Mchunu chiefdom also indicates similarities (*Natal Witness* 1924, article appended to Capfarm Trust Quarterly Report, January 1993, in "All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters" 2016).

19. Argenti (2007) does not provide ethnographic support for his persuasive observation, leaving me wondering whether the masqueraders draw significance from this unsettled chronology and from the dance as a danced history of enslavement.

20. Bonner and Ndima (2009) historicize the violence that erupted between competing taxi companies, explicating the intertwined dynamics that led to the spread of violence from the township of Vosloorus and the Thokoza hostels across the East

Rand and further during South Africa's transition years (1990–94). First, stock theft syndicates emerged in impoverished rural KwaZulu, and these syndicates put their money into minibus taxis, giving impetus to a burgeoning industry. This black-owned and -run industry was deregulated in 1986 and mushroomed overnight into a national network. Men could travel more cheaply, faster, and so more regularly between the city and home five and a half hours' drive away. Violence also had new mobility. In addition, with the taxi industry, came new violence, as taxi owners struggled for control over their routes and over the business. In three case studies (Soweto, Alexandria, Kathlehong), Khosa (1991) traces the industry's development, including legal and illegal practices of taxi owners that explain the feuds that characterized the industry. He argues that claims over routes were a primary motivation for violence. The 1991–92 altercation between Madulaneni and Uthuli lweZulu began as a fight among taxi owners but escalated into a community-wide conflict when Dudu Ndlovu was shot.

21. The Capfarm Trust Reports (1973–94, in "All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters" 2016) document incidents in the Thukela Valley that indicate local police corruption, and other events in which they took appropriate and humane action. Police faced terrible violence and suffered traumas, some of which led to suicide.

22. In this section I combine incidents reported to me by esiPongweni residents and occurrences during my fieldwork.

23. C. Alcock, in the Capfarm Trust Quarterly Reports (1975–93, in "All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters" 2016), provides examples of the ways that women are embroiled in the practices of conflict, even when the ethics of men's fighting precludes targeting women. Repercussions for women include curtailed movement, fulfilling the usual homestead duties of men now in hiding up in the mountains, sharing warnings and carrying tip-offs, managing inflicted injury and loss, and sometimes suffering collateral injury. R. Alcock recounts a faction fight provoked by the competition of two suitors (April 1993 report) and offers an example of how women sustain solidarity among themselves across warring factions (April 1989).

24. In 2009, Sifiso Zulu was shot in the dead of night at George Goch hostel. It was a case of mistaken identity. A finger pointer in another altercation had misnamed the room.

25. The Johannesburg City Council sponsored this event as part of its Arts Alive festival.

26. The South African Defense Force acted as a third force, bolstering the IFP against the ANC during the liberation struggle, so its intrusion into Msinga brought political complexities, while being a protective regulatory presence.

27. The quarterly reports of Capfarm Trust (1975–93, most written by C. Alcock, in "All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters" 2016), a rural development project in the Thukela Valley, chronicle in informal statistics and ethnographic narrative specific thefts, injuries, murders and assassinations, suicides, and collateral deaths that were the consequence of a multitude of altercations that crossed over the trust's land or affected the people who worked on it and the families that variously collaborated in its projects. Reading them together, one is left with a sense from these reports of the

Thukela Valley reeling from gun violence through the 1980s into the early 1990s, of men in positions of authority risking their lives in attempts to stabilize each sporadic outburst and quell the potential flames, of threatened or hunted men having to flee, of police sometimes helping and sometimes not, and of women having to manage these terrible circumstances. Rampant stock theft was entangled with the violence. These narratives documenting a portion of Msinga's Thukela Valley point to the state of Msinga through the 1980s as a whole. For example, violent altercation over succession to the chieftainship in the eMakhabeleni district near the Mchunu district razed that area in 1989 (Creina Alcock, personal communication). Also critically implicated in the violence in these narratives are the white-owned farmlands bordering Msinga, for armed farmers often responded to stock theft and illegal grazing with force, while they evicted laborers who had historically held tenancy on their lands.

28. This altercation is known as the Ngongolo war (McClendon 2009, 281).

29. For consistency, I use the postapartheid designation "KwaZulu-Natal" for what was the province of Natal and the homeland KwaZulu. Prior to the establishment of the homeland, the entire area encompassed the province, formerly the colony of Natal and Zululand.

30. Guns were sold legally in Kroonriver, Msinga, in 1992—for the first time—and some young taxi drivers started licensing the weapons they carry. R. Alcock interprets this as a sign of upward mobility that the taxi industry enables for some (Capfarm Trust Quarterly Report, September 1992, in "All CAP/Mdukutshani Newsletters" 2016). Of course, distinguishing between licensed and illegally owned weaponry misses the complexity of the use of firepower. Many licensed firearms are used for illicit purposes; many find their way into criminal circles through theft; and on a larger scale, the legal small arms market is the seedbed for the black market trade (Cock 2001). Alcock's point underscores the entanglement of the taxi industry, violence, and breadwinning. Consider what it might mean to be a gun trade center in a gun-ridden nation. At the millennium's turn, there were 4.2 million licensed firearms in South Africa (Cock 2001, 48). This figure is high for a country of about forty million people, giving some indication of the density of weapon ownership in a hotspot like Msinga. Such easy availability of guns ups the opportunities and perhaps the felt necessities of gun ownership as well as the potential for serious injury (Cock 2001), while the display of weaponry, as well as its use, is a product of years of opposition to apartheid (Xaba 2001).

Capfarm Trust Quarterly Report, May 1983, provides some history to the prevalence of guns in the Thukela Valley; April 1985 profiles a local gun manufacturer; the April 1979 report details a case of suspected gun running trumped up by the police; and June–August 1988 a case of bartering goats for bullets (in "All CAP/Mdukutshani Newsletters" 2016). Labor exploitation, alternative economies, and violence have long been entwined in the Zulu region. The colony of Natal instituted an early gun law, but resistant chiefs and their followers (such as Langalibalele and the Hlubi) exchanged their labor for illegal firearms on the Griqualand-West minefields hundreds of miles away in the early 1870s (Guest 1989). Concomitant with the history of firearm trading is a history of futile attempts by the state to confiscate unregistered firearms. "We are

being decimated by the sticks of Europeans [guns]; we must return to the sticks of our grandparents,” sing Umzansi Zulu Dancers (1998) on “Ubuzimuzimu.” Yet in the context of Msinga’s conflict-ridden living, even the martial art of stick fighting at times turned deadly as Zulu herd boys found themselves in bitter struggle. With the stakes raised on stick fighting by competitive grazing needs, herd boys exploited the consequences of victory. Suffering defeat and losing grazing land to a victor, some losers sought retribution by attacking winners’ homesteads, sometimes using knobkieries and spears rather than sticks. This provoked revenge attacks. In attempts to manage the fierce tensions, homestead heads initiated interdistrict stick fighting competitions (Carton and Morrell 2012). (Carton and Morrell draw on references that span a range of decades, rendering unspecific the time span of homestead raids and interdistrict competitions.) Deadly stick fights went along with the upheaval and unrest provoked by increasing crowding on arid lands with intensifying segregation policies (following the 1913 Native Land Act that relegated African ownership of land to the reserves). These dynamics were especially intense through the 1920s and 1930s (McClendon 2009). Generational differences within the patriarchy were another catalyst for conflict (Carton 2000; McClendon 2002), and these internal struggles intersected with struggles against the racist industrializing state (Wright 2009).

31. As well as performing with Savuka, Dudu participated as percussionist and vocalist on three of Savuka’s CDs: *Third World Child* (Clegg and Savuka 1987), *Shadowman* (Clegg and Savuka 1988), and *Cruel, Crazy, Beautiful World* (Clegg and Savuka 1989). He is memorialized by Clegg and the band in a subsequent recording, *Heat, Dust and Dreams* (Clegg and Savuka 1993).

32. *Ukuqhatha*: to set on to fight, to set one against another (Doke et al. 1990). Clegg goes on to say that sometimes the igoso might announce he is pitting two “bulls” against one another who “must kill each other,” and that “the air is fraught with tension and the winner is usually acclaimed by the audience” (Clegg 1984, 68). I have not witnessed this. It may be that such practices belong to an earlier generation or were particular to the circumstances and personalities with whom Clegg interacted in the 1970s and early 1980s.

33. In other instances, the uncertainty of how the arts are interpreted and valued may perpetuate an environment of fear and terror. Shapiro-Phim (2002) describes the irregularity of the Khmer Rouge’s response to “reactionary” (traditional) music on the local level in this way. Because performances were sometimes sanctioned, despite official censorship, artists and their fans could never be sure when they would be punished or rewarded for their artistic expression.

34. Clegg (2007) translates Dudu’s name as “Destitution.” “Usizi” refers to the black ash left on the veld after the grass burns, and to misery, affliction, distress, mental pain, grief, or sorrow (Doke et al. 1990).

4. To Quell the Dancer’s Dust

1. Henceforth most Zulu lyrics appear only in English translation.
2. Walter Sisulu was incarcerated with Mandela on Robben Island. He was deputy president of the ANC from 1991 to 1994.

3. The song continues: “We are going up and down [the mountains] spoiling for a fight; for we are the determined ones. We don’t care if we die fighting our rivals anyway; we are moving about spoiling for a fight — hey, your shit, Mandela.”

4. Many marchers would understand this as a historical Zulu battle cry.

5. Traditional weapons that are ceremonially carried in various combinations, as identified in photographs and early writings, include a stick, a stabbing spear, a throwing spear, and a knobkierie (round-headed club). A shield provides protection.

6. This story appears in Meintjes (2003, 174–75).

7. This proceeded with power struggles internal to the IFP. This section appears in Meintjes (2003, 194–96).

8. In another incendiary instance, Zwelethini called on his supporters to “eliminate from your midst all those disgusting usurpers of our dignity without one shred of malice in your beings. . . . Go out my people, conquer evil, but never lose your humanity and never degrade the humanity of those you conquer. Rout them out only to make them one of us. Thrash them, if necessary, only to purge them into becoming better Zulus” (quoted in Maré 1993, 72–73; see also de Haas and Zulu 1993).

9. In a narrative in the Capfarm Trust Quarterly Report, March 1990 (in “All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016), C. Alcock captures the tragedy of a necklaced boy whose body is returned to his community in the Thukela valley. (A tactic in street activism during the liberation struggle, necklacing involved foisting a car tire around the neck of a victim, dousing it with gasoline, and setting it alight.) A hapless youth caught innocently in the crossfire in a Durban township, he is the first necklaced victim in his community. The political violence of the region in the 1980s through the transition period has been well documented by journalists. Kentridge (1990) focuses on Pietermaritzburg, the second largest town in Natal, located 90 kilometers south of Keates Drift, as a complex flashpoint. Jeffery (1997) assesses the violence across the province over the course of sixteen years. Short reports variously call attention to the devastation (Aitchison 1989; Osborn 1991; Louw 1991, 1992; Minnaar 1992; Howe 1993; Berkeley 1994). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1998) made concerted retrospective efforts to account for, detail, and quantify the loss of life that had occurred.

10. Bonner and Ndima’s (2009) fine-grained account of East Rand violence of the transitional period identifies how struggles between trade unions and struggles over unionization, student politics, taxi industry competition, hostel politics (generational and gendered differences, competing systems of bureaucratic authority), and so forth were intertwined. Minnaar (1993a, 1993b) succinctly documents the violence on the Witwatersrand, 1990–92. Donham (2011) discusses the relation of violence to changing identification with ethnicity and ethnic politics in migrant labor. Segal (1991) offers perspectives of hostel dwellers themselves.

11. The IFP exploited the authority system of village headmen and governing councils, for example.

12. Zulu nationalism arose in conjunction with the apartheid state’s overall strategy of separate development, whereby the state imposed ethnic divisions on black South Africans as the basis for land rights and labor control. Until well into the 1990s, the

liberation movement responded by dismissing ethnicity as little other than an apartheid construct designed to undergird the state's ideology and policies of separate development (Mamdani 1996; Zegeye 2001). The violence of the IFP's ethnic nationalism arises like a grotesque phoenix out of this contestation over the terms and truth of ethnic identity. Zuluness was the only black ethnicity mobilized into a political identity that came to be represented by an ethnic nationalist political party.

13. In the late 1990s, a recruiter for a South African Defense Force unit stationed in Pietermaritzburg, near Msinga, approached Siyazi. The recruiter tried to cajole him into bringing the team in as recruits. Siyazi refused, reasoning that it might re-fuel local resentments from past altercations or spark new altercations arising from new circumstances. Basically the problem would be that their own young men, once trained, would be called in to impose law and order on the community and in the wider district. Some might resent the imposition by members of one community on another. For others, the imposition by younger men or men from other families or by friends upon friends might ignite trouble. To Siyazi, the destructive potential of this opportunity appeared more ominous than it was worth. This footnote's discussion appears in Meintjes (2004, 193).

14. As Steingo's (2016) kwaito music study shows, appearances (Rancière's concept) are temporary, timed, and never fully transparent.

15. Feldman (1994) argues that the court edits of the video that captured the police beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles replicated the violence of the beating in representational form, and repeated viewing anesthetized reactions to it. In so doing, it perpetuated the prejudices that produce violence against black men.

16. Wesolowski (2015) accounts for the ease of capoeira's globalization in part as a consequence of the ambiguity of its form. Is it a dance, a game, or a fight? The ambiguity enables multiple parties to interpret its value in their own terms. Ngoma's ambiguity likewise enables its mobility, whether onto the global stage or into networks of violence. Hoffman's (2011, 112) ethnography demonstrates that the mobility of violence is tied to violence as a form of labor (of poor armed Sierra Leonean and Liberian youths). Putting "one's body and its capacity for violence into circulation as a tradable commodity" was a way of participating in the global economy. Msinga's violence is mobile because its men are, and its economy depends on their movement. But it is also mobile in the sense that it spills over from one kind of altercation into others and from action to performance.

17. On "Ubuzimuzimu," composed by Siyazi Zulu and Moses Nzuzza (Mzansi Zulu Dancers 1998).

18. "Ubuzimuzimu" (Mzansi Zulu Dancers 1998).

19. "Maningi Amacala" (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 1988). The song reappears with changes as "Amacala" on *Emzini* (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 1991).

20. "Amavaka," composed by Siyazi Zulu (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 1999). "Khu-zani," composed by Siyazi Zulu and Moses Nzuzza, expresses similar sentiment but pointedly calls the leadership on corruption: "Headmen are corrupting people [in their jurisdiction], and the people support them. I wonder when the new millennium comes how it will find things? Stop this, leaders, stop this!" (Umzansi 1994).

21. “Mntaka Baba,” composed by Siyazi Zulu and M. Majola (Mzansi Zulu Dancers 1998).

22. “Amabhande,” composed by Siyazi Zulu and Moses Nzuzza (Umzansi 1997).

23. In “Ama-Africa,” a song expressing concerns about nationhood succeeding, Africans are addressed broadly and directly: “Hey Africans, if we fight, other nations will deride us. Hey Africans, we must stand together and help one another. In parliament they are talking and listening. So let us talk and listen to one another on the ground as well. Hey, Africans, let’s stop this quarreling” (Umzansi 1997). The song follows the flare-up between esiPongweni and ekuVukeni in 1996. Composer Siyazi intended it to reference national and local issues at once.

24. “Ubuzimuzimu” (Mzansi Zulu Dancers 1998).

25. Wesolowski (2015) articulates this distinction in capoeira. The roda, in allowing for the expression of controlled violence, offers a retreat from the unpredictable, uncontrollable violence of the *favela*, where some Brazilian capoeiristas live.

26. “Phansi Imikhonto [Down the assegai],” on *Emzini* (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 1991).

27. Siyazi recorded the meeting on my behalf and with the permission of Nkosi Mchunu, who consented on the basis of the tape being a record of the meeting.

28. An issue concerning generational differences runs through the talk of these senior men, *omnumzane*. The assumption of irresponsible youths running amok surfaces. Some wonder why such a young new headman. But Nkosi Mchunu is a wise rhetorician. First, he expects that the spirit of the youthful headman’s father will guide his son, making him in effect senior. Second, the new headman will learn from the chief himself. Since the younger generation has its own spirits to whom it listens, a young headman will know what to do. “An age-mate will go with an age-mate.” Besides, the chief “knows people’s tricks — when looking for a favor, a young man knows the tricks that will make an older man think he is being respected.” Youths won’t be able to play this game with the young headman.

29. Afrikaners subsequently memorialized the battle at the Ncome River that enabled their land seizure as the Battle of Blood River, so named for the violence said to have turned the river red. A good portion of current-day Msinga lies within the annexed land.

30. Counter to the stereotype, the Zulu took up arms against colonials reluctantly in the Anglo-Zulu War, and in the 1906 Bambatha Rebellion (Beinart 1992, referencing Marks 1970; and Guy 1979). Zulu victory at Isandlwana and Hlobane made these battles infamous. Regiments approached the British position from behind, splitting into two *imihlathi* (cheeks) that encircled the enemy from both sides in their renowned “cattle horn” formation, while a third front approached head-on. With spears, assegais, and knopkieries meeting firepower, fatalities were enormous. Isandlwana is a storied and visited site, including by reenactors. While not within Msinga, Isandlwana and Rorkes Drift fell within the Mchunu chiefdom at the time of the Anglo-Zulu War (Laband and Thompson 1989).

31. “Twenty years later and he is still sitting with it!” a bemused Siyazi exclaims.

32. The fight over the dance championship pitted people living at Skaleni against

others at Kroonrivier in the Thukela valley. C. Alcock details how the fight unfolded and resolved. Underneath the dance bravado lay a struggle for living space. Evictions from white farmland had added pressures to already overpopulated African land. This issue accounts for the ferocity of the dance dispute and its escalation into a full-scale communal conflict (Capfarm Trust Report 1982, in “All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters” 2016).

33. Official competitions were instigated as recreation that would be less likely to disrupt productivity than the weekend inebriation that shebeens (beer halls) encouraged. Facilitating controlled ngoma competitions also encouraged divisions in Durban’s popular classes. By the 1940s, ngoma had been “sufficiently tamed” to be contemplated for introduction into schools (Marks 1970, citing la Hausse 1984).

34. “Yasha imizi,” composed by Siyazi Zulu and Moses Nzuzza (Mzansi Zulu Dancers 1998).

35. A year’s mourning period precludes family members from dancing.

5. The Crossing

1. Exploring how complicity and intimacy across race, class, and gender are entangled in South Africa’s literary present, Nuttall (2009) proposes that a “desegregated” analysis would loosen reliance on categorical apartheid-era thinking.

2. Mzila is misnamed Charlie Msinga in Coplan (1993, 317).

3. Clegg first went to Msinga in 1978. He first danced with the esiPongweni team at their home in 1980 (C. Alcock, unpublished interview, Johannesburg, 3 March 1988). In the late 1980s, following the breakup of Juluka, esiPongweni became his principal destination for dancing in Msinga. The first major interdistrict dance in which Clegg participated at Keates Drift was on 26 December 1986, with the then newly formed Wonkewonke (Everyone) team including the teams of Madulaneni, esiPongweni, Galibasi, and Nxamalala (C. Alcock, personal communication, 16 August 2013). Wonkewonke became locally celebrated. Clegg participated annually until 1990. The violence of the taxi conflict of 1991 that enflamed into the Madulaneni-esiPongweni faction fight upon Dudu’s assassination in 1992 ended the Wonkewonke team and Clegg’s regular participation.

4. I take the term “umhuphe” from Savuka’s liner notes (Clegg and Savuka 1989). I surmise it is drawn from the Xhosa *umrupe* (Kirby [1934] 1968), as I have been unable to locate “umhuphe” except on Clegg-related websites. Umhuphe may be isiBhaca.

5. Johnny Clegg (1981, 2007) describes features of Zulu musical styles. Marre presents early footage of Mchunu and Clegg performing in Johannesburg (Marre and Charlton [1979] 2000). Clegg (2003) includes live footage of the band Juluka performing in Cape Town in 1983.

6. The lyrics of two LPS (Juluka 1982b, 1984) are all isiZulu, code-switching to English only for occasional words. On the other LPS, English predominates for the narratives of verses and isiZulu for the backing vocals. The choruses vary.

7. Intermittent news reports allude to complex circumstances surrounding Mchunu’s departure from professional music to live full time at his homestead: strife in the chieftainship in Mchunu’s area, jealousies and struggles for power, status, and

resources, issues with stock theft, and the development of new rural enterprises. According to practices of inheritance within the family, Mchunu was designated to farm.

8. This 1989 event was a second ceremony for Clegg and his Johannesburg-based wife. People related to his French touring agency attended. The event was covered by a French film crew as well as by local media.

9. “My writing has become a lot more economic, a lot more tight. I’ve got a harder edge to the sound and I’m using Zulu guitar in a different way. I use it as a thematic element—it comes in and out of songs. . . . But in Savuka I do not limit myself—like I did in Juluka—to simply Zulu guitar music. I listen to urban traditional Zairean music. I listen to the guitar styles in Zimbabwe as well as to some other guitarists I saw in Senegal. I broaden my reference to include different African styles . . . and of course there’s certain concertina traditions I’ve drawn on which I didn’t really draw on much in Juluka. . . . A traditional Sotho accordion . . . that’s on the African side. Then there’s the influences I got mainly from The Police, Peter Gabriel, Genesis, Jethro Tull (very important)” (“Cultural Driftwood” 1987).

10. Johnny and Siphos recorded four singles, the last of which (“Woza Friday,” 1976) was a South African hit. Juluka’s first LP, *Universal Men* (1979), did not reach the charts, but their second release, *African Litany* (1981), turned platinum (Clegg 2007).

11. “Johnny Clegg Biography and Awards,” Johnny Clegg.com, accessed 15 July 2013, <http://www.johnnyclegg.com/biog.html>.

12. Clegg has released fourteen recordings, including those with Mchunu, Juluka, and Savuka, and with a backing band subsequent to Savuka. He has also released eight retrospective compilations, four live concert albums, and three DVDs of concert footage and past promotional videos. A fan website, *In My African Dream* (inmyafricandream.free.fr), provides the fullest documentation of Clegg’s discography and videography, including film tracks and covers of Clegg songs.

13. *Third World Child* (1987) and *Shadow Man* (1988), with singles “Scatterlings of Africa” and “African Shadow Man.”

14. *Cruel, Crazy, Beautiful World* (1989).

15. “Johnny Clegg Biography and Awards.” Also see “Johnny Clegg,” Wikipedia, accessed 21 March 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johnny_Clegg. Once Clegg had broken into the French market and expanded his market in Europe (with a qualified reception in the United Kingdom), he aimed for the North American market. Breaking into North America took organizational and promotional strategy, as well as redirecting some creative compositional energy to appeal to a national popular music radio listenership. (Alternative college campus and local stations had picked up some of his earlier tracks, but this was inadequate to make regular touring feasible.) He recorded in Los Angeles. He secured an American management company (“the same team looking after Alice Cooper, Anita Baker and the Gipsy Kings”) and was signed by EMI International in 1990 (Feldman 1990). Becoming part of EMI International had other advantages: access to eastern Europe and help breaking into the German market. He wrote with an international market in mind: “Things are no longer French. They are international. A French TV programme strives to get satellite link-

ups so that the show can go out to forty countries” (Clegg in Feldman 1990). Stylistically, his sound turned more to rock fusion, while his lyrics moved beyond South Africa. But until the 2010s, he did not secure an American circuit to the extent he had in Europe. He viewed this in part as a consequence of the monolingualism of rock and mainstream pop radio stations in the United States, whose support was crucial in allowing international musicians to break into the market (Clegg stage banter, Emperor’s Palace, Kempton Park, 17 December 2007). In 2015, Clegg was awarded the Office of the Order of the British Empire.

16. For example, compare “Sky People” (Juluka 1979) and “Gijim’beke” (Juluka 1981) to the two subsequent “Scatterlings of Africa” versions. In the 1981 recording, the chorus sounds bigger and fuller than in the 1979 recording, and in both the vocables play a brief bridging role in the song form. Clegg picked up this humming style from isiBhaca ngoma dancers (C. Alcock, unpublished interview, Johannesburg, 3 March 1988).

17. Theatre of Marcellus, Emperor’s Palace, Kempton Park, 17 December 2010.

18. Clegg recounts how his first guitar teacher, Charlie Mzila, was assaulted by his white supervisor and harassed until he moved his city residence (Shahin 1990, 84), a personal experience of the kind that conscientized Clegg. As a teenager, he was arrested multiple times for defying the Group Areas act. See especially Shahin (1990) for elaboration of his youthful intent and the costs he and others paid for it. Clegg and Drewett (2006) and Suttner (1997) also add details.

19. Their popularity—especially overseas—protected them from detention. “We never detained those people because their profile was too high. Can you imagine? I mean Savuka—when they were so popular in France? *Est Zulu Blanc [sic]*, I remember. That would have caused a huge stink” (Paul Erasmus, former member of apartheid’s secret South African Security Branch, interview with Michael Drewett in 2001, quoted in Clegg and Drewett 2006, 131).

20. For further discussion of SAMA, Clegg’s role in it, the debates it raised, international politics, and role in the liberation struggle, see Clegg and Drewett (2006), Coplan (1993).

21. Postapartheid, Clegg has appeared at the 46664 concerts that honor Mandela, and has participated in other benefits (such as AIDS concerts) internationally.

22. Songs purportedly banned for their language mixing like “Woza Friday” (Clegg and Drewett 2006) were probably banned for their unsettling working-class topics and in order to make the lives and careers of the artists difficult. At the end of the 1980s, the censorship board relaxed its policy, especially concerning language mixing, but Savuka’s explicit antiapartheid lyrics still came under fire. “One Man, One Vote” on *Cruel, Crazy, Beautiful World* (Shahin 1990, 83), “Asimbonanga” (Shahin 1990, 87), and three other songs from Savuka’s three records were banned.

23. Yet the view back on this period celebrates Clegg for his obstinate and informed commitment to justice, to recognizing that ethnicity was a lived experience, and to going his own way. Clegg’s language about Zulu culture always privileged class politics over race, but it was his championing of Zuluness that was at once his distinction and for some his downfall.

24. More recently, he has contributed to an article that considers music censorship through his experience with Juluka and Savuka (Clegg and Drewett 2006). (Drewett and Clegg are billed as coauthors. In the text, the authors state that Clegg contributed a small section, which was expanded with material from an interview Drewett conducted with him. Drewett's analysis forms the bulk of the piece.) I am struck by the investment other academics have made in getting Clegg's ideas onto the page, whether through transcribing talks, interviews, or collaborative publication. Likewise I am struck by academics' frequent praise of Clegg's articles when referencing them. Scholars contribute to Clegg's aura.

25. "The Crossing" was composed in 1993. A live performance is reproduced on Clegg (2007), from which I have directly quoted his stage talk.

26. Reproduced on Clegg (2007). Having in part drawn audiences by his dancing, Clegg faces the pressure of audience anticipation that he will dance onstage in big concerts. Yet at Keates Drift, men have usually long retired from dancing by their fifties, some suffering the physical consequences of years of vigorous dance. At most, mature men might step out for a short sequence for the pleasure of it. Clegg is now in his early sixties. A young ngoma lineup on his stage serves multiple purposes in showcasing the dance.

27. The discrepancy here lies between Clegg's analytic personal position and a reading of "war dance" as a statement from the stage, that is, as timed stage banter available for interpretation by audiences without the precise background knowledge that informs Clegg's own position. Clegg's typification of "war dance" would derive from his historical research concerning factional violence, especially of the 1930s and 1940s, in which stick fighting and dancing were implicated, and from his experience dancing through the 1980s in eMakhabeleni and Msinga. To my knowledge, the violence of the latter tends to be excluded from his stage narration, leaving a generalized notion of umzansi as epic warriorhood intact.

28. Clegg was continuing work on a film documenting ngoma aesthetics and his own position within it. He started it in collaboration with the BBC but subsequently undertook it independently (C. Alcock, personal communication, 16 August 2013).

29. According to his manager Roddy Quinn, by 1989 Savuka had sold more than eighty thousand records in the United States, over two million in France, and nearly fifty thousand in Canada (West 1989). In the summer of 1989 he reportedly outsold Michael Jackson in Paris, diminishing Jackson's ticket sales to such an extent that Jackson cancelled his concert on the night Savuka was scheduled to perform. By 1995, Clegg had fifteen albums to his name. He had sold 3.5 million records and won numerous silver and gold discs and a Grammy (for *Heat, Dust and Dreams* [Clegg and Savuka 1993]) (Raphaely 1995). European sales alone by 1998 were over three million units (Attorneys, Merchant Bank 1998).

30. His partners in MTV Africa are Primequity, a media conglomerate that holds 50 percent of the stake, Viacom's MTV networks with 20 percent, and Music and Youth Development Trust with 5 percent (Raphaely 1995).

31. "The integration of the skills and resources of the acquisitions [under Primedia Music] will result in a major independent music group with an immediate 9 percent

share of the South African music market. Key management including Chris Ghelakis [of CSR], Roddy Quin [of Real Concerts], and Clegg will hold substantial equity alongside Primedia to form a truly unique entrepreneurially driven vehicle” (Attorneys, Merchant Bank 1998).

32. Postapartheid, the state offered incentives to companies that redressed apartheid’s inequalities in ownership and management, and offered skills development.

33. When the Durban branch closed in 2008, the dancers moved to the Benoni site. Later they left. Apparently they felt they could earn more driving taxis (though this is employment without benefits or security).

34. A French singer-songwriter, Renaud critiques the petite bourgeoisie and French liberalism in his songs. The son of “an intellectual” and “a coalminer’s daughter” (“Renaud,” Wikipedia, accessed 21 March 2013, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaud>; phrases also circulating elsewhere on the Internet), he takes on the stance and voice of French working-class youth. He sings in part in regional working-class dialects, in particular from the region of his mother’s upbringing. Within the French context, this language choice is political.

35. Circulation as a site of culture is hooked to the notion of cultural feedback (Novak 2013). Feedback, an accumulation of information that is place-specific and temporary, produces uneven circulation patterns. Identifying blockage and breakdowns as potential rerouting mechanisms, Steingo (2015) finds the idea of flow presumptive. As the Clegg case shows, circulation (including rerouting) has to be set in motion. It requires that agents instigate motion, whether intentionally or not.

36. West Nkosi, interviews with the author, Gallo Record Company, Johannesburg, 22 and 29 May 1991.

37. I detail a recording in which West reduces the percussiveness of a band’s instrumental tracks and then introduces additional programmed percussion tracks in a process of producing an African sound (Meintjes 2003).

38. West, interview, 22 May 1991. Two tracks on this LP, *Emzini* (“Phans’imikhonto” and “Wentombi yami”) pit a clear, electronically produced pennywhistle melody contrapuntally against a melodic bass with a concertina chordal bed, an influence taken from Paul Simon’s (1986) *Graceland* hit “You Can Call Me Al.”

39. West, interview, 19 April 1991.

40. “Dance around Grahamstown” 2005. Siyazi is incorrectly identified as a former lead dancer for Clegg.

41. National Arts Festival billing, Artslink media distribution website, accessed 16 December 2016, http://www.artlink.co.za/news_article.htm?contentID=5734.

42. Homepage of umzansizuludancers.co.za, accessed August 2010. The website was built for the group by Black Index and is no longer accessible.

43. Writing about Ghanaian hiplife, Shipley (2013) argues that for those who are marginalized by neoliberal restructuring and lack access to material exchange value, celebrity itself becomes currency. Public figures trade on their celebrity. I am interested in Clegg as currency for ngoma dancers rather than for Clegg himself. Gray (2013) focuses on the ways Portuguese fado fans and musicians glorify the diva Amalia Rodrigues, bringing her into the intimacy of their lives through commemo-

rative practices and fado performance. They convert Amalia's charisma into forms of social value.

44. My thinking here is prompted by Feld's discussion of cosmopolitanism in which he debates propositions such as Gilroy's "multilocal belonging," Appiah's "universalism plus difference," and Clifford's "discrepant cosmopolitanism," and especially draws on P. Werbner's concept of vernacular cosmopolitanisms. Feld (2012) is interested in musical intimacy wrought through intersecting routes and genealogies and found in moments of shared appreciation of style across wide, historically constituted and politically reinvigorated social divides.

45. Sometimes the routes are necessarily alternative ones requiring improvisations around blockages (Steingo 2016).

46. B. White's (2012) edited volume represents a range of responses to global musical encounters considering the political dynamics that produce uneven access to forms of authority. Bigenho's (2012) ethnography of Bolivian musicians touring in Japan demonstrates how musicians respond and adapt in cosmopolitan encounters in which they search for shared aesthetics while rooting themselves in their "indigeneity." Gray's ethnography, sited principally in amateur fado clubs, shows the lead-up to and the underside of the making of cultural patrimony when fado is designated as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. The ethnography points to the radical unevenness of who benefits from the process but also to ways in which fado people variously positioned find creative ways to get in on a bit of the action (Gray 2013). Luker (2014) triangulates the dynamics among world citizenship, national belonging, and professional music making by demonstrating how tango becomes wrapped up in cultural policy because of both the dance's globalization and musicians' investments in the genre at a time of economic crisis in Argentina. In her exploration of women dancers employed in Indonesian state troupes, Larasati (2013) illuminates the dilemma of women gaining mobility at the cost of being exoticized and ahistoricized (and this, postgenocide) on the global stage, and of gaining some autonomous citizenship as a result but in the context of the pressures of domestic patriarchy. These analyses exemplify the emerging wealth of exploration of the vexed space of contemporary global encounter in the arts with its repercussions extending well beyond the site, moment, and participating artists in any instance.

47. The musicians who have worked with Clegg and their families who turn to Clegg with requests or who presume on obligations extend beyond the esiPongweni community.

48. From "Wayishele'ondongweni" (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 1991).

6. Dancing around Disease

1. Keates Drift community members variously espouse these perspectives. Black's (2012, 2013a, 2013b) ethnography suggests his Durban-based Zulu interlocutors are aware of such views, as are other South African publics (Cameron 2007). Leclerc-Madlala (2001) discusses the presumption that HIV is primarily spread by women.

2. Black (2013a) draws on an energetic debate about the currency of hlonipha.

Zungu (1997) provides a deeper history to the principles, noting diminished adherence to the practice.

3. When totalizing, these arguments risk becoming romantic idealism about music.

4. The best of these projects also spur new research. For example, University of KwaZulu-Natal's Center for HIV and AIDS Networking commissioned the fieldwork that became Henderson's (2011) ethnography. A children's radio project, initiated by a research and advocacy team associated with the Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town and Sisize Trust in Ingwavuma, KwaZulu-Natal, combined skill development, a children's support group environment utilizing the arts in a community with a high incidence of HIV, and research that produced scholarly analysis and policy documents (Meintjes 2009, 2011). Barz's (2006) and McNeill's (2011) principally academic ethnographies also address the application of their research in intervention and policy work. Working in northern South Africa (Limpopo, Venda), McNeill's ethnography cautions against easy presumptions about the instrumentalization of the arts by showing how community members engage in (theatrical) peer education projects of NGOs and the state for their self-actualization. They resolutely seek upward (and outward) mobility by means of peer education work, even though through that work they become stigmatized within their communities as contaminated. McNeill also usefully complicates the politics of interventionist programs by narrating the tensions between traditionalist and NGO institutions.

5. Saying *for sure* raises the possibility that the virus resides with the speaker, for how would one know the symptoms except through experience? He risks self-incrimination, marking himself as a disrespectable man. McNeill and James (2009) similarly report a connection between knowledge and assumed experience in Venda.

6. Black (2012) shows how members of a Zulu HIV support group through their positive encounters with international aid and scientific medicine reevaluate their negative value of the foreign (Western) as the origin of HIV.

7. Umzansi Zulu Dancers (1999) followed this song with another addressing the urgency of condom use, "*Siyesaba* [We are afraid/reticent]" (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 2011), but without naming the disease. Black (2012) offers examples of how HIV support group members avoid naming AIDS by means of poetic substitutions (for example, *amagama amathathu* [three words/letters]). In the ngoma case, the sensitivity around naming adds to the specter of raising the issue of the disease at all.

8. Zuma has been a controversial figure, despite appointing progressive health ministers. Hunter (2010) discusses Zuma's alarming AIDS statements as they relate to his position as Zulu patriarch. Zuma's personal perspectives came to light when he was charged with rape (though he was not convicted).

9. The province took over this Church of Scotland mission hospital in 1975.

10. Despite these circumstances and feeling at odds with many aspects of the national HIV/AIDS policy during the Mandela and Mbeki years, the staff worked tirelessly to prevent HIV contagion and to treat AIDS, achieving international recognition for their innovation. In particular, a home-based care program for AIDS patients initiated in 1997 by hospital staff became the national model. Home-based caregivers

and the sick from distant districts traveled arduously to use its services (Henderson 2011). The hospital subsequently became the site of a Yale University project researching the integration of TB and HIV/AIDS treatment. The hospital reported the first outbreak of XDR-TB worldwide (Gandhi et al. 2006), an indication of the dire TB and AIDS circumstances and of the quality of research undertaken.

11. In collaboration with Yale, the hospital was able to treat some people with ARV therapy in a clinical pilot program beginning in 2003. In February 2004, enabled by the hard-won change in state policy, they began to administer ARVs through a government rollout program (Oppenheimer and Bayer 2007). With a leadership change in the national health ministry in 2007, and soon thereafter in the presidency, revisions in HIV policy included a directive to exponentially increase access to drugs.

12. In 2002, the prevalence rate among antenatal clinic attendees in KwaZulu-Natal was 36.5 percent, the highest recorded of all the provinces (Department of Health 2003). In 2011, the province's HIV prevalence for the same category was estimated at 37.4 percent (down from the previous two years). The estimated provincial HIV prevalence in the general population (fifteen to forty-nine years) for 2011 was 24.7 percent (Department of Health 2012).

13. Global AIDS politics also played a role. Susser examines how the inequalities promulgated by the global regulation of intellectual property, imperial moralities, and trade agreements affected the spread of the disease in South Africa. She considers feminized responses to the disease on the ground (Susser with Mkhize 2009). Cameron (2007) addresses pharmaceutical patents and the consequential unequal access to medication as a question of human rights.

14. These constraints remained in place until state policy changed in 2003. Other constraining policy included restrictions on who could administer ARVs and the roles nurses and clinics could play (Steinberg 2008).

15. In Oppenheimer and Bayer (2007), doctors narrate how health ministry bureaucrats and some hospital staff pressured doctors and other hospital staff to comply with Mbeki's public health regulations.

16. Some argue that infection spreads more readily through sexual intercourse with uncircumcised men (see, e.g., Halperin and Epstein 2007).

17. Henderson (2011) reports the same variability for the Okhahlamba region.

18. The gendered dynamics in the use of HIV health services applies more broadly in South Africa (Russel and Schneider 2000; Visser, Lynch, and Brouard 2010).

19. On Zulu medicine, see the classics (Berglund [1976] 1989; Ngubane 1977). On the historical interconnections between Zulu and colonial (Indian and white) medical and pharmaceutical practices in KwaZulu-Natal, see Flint (2008).

20. On some history of apartheid representations of the African body through medicine, see Butchard (1998).

21. Steinberg (2008) recounts the fears in rural Eastern Cape that HIV blood testing needles inject the virus. He positions this conspiracy in the history of colonial epidemic treatment.

22. On doctors' differing perspectives on integrating traditional healing ideas into HIV/AIDS prevention and care, see Oppenheimer and Bayer (2007, 105–10).

23. It took the South African Cabinet until 2002 to issue a definitive statement that HIV causes AIDS.

24. Tshabalala-Msimang was minister of health from 1999 to 2008. Under her successors Barbara Hogan (2008–9) and Aaron Motsoaledi, President Zuma's health ministry has been much better and proactive on the issue of HIV/AIDS (Andrew Boule, personal communication, June 2011).

25. When older men naturally lose their form, they progress to the status of elders who oversee the team.

26. McNeill (2011) rightly criticizes the easy presumption in social scientific analyses and popular accounts of AIDS that silence is a form of denialism.

27. Such moments reorganize face management practices (Goffman 1963).

28. Mboneni's appearance before the team unsettled some elders (and probably other community members). Some felt it violated the spirit of the occasion. Others worried he would feel shame, and in feeling shame that he would glimpse his own death, and that this would hasten his passing. Still others worried for their loved ones. Would Mboneni's spirit, appearing to be so close to leaving his body, inhabit someone else, bringing illness upon them? For some, these were reasons to exclude his participation. Underlying these anxieties is one local reading of AIDS sufferers as living dead, a status that places them in a precarious liminal space. (People remark about someone being "already finished.") Given the permeability of boundaries of the body, the fear concerns the possibility of undesirable crossings of a spirit. McNeill (2011) elaborates on comparable beliefs around death and dying for the Venda.

29. Taussig: "I regard the public secret as fated to maintain the verge where the secret is not destroyed through exposure, but subject to a revelation that does justice to it" (1999, 8). The process of the revelation produces mystical moments.

30. Here the question of the role of lyrics in changing behavior is rendered moot, not only because this moment that is revelatory about local concerns of HIV is drummed and danced but also because it points to the way that were there to be lyrics, one could not assume that they would be transparently and definitively interpreted. Interpretation, including of lyrics, is contextually contingent. McNeill (2011) raises this criticism of lyric-based analyses as well. The issue presents challenges for intervention programs.

31. As HIV works its way to full-blown AIDS, the body processes related to a diminishing CD4 blood count, including opportunistic infections, the side effects of ARVs, and increasing weakness, bring about pain, suffering, and, for many, humiliation. Multiple texts educate lay readers about the virus's physiology and effects on a person who carries it. The pain and suffering entailed is evident in these texts, such as Cameron's (2007), Steinberg's (2008), and Henderson's (2011). Arguing that anthropology has skirted around the ethnography of suffering, Henderson details the suffering for the ill, for their caregivers, and for those who are left to mourn. Through her descriptions and those whose stories she reproduces, the racking physical, emotional, and material struggles that women, men, and families endure are laid bare. This is what ngoma dancers and their friends and families risk having to confront.

32. December 2005.

33. Neuropathy is a side effect of ARV medication. The burning sensation can also be caused by TB medication or by the HIV infection itself (Andrew Boule, personal communication, 2 January 2006). Painful thrush in the throat can be another symptom. Mhlonishwa Mdlalose passed away in March 2006. Mboneni had broken with proper practice because he wanted to see Mhlonishwa “while he could still talk.” It is my presumption that Mboneni’s two decisive actions that ruptured conventional social practice—this visit and his own retirement from the team the following day—are linked, though I have yet to find an opportunity to discuss this with him.

34. “Amacala” (Umzansi Zulu Dancers 1991).

7. The Digital Homestead

1. “Amathambo [Bones],” composed by S. Zulu (Umzansi 1997).
2. Umzansi Zulu Dancers is the only ngoma group from the Mchunu chiefdom that has released professionally recorded CDs.
3. That they are marginal to the state does not mean that they are socially marginal in all ways. They probably represent a majority underclass.
4. Makhulu (2015) demonstrates the effects of diminishing wage labor by detailing the mobile, precarious life paths of working-class South Africans.
5. I detail how apartheid’s race and class politics impinged upon studio relationships, and so on the shaping of South African sounds, in Meintjes (2003).
6. Keates Drift ngoma dancers sang some vocals for the Shirimani production. None were present, other than Siyazi, in the Black Eagle studio, though both projects were billed under Umzansi Zulu Dancers.
7. Literally: How will you woo a girl who drinks liquor? Siyazi transcribed, we translated, and I edited Zulu dialogues I recorded in the studio.
8. I borrow the acute accent to indicate a high tone.
9. A top-flight studio would not require that their clients work with a producer. However, these musicians are unable to afford such a studio without company backing. A backing company would probably insist on a company producer.
10. I use a pseudonym.
11. *Omaskandi* (maskanda musicians) prefer miking the amp. One session I documented folded on a disagreement over this issue (Meintjes 2003, 144). In another, a guitarist surreptitiously refined the settings on his amp while the engineer worked to control the sound from the console (106).
12. A guideline (usually a vocal) is a basic but key melodic part that is recorded first, along with a skeletal rhythm track. Musicians synchronize and elaborate their parts in relation to it. Finally, the guideline is replaced.
13. At times dancing in studios is productive, by providing levity, reproducing something of the spirit of a performance event, and helping musicians sustain their groove. Tom Turino contributed this point.
14. Porcello (2004) makes clear how sophisticated a sound engineer’s professional linguistic expertise is, combining talk about the science of acoustics, histories of listening, knowledge of technologies, and elaborate improvised poetic reference.
15. Pakie Mohale, interview with the author, Johannesburg, 29 July 2002.

16. R. Murray Schafer ([1977] 1993) proposed a continuum from hi-fi to lo-fi soundscapes. Clarity and communicative reliability characterized hi-fi soundscapes, epitomized by the natural world. Industrialization, for him, compromised high fidelity. I apply his idea to a high-tech social space.

17. Stanley Dladla, the politician from a neighboring chiefdom who backed Umzansi Zulu Dancers' 2009 project was accused of state and municipal embezzlement soon after the group gained his support (Olifant and Hlongwane 2012).

18. "Zindala Zombili" (Mzansi Zulu Dancers 2007).

19. Tejumola Olaniyan contributed this point.

20. The film production team resorted to overdubbing nonrelated music for a good proportion of the film. The teams were unhappy with the film's editing and the unequal representation of the groups who had performed, so many refused to buy the DVD. As a result, J. Mofokeng and Associates failed to recuperate the capital that they said was a prerequisite for them to market the video. The unequal representation of the ngoma groups was a consequence of the quality of the raw footage the young crew had accumulated.

8. Brokering the Body

1. Quotations and narratives stem from personal communication with Mandla Thembu (pseudonym) at Keates Drift, December 2000 and 2001, unless otherwise stated.

2. Zondi (1998) considers the potential for heritage tourism in the Greytown area. Focusing on the history of Bambatha's Rebellion and the development of a community trust game farm, she demonstrates the investment of local community members in tourism projects. Irrespective of the signage, local school children have long learned about Bambatha's Rebellion.

3. The Zulu kingdom historically fell within a portion of today's KwaZulu-Natal. Interestingly, the enduring arts project in the Thukela valley, a component of an NGO in operation since 1975, works against ahistorical representations of KwaZulu and exoticizing generality of Zulu artistry (see Mdukatshani, www.mdukatshani.com).

4. Myers tracks how Aboriginal bark painting is framed for a fine art market in the process of transnational circulation, enabling its sustained market presence (Marcus and Myers 1995), and Steiner's (1994) ethnographic focus on Nigerian middlemen's agency in transatlantic African art trade details how their transactions with wood carvers and series of buyers produce the artworks' value. Such value-producing trafficking of African performers rests on a colonial history of impresarios and entrepreneurs (e.g., Bradford and Blume 1992; Erlmann 1999; Lindfors 1999). Sustained ethnography of musical brokers akin to Steiner's art traders is sparse, yet brokers appear prevalently in passing. Eyre (2015) chronicles the passionate attachments and limitations of international promoters of Thomas Mapfumo. However small-scale or sometimes misguided, they were crucial to Mapfumo's international success. I am likewise interested in small-scale brokers' biographies and aesthetic engagements, as implicated in South African political history.

5. Mandla Thembu, fax to Siyazi, 4 June 1999. Fax quoted with Siyazi's permission.

6. As luck would have it, when Umzansi Zulu Dancers performed at the gate of the Union Buildings, Pretoria's parliament building, to welcome guests to a conference, Siyazi met the wife of an employee in the cultural affairs office of South Africa's embassy in Canada. She proposed that the group obtain a website and offered to fund its design and implementation (www.umzansizuludancers.co.za). Umzansi Zulu Dancers lacked funds to pay the ZAR999 (approximately US\$90) annual maintenance fee after a couple of years and so lost access to it.

7. See Blackindex Creative Agency (blackindex.co.za). I take Makhumbila's quotations and narrative here and further from a grant proposal he submitted to Mmino (2009) and personal communication in Johannesburg, 17 July 2009.

8. Thembu, fax, 4 June 1999. He lists the four groups he intends to take as "Umzansi, AmaZulu, Novensi, Ka-Zimba Ngoma The Academy of Nubian Cultural Arts." The fourth is British.

9. Mandla Thembu, fax to Siyazi, 18 June 1999, used with Siyazi's permission.

10. He is referring especially to Hillbrow and the adjoining Joubert Park. His assertion of a preponderance of Zulus is a presumption.

11. Africa Umoja presents a panoply of South Africa's indigenous cultures and history in a song-and-dance extravaganza. Initiated by two performers who had toured the world as members of *Ipi-Tombi's* cast, the show trains amateurs and has enjoyed international success (www.africaumoja.com, accessed 1 July 2014).

12. The critical role played by the arts, especially music, in South Africa's liberation struggle is celebrated in documentaries such as *Amandla! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony* (Hirsch 2002). The film enjoyed global distribution and wide acclaim. When Paul Simon insisted that his *Graceland* album was a cultural, not a political, project, global controversy ensued, pointing to widespread understanding of 1980s South African music as inevitably a political act (Berlinger 2012; Feld 1988; Meintjes 1990). Jeremy Marre's film *Rhythm of Resistance: The Black Music of South Africa* insists on music as resistant to a point of erroneous exaggeration. The narrator, Todd Matshikiza, explains ngoma filmed at George Goch hostel in the late 1970s as defiance against colonialism and apartheid: "When they clashed with the invading British army only one hundred years ago, the Zulus took the bass drum and regimental march and turned them into ngoma, a dance against the enemy. Today, in the middle of the city, it is a symbolic dance against a different enemy. This is a side of black society that whites never see. Deep inside the metropolis, this act of defiance is replayed every week. Today the aggression has nowhere to go. For now these people can't make battle against their enemies, so they dance in competitive display against one another. These are migrant workers who have been pulled away from their land and separated from their families" (Marre and Charlton [1979] 2000). Popular press publications champion music's contributions to resistance (e.g., Anderson 1981). Scholarly analyses researched in the 1980s answer the question of resistance by nuancing, detailing, historicizing, and complicating the relationship of music to defiance and empowerment, while they celebrate it (e.g., Ballantine 1993; Coplan [1985] 2008; Erlmann 1991a, 1996).

13. Zibonele Goodman Bhengu, telephone conversation, South Africa, December 2009.

14. Nostalgia is future oriented. Post-Soviet diasporic longing for an unattainable past expresses the state of the present and desire for how it could be (Boym 2001). Togolese nostalgia for a sense of a future under one's control sheds light on citizens' spiritual preoccupation, hustling, and trading on risk in a failing state (Piot 2010).

15. Siyazi was refused a visa.

16. Mmino was funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and South Africa's Department of Arts and Culture to support music education and binational exchange from 2000 to 2011 (Tjønneland and Gaylard 2012).

17. "Isigwadi" and "Amaginsa" appeared on local radio charts. Shaluzza's biography is largely drawn from Making Music Production's website that profiles South African musicians (<http://www.music.org.za/artist.asp?id=176>), and from the National Geographic World Music website, accessed 8 January 2008 but now defunct.

18. He had also visited during Christmastime in 1991, 2000, and 2004.

19. By "grandfather" (said in English), Mfaba does not mean his immediate grandfather, but one of some generations back.

20. I take the quotations and Mfaba's narrative from an interview I conducted, ACUMDA office, Johannesburg, 11 August 2009, and from subsequent personal communication.

21. It is an identity in the sense of Comaroff and Comaroff (2009), that is, a self-presentation available for commodification that enables those whom it purportedly represents to engage in the market economy.

22. The production of heritage has long been a folklore studies concern. For Africanists, Ranger's (1975) formulation of "invented tradition" set the stage for debate that nuanced analysis of the tense relationship between the expediency of culture and its local veracity. The tension remains a point of theoretical interest. For example, studies of festivalization hook performance culture to political institutions and corporate interests (e.g., Aggarwal 2005; Jowers 1993). Sensory approaches to the artisanal labor and commodity culture in tourist economies foreground the body in crafting or consuming pleasure (e.g., Caldwell 2002; Choo 2004; Meneley 2008). That is, the veracity of sensory experience is their starting point.

23. Izimpande IT and Communication Skills (pty.) Ltd., which became AfriCommunications.

24. Gunner (2008) discusses the efficacy of political song and dance specifically in relation to Zuma's performances.

25. After winning a parliamentary seat in May 2014, Makwazi-Msibi was appointed deputy minister of science and technology.

26. "Amancamnce" on *Impilo* (Max 2002). The song used was "Ungibona engathi ngizokwenana" from the unreleased Shirimani sessions. Siyazi had imagined Shaluzza's use of it would promote the Umzansi Zulu Dancers recording.

27. A growing literature documents musicians' aesthetic intrigue and savvy in world music encounters. Some knowingly enter appropriate relationships with

musical stars to fulfill their own goals (Meintjes 2010). Bolivian Andean musicians have creative and social interest in interacting with Japanese counterparts, while tolerating audience requests for performances of “El Condor Pasa” (Bigenho 2012). A mbalax band incorporates violinist and ethnomusicologist Tang into their band for musical interest and as a gimmick (Tang 2005). Tibetan Buddhists live with their spectacularization in service of their political cause (McLagan 2002).

28. Ngoma dancers share the practice of restoring a long past to overcome the legacy of recent trauma with others. For example, by means of traditional dances for the dead and storytelling animating an idyllic rural past, Okinawans counteract the memory of Japanese colonization and American occupation, though not by erasure. The past(s) are kept uneasily present (Nelson 2008).

29. *Culture Shock*, episode 9. Produced for M-net television by Vanilla Productions, n.d. While Max and Carla visited Siyazi’s homestead, Siyazi’s daughter Welile, her baby, and her mother visited Max’s father, Rehann Calitz, and his housekeeper, Letta. (The film omits Letta’s full name.) They traveled by plane for the first time and it was beautiful, Welile said. She found Rehann to be friendly and kind. Having visited a new place, now Welile is curious to see other places, and they even appeared on television!

30. He wanted to avoid any controversy over his decision in his home community.

31. “MEC Creecy to Launch the Cultural Dance Project,” Gauteng Provincial Government media statement, 27 October 2006. Creecy describes the mission of this project in her budget speech to the Gauteng Legislature, 11 June 2007 (available on the South African Government website, <http://www.gov.za/b-creecy-gauteng-sport-arts-culture-and-recreation-prov-budget-vote-200708>, accessed 20 November 2016).

Closing

1. By washing with blood of goats, the men refer to the ritual sacrifice that honors their ancestors and, in attending to their ancestors, nourishes relationships with them.

2. The umsamo is the coolest, darkest place in a round house, and so the place where the ancestral spirits reside. It is the far back of the house, farthest from the door (see Berglund [1976] 1989, 102–3).

3. No media invitees showed up.

4. Siyazi solicited a new copy from me for the occasion, his being long gone.

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