

**LOST MEANING-NEW TRADITIONS:
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECTS OF MODERNITY ON AFRICAN SOCIAL
TRADITIONAL DANCE IN NYANGA, CAPE TOWN**

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Declaration

I declare that this work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work, each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature

Date

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ABSTRACT

The context, as well as the perceived embodied experiences, of both individual dancers and groups who attempt to earn a living as professional African Black social traditional¹ dancers in the urban settlement of Nyanga, Cape Town, remains a site of vigorous debate. Earlier studies included research around the implications of specific ethnic dance groups in South Africa and their sense of dance creation as well as issues around education. These studies, which are all general in nature, include Van Zyl 1985, Forbes 1986, Baard 1988, Thomas 1989, Roos 1989, Muller 1995, Kutu 1998, Mans 1999, Clark 2000, Rani 2007 and Ngema 2007.

The dancers of Nyanga have taken note of the extent to which modernity has caused them to adjust and transform the movement quality and execution of their dances to create new urban African social dances. In addition, the urban dancers' experiences in the field have affected and influenced their craft. These perspectives have served as a point of departure for a re-evaluation of the role and predicaments of African social traditional dance in an urban environment, with specific reference to Nyanga township and raises questions around the manner in which modern agencies such as Christianity, education, multimedia, fashion and geography influence South African social traditional dance.

This dissertation interrogates the differences between rural and urban styles of dance and dancing. The impact of apartheid and the birth of townships in South Africa, as well as many of the elements that are mentioned above, are discussed in the writing in relation to how the migration from rural to urban areas has affected African dance in a transitional era for social traditional art in South Africa. Further, this dissertation investigates modern influences on South African social traditional dances in Nyanga township through the lens of a performance showcasing social traditional dance at the Eoan Group's Joseph Stone Auditorium. This experience gave rise to debate around many issues, including the choice of rehearsal space, the length of the production, the urban theatrical conventions of costume, choreography and music as well as the suitability of the venue itself. Gender concerns are also addressed based on how the

¹ Having established this term in full, hereafter the dissertation refers to African social traditional dance.

dances are executed conventionally and how adaptation has played a role in altering the tone of these dances and choreography. Western theatre philosophies are challenged due to the perception by many African theatre practitioners that these philosophies continue to dominate theatre practice in South Africa particularly with regard to the conventions of music, costume and theatrical lighting. Matters of multi-culturalism and formal training are similarly contested in relation to the notion of South African social traditional dance². For example: live African social traditional musicians who played djembe, umrhubhe, istolotolo and mbira also now play on Western instruments such as guitars, drum kit and cow bells.

African social traditional dance is a broad term that includes dances originating from African traditional and indigenous culture that have social and religious value. These dances in modern times have taken on performance and entertainment roles. For example; *Amahubo*- a wedding dance used in touristic performance, is combined with *Isishameni*, stick dancing, an adaptation which would not have occurred in the past. Given then, the transformation and adaptation of South African social traditional dance under modern influences, the central question remains: Is African social traditional dance in South Africa still traditional and/or indigenous despite the dilution?

In order to attempt to answer this question, the writing addresses the following issues.

CHAPTER ONE: Provides the background and context for this study by presenting an overview of the historical developments responsible for the current status quo in urban African dance, and includes a summary of my own context as a dancer, choreographer and teacher who emerged from Nyanga township. The significance of dance in the context of rural practices in Southern Africa (and the African continent at large), is contrasted with subsequent and concurrent developments in the urban setting of Nyanga township. A range of researchers in the fields of Ethnomusicology, Dance Ethnology, Anthropology and South African history serve as relevant sources of material and are reviewed as part of this chapter. The chapter concludes with a detailed synopsis of the key questions that are investigated as part of this study.

² A social traditional dance implies a consistency that has its own boundaries and parameters. Implied in the definition of social tradition are the requisite confines of the rules and norms of that society that the art forms manifest (Welsh -Asante 1987:178).

CHAPTER TWO: Presents information on the demarcated area of the study: Nyanga, Cape Town, South Africa. Demographic information, i.e. exact location and historical background is referred to. The research methodology is placed in its theoretical context, both with reference to the general principles of ethnographic research and to etic-emic research frameworks devised by dance ethnologists and ethnomusicologists.

CHAPTER THREE: Analyses the literature surrounding the study thus foregrounding the research area. This section is one of the vital parts of my research as it introduces and reveals the work of the researchers who specialise in my topic of choice. This chapter reviews literature that specifically looks at synthesizing and interpreting previous research. The goal is to extrapolate detailed, cutting-edge knowledge of my topic.

CHAPTER FOUR: Provides a theoretical review and the in-depth views of three chosen scholars that are favourably aligned to this research topic which in its essence interrogates the transformation of social traditional dances to accommodate modernity in Nyanga, Cape Town since the 1980s. The chosen scholars' discourses are discussed in this chapter alongside an exploration of the subject matter. The model of established South African social traditional dances that emerges from this chapter will be deliberated. While a researcher has the choice of situating the model within the selection of theorists such as Snipe 1996, Primus 1996, Nicholls 1996, Bhola 2002 and others, as has become fashionable in many recent African dance studies, I have deliberately avoided this route by specifically contextualising the emergent model within the Nyanga township dance environment, with reference to Diaspora and Western dance philosophies. This chapter does not dwell on the past. Instead it searches for ways in which the past and present have 'shaped' the future and complemented each other without trivialisation. There will be an exploration of urban influences and modernism in order to discuss their role in the social traditional dances of South Africa.

Chapter Five provides a contextual background for the chosen work *Diamond out of the Rubbish*. The chapter discusses the context of Nyanga township and includes analyses of various photographs taken between the years 2000-2009. The historical background

leading up to the production and the rationale for the creation of a choreographic work such as the *Diamond out of the Rubbish* is discussed, the questions concerning the modern influences in the Township style of dancing echoing throughout. This chapter provides examples that should bring understanding to the topic in order to show modernity and how the show got to be performed at the Joseph Stone auditorium.

CHAPTER SIX: presents an analysis of *Diamond out of the Rubbish*; its contexts, and the shifts and discussions around the work. The chapter discusses the use of theatrical spaces, costuming and choreographic discourses. It places the data collected during interviews within a scholarly context. Such an in-depth discussion is by no means intended to devalue the perspectives of the dancers that are interviewed, but rather to provide a context-rich setting for the more personal and, to some extent, polemic findings in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN: summarises the conclusions and recommendations of the study. Technical-analytic components of this dissertation involve the description of urban dance techniques and performances, as well as their comparison with older-traditional technique practices. These analyses are illustrated by means of an appended DVD that presents the audio-visual material collected as part of the research.

CHAPTER ONE

A Context for this Study

Introduction

Dance in South Africa has undergone many changes since the time of the First World War, and has not been left untouched by the influences of colonisation and urbanisation. Nicholls, among others, has argued that modernity is having an adverse affect on traditional dance in Africa (1996:15). The influence of education, mass media, Christianity and urbanisation has eroded indigenous culture, and it ceases to be practiced (Bhola 2002:7). One township dweller described the effect of urbanisation and modernity to Kevin Cox as follows:

People who have culture, to me, are those who strive to keep their traditions alive, even if they have appreciation for the cultures of others. Most people in the city disregard the culture of African people. Even those who claim to practice it mostly talk about their own modified cultures, not The Culture. Many no longer practice the fundamental rituals of African culture. I mean, they no longer consult with their ancestors. And as soon as you have forsaken your ancestors, you have lost culture (Cox 2005:27).

Nyanga is my place of birth. I have witnessed the fusion of various ethnic backgrounds- Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Venda and Tswana. I have experienced firsthand the effects of assimilation into the modern urban society, and seen just how the forms of African social traditional dances have gradually changed

I grew up in Nyanga Township at the “Old Location” where my career as a dancer began. I was almost 11 years old when I began to learn traditional dances. I started in Gugulethu township learning the *Zingili* dance style, a typical Zulu style. My teacher, Douglas, was originally from KwaZulu Natal in Durban and he worked in a shop in Nyanga as a salesman. The shop was called *eziNzuleni* (a derogative name meaning ‘a cow’). I became a member of a group that Douglas taught for, *Izilo Zakwantu*, which was originally from Gugulethu (our pride) township. The director of the dance group was Sisi Evelyn, a beautiful musician and a dancer. It was then that my love for dance was instilled and my passion drove me to love it even more. I would walk to Gugulethu every

afternoon, Monday through Thursday, to rehearse in Sisi Evelyn's dining room as there was no space in the Community Centre at that time. The spaces were granted to the church meetings, community meetings and social or political meetings. We were accustomed to performing every weekend at private functions, for non-governmental organisations and mostly for the Red Cross Organisation, which is where Sisi Evelyn was employed. The *Izillo Zakwantu* group formed by Sisi Evelyn had its own repertoire that consisted of *SiSwati* dance style, typically from the Swazi people, and *Zingili*. In retrospect, I realise that these two very distinct and different 'outsider' styles were well received and respected in what was a dominantly Xhosa area. However, Nyanga was the place I danced in for a large part of my childhood and until I was an adult I was involved in sharing performance space with community dance groups from Nyanga such as *Siyakhala*, *Mabutho*, *Izilo zakwantu* and *Siyakha*. I was and still am, involved with many dance groups in Nyanga.

The question that remains, is how those "outsider" dances came to be acknowledged in such a way? And why were Xhosa dances not practiced? Perhaps it is because most of our dances (Xhosa) appear very static and simple and some people may find them boring and less dynamic. The older Xhosa generations often comment that the Xhosa do not have many dance games or plays/drama. This is in contrast to the Zulu people who have extensive plays with musical accompaniments and a huge dance vocabulary. At that time of my life, I was attending the New Crossroad School called X3 (later called *Nomlinganiselo*-Xhosa for 'equal'). I was what they called a "cross-over" because I was attending school in another neighborhood.

In the late 1980s, a fight occurred between rival gangs from the townships of Gugulethu, Nyanga and New Cross Roads. New Cross Roads is part of the Old Cross Roads and it is in between the two old townships. The conflict affected school boundaries, particularly those of the high schools X3 *Nomlinganiselo* ("to measure" in Xhosa) and *Sizamile* ("we have tried" in Xhosa). *Sizamile* was renamed after a political activist from Zwelitsha in Nyanga, Oscar Mpetha, who defied the apartheid government on matters of the Pass Laws. The people who lived in Nyanga and attended school in another township like New Cross Roads (located close to Gugulethu) were forced to find schools located in

their own neighborhood. This also meant that I was not able to attend rehearsals in Gugulethu and was forced to abandon the group. Although it was painful to lose good dancing friends and the style of dance to which I was becoming accustomed, I continued to dance.

At a later stage I was invited to join the group in Nyanga called Manyanani, ('to unite' in Xhosa). The group was run by men and women from Nyanga who had returned to South Africa after traveling around the United States of America working in the circus and dancing as warriors in the Zulu style. The most influential figure of the group, "Sticks" Mzwakhe Mdidimba, was looking for new recruits to think and work from new angles. This group kept my interest because of how effectively the members worked together, their sense of pride and how community-oriented they were. We used to hold free performances for the people of Nyanga and although we were not paid, the commitment and dedication of members kept the group, which involved our families, as well as the dancers, together. Our group showcased an alternative lifestyle to the people of Nyanga, demonstrating that some of us were capable of leading lives without drugs or corruption and were involved in our education. Our group helped raise drug awareness, sexual awareness and issues related to the problems of gangs. Rehearsals kept us away from gang activity or any other mischievous behaviour. That was a good enough reason for most of the youth and specially teenagers to want to join in the group's journey. Most parents were very enthusiastic about the positive drive of the group and encouraged the youth to live a positive lifestyle. Many other dance groups began to be established. With more resources now in place, the Zolani Center became a popular place for people involved in different art forms to develop their skills. It was a place for youth to go to as an alternative to getting involved in gang activity. It provided opportunities for dancing, cooking, karate, body building, poetry, acting, sewing, table tennis, snooker boards, Kareem boards (similar to a pool table) and other crafts. Manyanani set an example and indirectly empowered teenagers to get involved in activities in the community.

After Matriculating in 1991, my grandparents sent me to a French private institution called Fonds Ouvrier ('workers fund') in Woodstock, Cape Town. The institution

collaborated with Alliance Francaise and the French University in Paris. An important influence on my life was the late David Poole, then Director of CAPAB Ballet (now Cape Town City Ballet) and former Director of the University of Cape Town's Ballet School (now School Of Dance) with whom I had established a close relationship through my aunt who worked for him in Camps Bay. He worked with Manyanani from 1985, He was a very firm and dedicated teacher who visited the Nyanga Township on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at Zolani Centre to teach ballet classes. Through his influence, we were exposed to performances in the late 1980s by Val Steyn's Pace Dance Company and Alfred Hinkel's JazzArt Dance Theatre. David Poole and I enjoyed extensive conversations about all kinds of dance, art and music. He would invite the Manyanani group to ballet performances like Nutcracker and Swan Lake at various times. It was also through his influence that the dance group became more versatile, to the extent of incorporating other dance art forms into our repertoire. Through these new facilitating interested parties and resulting collaborations, we managed to create South African contemporary pieces based on Steyn's specialties: modern dance, jazz, *Pantsula* and *Gumboot* dance. The group's popularity grew and was well received in predominantly White suburbs. Eventually, even international tours took place taking us as far as Canada, London and France. During this time, I acquired most of my knowledge of African and contemporary dance. I was inspired by the material I was learning especially from artists originally from Africa. They were artists who had migrated to Europe mostly due to work opportunities and were aided by their ability to speak French. Most of the artists I met in France were from areas such as Senegal, Burkina Faso, Gambia and Cote D'Ivoire.

In 1998, I registered at UCT for the newly introduced BMus in African Dance. This was my first time in a formal dance institution and I began to understand the studio version of African dance and the importance of codification in a class-teaching method in order for progression to take place. I was able to re-focus on experiences from my earlier environment and redirect those within the theatre and university environments. It was classes in contemporary dance that revealed to me how art and dance are not stagnant but evolve and develop through time and space and I now began to experiment with Afro-fusion choreography. I recognized Spanish dance as having commonalities with

African dance, especially the use of vocal music and the *cahon* as an instrument played by hand in a polyrhythmic fashion. The theoretical aspects of the course introduced me to Benesh Movement Notation which investigates and documents movement, Ethnomusicology which allowed me to study African Musical Instruments and to understand their historical background and Teaching Methodology which included child development and shaped my teaching abilities. Beyond the dance department, an introduction to Anthropology and Archaeology helped me to understand the significance of dance research. Above all, the university provided me with a library and other resources to research companies from Africa, Europe and America.

All these influences persuaded me that I wanted to be present when an inevitable transition from traditional to neo-traditional¹-and contemporary dance art took place. I hoped to be able to be part of the creation of a community that would be open minded and take the South African social traditional dance form, an area which had emerged as my main focus of interest, into the global arena. I would like to mention that I am aware of the complexities concerning the term 'African dance', as it comes with a lot of generalization behind it. This term is an umbrella for most dances that are found amongst most black African communities, starting from indigenous till contemporary era. The term is used because of its popularity and its legacy amongst Africa dance scholars. A broader explanation of the term 'African dance' later avoids generalization and inappropriation.

Indigenous Dance in South Africa: A Short Overview

Indigenous knowledge may be broadly defined as the “knowledge that an indigenous (local) community accumulates over generations of living in a particular environment” (www.Unep.org). The term ‘indigenous’² means “having originated in and being produced, growing, living, or occurring naturally in a particular region or environment” (Merriam Webster Dictionary Online). This definition encompasses all forms of

¹ According to the dictionary.com neo-traditional means reviving traditional methods, combining traditional with newer elements. www.dictionary.reference.com

² The term “indigenous” comes from the late Latin *indigenus*, from Latin *indigena*, noun, native, from Old Latin *indu*, *endo* in, within + Latin *gignere* to beget (Merriam Webster Dictionary Online).

knowledge, including dance practices, that enables the community to achieve stable livelihoods in their environment (Nzewi 2007:73). The emphasis of the indigenous knowledge system is to deepen knowledge resources already in existence within communities and strengthen the intellectual endeavours of indigenous individuals and communities in developing countries in general (Hoppers 2002:33, Ntuli 2002:24, Mazonde & Thomas 2007:26). Indigenous knowledge of dance is unique to every culture and society. In Africa, it is embedded in community practices, institutions, relationships and rituals.

Dance has been an important part of community practices and life in Africa and is one subset of Indigenous Knowledge that gives insight into a set of experiences generated by people living in those communities. It is one subset of local tradition that has developed over centuries of experimentation with ways to adapt to local conditions. Dance, therefore, represents the accumulated knowledge of a people and embodies the collective wisdom and resourcefulness of the community. African dance, like many types of indigenous knowledge, has guided indigenous peoples as to how to deal with local issues (Bhola 2002:8). Anthropologist, Ntuli expands on the theme that indigenous knowledge, in forms such as the role of festivals and carnivals, helped to maintain peace within communities (Ntuli 2002:23). Dance as an extension of these types of rituals has been viewed as not only an important recreational activity, but also as an accurate portrayal of the psyche of the people (Primus in Green, C. 1946:23, Hanna 1965:7).

Indigenous dances in Africa vary according to purpose. There are dances that have existed for centuries, and originated in the rural areas of Africa based on "birth, death, puberty, marriage, hailing a new chief, discovering evil spirits" (Primus 1965:15). For example, in a situation where an event (the naming of a new born, new chief, seasonal change, etc.) requiring dance and music occurs, this could be described as a "title event". Everyone in the community can come and watch the dance. Most of the time, dance and music are accompanied by dramatic enactments in association with title ceremonies (Nzewi 2007:74). Cultural upbringing in indigenous communities lends itself towards the production of individuals within the society who are educated in dance, music, arts and other cultural activities. They acquire skills such as rhythm, spontaneity and

individual interpretation which allow dancers to execute choreography without specific training or rehearsal. The occurrence of African indigenous dances of any category is suitable for the study of individual personality traits, as well as the correcting of socially inhibited dispositions (Primus 1965:16, Nzewi 2007:75).

Social traditional explains the social function of indigenous dance in Africa. The term social traditional dance³ refers to any dance-related social tradition such as, initiation, which is passed on through generations and is recognised by most members of the community as being of, for, and by that community (Welsh Asante 1996:23)⁴. In an earlier publication, Welsh-Asante stated:

Social traditional dances generally explicitly imply a consistency that has its own boundaries and parameters. Implied in the definition of social tradition are the requisite confines of the rules and norms of that society that the art forms manifest (Welsh-Asante 1996:178).

Social traditional dances can be sacred, to be attended by selected insiders, but can also be open for the entire community to partake in (Bhola 2002:8, Nzewi 2007:94). Although removed from its place of origin, social traditional dances remain traditional in the sense that the dance has evolved and been passed down and is social in the sense that it is communal. Kariamum Welsh-Asante, author of *The African Aesthetic* (1994) argues, that implied in the definition of social tradition, are rules and norms of the society that the art form manifests (Welsh-Asante 1987:178). Nicholls expands on the idea of social-traditional dances by suggesting that most African dances are integrated into specific social situations. Not only are dances performed on particular occasions, but the movements and drum rhythms must have already been learnt by the dancers (Nicholls in Welsh-Asante 1996:15). According to Doris Green, dance in African culture is a way of life (in Welsh-Asante 1996: 45). This culture is passed down from generation to generation within a group for religious, social or other ceremonial purposes (Snipe 1996:68). As indicated earlier, culture and thus dance, is associated with everyday

³ This term is commonly used in tertiary dance institutions such as University of Cape Town School of Dance, Agriculture and Technology University, Greensboro (USA), Temple University, Philadelphia (USA) to distinguish between different African dance categories. The difference between traditional and indigenous is discussed later in this chapter.

⁴ In some of the scholarly works Dr. Kariamum is referenced as Kariamum Welsh, in others as Kariamum Welsh-Asante.

activities such as birth, death, puberty, war, recreation, initiation and ritual (ibid:64). Dance is a way to communicate, to express feelings and beliefs and to preserve historical and cultural traditions. African dance is not detached from people, but part of “a whole complex of living” (Primus in Welsh-Asante 1996:6). It functions as the community’s cultural and artistic expression (Snipe 1996:63). Primus describes African dance as “a hypnotic marriage between life and dance” (in Welsh-Asante 1996:6). There are different scholarly discourses around the use of the term “African”. Although there is the notion of sub-Saharan Africa, I am in favour of utilizing “African”, because of the popularity of the word and ancient usage. According to scholar and established researcher on Afrocentricity, Frantz Fanon, the Sub-Sahara is rooted in racism, which in part assumes that a little sand is an obstacle for African people. He explains further that:

This barrier of sand hence confines the notion of some invisible border, which divides the North of Africa from the South. This barrier of sand hence confines/confined Africans to the bottom of this make-believe location, which exist neither politically or physically. (Fanon 1967:29)

Social traditional dance also tends to be participatory in nature, and the role of the dancer and the observer is often interchangeable (Nicholls in Welsh-Asante 1996:143). In the relatively self-contained social systems of rural⁵ Africa, dance (in association with music, song and storytelling) plays a vital role in the daily life of African people⁶ and

⁵ Rural areas, also referred to as the ‘country’, or countryside, are sparsely settled places away from the influence of large cities. According to Blakely (1984), “major features previously used to define rural, simple life, agriculture, smallness, homogeneity, and dullness. Such areas may be distinguished from more intensively settled urban and suburban areas, and also from unsettled lands such as the outback or wilderness. People in rural areas live in towns, villages, on farms and in other isolated areas.” Also, “[r]urality can also be determined by population density; rural areas have an agricultural character, remote communities, and limited or absent public transport, requiring people to, usually, use their own cars, but if this impractical they may walk, bicycle, or ride a horse, donkey or camel”(Shahadah 2005).

⁶ Owen “Alik Shahadah agrees with Fanon by saying that Sub-Saharan Africa is the term used to describe those countries of the African continent that are not considered part of North Africa. In 19th century Europe and the Western world, the area was sometimes referred to as “Black Africa”. Africa as a whole was commonly known as ‘the Dark Continent’, a term that was usually intended to refer to the Sub-Saharan region. This was partly due to the skin colour of its inhabitants and partly because much of it had not been fully mapped or explored by Westerners. According to these scholars, these terms are now obsolete and often considered to be pejorative. Apart from Fanon and Shahadah views on ‘African’ rather than ‘sub-Saharan Africa’, it is also a fact that dance practitioners divide dance offered at institutions in three streams, namely Ballet, Contemporary/ Modern and African. Scholarly works on dance across the world do not use the term ‘sub-Saharan African’ and the term was not found in scholarly works including those by Sir Rex Nettleford, Hilary Carty, Kariamu Welsh-Asante, Tracy Snipe, Robert Nicholls, Doris Green, Robert Farris Thomson, Sylvia Glasser, to name a few.

forms an inextricable part of the social customs that defined cultural, social and clan groups (Thompson 1966, Hanna 1976, Nettleford 1985, Carty 1988, Glasser 1997 Green. D. 1996; Nicholls 1996; Snipe 1996; Welsh-Asante 1996). According to Ajayi (1996:184), African dance is not only a crucial way of communicating the sacred, but also leaves room for vocational, transcendental and celebrative dances. African dance scholar, Tracy Snipe elaborates on this idea as follows:

African dance is an expression of a physical, psychological and spiritual state of being that enables people to give meaning and context to their greatest joys, hopes, frustrations, fears or sorrows (1996:23).

Although this statement can be applied to many different dance forms, Doris Green, in *Traditional Dance in Africa*, argues that African dance is not like any art form; it is not art merely for the sake of art, but is rather a source of communication (1996:9).

Within the different ethnic groups of South Africa, dance plays an important role in social communal functions. Renowned South African Ethnomusicologist, Andrew Tracey (2004) discusses the diversity of the South African 'black' ethnic groups and the manner in which they use dance as part of the social entity. He comments that in the Witwatersrand (Gauteng), the Xhosa *Umteyo* could be found in the same competition or stage setting as Zulu Christian dancers of the Independence Church. Therefore differing forms appeared parallel to one another and had different social meanings regardless of the event that they were sharing.

The distinctive features of indigenous dance derive from their respective creative-presentational intentions. Free movements and stylized semi-formal movements are two aspects of indigenous dance. The indigenous concept of free form dancing involves mass participation or communal dancing in a music-making situation. In some instances, other cultural issues may restrict participation to a select category of people. This is necessitated by the ownership of musical and dance arts types. For instance, those who are allowed to relate demonstratively to a musical dance type for association of titled persons have earned the particular title. Thus, in a situation where a music and dance event is presented, the community's role as an audience which can observe and appreciate is merely supportive.

Stylized dancing implies that the dance steps, phrases, sequences, formation and syntax are systematically choreographed and learned. There will be defined group patterns, prescribed standardized movement and pathways, specified use of space and application of effort. Participation is reserved for those who have learnt the dance through attendance at rehearsals, as special structural relationships such as formation dance or in-group dance sequences and changes of direction may feature. The indigenous dance styles and aspects are called free medley and stylized formation by Nzewi (2007:73).

Effects of Colonisation and Christianity on Dance in Africa

Because of Africa's colonial legacy, African indigenous dance has long been devalued as an art form. Although black people were well versed in Europe's cultural heritage, colonisers were not often well-informed about "the heritage of the vanquished" (Mudimbe 1994:120). The colonial system forced Africans to submit to a transformation that was taking place; indigenous knowledge was devalued, and colonisers imposed their own strategies in their mission to "domesticate African minds and create a new idea of Africa" (ibid). According to researcher Michael de Creteau, the colonisers carried out these intentions by playing with tactics to compromise and subvert African cultural traditions. This they did by playing one tradition against the other and even attempting to suggest alternatives to traditions (De Creteau in Mudimbe 1994:129). Change has affected the ways of 'black' Africans and therefore the manner in which these traditions are reflected and translated into dance. Judith Hanna, in *Africa's New Traditional Dance* (1965) explains that before European contact, changes in such dance generally came from situations within the indigenous cultures. However, the forces of change launched by European occupation have buffeted indigenous African religions. These include Christianity, Western education, "improved" communication and transportation systems and new urban centres. In many areas, Christianity has replaced indigenous religions or caused them to be transformed in accordance with changing needs. The full extent to which missionaries affected dance is exemplified by Hanna's statement: "The Christian missionaries, with the cooperation of the imperial administrators, probably

were most directly responsible for the modification, suppression, or disappearance of traditional dancing” (1976:13).

When these missionaries were exposed to indigenous African culture, they often approached it with negative perceptions. According to Nettleford, “African dance for a long time was reported, described and classified as ‘licentious, savage and heathenistic’” (1990:15). He points out that in the circumstances of the dynamics of ‘coloniser-colonised’, “the dance and all other artistic expressions of the overlord take precedence over those of the subjugated” (ibid:17). Simply put, Westerners did not appreciate African dance. According to Hanna, Europeans saw African dance as uninhibited, sexual and vulgar. African dances were reduced to movement that was “obscene, child-like, primitive, noisy, and inferior” (Hanna 1976:14). Motivated by an irrational fear of the unknown, these comments made by missionaries and Western agencies when they came across indigenous dance practices, were ways in which to rationalise their practices and undermine African traditions.

These agencies portrayed African dances in a negative light without an understanding of history or context. In South Africa in particular, Europeans colonisers brought ballet with them. During the apartheid era, according to pioneer Afro fusion choreographer Sylvia Glasser, ballet was considered for ‘whites’ only and was well supported by the government. The apartheid government distinguished between African traditional dances and ‘high art’ which came from the Western aesthetic tradition. Ballet was the main component of this ‘high art’ (Glasser 1997:83). It was accessible only to the white middle class and supported by the government and businesses. On the other hand, African dance forms were viewed through a Western lens as primitive, exotic and simple, and were given little place or value (Waterman & Van Papendorp 1997:174-175). An argument illustrating this clash of aesthetics is poignantly exemplified by a story about renowned ballerina Anna Pavlova’s visit to South Africa. In 1926 Pavlova was introduced to a Zulu dancer as “the best dancer in the world,” to which he replied, “No, I am the best dancer in the world” (Hurwitz 1997: 109). Unfortunately the name of the Zulu dancer is not mentioned but it would have been informative and important to acknowledge that. What this illustration demonstrates is the different standards by

which the two dancers in very different dance fields were being measured. Western ideals of what constituted good art did not allow for the Zulu dancer's skills and talents to be appreciated (ibid:110).

The arrival of Christianity in South Africa has, in my view, exerted a detrimental effect on the conservation of African social traditional dance. Dance had always been an integral part of African traditional religion, as traditional religion was a central part of dance (Ajayi in Welsh-Asante 1996:193). However, Christianity challenged not only the place of dance in religion, but also the existence of traditional dance itself. When Christianity was implemented in Africa, Christian worship was dominated by verbal expression and efforts were made to publicise the gospel as the sacred word (Comaroff & Comaroff 1997:76). "There was no place for dance in religion, and its primacy became threatened" (Ajayi in Welsh-Asante 1996:192). Further, because it was vital for Christian missionaries to establish an undisputed monopoly of their beliefs, "the sacred dance was blamed for perpetuating traditional religion and became the target of unbelieving and often indiscriminate attack" (ibid). Modernity and Western religion have also caused many traditional dances to become secularised, losing much of their original context and meaning (Hazzard-Gordon in Welsh-Asante 1996:109). Although dance was targeted and repressed as an agent that perpetuated traditional religion which was seen by missionaries as a threat, it is still an important force in religious worship in Africa today. It has been "appropriated" and has become integral to Christianity, the religion that initially sought its destruction (Ajayi in Welsh-Asante 1996:200). The damaging effects of the coloniser's religion not only affected the dance but the dignity and self worth of African people.

A Short Introduction to Urbanisation in South Africa

Urbanisation in the South African context is seen as the movement of people from rural to so-called "developed" communities (Wisner 1995:54). There was a rapid expansion in the 19th century due to the development of the mining industry, railway building and economic growth. Until 1870, South Africa was primarily an agricultural country. "The discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand and diamonds in Kimberley, however, caused a massive migration of people from rural areas to the cities as they came looking for work

in the mines” (Louw 2004:107). A large number of ‘black’ people in the Southern part of Africa flocked to Johannesburg for economic reasons, leaving their families, loved ones and parents in order to be part of industrialisation (Wilson & Ramphele 1989, Weiner & Levin 1991, Cooper 1991). Diamonds, railroads, and mining were the three major industries influencing the development of urbanisation within South Africa. The growth of the mining industry, and further industrialisation in the 1970s was attributed to “the discovery of diamonds and the commencement of railroad building” (Stent 1948:163). Likewise, mining affected the population growth in urban areas. A huge redistribution of the population coincided with the expansion of the mining and secondary industries. In 1865 there were less than twenty towns in all Southern Africa with a population of more than 1,000 persons. By 1904, there were 1,200,000 people living in urban areas, the majority in a few relatively large cities. By 1936 there were over 3 million (ibid 1948:164, Posel 2003:34). Thus, modernity and industrialisation caused many South Africans to move to cities.

Black people also migrated to urban areas as a result of the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts. These acts restricted black settlements to a few well-defined rural areas which were largely unsuitable for farming. The black population could no longer make a living in rural areas. They were forced to abandon subsistence living and moved to the cities (Gelderblom 2004:123). State interventions were also put in place to mobilise and control labour, preventing urban settlement (Ramphele 1989:23, Posel 2003:14). Thus, the changing contexts of urban versus rural areas led not only to the decline of a rural way of life, but also to the expansion of urban areas and their concomitant values in South Africa. According to Stent, urbanisation was due to the expansion of mining in the urban areas, and the decline of productivity in the countryside of South Africa. (1948:168). Within this context, the value of money became much more significant. This process coincided with a decline of the subsistence economies in the rural areas, and a rise in the exchange or monetary economy associated with the urban areas. Life changed from one where a clan was made up of families, each a self-contained unit with a division of labour between the sexes and age groups, to urban family households. “Black urbanisation accelerated rapidly in the 20th century, from 13% in 1911 to 33% in 1970 and 38.6% in 1980. Mostly men came from the rural areas” (Louw 2004:123).

Some of the young unmarried men, anxious for adventures and to prove their manhood, required little encouragement to see the white man's world ... work meant money, and a short spell of work would suffice to buy goods for which a desire was growing. With money, food could be bought if harvests were bad (Stent 1948:168).

These men came from different backgrounds with different levels of experience. Migrant workers were classified in a variety of ways. Some workers came into town for short periods of work for a few months, some spent all their potential working lives in wage-employment, and some, who were getting on in years, were new to urban wage-employment. Others had long records of urban employment, having had a number of jobs. Their movement was not always necessarily voluntary (Ramphela 1989:26). Situations worsened after World War II because opportunities became scarce. Migration no longer became a matter of choice, but a necessity for survival. "The desolate rural settlements underwent a process of displaced urbanisation and were no longer tied to a rural lifestyle" (Erlmann 1990:200). By 1986, at least 50% of South Africa's black African population was living in urban areas (Louw 2004:108). When laws on black migration were lifted in 1994 with the creation of the new South African government, migration rates rose even more sharply, and South Africa became the most urbanised region in sub-Saharan Africa (ibid:110).

Since the latter part of the 20th century, black South Africans have been drawn to urban areas, more commonly referred to as townships in the hopes of a higher general standard of education, better housing, employment opportunities, the possibility of piped water, decent sanitation services and food subsidies (Van Vuuren *et al.* 1983, Rakodi 1997, Louw 2004:110). However, the allure of an expected improved lifestyle was often overly romanticised, as the living conditions are very poor. "The so-called 'housing' frequently consists of old pieces of iron, sacking, wood poles, mud, and anything else at hand. Sanitary provisions are often absent, water and lighting not laid on [...]" (Stent 1948:182). Many townships do not have good housing, educational facilities and clinics (Aboutorabi & Abdelhalim 2000).

In urban areas, rural black migrants resided in secluded quarters like hostels and squatter camps⁷. For example, in the 1970s, the homeless amongst black South Africans in Cape Town took up residence in illegal shacks built in the backyards of existing formal township houses in Nyanga. This pattern began to change in the 1980s as freestanding squatter settlements sprang up throughout the Cape Town region (Crankshaw 1993:10). However, already by the early 1980s, the numbers of squatters had increased to the point where the Cape Town City Council Board took steps to evict illegal tenants. Squatters later became unpopular and were the first to suffer harassment and face trespass charges. According to Owen Crankshaw, with reference to the growing number of informal settlements⁸:

In 1987 the shack settlement attracted only small numbers of new residents. By the end of 1986 the total numbers of shacks in all these different settlements did not exceed 300. However, after the abolishing of influx control laws in mid 1986 these settlements grew rapidly. Within the period of a year the number of squatters in the district tripled to about 1,200 (Crankshaw 1993:33).

This movement of black African people within South African borders towards urban settlement was to lead to several alterations and modifications to traditional movement and dance aesthetics.

The Effects of Urbanisation on traditional dance in South Africa

If the cause of urbanisation was a need for expansion, growth, and production, the end result was the destruction, reconstruction and adaptation of social traditions (ibid:34). This mass migration had an enormous effect on African social traditional culture in the sense that traditional culture usually refers to cultural continuity transmitted in the form of “social attitudes, beliefs, principles, and conventions of behavior and practices derived from historical experience and migration changed these aspects” (Berkes

⁷ “Squatter Camp” refers to a semi-permanent dwelling area, that consists of shacks made of woods, and cardboard, tin and other scrap material. Whole families live in a single shack the size of a garden shed. Open fire are used for cooking and candles for light. These shacks often catch fire where there are accidents. The majority of the camps still do not have running water, sewerage pipes, gas or electricity” (www.allwords.com/word-squatter+camp).

⁸ The term “Informal Settlement” is used interchangeably with Squatter Camp.” www.allwords.com-_squatter+camp.

1999:43). Through the process of urbanisation, the performing arts moved from indigenous places of birth to urban areas. New traditions were born out of the movement of indigenous practices. Erlmann states: "One of the central issues in studies of cultural processes surrounding labor migration in the recent years concerns the role of music, dance, and theatre as vehicles of the adaptation of rural populations to the urban environment" (Erlmann 1990:199).

Since the colonisation of Africa, traditional South African dance has undergone extensive changes (ibid). Western influence and rural-to-urban migration have changed the physical, socio-cultural and ideological spaces in which dance takes place. As people moved to townships, cultures clashed and both hybrid and new forms were created. One causal factor of this change has been the mix of different cultures or multiculturalism (Richards 2007:40). People from different South African clans were moving to the townships to find work, including people from Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Venda and Tswana ethnic backgrounds. These are very distinct cultural groups with widely varying traditions. This merging and collaboration of different cultures has impacted on the meaning, context and function of African performing arts, including the sphere of dance (Erlmann 1990:199). The effects of urbanisation and assimilation into the dominant ideologies of modern society caused a new wave of social-traditional dances, in which geographical boundaries and culturally defined distinctions have increasingly played a less significant role.

As an example, based on my phenomenological knowledge of indigenous South African dances, as a black African dancer I have observed and embodied the varying aesthetics of the many South African dances to which I am exposed.⁹ While the dance movements differ, the different ethnic groups also have widely varying rituals and beliefs concerning issues of the rites of passage. Dance became one element of culture that began to permeate an entire society as a result of urbanisation and industrialisation. For example, Hugh Tracey author of, *African Dance in the Mines of Witwatersrand* (1943), states that competitions were established thus marking the beginning of a multicultural

7. Xhosa traditional dances involve a lot of shuffling, shimmying and digging, while Tswana dances requires dynamics that are identical to the San people. Sotho dances include a lot of striding, in particular from the man, as per the mountainous terrains from which their clans descend.

entertainment arena. According to Tracey, the different aesthetics evident were based on different ethnic backgrounds. He explains that the distinct aesthetics of Dlamini (Xhosa clan) performed by males of the Bhaca-a Xhosa clan were demonstrated by the usage of the armpit as a sound maker that is enforced by a knee movement. The stamping of the foot is marked by a sharp backward move of the head. Instead of stamping in a Xhosa *ndlamu* style with a basic leg usage, the Bhaca used a knee to engage with the armpit to imitate the sound of a stamp. To achieve this, one leg is lifted off the floor as a preparation, and the knee connects with the armpit as the arm is swung over and forward as a consequence of the rounding of the spine.

African traditional/ Indigenous performing arts such as Zulu *isicathamiya* (male choral music), Sotho miners' *sefela* songs and Zulu migrants' *ingoma* dance styles have been associated with industrialisation and urbanisation in the shifting socioeconomic and political context of South Africa. One of the most detailed explanations of the movement and aesthetics of the popular high frontal stamp or kick found in Zulu dance, *Ngoma*, is described by Meintjes:

After a preparatory sequence, the dancer's right knee bends, his back arches, his head tilts back. He extends his right arm over his head as his left leg stretches back to prepare for the pick-up to the beat. The forward thrust of his left arm balances his taut (sic) and arching body. Then, as if a spring suddenly triggered, he kicks his left leg into the sky, curls his torso and shoots his right arm forward to balance his one-legged stance. His skyward foot thunders down onto the ground on the beat, gqi (2004:174).

Development of the African social traditional dance in South Africa must be understood as a cultural strategy corresponding with the changing rural domestic modes of production and the formation of urban wage and labour systems. Although some of the characteristics were derived from models that were rural and indigenous, their ultimate future rests in the urban context (Erlmann 1990:200). When Africans of different cultures met in urban areas, such as the Johannesburg gold mines, they met in a new environment "with peculiar culture, values and norms to which they willy-nilly had to adapt" (Maqoma 2001:75). Through such a cocktail of cultures and traditions in one space, the domestication of movements, language, dress codes and dances came into play.

The mix of cultures led to a dilution of differences in favour of the new culture or nation. The mixing of cultures encourages a direction towards multiculturalism which can be a positive practice because it is based on:

the political accommodation by the state and/or a dominant group of all minority cultures defined first and foremost by reference to race or ethnicity; and more controversially, by reference to nationality, aboriginality, or religion, the latter being groups that tend to make larger claims and so tend to resist having their claims reduced to those of immigrants (Jackson 1987).

However, with modernity and the subsequent migration to the cities, people's loyalty shifted from the village to the township, city or nation (Tracey, H. 1943:14, Ramphele 1989:26). They attempted to submerge their differences to forge a new unity, resulting in a loss of diversity and traditions that came from particular villages (Hanna 1976:4). When people move from rural homelands to townships, their dances also take place in a completely new physical and geographical environment. Traditionally, dance and the environment were intimately connected. According to Primus:

African dance uses the earth as if it were an extension of the dancer's own feet, as if it were a stage of rubber from which he can bounce to the skies, as if it were a soft bed upon which he could roll and be protected (in Welsh-Asante 1996: 6-7).

This love of the earth, Primus argues, is one of the main factors of African dance and gives the dance a certain "vitality and dynamic strength" (ibid). However, in townships people have had to adapt dance to new environments and contexts. Often these spaces were very small and cramped with no "earth" for gardening or farming. The urban environment forced various dance traditions to exist side by side, often divorced from their original context and in contra-distinction to one another. In addition to a new physical space, urban migration to the townships caused traditional dance to take place in new socio-cultural spaces such as beerhalls and shebeens. Initially, most migrants to the cities were single male workers and new township communities did not have the same demographic makeup as villages. For example, mining communities were largely made up of male workers, while women and children remained in the rural areas. The *Gumboot* dance, a workers' dance that evolved in the mines, incorporates highly

complex rhythms anchored in weight, an element of competition and vocal call and response where socio-political elements attached to it were influenced by these new social demographics in townships (Sichel 1997:152). While traditional South African dances had clearly defined roles for different members of society as dictated by gender and age, in the townships these roles changed significantly representing a loss of traditional culture. There is a fear in the dance community that experience, insight and methodologies that once sustained African communities will be lost to future generations (Nicholls in Welsh-Asante 1996:10). This may be as traditional African dance is most meaningful within a given socio-cultural context. Traditional African dance has also migrated towards the proscenium arch theatre; a Western context and format. This is a major departure from African social traditional dance's purpose and role.

According to Sichel:

For the majority of South Africans, dance is something you do at weddings, funerals, celebrations, rite of passage or traditional healing rituals, even in the workplace or simply spontaneously. It is not necessarily something you purchase a ticket for to see in a theatre" (1997:151).

When moved onto a Western theatre stage, social traditional dance in South Africa loses its context and thus loses much of its meaning. University of KwaZulu Natal, drama lecturer Christopher Hurst, has argued that the staging of traditional or 'fusion' dances in a Western concert format is inaccessible to different audiences, because its highly contextualised associations are not accessible to different cultures (Hurst 2001:67). African governments, including the post 1994 South African government, have begun holding cultural festivals to preserve traditional dances. However, these festivals do not actually showcase 'authentic' traditional dances. Rather, what is performed is better described as "neo-traditional" (Nicholls in Welsh-Asante 1996:11). Moving traditional dance onto the stage also could make it an elitist commodity, because not everyone can afford a ticket. This is against the participatory and inclusive nature of African social traditional dance.

Often, dances that outsiders¹⁰ consider 'uniquely African' actually evolved due to Western influences. For example, the *Gumboot* dance would not have developed in the way that it did if Westerners had not introduced mines, gumboots and dance competitions (Marce 1997:146). Further, these dances have been misunderstood and appropriated, even though the *Gumboot* dance could be seen as a political statement. According to Hugh Tracey, the South African mine dances are secular dances "performed wholly and singly for the fun and enjoyment of dancing" (Tracey 1952: 2).

The dances are exactly what they appear to be, movement for the love of movement, without a hidden, secondary or spiritual meaning behind the physical actions; a little clowning, maybe, and a little mime, but as a rule, nothing more" (ibid 1952:2).

Tracey misses the deeper social and political meaning of the *Gumboot* dance, because *Gumboot* was about expressing the poor working conditions, the poor living wage and the poor accommodation system. *Gumboot*, or *Isicathulo*, was a dance based on subtle, non-aggressive protest, where the labourers/ miners danced about their problems. Miners created routines to symbolise the oppressive characters in the mines: "they would mimic behaviour of black policemen and boss boys" (Erlmann 1989:262). They also developed stepping patterns named after their city of origin. The *Gumboot* was a source of communication in the darkness of the mine whilst working and it was used as a 'Morse code'. The BBC history of *Gumboot* (2008), explains the context of *Gumboot* as follows:

Working conditions in the mine were tough, with many miners experiencing long hours away from their families in utter darkness, forbidden to speak and chained [sic] [restricted] to their work places. During the apartheid era the conditions surrounding gold mining worsened, as white bosses restricted the movement of black miners through the use of passes. There were unions set up for white miners allowing them to get better pay and working conditions than black people and skilled work was only carried out by white people" (www.bbc.co.uk/gumboot).

Similarly black South Africans find themselves immersed in a culture and value system that cannot appreciate the deep and layered meanings of African social traditional dance, with the result that those meanings are slowly lost. Western music has also

¹⁰ I refer to outsiders as those who do not understand the dynamics, aesthetics or history of African dances.

influenced the music of African social traditional dance in South Africa. With the advent of modernity and urbanisation, people no longer only dance to traditional music. For instance, American jazz music had a huge influence on South Africa's culture of music and dance from the 1920s onwards. According to Ballantine, in the early 1900s, urban Africans were held in thrall by American culture (1993:13). American jazz led to the creation of the South African jazz tradition which replaced traditional music as the primary accompaniment for dancing. Today, new forms of township dance often turn to Western music, rather than traditional or indigenous South African music for inspiration. For example, *Pantsula*¹¹ dance was often performed to live music in the 1980s.

Today *Pantsula* dancers often use American and international music such as JM Silk and 2 Unlimited (Myburgh 1993:21). One young *Pantsula* dancer explained that many *Pantsula* groups prefer American music to local music because "it's got more power, meaning it's got more beat, more rhythm and more instruments" (ibid). Black youths leaving rural areas for urban ones began to embrace goals differing from those of their elders and underrated the value of older-traditional practices and cultural expression.

Artists began to use dance to voice sociopolitical issues within South Africa through companies like Jazzart in Cape Town, Moving into Dance Mophatong in Johannesburg. Dance festivals like the FNB Vita Dance Umbrella in Johannesburg, Jomba Dance Festival in Durban and Baxter Dance Festival in Cape Town offered a platform for artists to voice their feelings and their political curiosity. Currently the largest festival is the international FNB Dance Umbrella which takes place annually in Johannesburg. FNB Dance Umbrella offers a platform for amateurs and professionals alike where dance practitioners are given theatre venues around Johannesburg to practice their freedom or democratic license to be the "voice of the voiceless". Dance performance became an expression of social and political circumstances; people were no longer using

¹¹ "*Pantsula* mainly represented the expression of rebellious youth in the township, but it also consisted of a certain fashion (with dance and music). Since music equipment was extremely limited for these youths, most of the competitive spirit of *Pantsula* was revealed in the streets- who could be the flashiest dresser and who could perform the most creative *Pantsula* dance. The description of the youth culture was therefore coded in specific dance steps that were almost always performed in the street. Today, the *Pantsula* dance and its accompanying music (known as Kwaito), has slowly migrated out of the townships and emerge in the commercial arena" (Rani, M.X. in Friedman (edit)2012:81).

performance abilities to dance in a traditional context or as a daily activity, but to express dissatisfaction toward the existing government and social issues in their communities (Loots 2001:90). Lynn Marce also noted that dance art is also “offering us beauty, non-utilitarian purists, becoming truly human and connected to each other through the respect and fellow-feeling” (Marce 1997:143).

Through urbanisation, dance and theatre became more expressive of changing political issues. The changing geography, mixing of cultures, races and languages created a new breed of performance culture in South Africa. Artists created new stories about black people striving for success and expressed the challenges to earning a livelihood under the apartheid regime.

Companies such as Jazzart¹² Dance theatre in Cape Town came into existence and challenged the government during the apartheid time using dance as a vehicle to educate people in Cape Town about issues of humanity, inequality and racial discrimination, issues that urgently needed to be addressed. Performances had to be executed in entertaining ways to be effectively accepted by audiences (Marce 1997:13). Specifically, the period of the 1990s reflected a time of theatre in transition, where the struggles of the society were voiced through productions that became categorised as protest theatre. Black artists like Mbongeni Ngema embarked on the creation of productions such as *Township Fever* (1990) which was performed in Johannesburg’s Market Theatre. The production featured a cast of black youths from Johannesburg and revealed police corruption, workers unions’ involvement in transportation, protest marches and youth involvement in strikes in the South African transport services. Long before that specific production, Professor Peter Larlham noted that Ngema created productions “based on a fusion of “township musical” and “serious drama” (Larlham

¹² Jazzart started as a privately-owned dance studio specialising in modern jazz dance, established by Sonje Mayo (then newly returned to South Africa) in Cape Town’s Long Market Street during the early 1970s. After some years in its original venue the studio moved to premises in Jameson Street in the Bo-Kaap district of the city. As is the nature of such enterprises, the Jazzart studio was involved in both training dancers and in giving performances at various venues around Cape Town and since its inception Jazzart has welcomed dancers from across the racial spectrum a factor that was to become increasingly important in later years given the nature of South Africa’s political history. (Jazzart Website)

1985:205). Township musicals are best explained by Larlham who describes township theatre as a portrayal of:

“domestic scenes and scenes that expose social injustice alternating with sequences of song and dance; acting that varies from exaggerated realism to slapstick; elaborate stage business used repeatedly to enliven scenes or to embellish character; and movement of the broadest comedy juxtaposed with scenes intended to involve and move the audience”
(ibid:203).

Township theatre as a form of political protest was one way in which the role of urbanisation was clearly defined with new views of performing arts shaped by a township perspective. Transformation of dance through urbanisation led to changes and restructured definitions, shaping the very idea of performing arts.

Modernisation

Alongside urbanisation, modernisation has also affected African dance. Urbanisation refers to “the physical growth which is determined by the movement of people to an area closer to the city through migration” (Bradshaw 1987:225), whereas modernisation refers to a “post-transitional period marked by the rise of industrializing, capitalism, and secularization” (Barker 2005:444). Ultimately, urbanisation reflects the movement of people closer to a city and the result is modernisation, a transition due to the previously mentioned factors. Richard Lee from the University of Malaya explains that: Modernism refers “to a certain period of western cultural, artistic and sociological history. This period covers the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; modernism is a vague and general term that refers to a period of great change in the western world” (2006:350). This change refers mainly to an alteration in thinking and the development of different views of reality. There are a number of historical factors that are important in understanding modernism. These theories will be discussed in more detail below in Chapter Four.

The modernity that I refer to in Nyanga is between the liquid and reflexive types of modernity. As different African cultures were mixing in the townships and adapting to

new physical and socio-cultural spaces, they were also confronting new ideological spaces and the influence of modernity's Western¹³ norms and values. In other words, cultures were recreated and mounted according to the present urban forms of culture and identity. In the past, cultural norms and values were handed down from one generation to another through many ways, not least of which was through dance. However, when traditional cultures encountered modernity, schools began to take on the responsibility of teaching norms and values to the younger generation (Molapisi 2005:14-15). For instance, according to Molapisi, the concept of patriarchy, a cornerstone of African traditional culture, has been strongly challenged by Western education (ibid:12).

The prevalence of foreign pop culture has also pushed African tradition to the wayside and created not only a generational gap but a cultural identity gap.

Statement of the Problem and Demarcation of the Research Field

It is clear from the above discussion that indigenous dance in South Africa has been affected by colonialism, Christianity and modernity. However, it also became clear to me through initial research, that no specific study on urbanised African social traditional dance has been completed by local researchers within the Cape. The Nexus database, which represents current and completed studies in South Africa, lists 97 entries for the keyword 'dance' The following areas of research have, amongst others, emerged:

- Injury and prevention in ballet (Huisamen 1978; Uys 1997; Dennill 2001; Willat 2002; Balding 2006; Van Staden 2006; O'Connell 2008).
- The implications of specific ethnic dance groups in South Africa and their sense of dance creation also covering education (Van Zyl 1985; Forbes 1986; Baard 1988; Thomas 1989; Roos 1989; Muller 1995; Kutu 1998; Mans 1999; Brand 2000; Clark 2000; Rani 2007; Ngema 2007).

¹³ "There are now some interesting uses of Western and the West, in international political description. In some cases the term has so far lost its geographical reference as to allow description of, for example, Japan as a Western or Western society. Moreover the West is notoriously subjected to variable geographical and social specifications" (Williams 1976: 333).

- Defining arts in the field of South African contemporary dance (Van Tonder 1980; Hurst 1981; Larlham 1986; Du Plessis 1991; Finestone 1995; Pienaar 1995; Watanabe 1997; Ballantyne 1998; Parker 2007; Kodesh 2007; O'Connell 2008).
- Relationship of dance, architecture and funding in South Africa (Frohlich 2002; Waterman 2007; Du Pisanie 2008).
- Narrative dance towards emotional attachment through therapy and emergence of intercultural dialogues (Barnard 1984; Kober 1989; Govinder 1997; Tyatyeka 1998; Naude 1999; Oyston 1999; Viranna 2000; Singh 2000; Samuel 2001; Wessels-Bloom 2005).
- Defining the role of music in dance (Lindemann 1979; Munday 1989; Layne 1995; Peacock 2001; Sandlana 2002; Holtzman 2007).
- Aspect of drama and dance in the 20th century (Annamalai 1992; Muller 1994; Botha 2006).
- Film representations of dance documentary and choreography (Armstrong 1998; Raizenberg 2001; Lindsay 2001; Van Vuuren 2006; Parker 2007).
- Ritual worship dances in religious context (Fourie 1967; Thorpe 1982; Nyamende 1991; Moodley 1995; Pewa 1997; Masango 2004).
- Influences of dance development in South Africa (Copteros 2000; Marriott 2001).

Although these studies deal with aspects of dance in South Africa, none of them focus on dance in Nyanga, Cape Town, with special reference to the influences of urbanisation and modernity. Further, very limited documentation of the township of Nyanga, exists. Nyanga is discussed in the media and in some scholarly writing, the subject matter limited to crime and HIV/AIDS (Feni 2007:13; Medved 2007:16). There are few documents that view Nyanga as being little more than just a township in Cape Town burdened with crime and HIV/AIDS. The only subject material that provided a modicum of in-depth information or alternate view about Nyanga was an arts funding proposal

for the Nyanga Arts Development Centre Project published on the internet in 2007. This project, Nyanga Arts and Development Centre (NADC)¹⁴ started in 2009.

Lack of scholarly material about Nyanga with its rich history of arts, makes it an ideal focus area for the study of African social traditional dance within the contexts of urbanisation and modernity. With the merging of different ethnic groups came the merging of different socio-cultural traditions. Although some of the characteristics of society have been derived from models that were initially rural and indigenous, their ultimate future rests in the urban context. The township of Nyanga, exemplifies an urban area of South Africa where western influence and rural-to-urban migration have changed the spaces and the content/form in which dance takes place.

As there are numerous performances depicting the influences of rural-to-urban migration, I have decided to focus this dissertation on one specific case study: a performance, which I sometimes refer to as the Joseph Stone performance. The Joseph Stone Auditorium, is a theatre used by the Eoan Group since 1969.¹⁵ The Eoan Group is a Cape Malay community grounded with a rich performing background and has been current since the apartheid era. Although performances were constrained and subject to political tensions during the apartheid years, the theatre has remained a popular venue for communal projects. People of all races have attended the venue perhaps because of its location which is easily accessible to the variety of formerly divided communities. Situated in Athlone, Cape Town, the theatre was built within the surrounding coloured¹⁶ residential areas.

The performance took place at the beginning of 2009 and the production was formally entitled *Diamond out of the Rubbish*. Even though I was the choreographer of this production, my role was to structure the dancers' suggestions into a theatre production.

¹⁴ NADC started in 2009, initiated by the Nyanga Arts Initiative (NAI) with the intention of contributing to arts development, skills development and enterprise development in the Nyanga community and surrounding areas.
(http://www.powershow.com/view/132f7aNzhhZ/NYANGA_ARTS_DEVELOPMENT_CENTRE_NADC_powerpoint_ppt_presentation).

¹⁵ The history of this theatre is discussed in detail in Chapter Five

¹⁶ The word "coloured" is a problematic word, as it is derogative term based on the history of classification in South Africa and it has been used in pre- and post-apartheid era. Census information had an impact in the peoples description in South Africa based on colour. It was a term used to classify people of race that were neither "black" nor "white" (Dolby 2002, Huttenback 1978).

In that sense I did not fulfil the customary role of a choreographer (maker of the dance vocabulary/sequences) as the dancers from Nyanga dictated their steps for this production. An in-depth analysis of this production therefore provides me with a very good sample of the fusion of various dancing styles in an urbanised setting that has adapted to modern urban tastes.

In my analysis, I will outline the elements of the show in detail as seen through the my choreographic lens. I am aware that my opinions and views have been influenced greatly by my past experiences as a member of a township group, a freelance artist; a dance student at UCT, a young scholar with some international experience, a choreographer, a lecturer in African dance and my past involvement with the Nyanga dancers. I examine the changes specifically with regard to the style of dancing, the execution of the movement, the new spaces and context of the performance (neighbourhoods, suburbs), as well as costumes.

Apart from an in-depth analysis of the entire production as well as a detailed analysis of a specific section of *Diamond out of the Rubbish*, I also conducted interviews with two of the dancers from the production, both from Nyanga: Luthando T.O Ntsodo and Silumko Koyana. (see Appendix B).

Silumko Koyana was born in Cape Town in 1980. He attended school in Nyanga, and received his basic dance training at Zolani Centre where he was exposed to contemporary dance, *Gumboot* and *Pantsula*. On completion of his Matriculation, he began his dancing career studying at the University of Cape Town's School of Dance. He has performed in South Africa, China and Germany. He has been a guest artist at the University of Cape Town's School of Dance and is currently the Director of Dance at the Nyanga Arts Center in Nyanga.

Luthando "Toto" Ntsodo was born in Nyanga. He attended school in Nyanga, and due to his family's financial difficulties he was not able to finish high school. Dancing was the only close thing to his heart. He also received his basic training at Zolani Centre. He was accepted into Jazzart Dance Theatre and received formal training, performing around

South Africa. He received more exposure through creating his own choreographic work and teaching. He specialises in contemporary works with special reference to aspects of fusion. Currently, he is one of Cape Town's freelance dancers and performs in corporate and theatrical works.

Objectives of the Study

This in-depth study not only documents dance in Nyanga, but also looks into the circumstances and subjective experiences of individuals who attempt to earn a living as professional African dancers from the urban settlement of Nyanga. The purpose of the study is to provide insider perspectives of the experience of dancers in Nyanga regarding issues such as the extent to which modernity forces them to adjust and transform. The study also aims to establish through a technical dance analysis (i.e. with reference to movement quality and execution) how the urban dancers' experiences have affected and influenced their craft. These perspectives, extracted through interviews with professionals in the dance industry in Nyanga, serve as a point of departure for a re-evaluation of the role and predicaments of African social dance in an urban environment, with specific reference to Nyanga township. Through discourses around issues of external influences such as modernisation, urbanisation and colonisation, I will structure my research around the question: How does social traditional dance in Nyanga reflect the impact of urbanisation?

CHAPTER TWO

Research Methodology

The intention of this chapter is to present the research methodology describing the programme of work followed in order to allow the research questions to be answered.

Research questions

- Did African social traditional dance in South Africa in Nyanga township exist in the apartheid era and then continue post-apartheid, and if so, what changes did it undergo?
- How may these changes in social traditional dance art be assessed in political, social, culture and religious spheres?
- How has the influence of Western and other African cultures and religious identities impacted on African social traditional dance?
- Has African social traditional dance survived the impact of increased literacy and technology?
- What are the external factors that influence the performance of various social traditional dances in Nyanga?
- What are the African social traditional dances and contemporary South African practices reflected in the performance of the *“Diamond out of the Rubbish”*?

Intentions of the study

- To investigate the continued existence of African Social traditional dances in South Africa with specific reference to Nyanga township, and assess the extent of modifications that have taken place in these dances.
- To establish the influence of the agencies of modernism on these modifications.
- To determine the influence of other African as well as Western cultural and religious identities and the extent to which they have impacted on the African social traditional dance arts.
- To determine the nature of the African social traditional dances and contemporary social dances reflected in the performance of *Diamond out of the Rubbish*.
- To identify the emerging model of Nyanga social traditional dances in the twenty-first century and provide a rationale for the emergent model.

Within these above-mentioned great intentions of the study there are complex discourses, which lead to problems.

Statement of the problem

In South Africa, social traditional dance was a source of entertainment and played a vital role in the link between the dead, the living and the unborn. In rural communities, the dances performed a cultural function for community, family and friends. In essence, dance is an integral part of everyday behaviour in the rural areas and it is classified as a craft by the community rather than an art because of the role it plays within society. Tracy Snipe elaborates: "Although African social traditional dance may be entertaining, it functions primarily as a cultural and artistic expression of the community, in Africa the notion of art for the sake of art is a foreign concept." (Snipe in Welsh-Asante 1996: 64). In addition to Snipe, Robert Nicholls argues that the factors that are featured in African dance have significant functions and that is why it is argued that there is no art for art's sake' in Africa (in Welsh-Asante 1996:45). These are very sensitive issues:

people who are involved in carving, dancing, drawing, singing and acting are classified as artists, but who has authored these categorisations? In the same vein: who qualifies to be called a professional and who determines the standard? Does one need to be a graduate from a tertiary institution in order to be qualified? The answers are later discussed in relation to other scholars' work.

Squatters, due to a context which is perceived as less sophisticated than urban township dwellers, are faced with an identity crisis. They need to fit in and do not want to be labelled by the township community as 'other'. This pressures them to participate in "popular" activities within the area in which they are settling. In rural areas, those who would come to settle as squatters in the informal settlements spoke "pure" Xhosa i.e. language that is not mixed or tainted with any outside influences, maintained a conservative dress-code in which the body is in no way exposed, and danced dances that may be described as 'rural' and untouched by Western civilization. The transformation began when the youth attended schools in the township where they were/are exposed to popular culture; sharing time with their school friends, and picking up behaviour of which their parents disapprove. Furthermore, the attendance at social gatherings which are different from that in rural life, means that these youths are often exposed to alcohol abuse, slang and "foul" language and new behavioural patterns.

With all the above influences, the invention of new township traditions and a new township culture comes into existence. These developments cause a crisis of identity – what is authentic and what is not. As a result of this process, the knowledge of the bicultural derivation of the traits is lost or greatly obscured. Frequently, re-interpretation of a trait takes place in both directions (African to European culture and *vice versa*), and continues over time, resulting in the creation of a new trait that is perceived by everyone to be simply, for example in America, "American" or "Afro-American".

The South African social traditional dance political background delineated above, suggests that there are two paths that may be followed: preservation or conservation. Preservation seems to imply that people should be persuaded not to change or integrate

their ways, that it is incumbent on them to retain their pre-industrial and possibly “primitive” practices. “The idea of preservation was often resented by people who wished, in fact, to change or transform their ways of dancing[...]” (Nicholls in Welsh-Asante 1996:22) Conservation, on the other hand, makes possible a transformation of traditional forms; one that provides new; alternative contexts for dance and accommodates modern needs but does not lead to erosion of cultural values.

Problems:

Factors such as colonisation, migration, cross-cultural exchange, modernity and its agencies gave new forms to the 20th century and triggered curiosity that questions authenticity. The adaptation to contemporary lifestyles meant that Eurocentric systems were adapted either fully or partly according to current fashion. Cultural tourism and the entertainment industry increasingly places African social traditional dance in South Africa at the beck and call of popular fads and fashions, and is gradually changing its character to cater for an economically motivated market. For many modernists in Africa, Art is seen as a frill, an inducement to consumer enterprises such as tourism. Thus, exploitation of social traditional dances can be found in cabaret acts performed for tourist or night club audiences (Nicholls 1985:33). These audiences generally have little understanding of the genre, or of traditional aesthetics and are not concerned with the authentic employment of masks, dance gestures, quality of movement, alignment, expression, mimicking, significances, uniformity in movement, colour of the performance, relationship between the dancers which is acquired and understood through transference of energies, or drum passages in dance. The voyeuristic stance of tourists towards the performance they observe in their search for local flavour, has often been cited as a cause of the decline in cultural and artistic standards.

The complexity of urban living with its vast problems of poverty, crime, inadequate education and lack of social awareness, is to the detriment of the urban South African dancers’ long-term development. Young performers often pursue short-term goals and financial gains at the cost of their long-term education; and, as a result become the unwitting victims of exploitation. The purpose of this study is to provide insider perspectives of the dancers’ experience on how far modernity has forced them to adjust

and transform, and to establish through a technical analysis (i.e. with reference to movement quality and execution) how the urban dancers' experiences have affected and influenced their craft. These perspectives will serve as a point of departure for a re-evaluation of the role and predicaments of South African social dance in an urban environment, with specific reference to Nyanga township.

Significance of this Study

I propose to conduct an in-depth study into the circumstances and subjective experiences of individuals and groups who attempt to earn a living as professional African social traditional dancers in the urban settlements of Nyanga, and investigate the influences of modernity. It is against this background that the findings of this study will contribute significantly to scholarly work in the following ways: (a) the findings will contribute to future research on the Social traditional dances of Nyanga and their role in multicultural societies in Cape Town. (b) educational institutes may benefit from a detailed account of the African social traditional dances of Nyanga and the emergent theoretical framework, which may guide them in their social traditional dances programmes in order to render them meaningful to their communities.

Research design

This research is qualitative in nature and as such employs qualitative methods as these methods (a) offer a platform for focus on the social contexts of activities; and (b) allow the researcher "to understand people in terms of their own definition of the world"(Roberts 2004:134). Interviews and participant observation provide the necessary information for an area of study which has not previously received scholarly attention. The interview material collected provides a broad range of material for analysis. (See Appendix B). An eextensive literature review was conducted in order to position the study within the appropriate scholarly discourse.

Methodology

Field research is imperative in order to find conclusive evidence. Primary data was collected through informal interviews in which members of neo-traditional African dance groups such as Calabash, Ladies Mantombazana, Amabutho and Women Unite, were given an opportunity to explore the above themes. The data collected from an in-depth analysis of the production titled *Diamond out of the Rubbish* performed at Joseph Stone Theatre in Athlone, Cape Town was investigated for signs of transformation towards and away from modernity.

Historical background is given on members of the Cape Town-based neo-traditional and fusion groups Calabash (Nyanga); Ladies Mantombazana (Nyanga); members of Amabutho that are still around in Nyanga and the Women Unite Group in Nyanga who live and work around in Cape Town but are based in Gugulethu and Nyanga township. With the aim of gaining a rounded picture of the dancers' perceptions and self-definitions, the dancers were first interviewed individually and then as groups. This approach highlighted both consensus and disagreement amongst interviewees thus helping to reveal the diversity of views and opinions. In addition, audio-visual recording of interviews were made to assess the content of the spoken word against other communication cues (e.g. behaviour and body language). This approach was deemed necessary to circumnavigate the possibilities of bias or hostility on the part of interviewees (e.g. they may be over-protective about their status and betray their insecurities in "double" messages that may be overlooked during the interview process).

The information gleaned during research was continuously correlated and evaluated against the background of similar research material and cognate studies by other writers. Comparisons were drawn by matching personal research findings to those of others. These findings, like the evaluations of urban performances, were ploughed back into follow-up interviews around the study's focal themes.

This back-and-forth approach was deemed necessary because my research, though scientific (in the sense that it collected ethnographic information), had a larger objective

than the mere recording of the private perceptions of urban black South African dancers. The ethnographic findings form the basis for a final section in this study in which, through a careful assessment of the material gathered and correlated during the course of research, recommendations for the future of African social traditional dance in Nyanga township could be formulated. In this way, this qualitative study provides a context-rich backdrop for the articulation of a new vision for urban African social traditional dance within South Africa.

Geographical Demarcation of the study

The demarcation in this study has two dimensions, (a) the chosen area of Nyanga and its specific geographical location. The study examines the social context of the area towards documenting the involvement of the area during both apartheid and post-apartheid times. This will hopefully guide the reader to an understanding of the social political background of the area of study, (b) A comparison of the area to surrounding suburbs and race relation in order to showcase the Cape Town area's demographics. Field research for this study was conducted in Nyanga township, Rondebosch, Central Cape Town and Athlone respectively. These areas are the main urbanised cultural, industrial and economic centres in Cape Town and they share similar historical backgrounds. Therefore, these areas are the ideal to study the effects of modernity and its agencies on South African social traditional dances of Nyanga township.

Nyanga is a very popular township amongst artists; it has developed much potential talent via the Nyanga Art Centre, Zolani Centre and within its school halls. Nyanga, in Xhosa, means the moon, and is one of the oldest black townships in Cape Town. It was established as a result of the migrant labour system. In the early 1950s, black migrants were forced to settle in Nyanga as Langa, the neighbouring township, became too small. Nyanga is one of the poorest and most dangerous parts of Cape Town. Its unemployment is estimated at around 70% and HIV/AIDS is a huge community issue. 'Nyanga is situated 26 kilometres (less than 20 minutes' drive) from Cape Town using the N2 highway. The area is situated close to the Cape Town International Airport and next to the townships of Gugulethu and Crossroads. Nyanga like other disadvantaged black townships, joined a national call to protest against the 'pass laws' in 1960 and

later the 1976 student uprisings against the use of Afrikaans as a first language in school.

Nyanga became notorious for its black faction fighting that was allegedly perpetrated by the corrupt police in the early 1980s. The local authorities (*izibonda*) grouped themselves according to their cultural backgrounds and used that as their criteria when allocating land. The police allegedly utilised these cultural differences to provoke black on black faction fighting. These factions were infiltrated by the apartheid regime and as a result fought against each other, which led to emergence of the notorious group called “the Witdoek” (the white scarves).

Population sample

In order to meet the objectives of this study, a sample of 30 informal and two formal interviews were recorded and analysed. Two were designated as formal, meaning as I chose the major interviewees out of the 30 semi-formal interviews. This sample was drawn from the cast during rehearsals conducted at the time of the research and further determined the presence of the performers involved in the production. Care was taken not to investigate more than one rehearsal in each rehearsal space. As we changed venues for rehearsals, the collection and analysis of Nyanga social traditional dances afforded the researcher with a broader knowledge base.

Apart from interviewing people directly related to the Nyanga social traditional dances, the opinion of a cross-section of people over various generations was sought. Although the data analysis is qualitative in nature, very basic statistical principles were used to define the purpose-based sample of people to be interviewed. Census 2012 (www.statssa.gov.za) reported the population density of Nyanga as: 14,369 per square km with a population of 58,727 B (See Appendix A). Since it was not feasible to interview everybody in Nyanga, the numbers of research participants were narrowed down to a manageable figure. The research participants interviewed and their stratification according to the selection criteria is outlined later in this section.

Research participants drawn from Nyanga township were selected carefully according to their particular dance background. It was necessary to use performers with a balanced knowledge and experience of social traditional dances and modern influences.

The following criteria were used to select the research participants:

- Active institutional involvement in the dance arts.
- Experience in terms of Nyanga African social traditional dances;
- Involvement in dance social traditional dance arts and organisation;
- Academic status (where applicable)

Ethical considerations

Prior arrangements were made through a performers' meeting during our first rehearsal, when I was introduced by the director Mandla Mbothwe as the choreographer for the production. He informed them that I was conducting research that required their co-operation. The whole cast was excited as I explained my work and my aims as a researcher and the basis of my topic. Research participants were also briefed on matters concerning confidentiality and requested to sign a consent form before the commencement of field research. The interviewees were over 25 years of age ruling out any necessity for parental or guardian permission. Bottorff recommends that "subjects who are videotaped should give their consent and confidentiality must be ensured" (in De Vos *et al.* 1998:330). This conforms to UCT's requirements for all research conducted under their auspices. In keeping with Bottorff's recommendation, confidentiality was strictly observed in order to avoid embarrassment, administrative or legal implications for those interviewed. In addition, research participants were at liberty to: (a) request certain parts of the interview not to be audio or video recorded; and (b) withdraw from the exercise at any point of the research. Both my chosen two interviewees granted me the permission to continue my research with them.

Data collection

Data was collected by utilising qualitative interviews, which "emphasise the relativism of culture, the active participation of the interviewer, and the importance of giving the

interviewee a voice” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:31). Individual interviews are the main structure and main instrument for my data collection. Individual preference and individual topic interview style were used during the different interviews sessions with research participants. Rubin & Rubin argue that:

In practice these cultural, individual preference and topic styles are often mixed in a single interview; the researcher may alternate listening for nuanced cultural meanings and asking about the events (ibid).

An interviewee may demand clarity of arguments and express a diversity of views, while at the same time the interviewees’ re-evaluation of points that they have contributed may require an amplification, amendment or qualification, or they may even contradict themselves. During the interview sessions, careful individual audio-visual recordings were made of all the conversations and interviews. These recordings were the main data collection instruments and are supplemented with field notes. This research also involves collection of data from electronic databases and websites, books and journals, theses and dissertations, conference papers, seminar papers, newsletters and monographs. Audio and video recordings of Nyanga African social traditional dances were collected through participant observation. The data-capturing process included the use of one stationary video camera with audio tools. Furthermore, recordings enabled the researcher to focus on pertinent issues or actions that could not be attended to during the actual time of the interview or performance. The data from all the available sources that were utilised during the research process were integrated and collated to conclude the data-collection process (Mouton 2001: 198).

Details of investigation: describing the research journey

Setting out to conduct a study of this magnitude requires a considerable amount of time and patience to produce a comprehensive and representative report. Furthermore, the data-collection process includes the making of audio and video recordings of actual Nyanga African social traditional dances. The entire process of attending the rehearsals, and different dance needs of small groups and individual solos contributed to the lengthening of the duration of field research.

Between 2 February 2009 and the performance day on the 8 March I was conducting informal interviews and conducting rehearsals in Nyanga, Rondebosch and Athlone. The findings from these preliminary meetings indicated that the research topic was viable. The next step (2 April to 29 October 2009) followed after confirmation of the feasibility of the study, and required the identification and selection of research participants. This process involved personal contact either telephonically or through an intermediary. The next phase (2 October to 30 January 2009) involved the creation of a formal strategy for the pursuit of my dissertation. At the same time, this period was dedicated to the literature review survey and preparation for field work. I embarked on the literature review, while continuing to make the necessary preparations and arrangements for fieldwork. This process necessitated the contacting of research participants and the organisation of funds for audio and video recording.. Due to past experience, I was successfully able to edit my own audio and video material. From 30 February to 29 July 2009 I was intensively collecting sources relating to my topic and data. During this period of my research I had an opportunity to get in-depth knowledge about planning and what was to be expected.

From 30 December to 4 June 2010 while on sabbatical, I had the privilege of working with Master's students at the University of Wisconsin, Madison USA. The experience furthered my understanding of academic writing and conventions and facilitated a deeper understanding of my own topic from a different angle. In the meantime I kept in contact with my two main interviewees. The significant purpose of this visit was to get an opportunity to talk about my dissertation with other scholars and through their feedback, I managed to scrutinise my work, resulting in looking further and studying the work of other scholars in sociology, education and anthropology.

Within the period 23 July to November 2010, I transcribed interviews and wrote analyses of video recordings. In order to achieve accuracy, transcriptions were processed both manually and digitally. All the recordings that were in XhosEnglish (meaning Xhosa with English) are transcribed and translated as well (see Appendix B). January 2011 and 31 January 2012 was spent in data verification.

Data analysis

Interviews were transcribed, categorised and coded for comparisons during a process which considered variations and nuances in meaning and connections between themes (Rubin & Rubin 1995: 226). During the process of theoretical sensitising and summarising, notes were recorded. In addition, I maintained a journal which documented the whole process. Transcriptions used in this study are based on a sampling of 10 dances chosen from amongst the dances which I collected through this study. This experience afforded me an opportunity to learn to understand some of the modern techniques involved in the production and to further interrogate the dance text and its deeper meaning with the help of the performers.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER THREE

Literature review

This chapter will discuss the literature surrounding my focus topic which allowed me to examine enquiry that is at the forefront of African dance research. The insights and knowledge I gained have provided the basis for a better-design study and enhanced the possibility of obtaining significant results in this field. This section is one of the vital parts of my research as it reveals the researchers who specialise in the influences of modernity on social traditional dances.

As discussed above, Green, Snipe and Primus all foreground the functions of dance as the cultural and artistic expression of the African community. In its indigenous and traditional context, social dances were a source of entertainment and served as a vital link between the dead, the living and the unborn. In rural life, these dances had a socio-cultural function for community, family and friends, and impacted on their descendants. Urbanisation has changed this in that African dance is moving farther away from this context as a consequence all the above mentioned factors.

Dance has been a part of everyday life in the rural areas and it was classified as a craft, rather than an art, because of the role it plays within society (Snipe in Welsh-Asante 1996:1). A Professor of Political Science at Wright University USA, Tracy Snipe elaborates on this in relation to traditional African dance: "Although African dance may be entertaining, it functions primarily as a cultural and artistic expression of the community, in Africa the notion of art for the sake of art is a foreign concept" (ibid). "The factors that are featured in traditional South African dance have had more significant functions, which is why it is argued that there is no art for art's sake in Africa" (Nicholls in Welsh-Asante 1996:45). As noted above, these are very sensitive issues in South Africa. Have these standards not been a consequence of Western principles and ideals? European occupation hastened the forces of change, by introducing improved communications transportation systems and new urban centres. The value of our indigenous African educational system was consequently undermined

and has been over-taken by the primacy of the norms and values of Western educational systems. Unfortunately these thoughts in my opinion, and in the views of scholars like Pearl Primus, Robert Nicholls, Tracy Snipe, Osei Darkwa and H.S Bhola, cannot be weighed up against the present traits of thought before we engage with the forces of change that are embedded within Western philosophies. However, according to Snipe, modernisation and change have helped to spark creativity in some traditional dances that have become more secularised (in Welsh-Asante 1996:9). He further maintains that Africa is bound to be affected by these changes because of the role that the arts play in this society even though such changes may provoke some criticism and controversy (ibid:10). Snipe is therefore encouraging the blending in order to see dance reaching out to the global arena without losing the Afrocentricity. Nicholls comments in the same tone, saying that “in the course of social evolution, a modernising, urbanising people need to see reflections of their emerging new identity mirrored in their popular arts” (in Welsh-Asante 1996:20). He adds that with the diminishing significance of African social traditional dance in urban areas, new forms of dance music were created in response to the citizenry’s need for recreation and entertainment. The angle that I am pursuing in my dissertation is based on a similarity of reasoning as in my view, it is important to recognise that time, space, geography and multi-media play a role in contributing to evolution and adaptation so that tradition is not stagnant and survives. But, do we acknowledge the processes of transformation when change takes its course or do artists engage without thinking? Primus answered some of the above questions on issues of professionalism in African dancing. She explains that there is a sharp distinction between the trained dancer and the person “who just dances”, and the person who “just dances” is one who has picked up the dance in early childhood, who has been trained in the dances necessary for his initiation, and who just enjoys speaking with his body sometimes impressively, but is still not considered a dancer by his people (in Welsh-Asante 1996:7). Primus continues to defend her point of view by saying that “dancing does not come more spontaneously to Africans than ‘pas-de-deux’ does to Europeans, the difference between the two areas being that few Europeans are called to ballet schooling while the majority of African youth had to submit to the severe dancing masters who preside, among others, at the compulsory curriculum of initiation” (ibid). The professional African dancer is one trained from childhood. Having shown a special

aptitude for dance language, he is apprenticed to a master, usually the oldest and most powerful of the dancers, in the same way that in urban areas the child would seek training by going to the community centres in the township. Then the meaning behind professionalism is contested because Africa has its own interpretation of the word, particularly in African dancing. One scholar who clarifies the balance is Bhola who explains that although primarily unselfconscious, ultimately processes of integration will need to be institutionalised. This theory will be revisited in more detail in the next chapter.

I fully agree when Bhola mentions that it happens unselfconsciously and that integration is the key whereby the indigenous combines with the modern. One needs to process the idea of transformation or change and make sure that Western philosophy is not superimposed on African values and principles despite its active global involvement. Then at the end we will have something special that defines who we are as a black nation in Africa especially South Africa with its multi-racial profile. Since the 1950s, these relatively homogeneous cultural patterns¹⁷ and customs are being redefined through the new social circumstances and lifestyles that are part of urbanisation. All the above-mentioned circumstances have created a number of advantages and disadvantages for South African dance and the urban South African dancer.

It has become increasingly difficult for hostel and township residents to fulfill their indigenous and traditional¹⁸ social functions because various dance traditions exist side by side. Often divorced from their original context and in contra-distinction to one another, youths leaving rural areas for urbanisation gradually embrace goals different

¹⁷ Nevertheless, one has to bear in mind that the concept of a homogeneous cultural pattern does not imply a static tradition. As argued by Welsh, change is part and parcel of culture, but occurs within a framework of established norms and values: "African traditional dance develops and changes as new forms take root and grow in so far as they reflect abiding values and new concerns together" (Welsh 1982:25) See also, Erlmann: "Tradition has little to do with predominantly rural, participatory, non-commercial, classless art forms, nor with the persistence of old forms, or with organic, unalienable growth. (Erlmann 1992:122)

¹⁸ "Indigenous" dances originate or occur naturally in a particular place and the word therefore refers to elements that are older and, from a South African Black perspective 'more sacred' than traditional elements. "Traditional" implies the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation and "[...] refers to any social institution that is passed on generally and is recognized by most members of the community" (Welsh1982:12).

from those of their elders. This would include language changes and dress codes which follow the trends of the township; an example being short dresses and shorts worn by girls, which would be considered a foreign concept in rural areas. Most tend to forget about the traditional values of respecting the elders and replace this with respect for the street only. Youths tend to underestimate the value of older traditional practices and cultural expressions by following the new township culture¹⁹ that has come into existence and this leads to perceived identity crises. Crime which is forced by township circumstances and politics, and crime such as that which led to the shooting of the artist Jacky Semela by hi-jackers who claimed that they thought he was white, is rife. Inadequate education and a lack of social awareness are to the detriment of the urban African dancers' long-term development. For all these reasons, dancing, for the Nyanga youth, can be therapeutic. In a sense, when they are in a dance space, they become the striking profound community that shares one common fascination which is dance. They forget about crime and poverty when they are in that space. For once they smile, relaxed and calm.

In urban areas, people are exposed to many influences such as the media, new religious influences, the 'high life' based on night clubbing, the gangster sub-culture, drugs, the influences of the colonial legacy, fashion and being sexually active at a young age. Because of increased urbanisation and colonial influences, many South African dances and dance styles have been subjected to extraneous new demands from surrounding communities and societies, and even the expectations generated by tourists and tourism boards. As mentioned by Nicholls, people embrace a newly found way or form of entertainment and unfortunately, although it can be advantageous, it may also be detrimental based on choices that one has to make. Harper points out that such pressure does not change the dance's importance to society nor necessarily the movements, but that the context does change and consequently "the dance becomes traditional-like or neo-traditional" (Harper 1967:10). I fully agree with Harper because that is exactly what happens in all the dances in *Diamond out of the Rubbish*. They have been removed from the context and adaptation took place in order to fit on the western

¹⁹ Township Culture is based on how you walk in the streets; how you communicate in order to be street smart. It is a sense of style and life style, the food we eat that is sold in corner shops and ONLY can be found in the township and that originates from the streets of the township.

theatre stage. Such adaptation can be traced from their beginnings and through the history of *Gumboot* dancing, to the Zulu *Ingoma* dances that are showcased in the production.

The effects of urbanisation and assimilation into the dominant ideologies of modern society have caused a new wave of social-traditional dances, in which geographical boundaries and culturally defined distinctions play a diminishing significant role. The outcomes of the influences and counter-influences which occur through the close proximity of cultures, is a new urban culture in which large bodies of practices that characterise the expressive cultures of South Africa are redefined. I think they are redefined and founded on mutual ground just as Bhola mentioned and all such experiences take place unconsciously. The influences of mass media dissemination, labour migration and exposure to other African and non-African modes of expression are all-pervasive. Examples range from Indian movies and Western Opera, to Reggae, photo novels, Onitsha market literature and television soap opera, African ballet, Afro-Jazz, Afro Hip-Hop and neo-traditional dances. According to Ballantine, in the early 1900s, urban Africans were already enthralled by American culture (1993:13).

The complexities of urban living, with its problems of poverty, crime, inadequate education and a lack of social awareness, have been detrimental to the urban South African dancers' long-term development. Nicholls states that young performers often pursue short-term goals and financial gains at the cost of their long-term education and as a result, become the unwitting victims of exploitation as "Tourists want to see social traditional South African dances and find a bit of local colour" (Nicholls in Welsh Asante 1996: 23). Squatters, with their less sophisticated background, from a township and urban point of view, are faced with an identity issue. As Gregory Maqoma noted in 2001, many find their identity within the "cocktail and confluence of township life", not within traditional culture (2001:76). One Zulu girl in a township high school said that she enjoys Zulu traditional dance, but training to do it is not natural for her (Dolby 2001:54). It is not 'natural' for her in the sense of formal training because her dancing is part of her heritage. To add more, she does not see the importance of creating a schedule for dancing in order to 'better' her dance quality.

As a consequence of urbanisation, colonialism, Christianity, and the invention of new township traditions, a new township culture came into existence. These developments precipitated an identity crisis – what is authentic and what is not? In South Africa this is well illustrated in the emergence of *Kwaito* music and groups such as Johannesburg-based group Skwatta Kamp. The implication is that it is no longer demeaning to be a squatter: the group Skwatta Kamp has a designer label named after township culture and uses terminology such as *Loxion kulture* (borrowed from the English term ‘Location Culture’). The Ethnomusicologist and scholar Veit Erlmann points out that “the notion that tradition cannot be invented or manufactured seems contradictory” (1991:122). He uses the term syncretism, or re-interpretation. According to Erlmann, syncretism is the process whereby an African cultural trait is equated with, or likened to, a European or Euro-American trait encountered in the New World (USA). Those who take part in the process are aware of the bi-cultural derivation of the trait. The re-interpretation is a process whereby an African culture trait is given a new meaning in terms of European or Euro-American culture, or conversely, new meaning in terms of the “African culture” (ibid).

In defining “African culture”, a scholar that specializes in labellism, Jean Marquet states that “it is the totality of knowledge and behavior, ideas and objects that constitutes the common heritage of a society” (Marquet 1971:4). As a result of this process, the knowledge of the bicultural derivation of the traits is lost or greatly obscured. Frequent re-interpretation of a trait takes place in both directions (African to Europe and *vice versa*), and continues over time, resulting in the creation of a new trait that is perceived by everyone to be simply American or Afro-American. The argument proposed by Marquet and Erlmann are in agreement with the rest of the scholars, from Snipe to Bhola, basing their argument within the same context as my dissertation topic.

The socio-political background delineated above begs the question- should one preserve or conserve African social traditional dance? If yes, how should one choose? because preservation seems to imply that people should be persuaded not to change or integrate their ways; that it is incumbent on them to retain their pre-industrial and

possibly primal practices. “This preservation intrusion was often resented by people who wished, in fact, to change or transform their ways of dancing” (Nicholls in Welsh-Asante 1996:22). On the other hand, conservation enables a transformation of traditional forms; one that provides new, alternative contexts for dance and accommodates modern needs, but does not lead to degeneration.

The problem presented by these developments puts South African social traditional dance at the forefront of modern aesthetic debates. Modern/contemporary art (including the art of dance) is typified by self-awareness, as well as by the manipulation of form or medium as an integral part of the work itself and “modern art tends to encourage the audience to question its perception, and thereby the fundamental nature” (Joyce 1941:35). Some scholars in Communication Studies have examined the usefulness of ‘folk media’ for disseminating information to bring about improvements in urban areas. According to this rationale, South African artistic resources could be matched to developmental goals; and music, dance and song could help to educate urban inhabitants in the ways of communicating, socialising and community development.

The chaos and confusion experienced by modern dancers of African social traditional dance in urban areas and townships are of a fundamental nature. This can be illustrated by the arguments that revolve around the concept of “domestication”, as broached by Erlmann. “Domestication is when a dance form changes its purpose and genre due to geography, space and socio-political issues” (Erlmann 1989: 10). Dances are subject to various forms of domestication whereby the rural and urban dance styles co-exist by acknowledging both the past and the present. For example, between 1929 and 1939, a remarkable transformation and domestication of *ingoma* dancing from a militant, oppositional and suppressed form of popular culture to a tourist attraction took place (ibid 1992:45). But the question is: Do these dances carry the dignity, decency and quality they once had and how far should transformation, amalgamation, re-interpretation and choreography be taken? Can these dances in the Nyanga township endure without being trivialised? Is the essence that used to exist within the African social traditional dance fading away? Are modern South African dancers trying to adjust

and compromise due to pressure from the people who have the economic means and power to decree standards and expectations that are not directly relevant or meaningful to these dancers? In my opinion, these dances will be trivialised to such an extent that they will need to be revisited and renegotiated. The essence that used to exist is definitely fading and is being replaced with another formula which will be familiar to the people of the township ---and bear in mind the effects of township culture. Yes, there is pressure that comes from the entertainment agencies, pressures setting up the standard required by clientele of the tourism industry and the definition of Africa by the Euro-Western interpretation. Money has to be earned and people have to live and in order to do so compromises need to be made despite the dancers' discontent.

In addition, one can no longer ignore the commonalities between African states. A Scholar and an assistant professor at the Jane Addams College of social work in Illinois USA, Osei Darkwa comments that African nations cannot afford to lose their cultural identity, for it is this that will enable them to contribute to the enrichment of other world cultures. According to Darkwa, the media and the dominant cultures of societies have succeeded in creating a mythical image of South Africa. He sees South Africa as seemingly untouched by the rest of the world. Researchers have travelled far and wide in order to extract or preserve artifacts of this foreign, 'primal' land that will soon be lost through urbanisation, modernity and the technological advancement of society. South African cultures are objectified and alienated whether they choose to remain true to their past, 'primal' ways or 'progress' with so-called modern society. Within this ideology, researchers have begun to extract or rescue artifacts from different South African cultures as an attempt to preserve the remnants of the world's last place, perceived to be untouched by modernity. "The trouble with 'preservation' is that its focus has been pinpointed only when 'conservation' is needed" (Nicholls in Welsh-Asante 1996:24). In order to understand the above quotation and its relation to indigenous South African dance, one must first evaluate the meaning of conservation versus preservation and examine the effects each theory can potentially have on a specific South African cultural dance. According to Nicholls, preservation is the process of extracting different aspects of a culture for display without a holistic representation of the culture from which the artifacts are derived. Preservation is based on an attempt

to preserve a culture through specific artifacts. As a result of this approach, cultures are persuaded to retain their pre-industrial and possibly primal practices. Cultures are represented in museums through pictures, clothes or physical representations of cultural practices such as masks, armour and jewellery. I ask; how can African social traditional dances, which are not artifacts, be preserved?

Conservationism relies on the continuity of traditions and authenticity based on historical traditions as well as on present day customs and beliefs. Within conservationist beliefs, cultures are viewed or displayed as entities that are constantly evolving and transforming. The focus is on the understanding of all aspects of the culture and the upholding of traditional values and beliefs, not of tradition or primal behaviour. A key aspect of conservationism is the idea that cultures are always changing. Conservationist beliefs are different from preservationist beliefs in the way cultures are portrayed to the dominant society and the degree of intrusion allowed to researchers. Within conservationism, cultures are represented through the interpretation of the people within the actual culture and not by the artifacts associated with the culture. Conservationism is based on the belief that “continuity depends to a large extent on the processes of cultural transmission and on the ability and willingness of successive generations to proceed from the creative models of their predecessors to those of their own” (Darkwa 1983:78). I agree with Darkwa that new ways of conservatism are found and that adds value to Bholá’s theories.

As African social traditional dance has lost significance and meaning in urban areas, it is important to recognise that the new forms of dance which have emerged have a positive value. They allow people living in the townships, who have never experienced traditional rural life to find meaning in the life around them (Nicholls in Welsh-Asante 1996:15). Like traditional dances, these forms of dance have developed historically and have deep social and cultural significance. Some, like the *Gumboot* dance and the *Marabi* style, have been passed from generation to generation. They are influenced by different cultures, and not taught or learnt in dance studios (Myburgh 1993:30). These new forms of dance are vital, because today many young people do not identify with traditional culture. New forms of dance give people who have never lived traditional

lifestyles in rural areas, and now live in South African townships, a vehicle for expression of their identity -- a confluence of traditional and Western values.

CHAPTER FOUR

Theoretical review

Chapter Four provides a theoretical review and the in-depth views of three chosen scholars that are favourably aligned to this research. The model of established African social traditional dances in South Africa that emerge from this chapter will be deliberate. I have chosen to specifically contextualise the emergent model within the Nyanga Township dance environment, with reference to Diaspora and Western dance philosophies. Much research has established that colonialism and Christianity impacted on the daily lives of people in Africa, in some cases disastrously so, (Fanon 1972, Achebe 1969, Biko 2000, Senghor 2000). However, this chapter does not dwell on the past, but looks for ways to explain the hybrid, the contemporary influences and the manner in which the past 'shaped' the future in ways which complemented without trivialising in the case of Nyanga township. This research is most closely aligned to the work of three scholars: Harban . S. Bhola, Robert W. Nicholls and Richard Lee.

Professor of Education at Indiana University, H.S Bhola explains that:

Change happens both *in* transmission and *by* transformation. Indigenous knowledge as a living system, embedded in social processes, changes on its own and unselfconsciously, over time. But to plan-fully and systematically promote the integration of indigenous knowledge with modern knowledge for the mutual enrichment of both traditions, and to use newly integrated knowledge to achieve sustainable development, locally and globally, the process of integration will have to be institutionalised (Bhola 2002:4).

It is important to acknowledge the fact that change takes place with or without leadership, with integration being the key whereby the indigenous and social traditional dances combine with the modern. But one needs to process the notion behind transformation and change to make sure that Western philosophy does not superimpose the Africanness despite its active global involvement. This means the Africanness should take precedence and lead the way towards transformation and not by a Western interpretation thereof. In a sense change happens in transmission where dance material is communicated orally and through motor development from one

generation to another. The messages of transmitted dances may take the form, for example, of folklore, chants and communal dance practices. In this way, it is possible for a society to transmit oral history, oral literature, oral law and social traditional dances as happens in Nyanga township. It is important to acknowledge the fact that this transmission of social traditional dances has existed for decades and evolved during different eras.

Transformation in social traditional dances cannot be ignored because as time evolves so does the style and reasoning behind social traditional dances. Such transformation can be driven by the new performance spaces, geography, and integration to name but a few. Urbanisation as a geographical space plays a huge role due to the fact that most people visit the urban settlement for work opportunities and that opens up the opportunity for transcultural and multicultural behaviour and through that one finds a new local culture being born. That is why Bhola is one of the scholars that relates closely to my work. I agree fully when he states that transmission and transformation within the social traditional dances happens unselfconsciously, because in Nyanga they evidently were not consciously aware nor took any note of the transformation and evolution of social dances. They were part of, or in fact, were catalysts for the emerging change and never took time to look where they came from as performers and how these dances had transformed. These changes happen through social processes, meaning that the society is involved in such acts of change and transformation. The emergence of styles of South African social traditional dance has distinguished three related forms: traditional, neo-traditional and contemporary. The last two categories have become increasingly evident as the result of radical social changes since World War II. Changes in social traditional dance styles within an urban settlement usually occur gradually, under the creative leadership of social master dancers. But, major social changes in the community, such as the introduction of formal primary education, radically alter the pattern of life, including the children's institutions, toward their dances which they no longer have time to learn in the inherited manner. In addition, and in conjunction with Bhola's statement, modern transport and communication brings people of diverse cultures together resulting in cross-cultural influences on dance performance. The spread of transistor radios and, more recently, of other forms of broadcast and digital media to urban settlements has ultimately prompted young people to turn to new styles

of dance, with an accent on entertainment. All these factors are echoed in Bholá's theories and are directly aligned to my research. Bholá also highlights the influence of globalisation and the pressure it poses on third world countries, as it plays a role in the tourist gaze. Bholá explains that: "Ironically, globalization has brought about its dialectic opposite: the desire for localization, the search for community, indigenous values, mother tongues, and the wish to preserve cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge" (2002:4).

Bholá continues by highlighting the aspects of globalization, commenting that "In the processes of being globalized we must not swallow the mantras of free-market competition, entre-preneurship, partnerships, and the illusionary blessings of the civil society" (ibid). But, we need to redefine our own possible special place on the globe which will, of course, mean redefining development as well. Through such an approach, we will be able to determine the role and possibilities of social traditional dances and our aims and objectives in terms of exploration. He further maintains that no lessons seem to have been learned from this predicament. Development, more than ever before, has come to be defined as competing successfully-and profitably in the global market.

Unfortunately, politicians do not fully realize the necessity of developing a definition and a program of development that is truly non-Western, though by no means anti-Western, and certainly not seeking to ensure development without borrowing from the knowledge and material resources of the West" (ibid:5).

Bholá's work sits exactly in the heart of this research as it raises matters of inclusion. Care must be taken not to be victims of Western ideology and philosophy, and realise that Africanness is part of this continent and we must not be intimidated because of the pressures exercised through globalisation. Creativity should be seen as transformation and development, and not as a representation of a lesser version of the art in social traditional dance.

Assistant Professor of Educational Technology at the University of the Virgin Islands, St. Thomas, Robert .Nicholls explains that:

As social traditional dance in Africa has lost its rural significance and meaning in urban areas, it is important to recognise that the new forms of dance which have emerged do have a positive value; they allow people living in the Townships who have never experienced traditional rural life to construct meaning from the lives around them (Nicholls, 2000:25).

Nicholls states that it is important to recognise that the new forms of dance must have attached to the social traditional dances in urban areas as they have been assigned a positive value just as the ones in the rural areas. Further, he maintains that “the traditional role of dance in African communities can be contrasted to the new directions dance has taken in today’s African society” (ibid:53). Live performances include government organised cultural competitions, cabaret entertainment, and dance theatre and that is important to acknowledge in the present state of the artistic expression in the township of Nyanga, Nicholls comments on the fact that neo-traditional and contemporary dance are performed by specialist artists, on a raised stage, for the entertainment of heterogeneous audiences and that is exactly one of the aspects that is explored in this writing. Recreational dance using recorded music occurs at dance parties and disco like night clubs, which in addition to popular African music such as High Life, feature non-African pop (mainly African American music) and the Caribbean Reggae and Soca (ibid). The primary role of contemporary dance is recreational and for entertainment, where social traditional dance has a functional orientation aimed at the realisation of social outcomes external to the context of the performance, and its characteristic gestures and locomotion are determined by the sociocultural purpose it fulfils. Nicholls expands by saying that “historically, dance is embedded in the ritual activities of specific communities and a hypothesis can be made that in Africa, the arts, including music and dance, are appraised by the same aesthetic criteria that are applied to the larger world view”(ibid). In the social traditional context, dance extends further into the life of the community and on the level of the individual, the intention and frequency of dance experience is greater, involving intimate and symbolic interaction with peers and community members at regular intervals throughout their life-span.

Another important aspect that is mentioned by Nicholls is that of age; he states that “The age range of participating dancers is also greater in traditional communities than in modern societies” (ibid: 54). I fully agree with Nicholls because in modern societies it is difficult to isolate a particular age group, it has to be mixed with other ages due to a lack of balance amongst the ages of all the dancers. That is why importance is placed on balancing in the townships, particularly in Nyanga. Shifts have to be acknowledged and embraced because of time and influences, exactly as mentioned by Bhola (2002:7). Nicholls also raises the issue of preservation versus conservation: that “[...] relative to African dance, an urgent sense of preservation is not a new phenomenon” (Nicholls 2002:56). This means recognising modernisation’s imminent destruction of societies, cultures, and artifacts and emphasises the need to concentrate on preservation. The other side of the coin is the equally important need to conserve as opposed to preserve. Conservation implies continuity within a living tradition, while preservation is limited by archival considerations. Preservation activities have by nature been discipline-based and oriented towards the academic community rather than to the indigenous art-producing community.

Nicholls explains clearly that “[...] it is equally important to record underlying determinants in terms of context, functions, social milieu, ritual themes, symbolism, and other factors relative to *why* a particular dance is performed” (Nicholls 1996:57). Such questions are vital as they raise concern over how the dance evolves and changes. One has to look at the processes of dance and why there is acceptance of influential “other” parties in order to allow transformation and change.

Thirdly, I have drawn on the theories of Raymond L.M²⁰. Lee, who, as mentioned in Chapter One, has distinguished between types of modernities, and has clarified this discourse so that it became apparent that my writing is situated within his definition of both reflexive and liquid modernities. It is important to clarify such discourses in order avoid generalisation. According to Lee, the emergence of postmodernism in the 1980s challenged modernity as the reigning paradigm of world development. However, since the mid-1990s, dissatisfaction with postmodernism has prompted a return to modernist themes (Alexander in Lee 2006:86) Subsequently several new approaches to the

²⁰ A lecturer at the University of Malaya, has conducted research on spirit possession, religious movements, and ethnic relations in Malaysia and has published, among others, cognitive pluralism and communication.

changing nature of modernity resulted in the proposal of (amongst others), 'reflexive modernisation', 'liquid modernity' and 'multiple modernities' (Lee 2006:356). Liquid modernity is critically concerned with the ephemeral condition of contemporary society. It is a theory of social change that attempts to uncover the consequences of advanced social differentiation and alienation. This view of modernity represents the recent work of Zygmunt Bauman (2000) whose earlier writings on postmodernity (1992, 1993) had earned him the epithet "prophet of postmodernism".

In liquid modernity, Bauman views the world as inexorably transient, producing a sense of impermanence that he describes as "the new lightness and fluidity of the increasingly mobile, slippery, shifting, evasive and fugitive power"(2000:14). The term modernity on the other hand created a lot of discourse due to its complexity. Abrahamson explains this in his review of Bauman's work:

the road liquid modernity is going down currently leads to unbearable human suffering and injustice where political and economic instability pushes apparently increasing numbers of people to escape their place and seek, but not find, decent lives elsewhere(2004:177).

However, the idea of modernity being liquid can be regarded as consistent with postmodern stress on the flexibility and mutability of all relationships. Reflexive modernity is associated with the works of Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck. Central to this discourse of modernity is the notion that individual actors are capable of self-monitoring activities, which contribute to the way social situations are perceived, assessed and changed. Reflexivity is not only a concept dealing with rationality and the decision-making process, it is embedded within an action-oriented approach to social change that sharpens the awareness of social responsibility and culpability.

Lee explains that postmodernism "disputes the emergence of a new era marking the end of modernity" (Lee 2006:356). But one has to be aware that it means postmodernism addresses the continuity of modernity as it requires new concepts that can meet the challenges of postmodernism. He explains reflexive modernity as a: "Widening exercise that is partly linked to development of mass education and the wide dissemination not

just of scientific knowledge but of the principle of doubt on which scientific method is built” (ibid).

In other words, reflexive modernisation is not only premised on the modernisation of structures but also on knowledge-based faculties that provide the means for overcoming the dire consequences of modern growth. Reflexivity represents another level of modernity that is self-confrontational; critically appraising institutional and individual behaviour without the ludic sensibility of postmodernism. In addition Lee explains that “reflexive modernisation is decisively programmatic in the sense of utilizing individual freedom to address the risk incurred in the modern context” (ibid). This entails transforming the disillusionment with modernity by systematically reviewing and possibly redrawing the boundaries erected in modernity. Reflexive modernisation can be regarded as a wary response to postmodernism’s claims of transcendence in the context of social change in Nyanga township. Lee clarifies such matters in a sense that “Modernity emerging from these forms must stress a new foundation based on a pursuit of economic and political integration in a particular country” (ibid). All three scholars have shown commonalities and aim towards the same direction of thought that is congruent to my dissertation.

CHAPTER FIVE

A context for *Diamond out of the Rubbish* performed at the Joseph Stone Auditorium.

Introduction

This next chapter will provide a contextual background for the chosen work *Diamond out of the Rubbish*. I discuss the Joseph Stone Theatre and the township of Nyanga and include analyses of various photographs taken between the years 2000-2009. A discussion of the historical background leading up to the production and reasons for the creation of a choreographic work such as *Diamond out of the Rubbish* is included. At the same time questions around the development of modernity in the township style of dancing will be posed.

The Joseph Stone auditorium, built in 1969 as a performance venue, has survived the trials and tribulations of the apartheid era and the challenges posed by the policies of segregation. It has been noted for its community involvement during the protest theatre era. Performances were attended by the Cape Town arts communities which favoured the venue for its accessibility to the coloured and black communities. Much, (but not all) of Protest theatre, visible since the 1960s, was based on the work of black theatre groups centred mainly in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban. The formation of these groups and an emerging interest in theatre, coincided with the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement, aimed at reaffirming the identity and dignity of the black people in South Africa (Larham 1985:75). It was not only the black people who were victims of apartheid. There are commonalities between Athlone, (a predominantly “coloured” and Malay community) the area where Joseph Stone is situated, and Nyanga Township. These commonalities created a sense that community values are viable understood and appreciated within the group committed to the cause. The political background of Athlone is similar to that of Nyanga and knowing this, the performers were comfortable in both spaces.

The theatre premises have not been as adequately maintained over the past decades as might be expected, however, compared to theatre spaces in Nyanga the auditorium can hold a large audience and provide some security to audience and artists. The involvement of the Athlone community is admirable. Another important reason for

black artists to stage a production at the Joseph Stone, is that an affiliation with the Artscape²¹ Theatre assists with back-stage technical expertise. The Joseph Stone is, in a sense, a historical monument where many artists performed their productions during the apartheid and the post-apartheid eras creating sentimental ties to the theatre. Since its inception, the theatre has been the home of, and managed by, the Eoan Group.

Established in 1933 in District Six, Cape Town, the Eoan Group was founded by Helen Southern-Holt. It functioned as a cultural and welfare organisation. The name Eoan derives from the Greek word *Eos* meaning 'dawn', referring to the enlightenment it strove to bring to individuals. According to the Domus website (www.domus.ac.za), initially the group's central offices were located in the Isaac Ochberg Hall in District Six. Fifteen branches were established throughout the Cape Peninsula by the mid-1950s offering a wide range of activities that included ballet, folk dance, speech, drama, singing, painting and sewing. From 1956 until the late 1970s, Eoan featured an active amateur opera section and appeared in numerous arts festivals, annual opera seasons and tours throughout South Africa (1960 and 1965) and the United Kingdom (1975). At the invitation of Helen Southern-Holt, Joseph Salvatore Manca joined the music section as choral conductor in 1943. He developed the small choir into an amateur opera company which presented their first full-scale opera in 1956. The Domus website explains that:

The Eoan Group achieved great heights despite working under the constraints of apartheid. Intensification of apartheid legislation since 1960s affected the groups morale, although they continued to perform whenever they could before mixed audiences (www.domus.ac.za).

Forced to accept financial support from the South African Coloured Affairs Department, the standing and support in the politically proactive community for the Eoan Group suffered. Eventually apartheid legislation engineered the total prohibition of mixed audiences. After the demolition of District Six, the Eoan Group moved to their new

²¹ Artscape Theatre, formerly the Nico Malan Theatre Centre named after Dr Johannes Nicholas Malan was renamed in March 2001, when the Artscape Company replaced the former Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB). Artscape is the main performing arts centre in Cape Town, South Africa. It was opened in 1971 and is located on reclaimed land in the Foreshore area.

premises in Athlone, known as the Joseph Stone Theatre, named after its benefactor who donated R100, 000 towards its construction. The theatre, comprising various practice rooms, studios and offices, was inaugurated on 21 November 1969. The move to Athlone also effectively removed the Eoan Group from the hub of Cape Town's cultural life (www.domus.ac.za).

In the Joseph Stone theatre, the Eoan group has hosted productions by the Cape Town Opera; the Dance for All Company, Cape Town City Ballet, University of Cape Town School of Dance; Jazzart Dance Theatre and non-professional theatre groups. It is important to mention that it was difficult to gather information on the Joseph Stone Theatre due to a lack of accessibility to archival resources. The Domus organisation, of the University of Stellenbosch, is the only institution which houses archival material on the Eoan group and its relevant history.

In order to understand the historical background of the theatre that hosted the production, it is vital to know the history of our country and province. The other reason to introduce the information is to understand that the Joseph Stone theatre had not previously had the luxury of hosting African social traditional dance productions and it was about time to break stereotypes. It was one of modernity's journeys to show that African social traditional dance can reach out to a multi-racial audience in order to close the bridge of ignorance concerning its aim and objectives in the performing arts arena. At a crucial stage in its history, the Eoan group started breaking away from entertaining the coloured and Cape Malay community exclusively and began to diversify audiences for marketing and survival purposes.

Profile and geography of Nyanga

Nyanga was established in part due to the migrant labour system.²² Strict control was placed on black people in South Africa during apartheid in terms of where they could live and where they could work and trade. This led to the forced removal and relocation of entire populations and the destruction of many black communities. During apartheid,

²² Migrant labourers are workers who have no reemployment rights, are usually not organised in unions and have limited access to the job market (Encyclopedia Britannica Online).

'migrant workers' were not just workers leaving their country to work for another for a specified period, the definition was also extended to include any Africans working outside of any of the Bantustans, those leaving their own "country" to work in "white" South Africa. In the early 1950s, black migrants were forced to settle in Nyanga as Langa became too small to accommodate the influx of people migrating from the rural areas. As noted above, the population of the rural areas reduced sharply because of the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936, and as a result of modernity and industrialisation that was taking place (Gelderblom 2004:123).

Nyanga, like other disadvantaged black townships, joined a national call in 1976 to protest against the Pass Laws²³. Students that were based in Nyanga participated in an uprising against the compulsory study of the Afrikaans language in all schools. Nyanga became notorious for its black on black faction fighting that was often provoked by corrupt police. "Laws such as the Black Consolidation Act 25 of 1945, the Native Law Amendment Act of 1957 and the Black Act of 1952 have been used as instruments to exclude undesirable Africans from Urban areas" (Ramphela M. 1993). These laws were enforced by local authorities. Community Municipal offices (*maspala*) run by the government selected local authorities (*Izibonda*) kept a record of all land allocation. "This is a common word (singular *isibonda*, which refers to a man set in authority over a local area); these men are also known as headmen" (ibid: 13). Their responsibilities included collecting rent money, evicting householders and reporting political activists to the Nationalist government during the apartheid era. They also had the authority to control the influx of people to a particular area through their power to allocate land. Using cultural roots as criteria, *Izibonda*²⁴ subjectively used their discretion and grouped individuals within the large townships according to rural or homestead

²³ Pass Laws in South were designed to segregate the population and limit severely the movements of the non-white population. This legislation was one of the dominant features of the country's apartheid system. The black population were required to carry these pass books with them when outside their homelands or designated areas. Failure to produce a pass often resulted in the person being arrested. (www.sahistory.org.za).

²⁴ Mamphela Ramphela was a Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town from 1996-1999. She is well known for her anthropological work specialising in problems concerning social matters. She is presently the executive chairperson of Circle Capital ventures. She states that *Izibonda* are subject to review and replacement if they fail to meet the expectations of their fellow residents, but in general they tend to remain in office until retirement or their movement back to the rural home. (1993)

background. In return for their services and loyalty to the apartheid government, they were well taken care of. Their responsibilities revolved around keeping the peace. They were in charge of the roster for cleaning the communal space, making sure that people adhered to set sleeping and lock-up times, and they arbitrated in disputes around these and other issues. In conjunction with the hostel superintendents, they also regulated access to empty bed-space and expulsion of any undesirable elements from the beds. Cultural differences were allegedly used by the police to instigate black on black faction fighting. The township was infiltrated by the apartheid regime and as a result rival groups fought against each other. This led to the emergence of the notorious youth group called *Witdoek*²⁵, which was based largely in the Crossroads township.

In the early 1980s, the township youth targeted shebeens which they considered were obstructing the changes in the community that they perceived of as a necessary prerequisite to political change.

Shebeens were operated illegally, selling homebrewed alcohol and providing patrons with a gathering place where they could meet and discuss political and social issues. Often, patrons and shebeen owners were arrested by the police though the *shebeens* were frequently reopened because of their importance in unifying the community and providing a safe place for discussion” (Stanley-Niaah, Sonjah 2007:14).

The proactive youth destroyed shebeens with petrol bombs and stones forcing many operators to close. The township youth believed that alcohol was addictive; that people were throwing their lives away and slowing down the protest activities that were taking place all over Nyanga. After the biggest bottle store was vandalised and burnt to the ground, the police took over the demolished building and converted it into a police station to serve the area. This police station is situated next to the Newlands hostels and not far from the taxi rank of Nyanga.

As noted above, Nyanga became a fully established township in 1955 as the number of people coming from the Eastern Cape increased dramatically. The first hostels were built for men only. These men had to share very small rooms and their wives were forbidden from joining them. The reason for this separation was justified on the

²⁵ The word Witdoek is an Afrikaans word referring to a white headscarf, tied around the top part of the head and worn by this group.

grounds of “health” as there were no separate male or female toilets and bathrooms, or privacy. Some of the oldest hostels can still be found in the Mau-Mau area of Nyanga. As a result of the poor living conditions in the hostels, most of the migrant workers moved out of the hostels seeking privacy and built themselves temporary houses²⁶. In Crossroads and later in an area known as KTC, these homes had no foundation or frame work and were made of corrugated zinc sheets, planks and hard boards. Formal houses with multiple rooms were built by the government and allocated to some of the people. These were very few in comparison to what was needed. For example 10 houses would be built when 1000 were needed. This next section provides several illustrations of Nyanga with comments.



Plate 2.1 This location is in between Zwelitsha and Mau-Mau (Nyanga). There were communal showers for the men; people had no showers in their homes. The washing of clothes was also done in this space and venue.

Photograph: Sonwabo Sompetha 1994

²⁶ Temporary houses were cleverly designed and could be erected in one day. They used any and all available material and can be seen as South Africa’s first recyclists. They used scrap, and broken items to make a home.



Plate 2.2 some formal homes between Zwelitsha and Mau-Mau (Nyanga).

Photograph Sonwabo Sompetha. 1994

The name Mau-Mau originally referred to a group of guerrillas in Kenya who used non-conventional methods to attack the Kenyan government army. Most black people who knew about the liberation of Kenya also knew of the Mau-Mau's cold hearted tactics and methods. Wa Thiong'o (1964) explored the vicious attacks of the Mau-Mau guerrillas on white people during the time of the British occupation in Kenya in his book *Weep Not, Child*. In Nyanga, the Mau-Mau area which was notorious for illegal activities and major involvement in crime, assumed the same name. Margaret Nombuyiselo Rani and her neighbour Ntombi Mfazwe commented that "it was hard times; we could not walk after 9pm because of gang related incidents and violence towards us women in particular" (Rani, Mfazwe 2008: informal conversation 2008).

The latest statistics as compiled by Yazeed Kamaldien for City Press newspaper in 2012 sourced from the National Police Ministry indicate that:

Most crimes in Nyanga increased from April 1, 2011 to March 31 2012 compared to the same period the previous year.

The number of murders increased up from 198 to 233, Sexual crimes from 368 to 398, attempted murder from 142 to 163, Assault with intention to inflict grievous bodily harm from 990 to 1,046, Robbery with aggravating circumstances from 623 to 879, Residential burglaries from 484 to 570, Vehicle theft from 114 to 134, Illegal possession of firearms and ammunition from 149 to 168, Drug-related crime from 1436 to 1881, Carjacking from 44 to 81 and kidnapping up from 16 to 28.

In addition to the above report, the recent census report issued by Statistics South Africa, indicated that in 2012 Cases of Sexual Crime and Rape increased by 8.06%, Cases of evident crime by 3.69% and Death related to Assault by 29.33% (www.statssa.gov.za).



Plate 2.3 Mau-Mau: the Dairy and the prefabricated building were demolished in 2009. This unfortunately means less dancing and rehearsal space.

Photograph: Maxwell Xolani Rani 2010

The Crossroads informal settlement, a sub-section of Nyanga, has developed since the 1980s into an area of formal housing. Many families living in hostels have converted them into family homes and have subsequently been granted full ownership as part of

the Nyanga development plan. The oldest hostels situated in the Mau-Mau area next to the terminus have been renovated and developed into flats suitable for families and the library and community halls have been built right next to the bus terminus. Zolani Centre is the community Centre where most of the activities took place including dance rehearsal, political meetings, church gatherings, karate, body building, chess clubs and the cooking schemes to feed the disadvantaged people. The Centre has been rebuilt with state of the art architecture, including offices allocated to assistance with disability funding, proper arts development programmes and other necessities. The reconstruction of the Nyanga taxi rank, one of the oldest, has made it safer and more convenient for the commuter. The offices of the taxi owners and ATM vendors are situated next to the Golden Arrow bus offices. The terminus is surrounded by restaurants and fruit and vegetable stalls. There are clothing stalls selling items from washing rags to dresses and underwear, at reasonable prices.

I could not find any documentation showing evidence of any dance that came out of this specific community in Nyanga. However, documented information about Nyanga in both pre- and post-apartheid eras is included in that relating to the more established areas of Langa, Guguletu, Philippi and Khayelitsha. Any analysis and/or history record of Nyanga dance therefore suffers from a dearth of scholarly literature.



Plate 2.4 Front view of Zolani Center

Photograph: Sonwabo Sompetha 1994



Plate 2.5 Front view of Zolani Center

Photograph: Maxwell Xolani Rani 2009.

A brief perusal through current and archival newspaper articles indicates that Nyanga is almost entirely referred to in the media in relation to crime and HIV/AIDS. The high incidence of crime, particularly with regard to black on black faction fighting and taxi wars, having always been a factor in Nyanga. More recently, this has spilled over to become an increasing problem amongst school-aged children. An exclusive report to the City Press revealed that “Primary schools make up a third of 109 ‘high-risk’ schools in and around the city, as the youngest group of pupils suffers, gangsters, drug-dealing and violence”, (Kamaldien 2012: 7).



Plate 2.6 The Bottle Store location transformed into Nyanga Police station

Photograph: Maxwell Xolani Rani 2009.

Nyanga is a large Township and most of the Cape Town community is familiar with its reputation. As a Nyanga local, I find crime and HIV statistics both disturbing and questionable as these statistics are compiled from data which includes crime in the areas of Lower Crossroads, Crossroads, parts of Delft, New Crossroads, Barcelona, and Phillippi (Statistics South Africa Census 2012 See appendix no B). The high crime statistics indicated by Kamaldien, and Statistics South Africa therefore, are a result of the inclusion of these other areas. In my view, it would be more appropriate if statistics included only the Old location, Mau-Mau, Zwelitsha, White City and the hostels. The high

level against which these statistics have been measured historically has reflected badly on what, for me, defines the township. Nyanga includes many hostels and squatter camps with its residents being a significant influence towards the development of its culture and traditions. Most of the people living in Nyanga came from different villages (some very far away); and clans and some were born in the heart of the township. For me, they embrace multi-culturalism and for the most part accept cultural differences. Graham Leach in *South Africa: No Easy Path to Peace*, writes about Nyanga's association with the development of another Township, Crossroads.

The government had done an about-turn on Crossroads, accepting increasingly that urbanisation could not be held back. The problem was how to regulate it: which blacks would be allowed to stay - the "illegals" as well as the "legals"? The past had shown that even the most rigorous apartheid laws had failed to prevent the influx; indeed, one estimate suggested the black population had more than trebled. The Crossroads violence inspired speedy government rethink (Leach 1986:10).

Just after the political unrest, in the 1980s, it was announced that those living in the established black communities of Langa, Nyanga and Guguletu would not be required to move to Khayelitsha (ibid:158). Andrew Tucker, in *Queer Visibilities: Space, Identity and Interaction in Cape Town*, focuses on the poverty levels of Nyanga and surrounding Townships.

These are by far the poorest areas of the city while the ANC government has attempted to improve the living conditions of Township inhabitants, large numbers of individuals continue to live in informal shacks without running water or electricity. In 2001 in Khayelitsha 64 percent were informal shacks. Only 20 percent had piped water inside their homes. Nearly 24 percent relied on paraffin, candles, and other fuels, rather than electricity for lighting (Tucker 2011:106).

Tucker also highlighted other negative issues of Nyanga as being one of the most dangerous places in Cape Town. "Nyanga is the highest 'police zone' in Cape Town with the highest homicide rate 135 murders per 100,000 people" (ibid:207).

Mamphela Ramphela in *A Bed Called Home* (1993) writes about hostels in Nyanga in relation to the migrant labor system. Ramphela focuses on the unhealthy lifestyles of hostel dwellers and the bad conditions that those who moved from rural to urban areas were forced to endure. A print editor of Health-e News and multi award winner on

public health issues Anso Thom, commented on behalf of the The Centre for the Study of AIDS at the University of Pretoria, in *Western Cape Plots HIV Rates by District* that Nyanga has HIV rates touching 30%. This translates into at least 1 in 4 people being HIV positive. Khayelitsha and Nyanga recorded the highest death rate in 2001, as well as the highest tuberculosis death rate. The HIV and AIDS death rates were by far the highest in Nyanga and Khayelitsha (Thom 2006:10).

It is important to share such information about Nyanga. The significance of the knowledge lies in the fact that despite how dangerous the area, it managed despite of all the gangsterism and poverty, to produce dancers. The information about Nyanga will help to understand the behaviour of the dancers of Nyanga, why and how they move dance-wise and where the attitude comes from. The next point is that despite all the obstacles, dancers managed to make time for rehearsals and became part of something positive. This having been said, it is my view that there is still not enough dancing in Nyanga because of the fear or stigma that is attached to the art form; that dancing is for girls and a waste of time.

A Transformation Research Project conducted by the Unit for Religion and Development Research of the University of Stellenbosch, in partnership with Transformation Africa, gives further insight on issues relating to poverty levels of Nyanga.

The percentage of adults (20 years and older) who did not have the opportunity to complete any schooling for Gugulethu/Nyanga/Crossroads is 11.3%. The highest percentages were recorded in Gugulethu (20.5%) and Nyanga (20.2%)” (Stellenbosch University 2001:14) Also, the percentage of households in each of the smaller areas of Gugulethu /Nyanga/ Crossroads, where the dwelling was classified by the Census as an informal dwelling, is as low as 45.4%. Crossroads (95%), Gugulethu (92%) and Nyanga (97%) consist almost entirely of informal dwellings (Stellenbosch University 2001:14).

However, the solution to the problem is not simply found in the deployment of more policemen in the schools and the community in general, nor in government enforced programmes aimed at behaviour modification and conflict management. In many townships in and around Cape Town, especially ‘black’ oriented townships, youths are born and bred into a society that necessitates crime and gangsterism as a form of

survival. Many youths are not aware that there are other viable and positive options. Nyanga is a primary example of the possibility for youths to be engaged in cultural activities. The Zolani Centre, and programmes such as the Nyanga Performing Arts Talent Development Project, serve to provide a multitude of culturally enriching activities for neighborhood youths. Empirical information about the cultural richness of Nyanga as a township is scarce. The only subject material that provided a modicum of in-depth information about the arts in Nyanga was a funding proposal for the Nyanga Arts Development Centre Project. Through working with the Nyanga Arts Initiative, a wing of Dramart Productions, UK, the Development Centre Project's intended goal was to contribute to arts development, skills development and enterprise development in the Nyanga community and surrounding areas. Dramart Productions would appear to be the only organisation that seeks to further develop the arts in Nyanga and yet Dramart Productions is a corporation based in the United Kingdom (UK) So here exists yet another case of outside influence infiltrating the heart of a community. The funding for this project comes from the UK and so does the initial leadership. While South African management is facilitated through Artscape, the issue of self-ownership still stands with regards to leadership and pride. While the efforts of Dramart Productions are commendable, the lack of the Nyanga community awareness and support should serve as a signal those attitudes within Nyanga and Cape Town need to change. Though the Nyanga Arts proposed document stands as a funding proposal, it highlights the need for greater appreciation with regards to artistic resources and support for artistic work/ dance from township communities. The funding proposal also serves to reinforce the observation that there is an immense lack of information in media and academic research on the topic of South African townships in relation to the arts.



Plate 2.7 Nyanga Art Centre; this was the second attempt in building a communal art establishment. It was vandalised in 1998.

Photograph: Sonwabo Sompetha 1994.

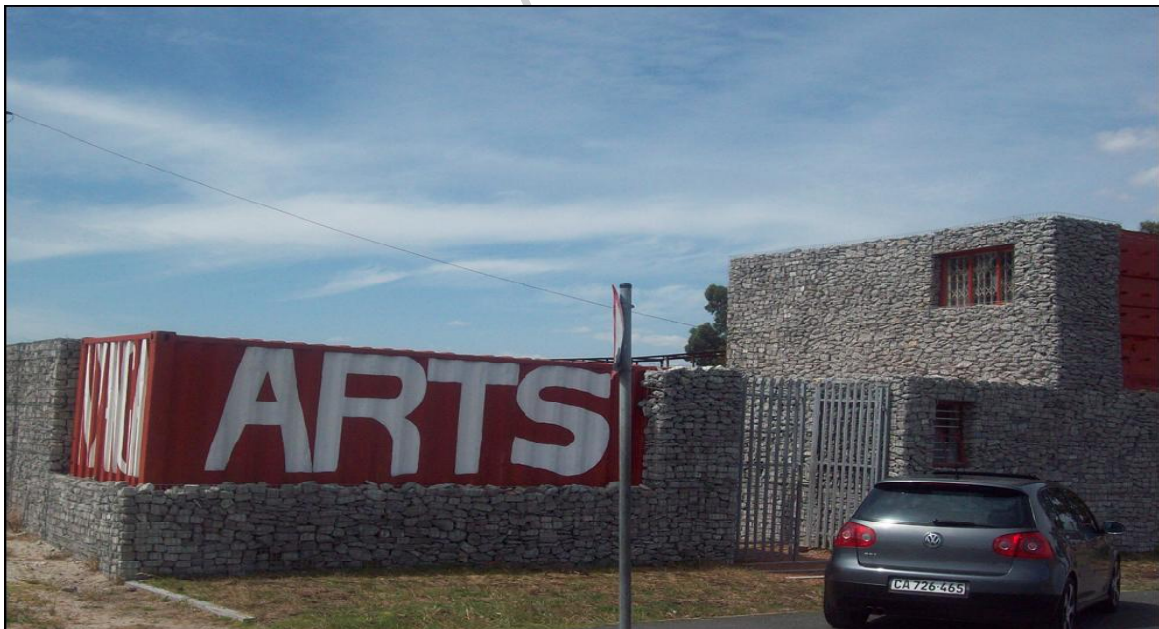


Plate 2.8 Nyanga Art Center facing Lansdowne Rd in Mau-Mau area.

Photograph: Maxwell Xolani Rani 2009.

This kind of signage draws attention to the fact that art can be used as a catalyst by other sections of society in the urban areas. Art and dance can restore respect and dignity as well as provide a way to stay out of trouble and not be influenced by the township's underworld. It is entirely possible that hostel people may have wanted to develop their arts but had no resources available to them. One can actually understand the pressure to "fit in" facing hostel dwellers. Their children learn about the popular township culture while sharing their time with their school friends, and not the old ways from the rural hostel people. As a result they pick up behaviour disapproved of by their parents or hostel people. Furthermore, their attendance at social gatherings, which is different from the rural way of living, often means that these youths are exposed to alcohol abuse, slang, and foul language and create new behaviour patterns.

Although Nyanga has previously been studied for AIDS statistics and corruption, it is important for me to highlight that there are aspects of the community that have been overlooked. Having growing up in Nyanga, I have firsthand experience of the safety issues of living in a township. However, Nyanga is proudly my place of birth and the place where dance began to make sense to me. I have closely followed the arts scene, in particular drama, dance and music. I can truly say that I know the history of Nyanga because I have experienced it growing up in an era where changes in the arts and dance specifically appeared. I have witnessed dance change dramatically in Nyanga, and in South Africa as a whole.

Origins of Joseph Stone Auditorium Performance *Diamond out of the Rubbish*

The Joseph Stone performance *Diamond out of the Rubbish* offers, in my opinion, a perfect example of the performance of South African social traditional dances by Nyanga dancers. In this work, the dancers had incorporated the traditional and modern elements of African dance in a production of dance-theatre. Through the choreographic lens through which I observed the performance, I will outline and analyse in detail the important elements of the show. As a member of a performing township group, freelance artist, dance student, scholar, choreographer, lecturer of African dance and my past involvement with the Nyanga dancers. I am aware that my opinion and views have

been influenced greatly by past experiences. I have danced, performed and taught in Africa, Europe, Asia and the Americas. I have worked with schools, corporate functions, nationally funded projects and in commercial productions. All of these experiences influence the way in which I now look at the Nyanga performance culture within the South African dance context. I will always be proud of my Nyanga roots and the many experiences that helped shape my appreciation of the performing arts industry. The performers from Nyanga did not always recognise my rationale for the implementation of certain elements in this production:-for example, adding new dance vocabularies to the already familiar choreography made them feel uncomfortable. They felt they were being challenged unfairly as they were not familiar with some of my imposed dance dynamics. This was logically due to their lack of knowledge about the greater dance world. By outlining the scenes and specific dances within this Joseph Stone performance, I will be able to highlight and analyse its modern and traditional elements with the intention not of being judgmental, but rather highlighting the co-existence of these elements in today's context.

The production *Diamond out of the Rubbish* began when the National Arts Council²⁷ and Artscape funded Thandi Swartbooï in March 2008 to put together township productions with an emphasis on African dance. I use the term "African dance" purposefully, because the mention of South African dances choreographed for this event would be too specific. Swartbooï asked Mandla Mbothwe to direct the production as he hails from Nyanga as well as being a qualified director who lectures at the University of Cape Town's Drama department. I was asked to be the choreographer as I had studied with Swartbooï at the University of Cape Town, School of Dance and I have worked with Mbothwe on several projects, in Nyanga and elsewhere. Much controversy has arisen in the field of African dance, re, for example, the wearing of white *tekkies*²⁸ on the feet and leopard printed vests, as part of the costume. I do understand some of the restrictions of the modern theatrical stage compared to traditional social functions of

²⁷ The NAC is a national agency mandated by the department of Arts and Culture, with the responsibility of developing South Africa's creative industry by awarding grants to individual and organisations in the arts.

²⁸ Tekkies is an Afrikaans word for a shoe based on a soft sole sneaker or training shoe, the name being used in a slang manner which is popular to the street lingua in South Africa. Popular tekkies for example, are the Converse brand.

dances. These include the shortening of the theatrical production, confinement to a given location, lack of audience participation, alteration of the function, understanding of a perfect marriage between music and dance, and the significance of the dances. However, I also see many valid reasons for bringing a local township production to a well-equipped theatre venue outside of Nyanga. Both these examples once again highlight the contentious issues around the influences of modernity.

Cast Members

I had worked with some of the cast members prior to the production. These dancers knew most of my repertoire of traditional pan-African and neo-traditional dances and were familiar with my style as they were students who had received intense training from me as part of their three years dance studies at the University of Cape Town. However, the show was not composed of one specific cast or an auditioned set of dancers, but rather a wide range of dancers with divergent styles and repertoire. One group involved was an unofficial local one in Nyanga that performed mainly traditional dances and worked with traditional costuming such as skins: cowhide, Angora goat skins and Zulu shields and *knop-kieries* (knobbed walking stick). Although not formally recognised or established as a group, they all had a similar background, studying the same dance style. In addition they were all fully acquainted with the dance repertoires and were eager to come together for the *Diamond out of the Rubbish* performance. Some dancers came as individuals, even though they belonged to other official groups. They joined in with the larger groups because of connections or affiliations they had with certain cast members. No auditions were held and people joined the cast informally.

Women Unite, an internationally acclaimed music and dance all women's group, was a strong company that was already 15 years old. All of these dancers had over 15 years of experience in the traditional South African dance industry. They were a mature group to work with and specialised in Marimba playing. Their music repertoire ranged from Dave Brubeck's *Take Five*, made popular by George Benson, to the traditional Xhosa folk music rendition of Miriam Makeba's *Lakutshon 'ilanga*. The two leaders of *Women Unite* were graduates of The University of Cape Town's School of Dance having had extensive

dance training in styles ranging from Xhosa to Zulu dances. The internationally recognised musical group called *Vimba* is composed of individuals playing western instruments: acoustic guitar, bass guitar, drums sets with synthesizers, keyboard and includes four backup female vocalists using four microphones. This group was led by Mpho Shuping and came into existence in the 1980s. They specialise in Afro-Jazz, Mbaqanga music and other musical variations. They are based outside Nyanga township and their members come from Khayelitsha and Gugulethu.

The professional narrator for the performance, Abey Xakwe, had previously worked extensively with director Brett Bailey in the productions *Ipi Zombi*, *Big Dadda* and *Orpheus*. In addition, he was experienced in community theatre work in Nyanga. He was important to the production as he linked the distinctive characters and told the story through dance, music and multimedia. Mama Madosini, was also part of the production. Originally from Langa, Cape Town, she worked mostly as a solo artist specialising in *Uhadi* (berimbau), *Isitololo* (Jews Harp), and *Umrhubhe* (mouth bow). She was a regular member of renowned African music and dance group *Amampondo*, and had worked with Thandiswa Mazwai on the short film called *Spirit of Uhadi*. She features on Mazwai's album *Zabalaza*, and has added her professional unique sound in many other productions. She has appeared at WOMAD Festivals in the UK, Australia and Singapore and represented the Xhosa clan in the multicultural Jazz ensemble Ped Xulu. We were lucky to work with her for this performance because of her professional status and her warm presence.

Abey Xakwe's role as the narrator was to tell a story about African ancestral dreams centred on confusion and protection. In *Diamond out of the Rubbish* a young girl, Akhona Ngcatshe, played this role very well. She had been trained at *Dance for All*²⁹, in this production, she dreams about images of people surrounding her. These are images she does not understand. They scare and haunt her. This story unpacks issues around traditional dreams in an urban setting where ancestral dreams may not be understood or embraced. As a choreographer, I was trying to incorporate the ideas of dreams and

²⁹ a non-profit organisation that gives children in historically disadvantaged communities the opportunity to dance for enjoyment, promotion of self-esteem and empowerment, as well as training professional dancers and developing a unique, indigenous dance company (Dance for All Website)

the significant role that they play in black society. I attempted to show the respect we, as Xhosa people, have for dreams and how we interpret them. This was a significant part of the production i.e. trying to explain what different dreams mean.

Xakwe narrated the story of this young girl throughout the production and incorporated her story with another story revealing the history of Xhosa people, and of how squatter camps came into existence and how modernity had influenced the Xhosa community. The narration is executed in a Xhosa folk style, reflecting the time period of the play; the 1950s and 1960s. Our objective was to showcase the storyline through dance and storytelling. The dance genres and costumes also reflected the time period in which the production was set.

The Production

The chronology of the production was designed so that the opening number began with the Vimba music group. They commenced with the song; *Push Skorokoro* that was popular in the late 1980s/early 1990s. *Push Skorokoro* was originally sung by Condri Ziquku and derived from pushing an old busted up junk car. They began playing while the audience was entering and taking their seats. They were joined onstage by African percussionists on *ngoma* drums, *djembe* drums, *mbira* drums and Xhosa mouth bows. To officially begin the production, Ngcatshe appears in a restless sleep on a bench in centre stage. We reflected her restless sleep and bad dreams through her movements i.e. twitching, contractions, tossing and turning on the bench. Through these movements we created set choreographed phrases and with the use of audio enhanced these images.

The second dance was a traditional Zulu *ingoma* dance called *Intsizwa Zophelela* "when the boys are altogether." The *Ingoma* is one of the purist remnants of Zulu tradition. Boys and girls perform the dance for transition ceremonies such as coming of age and weddings. In the past it was also performed before a hunt as well as before battle. For the youth, it instills the transition of sharing experiences and building solidarity through communal dance. It was popularised in Cape Town by Vusabantu Ngema, who came to teach and inform us about these popular tradition in his village in KwaZulu-Natal. After

the *ingoma* dance, other dancers took over by introducing Mpondo dance that originated in Lusikisiki, a village established in 1932 in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. The piece was called *Ihashe* “the horse”. Zulu warrior dancers then re-entered with another Zulu war dance, which was followed by a repeat of the Mpondo dance. Mpondo dances do not generally have music accompaniment, but are rather accompanied by vocals and clapping. Sometimes *masengwana* instruments are used. The literal translation of this plastic instrument is ‘to milk a cow’, and the sound of the instrument and the action of playing it, mimics milking the cow. The *masengwana* instrument produces a sound created from pulling on a piece of plastic similar to a deep double bass guitar. The player has to be seated in a squatting position and creates sound by pulling the plastic from an oval shaped container of water. The water creates the resonance and therefore the player needs to keep on playing with wet hands.

A *Gumboot* dance was the following act with the entrance set to Vimba music. The traditional drums emphasise the rhythm of the boots. The dance likely originated among South African gold miners, especially within their tough working conditions.

The “calling of steps” was based on the miner’s experience which at that time was not pleasant. The miners were underpaid and worked in an environment not conducive to good work and security. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, the *Gumboot* dances were also political statements. The soulsafari.wordpress.com site explains that: “Many of the steps and routines are parodies of the officers and guards who controlled the mines and workers barracks” (<http://soulsafari.wordpress.com>).

In *Diamonds out of the Rubbish* production, both men and women performed in this act. Half the members exited from the stage early to change into costumes for the next scene. I maintained the interest of the audience by designing a monologue for Xakwe where he explained the lifestyle of the mineworkers ranging from their work during the day to their nightlife activities. To introduce the nightlife scene, a woman entered in a modern dress amongst the workers who were dressed in overalls. The next scene reflected *kwela*, a township style of music and dance from the 1950s. *Kwela* has its

offshoots from the *Marabi*³⁰ sound, meaning that it originates from *Marabi*, which brought South African music to international prominence in the 1950s. At its outset, the primary instrument of the *kwela* was the pennywhistle, a cheap and simple instrument that was taken up by street performers in the country's shanty towns.

Apart from being cheap and portable, as well as easy to use as a solo or an ensemble instrument, part of the popularity of the pennywhistle was perhaps based on the fact that flutes of different kinds had long been traditional instruments among the peoples of the more northerly parts of South Africa. "The pennywhistle thus enabled the swift adaptation of folk tunes into the new Marabi- infected idiom" (<http://southafricaproject.web.unc.edu/musical-genres/pennywhistlekwela/>).

According to this site, the term *kwela* is derived from the Zulu language for "get up" or "get in", though in township slang it also referred to the police vans, the "kwela-kwela". Thus it could be an invitation to join the dance, as well as a warning. The fashionable aspect of the dance was the influence of the African-American style of swing dance in the 1930s. Unfortunately, the musical group Vimba did not use pennywhistles, but they did use one of the popular South African songs *Meadowlands*, a song describing the struggles of daily life in the Meadowlands township. *Pantsula* followed the melodic music and dance of *kwela*. The flavour of the township is demonstrated in this dance, as it was popularised by men in black townships. In South African townships *Pantsula* also came to signify a kind of behaviour, language and attitude, as well as attire. According to the helloevoque.com site; In the 1970s, the term *Pantsula* was used to refer to someone who dressed elegantly yet informally and with a degree of panache. Eventually, it also developed into a form of political expression even today; *Pantsula* mirrors the *zeitgeist* of South Africa. In addition Gerard Samuel, dance scholar and the current Director of UCT, School of Dance has written that "though some women dance the *Pantsula* these days, it is still primarily a dance for men. It is characterised by flat footed movements where the dancers shift their weight from one foot to the other" (Samuel. 2002:5). At

³⁰ According to Christopher Ballantine's work reviewed by Louise Mentjies "Marabi is the term generally understood to mean the repetitive progression that underlies a wide variety of black South African urban music. *Marabi* was popular from the 1930s through the 1940s and it was linked to American Jazz, ragtime and blues with roots deep in the African tradition (1996: 245-247).

first glance, the dancers sometimes appear to be moving in reckless abandon. Some consider it a *tsotsi* or thug dance³¹. Each and every township presents its own style and texture as the dance always depicts the social behaviour of the youth from the particular geographical area. The next two dances in *Diamond out of the Rubbish*, represent African dance fusion at its best. The women dancers enter the stage and incorporate the dance, which is in Ethiopian *Eskesta* (*shoulder dance*) style and vocabulary into the overall storyline by dancing toward the character sleeping on the bench in the centre of the stage. The dancers represent dream catchers, catching her bad dreams. The Ethiopian dance is not performed facing the front, in the traditional manner. Performed by women, it is executed in a circular manner surrounding the main character. Also, unlike the traditional version, the dancers exit and enter the stage during various parts of the dance. Because the Ethiopian dance phrase was so short, I incorporated other movements to lengthen the piece. I added Mpondo movements, which fused very well with the Ethiopian movements, in such a way that their differences were hardly distinguishable. This moved into the *Ingoma* dance which was performed by males only. The males carried long sticks and wore Converse³² shoes, leopard printed vests, and *umbleselo*³³ pants. This style of *Ingoma* dance was re-choreographed, reinterpreted and restructured to fit into the storyline focusing on the main character lying on a bench in the middle of the stage.

The dance which has come to be known as the township “cold-drink-tin-cans dance” was the next piece. This dance, popular in the 1980s and 1990s, derived from children’s games. It revolves around percussive sounds and the creation of rhythmic patterns and incorporates both rhythm and movement. Most children who participated in these games were those who did not have store-bought toys. They would use objects, such as tin cans, as tools to produce rhythms and to have fun. Through that inspiration, they would bring particular musical expertise with the complex rhythms, patterns and style.

³¹ Posted on 11 June 2009 by Sara Moore <http://happypeopledance.com/?p=315>

³² Performers also wore Converse shoes, an American brand sneaker, which was used to represent a South African ‘street smart’ costume.

³³ *Umblesele* is a pair of pants that is patched in various colours and materials in order to prolong its life and it is popular in the urban settlement particularly in the Mine Hostels.

Parents were never fond of this game, mostly played by girls, because it would ruin their clothing, particularly the hemlines of skirts. They would hit the tins in between their thighs and knees and catch the bottom of the skirt as they would attempt to hit the tins together. As a choreographer, I saw the need to revitalise this dance. It showcased the dynamics of a township child. It demonstrated how underprivileged children used innovation and creativity to stay entertained even though they could not afford store bought toys.

A Spanish dance called *savillanas* took place next. It showcased dancers from the University of Cape Town's School of Dance and La Rosa, a Spanish dance company in Cape Town. The producer of the show, Thandi Swartbooi, insisted that we put Spanish dance in the production because many of the cast members were familiar with the Spanish dance style. It was placed as an additional piece and could be seen as a different aesthetic. It demonstrated how children in the township were educated in such foreign art forms. I decided to include it even though it does not shift the storyline.

Later as the song reaches its climax, they begin to dance in a "cocktail" of free-styling and solo. It is a melting pot showcasing the many influences of modernity by dancers who are wearing *umblemelo* and leopard print vests and Converse *tekkies*. These dancers shared the stage with other dancers that were wearing a complete traditional costume, some made from the skin of a cow's back and others of the Angora goat.

The finale comprised selected shortened sections of the previous dances, performed to a *hashe* Xhosa song which simply means horse in English. It is a crucial part of the whole as it reveals the "cocktail" mix and outmost influences of modernity. It incorporates a mix of every type of dance and shows the most comprehensive information about the dilution of dance movement. A detailed critical analysis of the final section is notated using Benesh Movement Notation (BMN) and is displayed on the next page.



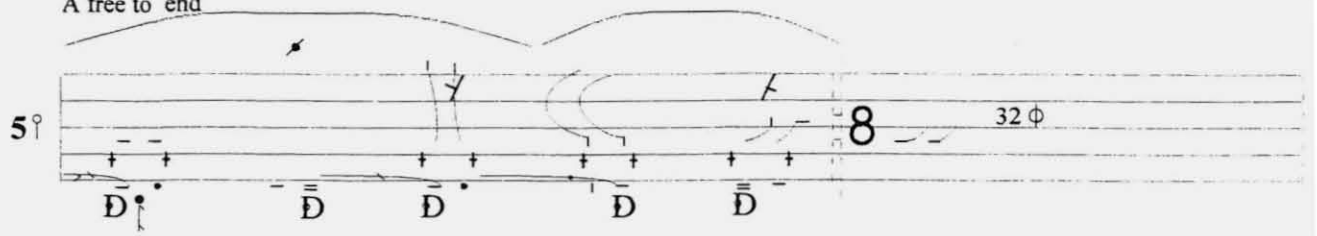
Plate 3.1: Zulu dance by men: Film Clip by Dr Eduard Greyling at the Joseph Stone Auditorium in *Diamond out of the Rubbish*"



Plate 3.2: *Mpondo* dance by women: Film Clip by Dr Eduard Greyling at the Joseph Stone Auditorium in *Diamond out of the Rubbish*.

Zulu Men's Dance

A free to end

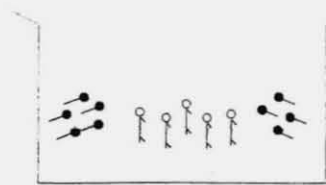


5°

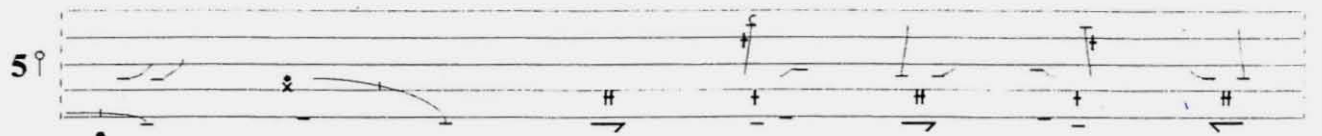
8 32 φ

D̄ D̄ D̄ D̄ D̄

Detailed description: This is the first musical staff, labeled '5°' on the left. It contains rhythmic notation with vertical stems and horizontal lines. Below the staff, five notes are labeled 'D̄'. A large number '8' is positioned at the end of the staff, followed by '32 φ'. Above the staff, there are some handwritten annotations and a small diagram of a person's head and shoulders.



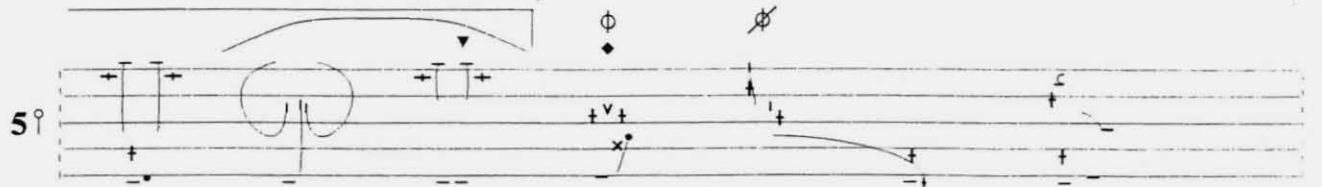
STEP X



5°

Detailed description: The second musical staff, labeled '5°' on the left. It contains rhythmic notation with vertical stems and horizontal lines. A bracket above the staff is labeled 'STEP X'.


STEP X



5°

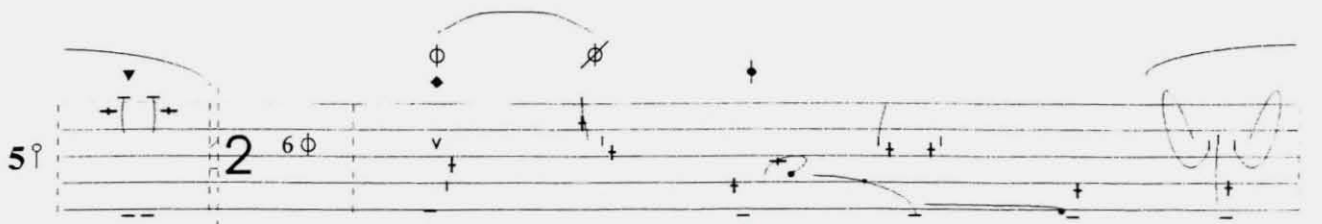
Detailed description: The third musical staff, labeled '5°' on the left. It contains rhythmic notation with vertical stems and horizontal lines. A bracket above the staff is labeled 'STEP X'.

STEP X



5°

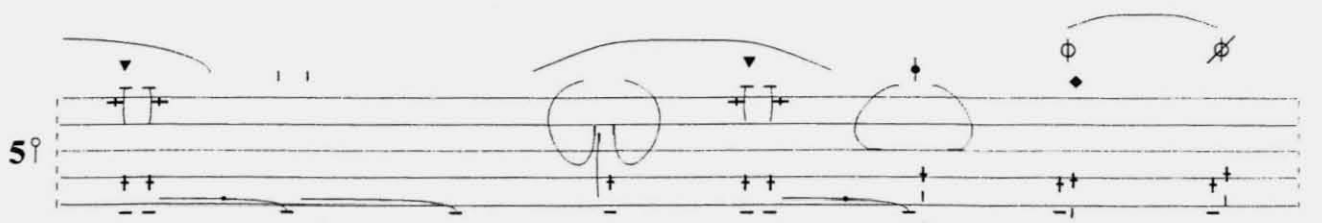
Detailed description: The fourth musical staff, labeled '5°' on the left. It contains rhythmic notation with vertical stems and horizontal lines. A bracket above the staff is labeled 'STEP X'.



5°

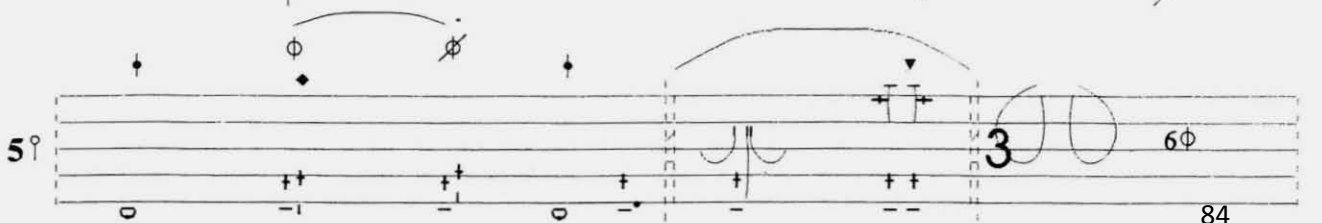
2 6 φ

Detailed description: The fifth musical staff, labeled '5°' on the left. It contains rhythmic notation with vertical stems and horizontal lines. A bracket above the staff is labeled 'STEP X'. The number '2' is written below the staff, followed by '6 φ'.



5°

Detailed description: The sixth musical staff, labeled '5°' on the left. It contains rhythmic notation with vertical stems and horizontal lines.



5°

3 6 φ

84

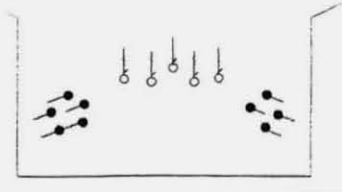
Detailed description: The seventh musical staff, labeled '5°' on the left. It contains rhythmic notation with vertical stems and horizontal lines. The number '3' is written below the staff, followed by '6 φ'. The page number '84' is at the bottom right.

5^o ϕ

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The upper staff is a five-line staff with a clef-like symbol on the left and a circled phi symbol (ϕ) above it. It contains several notes with stems and beams, and some notes have flags. The lower staff is a single-line staff with stems and dots below it, corresponding to the notes in the upper staff.

5^o χ till back of stage $X\phi$

The second system of musical notation consists of two staves. The upper staff has a clef-like symbol on the left and a large X symbol followed by the text "till back of stage" and then "X ϕ ". The lower staff has stems and dots below it. A vertical dashed line is present between the first and second measures of the upper staff.

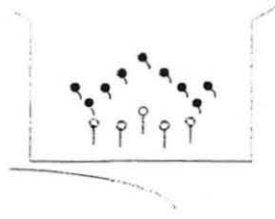


Mpondo Women's Dance



short stick

9 | 5



9 | 7

9 | 14 ϕ 7

9 | A free 7

9 | A free to* 7

9 | 11 ϕ 7

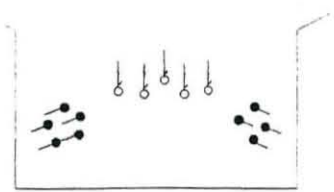
9 | 7

5

ϕ

5

X till back of stage X ϕ



During the finale, members of the band also came to the stage and danced to the song in a traditional Zulu style. They wore a beautiful Afrocentric costume that was specially designed for the music group. The dancers were moving in an ever-changing sequence, and the women enthusiastically attacked the Mpondo dance after which they opened the centre to the male dancers who executed the *Zingili* dance style. This is a dance style popular amongst the Swati people. The concluding sequence shows the women dancing a *Mpondo* dance in a circle. They lifted their legs in a Zulu stamping manner as if they did not care, and they were enjoying individual freedom of expression. They would stamp and tumble at once, their legs coming close to the ear with the head tucked forward in a deep contraction. Others would favour stamping outwardly in a rotational manner and tucking the supporting leg behind as if throwing something with both arms. This version is stylized. The upper body in all these solos engages varying dynamics e.g. trembling like a leaf, which is, called “*umteyo*” in Xhosa, and when they do “*ukulanda*” meaning to fetch in Zulu, the body goes down as if picking something up from the floor, bringing it up in an undulating manner. After this melting pot of solo dances, the audience was invited to join in the dancing on the stage, thereby ending the performance.

This section has provided a context for Nyanga, The chapter examined the venue where the dance production took place and described the production.

CHAPTER SIX

A close examination of the theatrical contexts of *Diamond out of the Rubbish*

Introduction

The following discussion on the usage of theatrical space, costuming and choreography will hopefully give insight into the influences of modernity as discussed in previous chapters.

The shortening of the duration of the theatrical production, the confinement to a given location, the limits of audience participation, and the change in the function of a performance as well as the shift in an understanding of the marriage between music and dance and the significance of the dances will be discussed in this chapter. Some of the functions of modern theatre conventions will be compared to the social functions of Southern African dances. The reasons for staging a local Township production such as *Diamond out of the Rubbish* in a well-equipped venue such as the Joseph Stone Auditorium will be explored.

Performance Space

An important social shift was taking place in the meaning and purpose of African social-traditional dances, because the dances were being moved from a black Xhosa oriented environment to a predominantly Cape Malay and Muslim urban area, not only from a rural to an urban setting. Mbothwe and I arranged a rehearsal schedule. However, the chosen locations for rehearsals presented certain challenges. We originally decided on the Zolani Community Centre as a rehearsal space, but that created a clash with the Church events and the Zolani Centre social meetings. These social meetings included a range of activities from bodybuilding to cooking lessons. As a result, we decided to look at places outside of Nyanga but most of the cast members found it difficult to get to the designated areas that we had recommended. We still needed a place outside of the township that offered appropriate dance facilities such as sufficient space, sprung floors and an environment conducive to creating an artistic ethos.

When rehearsals and productions were held at locations such as the Zolani Centre, cast members would often show up late, misbehave, skip rehearsals and not take the production seriously, giving us another reason to rehearse outside Nyanga. In the new venue we found that productions were taken more seriously especially as a new work was being created in an unfamiliar environment. The artists also felt more professional because the transportation to and from the rehearsal venue or Joseph Stone Auditorium could be organised. This made them consistent and punctual. It was therefore imperative to move away from feeling too comfortable and taking it easy when working in Nyanga. We eventually decided to rehearse at the University of Cape Town's School of Dance, and Drama Department where we were forced to create our schedules around established timetables and fit into available studio spaces. Our ultimate challenge was moving between the Dance and Drama department. We were indebted to the University for their assistance. Mbothwe and I used our working relationship with UCT to secure a final rehearsal schedule within the University calendar. Another benefit of hosting the production in a venue outside of Nyanga was the quality of theatre facilities. We needed good lights and good theatrical props not available in Nyanga. We were therefore able to do sound checks, plot a lighting design and create what I would consider a more professional technical rehearsal.

Influences of Modernity and the Hybrid Model – Execution, Quality, Style of Movement and Gender

One of the most important influences of modernity was that we used a mixed gender cast for dances that are usually gender specific. The women had previously learnt the dance repertoires in workshops accessible to both genders. Involving every dancer on stage made the overall production richer and filled the stage. In an urban setting, it seems to be accepted that some dances are not only for men, particularly if the purpose of the dance is artistic. Most of the South African population has access to these types of dances due to widespread visibility through the media. It is not a new concept to use both women and men in these dances within the urban society. Despite my knowledge as a choreographer that some dances are traditionally gender specific, the Director and I were not afraid of the idea of working with women in dances reserved for men only.

We felt they brought artistic finesse and lightness to these dances. I mention the light quality because African male dancers are generally perceived moving in a narrow, hefty and masculine manner. Incorporating feminine movement added a light, round and soft quality. These two sets of elements complemented one another.

The opening section of the first dance is a traditional ceremonial Zulu dance popular in villages like Nongoma. The dance came to Cape Town in the early 1990s when Vusabantu Ngema taught us at the Zolani Centre. He was a performer and teacher with an affiliation to Jazzart Theatre in the 1990s. Originally from Durban, Ngema taught at the University of Cape Town at a later stage between 1997 and 2001. He explained to us that this male dominated and competitive dance, based on flirting with the audience and showing off in a masculine manner would be used in Zulu traditional weddings in the villages. The costuming of the dance originally consisted of Zulu traditional skins made of cowhide and Angora goat skin. The dance is usually accompanied by the song *Intsizwa Zophelela* (when the boys are all together) while people clap to the playing of the *ngoma* drums like the *Isibhadlama* large double sided base drum made of cow skins, played on the floor. A set of six or seven drums is used at any given performance. The dance would usually take place in a circular formation with the audience surrounding the performers. As the dance calls for interaction between the performers and the audience, the dancers should be able to move freely within the shared space. Interaction is inevitable as many people usually know the song and accompany the dance, sometimes singing and at times dancing too. Traditionally, the dance leader would do the calling as the dance is about to start. However, in modern terms the music tells one when to start the dance. Dancers begin by counting the bars of the music, and decide on their own instead of listening to a leader initiating the chant to begin the dance. This is only one of the differences between African social traditional dances and their modern versions.

The first movement, normally executed in a masculine manner, was toned down. Originally I felt it was too harsh a movement so I smoothed the hand movements and changed the movement for the men because both sexes attempting to do the same masculine movement did not create a pleasing effect. I felt it was not fluid enough and

an adaptation was needed. The old version hinted at a division between the men and women and we needed neutral ground where all dancers would look as if they were executing the same movement. I used this approach for the entire production. Some movements were emphasised even more by increasing the pace. Movements like *ukulanda* (to fetch), where men perform 'a seven', taking a series of seven steps before a stamp, were toned down. I had to regulate all individual interpretation usually associated with these steps and asked everyone to dance uniformly. The movements before the stamp were unique to each dancer and gave them the opportunity to show their own style and dynamics, which in turn also needed changing. The director's instruction would be to 'polish it', as if he thought the individual interpretations collectively made the dance messy. Consequently the torso, head and arm movements were all choreographed to show strict unison. Such standardisation is in my view a modern impulse and does not exist across the board in African social traditional dance.

Working with the women was also more difficult when it came to the feet stampings and leg elevation due to costume challenges. In contrast to the male interpretation, they held their skirts down, adding a different dynamic, suitable to, or characteristic of, a woman, but also because the audience might disapprove of seeing their underwear when lifting their leg before stamping. The male interpretation of bringing the leg down is accentuated by a hard hitting of the ground, whereas the feminine emphasis is focused on the height of the leg in the air, lightly bringing it down to the ground with an emphasis on grace and elegance. This changed the quality of their movement. Instead of exposing themselves to the audience, we choreographed the movement so that their hands would go under the leg and hold the skirt as they kicked the leg up. All of this was done discreetly to be sensitive to the multicultural audience attending the show and not appear to flaunt women's bodies in a way that could be interpreted as disrespectful. After some thoughtful consideration concerning these possibly conflicting matters, I decided to accept the differences and staged men and women together in a mixed, but purposefully arranged pattern. I used the two different qualities of stamps to complement each other. In this modern context, the African social traditional dances looked arguably toned, elegant and stylised.

I also had restructured sections in the dance where traditionally the males tumble into a forward roll finishing the movement with a stamp. I had to completely re-choreograph these sections for the women because most of them could not cope with the tumbling movements. The movement had to be integrated to complement the tumbling without excluding the women. While the men were tumbling to the front, the women jumped backwards and clapped as if they were encouraging and supporting the men's antics. From there they moved into a circle to change positions in order to initiate new choreographic dynamics. Reflecting on this adaptation led to questions around the manner in which the dance was executed traditionally. Was the dance initially boring? I have found that experience in modern theatre dance choreography in contemporary society has taught me that formation changes are a necessary part of keeping the audience entertained and engaged in the dances. So far, mixed gender, uniformity and specific formation was emphasised specifically for theatrical effect.

The second phase of the dance required heavy, grounded squatting and some of the men were challenged. I advised them to approach the squatting in a semi format, meaning not to go all the way down as it was too stressful on their thighs and hips. The women, however, instead of emphasising the earthiness of the movement, tended to rather accentuate the rebounded movement. This was not because they could not execute the movement properly, but they were too aware of upholding a fashionable "modern" image during the dance and performance. I knew they were capable of the movements, but wanted to add glamour to the dance. In a way, these dancers have misunderstood the idea behind transformation and the adaptation of movement. They think that they are doing something new and fashionable, but instead it trivialises the traditional. They want to look cool in the township manner but in fact are diluting the quality of the movement. In my opinion the traditional and village feel is removed from the dance when they are more concerned with a fashionable modern presentational style. These are some of the circumstances in which modernity really trivialises traditional dances. . I argue that such modernism promotes misrepresentation and misappropriation of African social traditional dances. The dance does require certain movement qualities within a given parameter and freedom of individual interpretation is allowed, but the quality of the movement of the African social traditional dance must be retained.

I realised at the final dress rehearsal that both men and women were not able to sustain the endurance and intensity that was required throughout the production. I therefore shortened the dance, removing two phrases of movement. Allowing myself to manipulate the length of the dance and determining where to end it, is a modern interpretation. Traditionally this would not have been permitted. The dance traditionally ends with men stamping four times and with the fourth stamp, falling down on their behinds and walking away laughing and talking. However, the director asked me to finish the dance on a high note adding a climactic ending to the production; he wanted me to modernise it by bringing everyone downstage in a clustered, dense and tiered/levelled formation, ending in a choreographed smiling pose as in African musicals like *Iphi Ntombi* or *Sarafina*. I followed his wishes and his end was achieved. On the last note, the dancers struck their choreographed poses, and the stage fell into darkness with an abrupt blackout. This was effective for the performance and for the urban audience although I did not feel that it was doing justice to the African social traditional dance. We need to question the role modernity has played in South African social traditional dance art form, especially when as choreographers we are being asked to compromise dance quality.

The *mpondo* dance was the next example of fusing dances that coming from different clans and parts of Africa do not complement one another. These choreographic decisions to integrate contrasting choreography were based on theatrical aspects and other concepts of performance: a need for entertainment and a perception of what would appeal to the urban audience. These are some of the choreographic elements influenced by modernity. It was not African social traditional dance in its true form, but combinations that were pasted together taught in a studio situation. As Ntsodo says in his interview,

Every time I am doing a show, there must be something new, some new element, because we can't say that everything has been done before, nobody has changed it. You cannot claim and say 'this has never changed before.' That has been done several times before but it needs an individual to put elements into it, so that's me. That's the kind of dance I want to do. (29.08 2010)

Most of the work that I did with teenagers or upcoming Nyanga artists was something to which they could relate. I feel African social traditional dance needs to have new elements that reflect current influences. I picked up a slang word in Nyanga East for such descriptions of things new, vibrant or fresh. "Is' today" is a term expressed with a very deep Xhosa street accent used to describe these elements. It is very important to acknowledge the mind-set of the society and audience, who live in present times, but they should not forget the origins of their culture. They can pick up elements of the past that are being drawn into the present. The big challenge is choreographing in a modern and urban theatre where one is caught between two worlds. One is trying to satisfy an audience embracing the past and dealing with the present and at the same time dealing with performers who might love and embrace the past, but who also love to dance in transformed versions of the past.

The *mpondo* dance is a very male dominated dance, but was performed by women in this production. By including women, the traditional aspects of this dance changed in all spheres of the piece. Perhaps the audience misunderstood the initial intention. There were both positive and negative aspects of the influence of modernity in this particular piece. Negative in that movements and the style of the dance were changed to accommodate the women preventing them from exposing themselves during certain stamping movements. The quality of the dance and mannerisms also changed, because women were not dancing with the same heaviness men usually bring to the dance. On the other hand, allowing females to bring a different quality to the masculine dance, addressed issues of gender equality. As Koyana commented in his interview:

Today the artist is very much undermined by a lot of people. If you say...'I am a dancer' then people will begin to laugh at you... they don't know what you know deep inside and what your experience has been through dance. Dancers these days are compared with moffies/sissies (derogative term for homosexuals). (29.08.2010).

I am suggesting that there may be benefits to retaining dances specifically engineered for particular genders as this preserves the integrity of the dance. However, the integration of both genders indicates an appreciation of gender equality. It expresses a lack of discrimination and a move away from a sexist society.

The *Gumboot* entrance set to Vimba music again reflected a usage of modern elements. *Gumboot* dancing, originating in the mines, was traditionally set to music or percussion. Historically *Gumboot* did not involve women, as women were never accepted to work or live in the mines. However, within South Africa's transformation and equality policies, there are women now working in the mines therefore using women in *Gumboot* performances, eliminates the stereotyping of women. In this part of the production, I felt that we were being given the opportunity to educate the audience about issues of gender and women in the workforce. As Ntsodo comments: "We are in an evolving time...we are not only artists we are educators" (29.08.2010). However, women definitely alter dynamic of the performance. I am not suggesting that women change the piece negatively, but I pose the question, how is the presence of women changing the nature of male *Gumboot* performance? I accepted the addition of females to the work in order to be politically correct, but I keep wondering if it was not too soon to integrate both genders for the purpose of performance.

In the *Kwela* scene, dancers changing costume on stage broke down other stereotypes. It was very challenging for performers to take off their clothes in front of an audience of hundreds of people. It was also difficult to work with individual privacy issues. Having to remain on stage challenged the dancers to find creative ways to change costumes, yet remain in character by signifying enjoyment. There are two comments that Ntsodo and Koyana make on being performers who are committed to doing whatever the production entails. As Koyana comments: "Your personality when you perform is not 'you'. You are just a performer. We know you have decency in you" (29.08.2010). He is referring to all the times performers are challenged to step outside their comfort zones and explore new elements of performance. Ntsodo also brings up the issue of commitment to the dance. He explains how the quality of the dance is determined by the quality of the dancers and their intentions when they are performing on stage: "When you do your job and are trained for it, you do it exactly. It shows on stage; it shows right there. And people will respect you for that because you are doing it actually" (29.08.2010).

The Ethiopian dance may have had no direct relevance to the storyline but the dancers liked the aesthetics and were familiar with the dynamics, patterns, and steps of the choreography. As the choreographer, I had to justify its presence and place it on stage in a way that was complementary to the storyline. As stated before, the *Ingoma* dance was re-choreographed, reinterpreted and restructured to fit into the storyline focusing on the main character lying in the middle of the stage. *Ingoma* dances do not have barrel jumps or lifts, but we incorporated such movements into this African social traditional dance framework in order to relate part of the story. This is one of the most positive influences of modernity.

Koyana says:

The vocabulary will change definitely... let's say we have rehearsed on a wooden floor. On that wooden floor we had almost no limits. We could tumble on the floor with no injuries. Now, all of a sudden we would be told that we don't have a wooden floor or a proper stage. No dance mats, only the concrete floor is accessible. Now if we have to tumble twice or three times on the floor, maybe we will tumble once or not at all. Those are the changes that we would like to adjust immediately if the moment of the piece requires tumbling (if the nature of the choreography required us to tumble). We can also cut other movements and replace with others in and that is modernity. We even stylised the movements at the end in order to spice it up, the space usage as well (29.08.2010).

This idea of "cut and paste" and spicing things up is noted as a significant shift.

Modernity and Spatial Limitations

Unlike most traditional Western theatre practice, the performance of *Diamond out of the Rubbish* had already begun before the audience took their seats. The musicians started playing before the audience was seated to establish an immediate connection between the audience and the performers. In this way we attempted to create some of the atmosphere that exists in a traditional performance.

However, the performance space presented many spatial limitations. Performers did not have the freedom to as in traditional performance to move around, change direction and manipulate the space at their own discretion. Working on a proscenium arch stage,

they could not encroach on one another's space and were required to face the same direction so that individual interpretation of the movements in relation to stage space was limited. As discussed above, uniformity was therefore perceived as the organised way of moving.

An element of modernity exists in the placement of the dancers. Traditionally, the dancers would have limited pre-arranged choreographed formations in which to dance. However, we had to be aware of spaces between dancers sometimes for injury prevention reasons. We also placed dancers according to their skills levels and capability. For example, we did not want to place strong dancers next to weak ones or place weak dancers in the front. We also had to make sure that the formation was visually appealing to the audience and that all dancers would be visible to the audience, as well as to the musicians. Making a dance with live musicians is always a challenge due to the fluctuation in tempo. Musicians will often speed up the music in live performance which is not necessarily the case in the rehearsal situation. It is important for them to be able to watch the dancers and adjust their tempo. Placement in the theatre was also important, as the staging was influenced by the lighting. We had to be sensitive to the downstage area, because it is darker. The people in the front line have to be aware of the downstage wings in order to stay in the line with the lights placed in the wings.

The proscenium arch stage dictated how the traditional dances were executed. Because we wanted to incorporate the traditional dances into the story using a new and modern approach, instead of a traditional performance in a straight line, we needed characters surrounding the girl sleeping and therefore placed them accordingly. An instance like this is an example of how modernity has influenced and changed African social traditional dances. During the period of mingling on stage, females and males mixed. Four dancers were placed in the first line, four in the second, three in the third and three in the fourth. The dance consisted of a lot of stamps similar to the *Is'Shameni* style popularised by Johnny Clegg³⁴ and a particular stamp that requires the leg to be lifted

³⁴ Johnny Clegg- Dancer, Anthropologist, Singer, Songwriter, Academic, Activist and French knight. Whilst all of these togs are fitting, none of them can accurately describe the energetic, passionate human being

close to the ear with straight knees. The stamp technique requires much flexibility, control and skill when both lifting and placing the leg back on the floor.

Costuming

Costuming for *Diamond out of the Rubbish* was challenging. The first group of male dancers wore the traditional attire: a black and white cowhide skin or cow skin around the back of the waist, a sheepskin on twine around the front of the waist, leopard printed vests on top, Angora goat skin bands on their biceps and shins and they danced barefoot. The second group of male dancers wore khaki *umblemelo*, leopard printed vests and black and white *tekkies*/imitation of All Stars Converse on the feet. The women wore yellow and red with Ndebele printed miniskirts, yellow and red cropped tops with Ndebele prints, yellow headbands and white *tekkies*. The women also wore basic makeup which in the modern theatre context is used to highlight facial features under the bright lights. The use of *tekkies* started to move away from the stereotype of African dancing performed barefoot. The theatre floor was not safe for barefoot dancing as it was hard when the dancers had to stamp. The stamping and falling on the floor in this dance is hard on a dancer's body.

White shoes were a better choice for performance use because they were highly visible and appealing. Skirts, vests and white *tekkies* acted as accessories to the traditional dance. However, the performers, when asked about their outfits, appeared to perceive the outfit as "traditional". In my experience, they termed anything with which they were not familiar "traditional". All the elements although designed on a traditional basis, were in some way modernised. Traditional vests with zebra prints could represent an African way of thinking and being – or belief in natural elements. Utilising animal prints brings a level of Afro-centricity to the production. The beads symbolically reflected the colours associated with African culture: red for blood, the slaughtering and commemoration, white for peace, and green for vegetation and agriculture. The colour

who has become one of South Africa's greatest musical exports. He campaigned against the injustice of apartheid South Africa and been instrumental in putting the new South Africa on the map as a cultural ambassador (www.johnnyclegg.com).

co-ordination and combination of the costumes also reflected earthy tones and the colours of the South African flag.

The discussion around the role of the costumes needs to be acknowledged. The costumes in this dance are normally skins but in an urban setting, skins are very difficult to access so dancers favour *umbleselo* and leopard vests. There are many debates around costumes in today's African dance sector. There is a division between those who understand and are educated about the purpose behind costumes, as opposed to those who would wear a costume because it fits the profile of stereotypes of the traditional African dancer. According to Koyana, *umbleselo* is a costume used for urban dances:

We were not specifically doing the Zulu traditional dance, so we opted for the umbleselo.. But, the other boys wore skins because they didn't have umbleselo. We thought since we also had the leopard printed vests, maybe the two costumes could complement each other (29.08.2010).

Dancers who would prefer to use skins as opposed to *umbleselo* for urban traditional dances are uneducated according to Koyana. For me, the performers represented a melting pot, and showcased the influences of modernity by some dancers at the back who were wearing *umbleselo*, leopard printed vests and converse *tekkies*, and other dancers who were wearing a complete traditional costume - the skin of a cow and/or Angora goat. In the words of Koyana:

It's the experience and standard. They don't know much about wearing skins or what is expected out of the skins. They don't understand how we [are] interpreted by the audience OR by the tourists when we [are] wearing skins. The reason is we stopped wearing skins was because we wanted to stop that mentality [of] Euro-centrism, or that African people still wear skins and still live with animals or live with lions (29.08.2010).

Costumes were also an important factor of fusion and are most visible in the *Pantsula* piece. Waistcoats were used for aesthetic purposes. Performers also wore Converse shoes again because the dance is based on 'street-smart' culture.

For the Ethiopian dance that transitioned into the *Ingoma* dance, performed as a Zulu dance style performed by males only, the males carried long sticks, and wore Converse shoes, leopard printed vests and *umbleselo* pants.

Musical Instruments

The music group Vimba was situated upstage left. This consisted of a drum set (drum kit), keyboard, bass guitar and women musicians singing back up. Also upstage were five percussionists: three *djembe* drums, two *isibhadlama* drums, a tenor marimba, a bass marimba and a piccolo marimba. We used the *djembe*, a West African traditional drum, to complement the drum set, with the base guitar to complement the base of the *isibhadlama* and the drum set, and keyboard to complement the melodic tones of the marimba and the vocals. All these instruments representing different musical genres complemented each other by adding their distinct elements to the same song. There was a perfect union between the musicians playing the songs and the dancers singing. Dancers who were not connected to microphones were grateful they did not have to sing loudly or project their voices, because the musicians had microphones to amplify the sound. The energy that would have been required to sing loudly was saved for dancing. Another modern element that influenced the performance was the amplification of the instruments; all to improve the acoustics.

None of these instruments used fit the traditional profile of the dance, except for the *isibhadlama*. Traditionally the *djembe* and *isibhadlama* players would have room for individual expression and perhaps overshadow the other instruments in a performance, having their own timing for solos and adding their own interpretation of the dance. They have a unique style and rhythmic pattern. However, they used fixed music patterns and played from Western notation scores for this performance. The *djembe* players therefore did not overpower the other instruments. They accompanied and complemented the other musicians and learnt to work within these structured musical parameters.

The *Pantsula* piece began with a traditional marimba. To play marimba with jazz instruments such as guitar and drum sets, demonstrated collaboration and the influence of modernisation in a musical sense. The marimba is usually not incorporated with *kwela* music. The way they incorporated it in a theatrical setting demonstrates elements of fusion. During the *Pantsula* piece, musicians played the live Afro-Jazz music popularised by renowned African singer Miriam Makeba. From the 1960s the fusion element in the Spanish dance was accomplished by using a *djembe* instead of the Spanish cajón (a wooden percussion instrument).

Use of Multimedia

Mbothwe wanted to stage *Diamond out of the Rubbish* in a venue able to incorporate the use of multimedia. He wanted the audience to see the connection between what was happening on stage and the images projected on the screen. These images were intertwined with the plotline of the production. Beginning with images from the 1960s of people getting on trains in the villages to move to Johannesburg, the images moved onto more modern pictures of the people settling, living and working in the mines as well as other domestic working industries. Images constantly changed showing a progression of people from the villages moving to the townships, presenting a time frame of the period in which the production was set. Artistically, the pictures opened up a discussion of the theme of the production. Images added another dimension to the performance and gave another perspective to the storyline. These images enriched the quality and heightened the standard of the performance. If an audience member was tired of viewing the actual performers on stage, they had the images projected on the screen to carry them through from scene to scene. Multimedia worked not only as an aesthetic dimension, it also worked as an educational tool for those who were not familiar with the story of black people moving from rural areas to larger cities in South Africa. One of most powerful images of the performance was of an extremely overcrowded train carriage, which showed how people used to travel to work. Another image showed the poor quality of houses in which black people used to live. There were also images of black people being beaten up by police officers during protest marches.

Publicity

A further reason the production was not set in Nyanga was due to poor exposure levels of such events in Nyanga in the media, especially in newspaper and on posters. In order to publicise the production to an audience from outside of Nyanga such as dance agencies and tourist organisations, the directors purposefully chose a location outside of Nyanga. It needs to be stated here that productions, created and performed in the township, attract mostly local black audiences. Marketing for these events does not generally extend outside of the township area, which limits the amount of exposure for the event. Also, from what I have experienced, paying for tickets to see a show at a venue is still not part of the Nyanga “performance culture”. Generally, family members or friends of cast members gain free entrance to the performance. This influences the extent to which the show is viewed and perhaps valued by these non-paying supporters. Since only local people see the event, and because the productions are not supported financially, the Nyanga performance culture is not a highly profitable one by any means. The Joseph Stone Theatre was selected not only because of its location, but because the Eoan group has a marketing strategy of its own as it is a well-established organisation in Cape Town. It draws an audience because of its well-known name, its legacy and its role in apartheid and post-apartheid performing arts history.

This section has attempted to cover the impact of modernity in compromising the quality of the dances and the sensitivity in gender stereotype. It is important to recognise this information as it identifies the elements, their relevance to and shifts towards modernity, and in what sense they changed or transformed African social traditional dances of Nyanga and how the performers engaged in such a headlong and often confusing process.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Summary, conclusion and recommendations

The focus of this study was to interrogate the role of modernity in the transformation of African social traditional dances in South Africa with specific reference to Nyanga township in Cape Town. This involved a study of the forces of colonialism, migration, apartheid, urbanisation and modernity as major influences on the African social traditional dances of Nyanga. Data collection was based on qualitative research methods, employing participant observation and in-depth interviews, and focus groups within the production, *Diamond out of the Rubbish*. The researcher attended 30 days of intense rehearsals, and 3 performances as a participant observer and recorded the interviews conducted during this time. The performance on video was recorded by Dr Eduard Greyling. Data for the investigation was collected from both published and unpublished literature. The data analysis was based on grounded theory, which involved transcription, categorisation and comparison in order to attempt an emerging theory.

Social traditional dances of Nyanga were selected as a means to determine the existence and nature of social dancing, because in the Nyanga community they are the core of the instructional process and the transmission of culture and traditions. Social traditional dancing plays an integral role in Nyanga society, for example at weddings and funerals and in clubs, and as a positive extra mural activity for the youth. Dancing extends to the daily activities of the Nyanga community and takes place in Zolani Centre, Nyanga Arts Centre, Schools and Church halls. The South African social traditional dance found in Nyanga ceremonies, exemplify the acculturated nature of the urban communities in the country. This final chapter is organised in three sections: the presentation of a summary of the findings, a conclusion, and recommendations for further research.

Summary of the findings

This study has illustrated changes in the social traditional dances since the 1980s which suggest alterations to accommodate modernity. These changes have occurred with reference to the philosophical underpinnings of the African social traditional dance art as well as in the performance of these dances.

The study reveals that the Nyanga social traditional dances were influenced by following factors (as unpacked within the thesis) which in general affected the lives of the African community as it moved towards urbanisation:

- The effects of Colonisation and Christianity
- The influences of urbanisation
- The role of modernisation
- The influences of the geography and demarcation of townships

The performances of these dances were specifically affected by:

- Performance spaces
- Hybrid models: Execution, Quality, Style of movement and Gender

The dynamics and execution of the dances were altered with regard to:

- Quality and Style
- Shifting gender roles
- Costuming
- The role of music
- The use of multimedia on stage
- Modern Media

This study indicates that within the South African social traditional dance context, social dance was a source of entertainment and played a vital role in the link between the dead, the living and the unborn. In essence, dance is an integral part of everyday behaviour because of the role it plays within society. It is evident that although African social traditional dance may be entertaining, it functions primarily as a cultural and artistic expression of the community.

The study showcases the fact that there were many creative cross-overs and emerging dance styles in the Nyanga township that resulted in the invention of new township dance traditions and a new township culture. Within the Nyanga township, controversy emerged around issues of preservation versus conservation and this often led to acrimony and resentment. However, despite these drawbacks, it is clear that migration, cross-cultural exchange and its agencies gave birth to new township dance forms in the 20th century and triggered curiosity that questioned authenticity. Adaptation of contemporary lifestyle meant that Eurocentric systems were adopted either fully or partly as dictated by current fashion. Cultural tourism and the entertainment industry increasingly places Nyanga social traditional dancers at the beck and call of popular fads and fashions, and consequently the dances continue to change character in order to cater for an economically motivated market. The complexity of Nyanga urban living with its extensive problems of poverty, crime, inadequate education and lack of social awareness exacerbates the problems inherent in the long-term development of urban Nyanga dancers.

The study provided the inside perspective of the dancers' experience as to the extent to which modernity has forced them to adjust and transform. These adjustments were interrogated through a technical analysis of movement quality and execution as well as through an assessment of the role of a modern proscenium arch stage setting in imposing a transformed performance. This perspective served as a point of departure for a re-evaluation of the role and predicaments of Nyanga social traditional dance in an urban environment.

Conclusion

This study has illustrated that it is impossible to ignore the greater sociological context in which changes in the field of South African social traditional dances in Nyanga have taken place. Changing traditional norms and migration into new physical spaces have influenced the change that is reflected in the current interpretation of social traditional dances. In the performance of *Diamond out of the Rubbish*, participants adapted to a new location and formed a sense of community with other dancers, musicians, and actors in order to create a cohesive production. The study reveals that a new multicultural society has formed in Nyanga as a result of political, religious, social, urban and economic factors.

It is also necessary to emphasise that the aftermath of apartheid continues to affect the present. These remnants of the past are still evident in socio-economic inequalities and reflected in the living conditions of the townships. The creation of the township of Nyanga was also the creation of a new culture, one in which members of society were forced together with no common cultural background. This lack of a cultural denominator also had effects on adherence to traditions and the performance thereof. Cultural practices that have previously included dance for specific rites and rituals no longer have any application to the developing urban area of Nyanga. However, the creation of the Nyanga township's traditional hip groups has provided an outlet to practice traditional dances in a neo-traditional manner. By neo-traditional, I suggest that both elements of foreign and traditional elements are present and integrated in the dance performance. According to Begho; "neo-traditional is based on performing theatre groups that are experimenting with the idea of a 'modern' social traditional dance theatre" (Begho 1996:176). This means combining and experimenting in order to arrive at new interpretations without completely losing the essence of the tradition. This definition is closely aligned to the Joseph Stone Auditorium performance by the Nyanga social traditional dancers. The study reveals the movements, purpose, space, costuming and music associated with the dances that have been combined, integrated and influenced by urban modernity. There is considerable evidence in the study which points to hybridisation based on an emergent model that illustrates continuity as well as changes in the socio-cultural setting of Nyanga society.

As the tourism industry has grown, there is a greater demand for performance entertainment of social neo-traditional South African dances. The demands of the tourism industry and growing performance culture of South African society, leads to the creation of these township performance groups. There are groups that are specialising in *Gumboot*, *Pantsula*, *Kwela* and other social neo-traditional dance forms such as *Ingoma* and *Indlamu*. These groups are provided with financial opportunities as well as national and international exposure. Due to the prospective gains, neo-traditional dances are reorienting towards western stage concepts. Township dance performers want recognition within the national and international community and no longer simply present a version of authentic traditional dances suitable enough for South Africa's urban society.

This study has also identified that, judging by the amount of artistry involved in such productions, Nyanga is a vast receptacle of talent. One key modern feature of the Joseph Stone Auditorium performance demonstrated that exclusivity of one dance style and music was not necessary. The production incorporated traditional drumming alongside a modern band, and social neo-traditional dances set to the same rhythm as West African dances. The production exemplified a variety show of sorts, with singing, dancing, drumming, narration, adaptation and the use of multimedia.

However, despite the internal and external influences, and increased literacy and technology, it has also been established that to some extent the Nyanga social neo-traditional dancers' identities, entrenched in urban township tradition, have survived. Modernity in urban settlements has been the driving force behind the transformation of the traditional dance to neo-traditional dance and that is evident in this study. The liquid modernisation of South African social neo-traditional dances for a more western performance space is not a new concept in the South African dance field. It can be traced from the dances of the Witwatersrand mines in 1979 in Johannesburg to events such as First National Bank Dance Umbrella in Johannesburg, the Baxter Dance Festivals in Cape Town and Jomba Dance Festival in Durban which have all embraced and showcased the westernisation of South African dance. Again, elements such as dance costumes, music, and dance types, are all factors within the performances that indicate modern influences. The performance venue and occasion are also products of the changing

society. Traditional performance venues have been replaced by new venues for new occasions. Tourist sites and performance venues such as the Baxter Theatre and Artscape Theatre in Cape Town have contributed toward the propagation of modern approach to neo-traditional dance in South Africa. The study demonstrates that certain aspects of the performance have to be modified due to the nature of the audience (passive, from diverse cultural background). Few dancers share strong cultural connections to the traditional dances they are performing. From the emergent hybrid model of Nyanga neo-traditional dancers, it is evident that traditional roots still exist, but in an edited form. It has also emerged that certain rituals, ceremonies and props have changed to suit the current socio-economic and socio-cultural environment.

Liquid modernity has influenced social traditional dance. Individual image, style, approaches and interpretation that are encouraged in traditional performance, become compromised through the conventions of much western theatre dance. The two main interviewees in the study demonstrated a difference in approach to the issue. Ntsodo explained that “he is tired of artists who are not evolving or developing” He does not like that traditional dance can be viewed as “stagnant” because it does not develop or change because of time, space and geography. He finds offensive that dancers, dances and the management now in Nyanga, do not develop or transform dance vocabulary. He states that: “When I grew up there were about six groups in Nyanga doing same dances, songs and set-up. But, as a thinking artist at the time, I thought nobody is growing up proceeding forward. Each and every group that occurs follows the same trend or routine” However, one must question why his opinion is any more valid than Koyana, who enjoys his job, which is to preserve traditional dance, and yet allows the minor influences of other art forms without losing the traditional style and approach. According to him:

“I am still going forward, wanting to learn more to equip others. I am a very different person because I did not know a lot of things before. I was also like the people who lacked knowledge. I would say I am doing African dance meanwhile I was doing, South African Zulu dance. I could not define what I was doing then, but now I can define what I am doing. I can argue about what I am doing. I kept on reading books to get knowledge and know what I am doing and at the same time compare it with what I have experienced. It is like a journey.

They have different ideas of how modernity should positively influence the Nyanga dance arena. In Ntsodo's opinion, dancers and artist should be moving away completely from 'traditional skins' attire and from anything that resembles traditional dance in order to showcase that we are moving with the times. Koyana, on the other hand, thinks that within the traditional dance paradigm, there is room for the accommodation of modernity to influence dance, for example, wearing *umbleselo* instead of skins represents a modern practice. Ntsodo acknowledges that dances are modified through modernity and admits that one can still see the roots of the dance in a traditional sense despite the dilution. Ntsodo's way of evolving artistically is to leave behind the outdated choreography. The question becomes; where does one draw the line between transforming and evolving or preserving traditional dances? Is it a necessity and if so how possible is it? Does it work as with *Diamond out of the Rubbish* where changing the quality and the movements of dance did not mean moving completely away but retaining the essence? In that production, the essence, style and significance of the social neo-traditional dance context is still evident as an undertone.

I believe it is possible to move forward with the freedom to explore different elements of African social traditional dances within a framework of a broad range of definitions. It is only then, by scrutinising these definitions, especially those constructed by dancers, choreographers, and other knowledgeable people in the South African dance community, that one can begin to formulate a viable marriage between African social traditional dance and African social neo-traditional dance in South Africa. In Nyanga social traditional dance and social neo-traditional dance have been intertwined in many ways since the 1970s with much disagreement about definitions. Nyanga's social neo-traditional dance is a style as well as any type of dance that exists at the present moment. It is valid in the context of both social traditional and neo social traditional dance. These definitions also encompass deeper socioeconomic issues, including reasons for the use of traditional dance in a modern urban setting. Nyanga's social neo-traditional dance refers to present African dance, or any dance of Africa performed in a modern setting including dance movement forms created within South Africa.

Adding elements from traditional African dance such as improvisation and rhythm to support the creation of movement is another aspect of neo-traditional dance in Nyanga.

Nyanga social neo-traditional dance has evolved from, and has been inspired by, the dynamic changes that have occurred in South Africa since the 1970s. This study has revealed the fact that the youth of Nyanga is not conscious of the influences, transformation, dilution and negotiations around what or what not to add to the art form. They prefer to just dance and let the nature of transformation run its path. They are practically involved in the making of new dances while bringing tradition into the space and in addition setting up new approaches, as long as it pleases the eye and is energetic. One might say it is another form of progression within the Nyanga community. Such dance dynamics in Nyanga does not mean they are ill informed but they value what they do practically and affiliate it with the African dance umbrella. They do not have the desire to sit down and discuss terminology and new methods, they are walking the transformation path, and they are the dancers.

Recommendations

This study has identified that Nyanga social traditional and neo-traditional dances exist in parallel and in some instances they are intertwined and modernity has played its part in transforming the Nyanga urban township dances. The hybrid model of Nyanga social neo-traditional dance reveals integration with the socio-economic and socio political, arenas.

The study makes the following recommendations:

- As the main concern of this research has been to investigate if social traditional dance in Nyanga has transformed and been influenced by modernity, it is recommended that further investigation is conducted into the causal factors by investigating the agencies that are represented by modernism.

In order to further develop and strengthen the art form, it is recommended that:

- Following the findings as mentioned in this study, there is a need for integration of the arts practices of the dance fraternities from various social sectors (i.e. School halls, Church halls, Community halls and commercial media, dance studios and entertainment houses) in order to render them relevant to the lives of the people of Nyanga Township and its surrounding areas.

- There should be careful planning, liaison and dialogue between stakeholders within the different social sectors in order for the national arts bodies to be better organised. Sustainability and ability to provide a livelihood for the dance fraternity and the people in large of the country is imperative.
- With regard to education, this research proposes that the Ministry of Education through the Curriculum Development Centre provides an urban South African social traditional dance programme that embraces and promotes indigenous, traditional and contemporary versions, while at the same time incorporating other types of dances from different parts of the world.
- Considering that this research has not exhausted all studies involving the foreign and domestic influences in Nyanga social traditional dances, similar projects could be undertaken to cover the other components that have not been fully researched in Nyanga.
- In the light of technological advancement, the South African Broadcasting Corporation should take a leading role in promoting indigenous, traditional and contemporary versions of dance arts through the provision of well-researched and well-presented local programmes, both on radio and television.
- In order for the national dance arts to serve their intended purpose, which is communicating and transmitting social South African traditions and cultures, there is need of an organisation that would look into the kind of materials that could be channelled for public consumption. In this case the National Arts Council, South African Copyright Society should make a concerted effort to deal with matters concerning social traditional dance/art practices.
- Further investigation specifically on social traditional dances should be undertaken and published widely. By so doing, an extensive awareness of social traditional dances of South Africa within the townships is more likely such an approach will reflect the heady excitement of South African social traditional dances- an area that is mostly unexplored by the local and national media.

This dissertation, although significant in the field of African dance in South Africa, lays no claims to being definitive. It is hoped that it has, at least, drawn attention to an area in South African dance art that reflects the wider search for identity in modern South Africa. It is further hoped that young African scholars will be encouraged to delve into similar topics in the performing arts arena in South Africa thereby beginning to establish a much needed body of scholarly work.

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Appendix A- Census

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Appendix B- Interviews

3.5.1 Luthando “Toto” T.O Ntsodo

Maxwell: T. O khawutsho nje igama ne surname utsho ukuba uzalelwe phi?

Maxwell: T.O, Will you tell me your name and surname and state where were you born?

Toto: O hayi ngu Luthando Ntsodo Toto nge nick name ndizalelwe eNyanga East that is where I was born and that is where I grew up as well.

Toto: Ok, I am Luthando Ntsodo and Toto is my nickname and I was born in Nyanga East.

Maxwell: Khawutsho nje kancane nge child hood yakho nje kancane, wawu interested kwi ntoni ngoku wawu khula, isikolo into ye dancing ingene njani kanye kanye?

Maxwell: Will you just tell me a little bit about your childhood, what were your interests when you were growing up? The School and how did you discover dancing?

Toto: Uku khula kwam I was not focusing at school mostly bendisonqena is'kolo full time and ehhe and dancing as well it was something there, I was not interested but as seeing things around ekuhlaleni crime I tried to gaya idiscipline trough out iactivities ezenzekayo ekuhlaleni going to those and involve yourself to those activities which was dance at the time and there was soccer as well but I was not interested to it as well, there was everything but dance was there and there was iManyanani which you know they (dance finish the line together) so silandela ke uya bona, then come ifosure it went up and up and up and (Max so I interest yavuka apho?) that is where yaqala I interest for dancing.

Toto: My upbringing – I was not focusing at school mostly – I was too lazy to go to school fulltime and dancing as well it was something there. I was not interested but seeing as things around the neighborhood crime, I tried to get discipline through activities that were happening in the neighborhood by going to those and involving myself in those activities which was dance at the time. There was soccer as well but I was not interested to it as well. There was everything, but dance was there...and there was iManyanani which you know...so we all kept on following then it went up and up and then came for sure the arts project. That is where I became interested in dancing.

Maxwell: Uku diverter nje ka ncane ndibuze enyi weyi ndi nga kubethanga emlonyeni. How do you feel yazi xa kuthiwa Nyanga East kubalwa I Lower noma Cross road ne ne ne ne zonke nee hostele ii New Cross roads konke around ne KTCne Phillipi xa uyi jonga e mappin bayazibeka ngathi zii sub ze Nyanga East kuthiwa yi Nyanga east

kuthiwa yi Nyanga East and xa kuthethwa ngo bundlobongela icrime inintsi kuthiwa yi Nyanga East kanti ayi kho Nyanga East leya yakuqala ya qala kwi Mau Mau, Zwelitsha, Lokishin"endala uyabo, incinci yona but because sinezinye outskirts ,how do you feel about that?

Maxwell: To divert just a little bit, let me ask you something else without cutting you off, how do you feel when people talk about Nyanga East, including Lower Crossroads, hostels, the area around KTC, or Phillipi? When you are looking at the map, they address all these other places as subcategories of Nyanga East. They are called Nyanga East, in a way. People address issues of crime; people always refer to Nyanga East, saying it is very dangerous, forgetting that the original Nyanga East is small, because it is based on Mau-Mau, Zwelitsh, and Old Location. How do you feel about that?

Toto: Ya yenza sometimes umntu sometimes acinge in terms ukuthi because sikhule kukhwi Ntsara staff like that zaphela zozinto and I don't think le Nyanga East ndi yaziyo mna which is yi Zwelitsha, Lok"shine ndala, and if you are noticing those crimes bathetha ngazo zenzeka mostly ezi kolweni and abantwana bezikolo basuka kwi ndawo nge ndawo and then yenzeke Nyanga East then pointing ukuthi iNyanga East icrime inyukile and sine terminus eyona ya ke yankulu e Nyanga east uya understanda,ezozinto ezo zenzeka kwezondawo zinjalo ukuthi icrime iphi and staff like that and istats se crime si high aphe Nyanga east uyabona because and you notice even Ono Taxi ayingobalaph"eNyanga East (Max ayingobalapha ,ayingoba lapha ya) so bazokusuka neengqondo zabo zakwezinyi ndawo coming here kuzokuthiwa ngabase Nyanga East, (Max,unyani sile) (Max, yima ke ndiyayi builder kengoku lento.

Toto: Yeah, that makes somebody think like that, because of the Nyanga East history of 'gangster-ism'. We used to have Ntsara gangs, but none of those things exist in Nyanga anymore. I for one know that Nyanga East is based on those 3 location,s but nothing else. The crime people mostly refer to happens mostly in schools and the learners who attend those schools are originally not from Nyanga. They are just attending school in Nyanga. For that reason, people say there is a high crime rate in Nyanga. We have a terminus, one of the biggest terminuses in Nyanga East. The people who run the Nyanga East terminus are not even from Nyanga. None of these people are from Nyanga East, but only work in Nyanga East and bring their own behavior and their own mentality and that is not cool.

Maxwell: Kubekho kengoku abantu ngoku benga zalelwanga apha andithi and ukuba uyaqaphela imost yabo isuka ezilalini, ngoku kukho ela calucalulo umohluko phakathi kwa bantu abasuk"ezilalini naba zalelwe apha baphinde bathi aba basuka kwi home lands abantwana abazalelwe elokishini ngamathole onomokhwe. Aba bazalelwe apha bathi xa bebiza abaya zii bari o"know nothing so apho ndiya khona ihamba still ne dance uyabona aba base zilalini baza nento zabo apha and behlala nje koo mahostele xa usiya koo maHostele ubone be dansa ba dansa different kunathi and bayi biza ukuba yi traditional dance futhi uyayiva lento ndiyi tshoyo, thina sine yethu itraditional dance siyibiza ukubana yi urban version of traditional dance and a rural traditional dance and so on, in so much that iye ibonakale xa si dansa sonke ukuba ya ya iya bonakala,into endiyithethayo abantu ba shiftile kwezinye ii areas bazoku lenda apho and lonto yezisa nee iinfluences and all. Apho ndiqonde khona ngezo influences uyabona but ke mandible ndiqhubekeka nga leweyi kengoku . inantsika kengoku iiiii khawuke undixelele

ngawe kengoku nge dancing as icareer ke ngoku? Icareer dancing like ngeyiphi oyi thandayo, ngeyi phi oqonda ukuba ifak"imali, ngeyi phi oqondayo ukuba yi layni yam ke le and why kunjalo?

Maxwell: Now there are people not born here. If you notice, they are born in the villages. Through this, you will experience division between people coming from the villages and people who are born in the townships. People coming from the villages call the township kids derogatory terms. The guys from the township, likewise, call the kids from the villages names, like they are from the country, they are know-nothing people, but where am I going with this? It all has to do with dance. People from the villages brought their own things, and they choose to live in the hostels. They choose to dance the way they dance. They are just different from us, the people coming from the township. They are calling their dancing 'traditional dance', you understand? We in the township have our own traditional dance, but we just call it a 'twisted version' or the urbanised version of traditional dance. In a way, you can still see the way the township people dance. They have shifted a little bit and have embraced a lot of influences. I want to focus on these influences. Now tell me about yourself. How come dance became your career, which line of the performing arts brings you more money and why is it like that?

Toto: Well, mmm, to say that wena Mqoma(Mqoma my clan name) ukuthi ngeyi phi eyam kuhamba kanjani you understand, mna I started knowing nothing, ndilinganisa nje abantu just mimicking people being on stage and as a result there were about six groups in Nyanga East doing the same dance, same songs, same set up. But, as thinking artist at the time looking at this I said no man nobody is growing up nobody is preceding forward, each and every group that occurs follow the same routine you understand? My one that I like is something new I don't know how to call it but it's something that every time I am doing a show there must be something new, new element because we can't say that yonke into esiyenzayo ayi kekenziwa nga phambili,uya bo? Yenziwa nga phambili but it needs an individual to put an element to it, so that's me that is the kind of dance I want to do. Eeeemmmmmm to come to productions that I do, I would love to do, its productions that we have to revive things not to do same things over and over again like it happens in Nyanga East! And I hope and with trust and among the groups or artist in Nyanga East we come together and see ukuthi what we can do about it and that can be a traditional to us you understand? Because we can say that is a traditional dance we call ukuthi isi bhaca, and even isi bhaca sa then and now it's not the same but you can identify ukuthi that is isi bhaca but it's not the same as isi bhaca sango kuya. But, what I am saying there is an element, a new element on it.

Toto: Well, to say that Mqoma (Mqoma, my clan name), I started knowing nothing. I started by mimicking people, just being on stage, and having fun watching and trying to dance. There were about six groups in Nyanga East doing the same dance, same songs and same set-up. But as a thinking artist at the time, I thought nobody was growing up or proceeding forward. Each and every group that occurs follows the same routine. The one that I like is something new. I don't know how to call it, but it's something new that every time I am doing a show, there must be something new, some new element, because we can't say that everything has been done before, nobody has changed it. You cannot claim and say "this has never changed before." That has been done several times before, but it

needs an individual to put elements into it, so that's me. That's the kind of dance I want to do. When it comes to the productions that I do, that I would love to do, it's productions that we have to revive things, not to do the same things over and over again like how it happens in Nyanga East. I hope and trust among groups or artists in Nyanga East that we come together and see what we can do about it, so there can be a traditional for us, you understand? Because we can say that isibhaca is a traditional dance, but it's not the same now as it used to be. However, we can still identify it as isibhaca, there are just new elements to it.

Maxwell: What about those people who feel that even maybe in the same age groups, that hayi a traditional is not suppose to change its not suppose to be informed by other things, it needs to stay as is?

Toto: Eee mna to say that wena Max, people who say that are the ones who don't challenge themselves and for me to move forward from where I am is to seek out information somewhere else and bring it in and fuse because we are in a revolving time ixesha liya hamba kufuneka sidibanise izinto zanga phandle ne zinto zanga phakathi zibe apha nga phakathi kodwa ke sisathi yi traditional dance, that's a traditional dance. If a person says a traditional can't change? Why did we change from wearing skins? Si tshintsele ntoni ukunxiba izi khinzi?

Toto: To me, Max, people who say that are the ones who don't challenge themselves, and for me to move forward from here where I am is to seek out information somewhere else, and bring it in to fuse it, because we are in an evolving time. We have to mix up with outside things and include them to the inside things, but we will still be able to call them traditional dance. If a person says "a tradition can't change" then why did we change from wearing skins?

Maxwell: It is funny people look far about change as if hayi that cannot change and all, forgetting that change happened way back.

Toto: Yes, but it's scary. It's a risk to take those kinds of chances, because change is not something that is easy. It's not easy at all, because you have to take a risk and live with it.

Maxwell: I think the other problem TO is that there is a difference between indigenous dances and traditional dances; I think people are confusing the two. You know indigenous is something that you don't mess with? Indigenous is something that is very much sacred. Indigenous is something that we do as families and as a clan and as a community alone without anybody, Sotho's together, Xhosa's together, the Pedi's together. It's sacred to a particular age group. Even if they change, they change just a little bit just to adopt where they are. Traditional is for everybody. It started because people started to be mixing with other people, and sharing with others.

Toto: Because we are in Urban wena Mqoma is that we are here and my next door neighbor is Sotho and the other one is Pedi and Tswana, Zulu (Max: u Sis Tap Tap ngama Zulu, OO Star nga be Sotho OO Ara ngabe Sotho) uya understenda so we have to

not change but siphilisane in a way (Max: we share) siphilisane in a way and that is where it becomes a change, you understand to fit each other in, I mean we are the community.

Toto: Because we are in an urban setting Mqoma. We are here and my next-door neighbour is Sotho, and the other one is Pedi and Tswana and Zulu. We have to not change but share in a way. That is where there becomes a change. We begin to understand and fit with each other and become a community.

Maxwell: hayi ndiya kuva Bawo, let's talk about inantsi ka I what can I say I dance now directly, how possible for somebody to specially identify that hayi this dance was traditional? Especially if they have modernised it?

I hear you. Let's talk about dance directly. How possible is it for somebody to specifically identify that a dance was traditional? Especially if they have modernised it?

Toto: Emmmmmm Max its difficult if you take Unonkonjane into a theatre(Toto's Mother) first of all not used to the theatre in a way, I mean I will speak about dominating black people ne from aphe Kasi from Nyanga East, go to the theatre and understand what theatre is all about first of all and they don't understand what is happening there traditionally or contemporary or modern or anything, but they enjoy the kids been on stage you understand, so my take on that we need to introduce theatre first, for us for us to take the community to understand what is happening. We can't say people will be educated in that way, educating people about the theatre and that will take us to motivate abantu to go to the theatre.

Toto: It's difficult, for example, e to take my mother to a theatre; first of all, people like her are not used to theatre in a way. I will speak about dominating black people only from the townships from Nyanga East. They go to theatre and don't understand what theatre is all about or they don't understand what is happening there traditionally or contemporary or modern or anything, but they enjoy the kids being on stage. We need to introduce the theatre first for us to help the community understand what is happening. We can't just say people will be educated in that way. Educating people about the theatre will help us to motivate the people to go to the theatre.

Maxwell: I think it will create Classicism, because look at the culture of paying. We not used to it. Entertainment is supposed to be free to us. If people get to see something so called 'traditional dance' maybe at the corner of Maphindis (a famous shop and butchery in Old location, it sells barbecue meet) there will be a large crowd there, but if you put a CD of Baba Thunde or Bra Hugh Masekela and dress up in a contemporary clothes doing the same thing that they were doing, but with a twist, there will be lot of people who will giggle and laugh in the township. Others will say "this is the stuff for girls or moffies" they won't be appreciating more than they appreciate the other and I want to know what causes that?

Toto: That has been abused for me. People wearing skins just jumping up and down they are not dancing. It's something they learned long time ago they are just milking it (Max: as if like culture is not changeable?) not necessary it's not changeable, it's gone.

That was then, 16 years that was then, 16 years ago we were doing that. This is now; it is now we have to be here. I mean people may laugh at us, doing contemporary dance in the corner of Maphindi. Let them laugh, but there will be a change. For if I change one person's perspective, I have done my job. (Max: so that means you educate) yes, I have done my job. I did educate somebody and entertained somebody. Out of that hundred, one is enough for me. (Max: I hear you now, I hear you)

Maxwell: How do you feel about the guys that are doing traditional dance much more on a touristic version, they go to big companies like corporate and they get paid doing traditional dance? I personally don't mind because it feeds families, it pays the bills. But other people they don't approve of it because they say it demoralizes the value of African dance and you kind of kill the tradition and culture within it let alone you are selling your body like prostitutes. What's your take on this?

Toto: Xolani (my Xhosa name) leyo inzima kakhulu to say, u right xa usithi we must pay bills, that is our job and to what you just said we are not selling our body, we are doing our jobs. And saying for one to go to corporate companies and put a proposal and definitely it has to look good and definitely they not gonna put skins because Iphi Ntombi did put skins way back. (Iphi Ntombi is one of the oldest South African 'black' musicals) and that is the kind of thing that happened then, I mean now we have imibleselo and we have isi Pantsula and that is fresh enough. (Imibleselo are pants that used to be worn in times of the mines with lots of patches all around and the patches used to be applied when the pants are on its dying age or years, it used to be color coordinated and stylish. Pantsula is a township highlife dance style that originates from the streets of the townships and keeps on evolving or developing according to regions and influences) we have got everything that is fresh and has the traces of those things "old" things comes back to today's time. From then till today its way to different things and then udibanise ezozinto zombini izokuba kulendawo ikuyo, that's what it means "to pay our bills" I am willing I have to pay my bills and it is selling.

Toto: It's difficult to say because you're right when you say we must pay the bills. That is our job. We are not selling our body, we are doing our jobs. To go to corporate companies and put a proposal, it definitely has to look good, and definitely they are not going to put skins because they did put skins way back. Now we have umbleselo and we have isi Pantsula and that is fresh enough. We have everything fresh, which has traces of those "old" things. You mix things from then and today to get where you are.

Maxwell: It's a good thing, but when people take that line of work they should be good at it. That's how people get the integrity back, because when you take that line of work it's almost like you opening up a small business, and then you know that "this is my bench mark", measured by the quality of dance that I do. You know the technique that is behind it and nobody is taking you for a ride. You are not putting what people used to have back in the days when people find out that white people love traditional dancing, because it's very sensual and women wear short skirts and thick thighs and black guys are topless. So you don't actually work like you are begging, you doing it flat out and people will start looking at you and respecting you. Sometimes you see people dancing and you can see that they don't know what they are doing and that is when the embarrassment is upon us and people start to look at us in an embarrassing manner.

You will find other people commenting and saying “they are not doing it very well you know”.

Toto: That is what I was saying Xolani, that when we do the job you do the job, when you begging for the job, you are begging for the job and it will show on stage. When you start to beg, you are not doing what you feel inside, you do it for money. But when you do your job and are trained for it, you do it exactly. It shows on stage, it shows right there. And people will respect you for that, because you are doing it actually.

Maxwell: The funny part is that I did co-choreograph a production in Joseph Stone for the guys in the township. What was funny was you can see the styles are not the same. Some who took African dance to another level wore a different costume, but they are doing the same dance, the others who have 5 years on this field wear skins and they are passionate about it and they will say “its original its authentic” and the other dancers who have passed that stage are wearing Umblesele and there was no referee to say “no no no we all wear Umblesele no no no we all wear the skins” and its on video, that was fascinating for me. This already and people in Nyanga tells me that there is actually an influence of modernity we just have to accept it, the modernity that influence the way we dancing. No 1. TV No 2. The music the best part is that the dances that we were doing guess what? They were done on a drum kit and a bass guitar and the musicians in a mic. You get my point? That’s already modernity; it is in a modern context you know? And I like to talk about the things that influence us in our art today and in Nyanga East we have lot of people that are doing modern and lot of people that are doing so called traditional dance. It is like a pot of cocktail with lot of things but I think the others don’t understand the other, you see?

Toto: Back in the day, boys were willing to learn something new, but that is the only thing they know. That is the only thing they know (with a passionate expression) to do “seven” to do like zonke ezozinto. Sinida ixesha thina, ixesha lokuba once a month we jam like the gumboot dancers are doing emaholweni. Like the Indlamu dancers are doing emaholweni and and we don’t have thina as urban people that culture of sizwakaleni sonke.

Toto: Back in the day, boys were willing to learn something new but that is the only thing they know. That is the only thing they know (with a passionate expression) to do “seven” to do like all those things. We all need the time once a month to jam like the gumboot dancers are doing in the hostels, like Indlamu dancers are doing in the hostels.

Maxwell: Why do you think like these guys from the hostels, they like that? Whenever they have meetings they will meet in the hostel hall. They still have connections with the villages, but ‘us’ we here in the urban areas. We like to say we are from the rural areas, but we seem to lack interest of it (rural) and we mention that side when it suits us at a particular time. So it’s true what you saying maybe we need to create our own vibe that is to say singabase Kasi (we are from the township), but this is how we interpret traditional dance because we haven’t lost that much track. We will put what is happening from that side and what we have here and we have managed that, because we have people around us.

Toto: I would love maybe, we as modern dancers, to just have a session with the people from the hostels that are doing the traditional dance and are influenced by other things. But if you notice, what they are doing changes. It's not the same as last week and this week, even themselves are growing and coming back to the urban one they don't want to think, they don't want to challenge themselves they still doing thaaaaaaat thing. (lifting up the arms like he is going to pray) They still doing that monotonous thing.

Maxwell: (Intervened) It's a sense of belonging. It's the same as, most of the places like in America, North Carolina (USA) Philadelphia Temple University (USA) the companies are attached to them, that they want to do the traditional dances as if Africa as a whole hasn't evolved when it comes to traditional dances. So, I would say people that are much involved with the so called the 'reality' of things are people that are holding on to the identity thing...that "this is me, this is my culture." This is kind of interesting for me, because the people that you refer to as they are upholding your culture they have gone far away. So, who are you? Which culture are you representing?

Toto: That's what I am saying, Xolani. We just need to as dancers... we need to come together with them with us you understand? I don't know who are them I don't know who are us. But these things do exist? They exist in Nyanga East, so I am not saying we are crashing this side or that side. Them and 'us' need to come together so we see where we can take what is so called dance, because it doesn't take one person to change, it take the whole lot.

Maxwell: So, ukutsho ukuthi thina we are doing thina an urban traditional dance? Which gave birth to Pantsula and lots of things?

Maxwell: So, all in all, you mean we are doing an urban traditional dance? The dance that gave birth to pantsula and lot of things?

Toto: And its entertainment, definitely it is entertainment, but when it comes to entlombeni - that is not entertainment when it comes to emguyweni - that is not entertainment. And when you look at it some people when you look emguyweni other people might think its entertainment, but it shows something else that one and nase ntlombeni it means something else you can see those movements on stage, but they don't say the same thing as entlombeni..

Toto: And it's entertainment. It's definitely entertainment, but when it comes to entlombeni - that is not entertainment. When it comes to emguyweni - that is not entertainment. And when you look at some people, when you look at emguyweni, other people might think its entertainment, but it shows something else that one and also ntlombeni it means something else. You can see those movements on stage, but they don't say the same thing as entlombeni.

Maxwell: Yes. Because of the context.

Toto: So it's those things that we have to be clear about and we have to clear about and we have to make a clear mark that this is indigenous and this is traditional. And then educate abantu in between ukuthi xa ndisenza su nditsholoza kanje estejini but xa nditsholoza entlombeni ngoluhlobo itheth"enyinto so ngezoweyi ekufuneka sizijongile.

Toto: So it's those things that we have to be clear about and we have to clear about and we have to make a clear mark that this is indigenous and this is traditional. And then educate the people that when I am executing the kutsholoza like this on stage, but when I execute nditsholoza entlombeni this way, it means something else. Those are the things that need to be looked at

Maxwell: Hayi Tsodo ndigqibile mna man ndigqibile..

3.5.2 Interview with Silumko Koyana

Maxwell: Will you tell us your name, surname, where you are from, and what your occupation is? Feel free to say everything in Xhosa if you want.

Silumko: My name is Silumko Koyana. I live in Nyanga, Old Location, Dube Road N74. I am a qualified dance teacher, teaching in (outreach) projects.

Maxwell: Well Mtande (his clan name), ndifuna ukuthi nje kancinci nge zinto esizokuthetha ngazo, mmm I dance eNyanga East. I will focus eNyanga East not other areas. Khawundixelele nge dance aphe Nyanga East kwenzeka ntoni since ukhulele apha uya qonda? Yintoni oyikhumbulayo malunga ne dance, eyenzeka kudala?

Maxwell: Well, Mtande (his clan name), I want us to talk about dance in Nyanga East. I will focus on Nyanga East, not other areas. Since you grew up here, tell me about the dance history in Nyanga. What do you remember?

Silumko: Aaaaaah! Iminyaka egqithileyo, ukukhula kwam ndi khule with lots of different groups, groups which were doing traditional dance, Zulu dance. There was Manyanani and there was Amabutho and Isiyakha drama group and after there were lot that came after which copied what was happening from old groups like Manyanani and Mabutho. But before Manyanani and Amabutho used to collaborate in a Marimba musical which was called POMADA (poetry, marimba and dance) and the rehearsals used to take place in Zolani Centre. Before it was renovated, I used to go there to watch and getting some inspiration from there, because I wanted to dance.

Silumko: Within the past year, I have grown up with many different dance groups doing traditional Zulu dance. There was Manyanani, Amabutho, Isiyakha, and after that there were a lot that came that copied what was happening from the old groups like Manyanani and Mabutho. But before Manyanani and Amabutho, people used to collaborate in a Marimba musical which was called POMADA (poetry, marimba, and dance). The rehearsals used to take place in Zolani Center. Before it was renovated, I used to go there to watch and get inspiration, because I wanted to dance.

Maxwell: Yeh! iNyanga East is a very big township ja Mau- Mau,Lok”shin Endala, Zwelitsha, apparently Phillipi as well and Lower Crossroads and KTC and New Cross road. So, iNyanga East apparently inkulu, but we are still trapped on these three locations (Mau-Mau, Zwelitsha and Old Location) as the Nyanga East and all that. What do you think is causing crime in Nyanga East these days?

Maxwell: Yes. Nyanga East is a big township – Mau Mau, Zwelitsha. Apparently Phillipi, Lower Crossroads, KTC, New Crossroad. So Nyanga East apparently is big, but we are still trapped on these three locations: Mau-Mau, Zwelitsha and Old Location. What do you think is causing the crime in Nyanga East these days?

Silumko: Many people knew Nyanga East as a 50%- 60% creative part of the arts, and if you are from Nyanga East, people will bow and respect you because of the arts. It was easy because shows like POMADA, Mabutho and Manyanani were happening. Arts show were represented well, it was not something you were doing just for the money. It was a talent and something that you loved; you were doing it from the heart, not because you make thousands. It was different then how it is now. People have started to develop an interest in money and people started to exploit other people.

Maxwell: What do you mean exploit?

Silumko: Exploit as in people saw that we could make money in this. For an example, people were underpaid. Maybe an individual representing the group would be told that “This is how much we are going to pay the group” but he will go back and tell the group that they will be paid less than that amount. He would pocket the extra money. That is the exploitation I am talking about. But people would manage to find out the truth, and would stop dancing with that individual. However, these individuals would continue to open up small dance groups and continue to exploit others. And today the artist is very much undermined by a lot of peoples. If you say “I am going to dance, I am a dancer” then people will begin to laugh at you, because they don’t know what you know. They don’t know what you know deep inside and what your experience has been through dance. Dancers these days are compared with moffies/sissies (derogative term for homosexuals).

Maxwell: I realised that couple of months back, when we were involved with the diamond project that Lungelo, you and Ronny (Ihashe dance) were wearing umbleselo while other male dancers were wearing skins. What was going on there?

Silumko: (He giggles) The thing is we didn’t have enough umbleselo..

Maxwell: Oh! So you would have loved them to wear umbleselo. Why?

Silumko: We had to leave the skins for the Zulu traditional dance. Umbleselo is worn for the Zulu urban dances. We were not specifically doing the Zulu traditional dance, so we opted for the mmmmmmm We would have preferred to use umbleselo, because we weren’t doing Zulu traditional dance. But, the other boys wore skins because they didn’t have umbleselo. We thought since we also had the leopard printed vests, maybe the two costumes could complement each other.

Maxwell: But the other guys felt that they need to wear the skins though, they loved the skins. What do you say to that?

Silumko: They lacked knowledge and experience. We don't have the same knowledge (shrugs shoulders).

Maxwell: The experience and standard.

Silumko: It's the experience and standard. They don't know much about wearing skins or what is expected out of the skins. They don't understand how we interpreted by the audience or by the tourists when we wearing skins. The reason we stopped wearing skins was because we wanted to stop that mentality, the Euro-centrism, or that African people still wear skins and still live with animals or live with lions.

Maxwell: So you are raising ideas about the modern world, that South Africa evolved - Nyanga East has evolved (Silumko agrees drastically that we have evolved).

Silumko: We do things according to today.

Maxwell: Ok, what is your take in viewing Nyanga East when it comes to the role of the modern world in our dances in Nyanga East? Is it a good thing or is it a bad thing? What are the influences? I know television is one of them, you know the way we are living today.

Silumko: There is the good and there is the bad side of it. Ok, the good side of it is if there is a performance and we have to dance in a tarred road, we have options to wear shoes, even if the piece doesn't allow or need shoes. That is the good side of modernity. We can at least change or adjust the costume. If it's cold and we are supposed to be bare chest we are able to wear vests, even long sleeve, but colorful, it must go with the costume.

Maxwell: What about the dance itself? The dance vocabulary that you will be using now?

Silumko: The vocabulary will change definitely, because where we are supposed to perform, let's say we have rehearsed in a wooden floor. On that wooden floor we had almost no limits. We could tumble on the floor with no injuries. Now, all of a sudden we would be told that we don't have a wooden floor or a proper stage. No dance mats, only the concrete floor is accessible. Now if we have to tumble twice or three times on the floor, maybe we will tumble once or not at all. Those are the changes that we would like to adjust immediately if the moment of the piece requires tumbling (if the nature of the choreography required us to tumble). We can also cut other movements and replace with others in and that is modernity. We even stylised the movements at the end in order to spice it up, the space usage as well. If you have a group of twenty dancers, (fifteen dancers and live percussionists) you have live music that will be beautiful on stage. But you might be told that there is not enough space for all of you performers. That changes everything, and you have to restructure everything. That is difficult because fun will be missing. Other dancers have lot of individuality styles which is

beautiful. The piece will change; there will be no inspiration, because in African dance we use each other's energies and inspiration. If the other person is missing the energy breaks. We feed from each other in African dance.

Maxwell: Here in Nyanga East there are still people (Mtande, I called him by his clan name) that I know of and even groups that are fond of wearing skins. I think they have the assumption that traditional dance doesn't evolve. They think traditional dance is indigenous dance, you know? What causes that? What do you think of that? Don't you think that when you dance at Maphindi's (a place in Nyanga East that sells take away food and has a butchery attached to it. A lot of youth around Nyanga, Gugulethu and other townships, like to spend time in that space just conversing and eating in a socialising spirit) wearing umbleselo they won't take that as traditional dance. They will tell you that it's not traditional dance. What do you think that kind of information is all about?

Silumko: People are confused; it's a lack of knowledge, a lack of not knowing what are you are about (He uses his hands in an expressive way physically) as a performer or as a dancer. If you are saying you are doing a traditional dance and I come and ask "What does it mean? Traditional dance?" And they say in response "We are wearing the skins and it's a stamping and jumping and we ululating, singing, drums and the dance. That is my explanation" then it shows a lack of education based on dancing, and shows the Euro-centric minds. That is encouraged by tourism. People in tourism also lack knowledge about what we are about. Yet they want to see it, but if you show your version of traditional dance and they say "No that is not it." They will show you propaganda or books that have been written about lies of dance that show you skins and traditional dances. These books are written by people that don't even dance.

But it goes back to money. If the employers say "We want traditional Zulu dance in skins and we will pay money" then you won't argue. You will give them the skins and the drum beat that they want, and you will get paid and life goes on.

Maxwell: But there is pain involving this thing, there is pain of knowing "I am not what you want me to be, I am doing it because you are paying me to do what you want me to be." It's a matter of financial stability and survival. I see a lot of good groups in Nyanga that go and perform in the restaurants and hotels. They make a lot of money. Some of them are not happy. What is your take on that? People don't like, but they have to do it because it offers money.

Silumko: Eyi Inzima (Xhosa expression while laughing) It is a difficult one. People do want money. At the end of the day, people want to get paid. Your personality when you perform is not 'you'. You are just a performer. We know you have decency in you, and when people talk about offering you money and you need that money, you begin to have the mentality that, "It is only dance. Let me just dance and get that money." (He freezes for long time thinking with his hand on his chin, leaning to the left side and he laughs from being puzzled). I don't know, I don't know (he threw his arms in the air and smiled).

Maxwell: It is a tricky one. Some people think tourists should come to us in Nyanga if they want us to perform for them. Well I say there is a sense of security that has to be acknowledged and there is a high crime rate, a crime cobweb if I may put it that way, so they can't rather you go there and do the staff and other are saying it is a selling out and why are you wearing tekkies when you do traditional dance.

Silumko: It is a give or take situation (he sway his body left to right with arms wide open) There are people who say "I am doing this because I am in need of money" and there are people who are selling out. If the person in need of money understands the positive side of dance, he will take that route, and learn the art as a performer. It will be a more satisfying job, because they will be happy about their job.

Maxwell: How would you view yourself now before you went to UCT and after you graduated from UCT. How would you say you were and now you are? And would you advise people to learn dance further, if they are very much interested in particular in African dance?

Silumko: I am a different person, physically and mentally. I am still going forward, wanting to learn more to equip myself and equip others. I am a very different person because I didn't know a lot of things before. I was also like the people who lacked knowledge. I would say "I am doing African dance" meanwhile I was doing Zulu South African dance. I couldn't even define what I was doing then, but now I can define what I am doing. I can argue what I am doing. No one can come to me and say "these are the books that I have read" or say "traditional dance is this." I kept on reading books to get knowledge and know what I am doing and at the same time compare it with what I have experienced. It is like a journey. It helps to speak on behalf of what I know.

Maxwell: well that is it Mtande, you see that was easy.

3.5.3 Glossary: Xhosa – English

Xhosa	English
Khawutsho	Tell me
Igama	The name
Uzalelwe phi?	Where were you born?
Hayi	No
Kancane	A little bit
Wawu Khula	You were growing up
IsiKolo	The School
Bendisonqena	I was lazy
Ekuhlaleni	In the neighbourhood
Ezenzekayo	Things that take place
Silandela	We follow up
Uya bona?	You see?
Uku	To
Ncane	Little
Ndibuze	I ask
Kubethanga	Disturbing
Emlonyeni	In the mouth
Kubalwa	Calculate
Xa uyi jonga	When you look at it
Bayazibeka	Placing them
Kuthiwa	They say
Kuthethwa	They speak
Bundlobongela	Criminal acts
Inintsi	It is a lot
Incinci	It is not a lot/ Small
Leya	That one
Yakuqala	The first one
Sinezinye	We have others
Zaphela	They are gone/ finished
Ezozinto	Those things
Bathetha	They speak
Zenzeka	They are happening
Abantwana	The children
Ndawo	A place
Inyukile	Incline
Yankulu	Got bigger
Uyabona	You see
Neengqondo	The brain
Kuzokuthiwa	They will say
Ngabase	They from
Abantu	People

Zalelwa	To be born
Uyaqaphela	You recognise
Ezilalini	In the villages
Ngoku kukho	Now there is
Calucalulo	Segregation
Umahluko	Difference
Phakathi	Between
Baphinde	They repeat
Zii-bari	Not street smart
Baza nento	They brought
Behlala nje	They were leaving
Dansa	To dance
Uyayiva?	Are you listening?
Lento ndiyi tshoyo	This that I am saying
Sine yethu	we have ours
Siyibiza	We call it
Ibonakele	It is evident
Endiyithethayo	What I am conveying
Shiftile	Shifted
Kwezinye	Other areas
Ifak'imali	It brings money
Oyithandayo	The one you love
Oqondayo	You understand
Ixesha	Time
Sidibanise	Mixing things
Zanga phandle	Things from outside
Zanga phakathi	Things from inside
Sitshintshela ntoni?	Why must we change?
Ukunxiba	To wear
Izi Khumba	Cow hides skins
Ndigqibile	I am done
Iminyaka Eggithileyo	Passed years
Oyikhumbulayo	What you remember
Uya qonda?	You understand?
Eyi inzima	Wow it is difficult

Appendix C

