DUST OF THE ZULU

NGOMA AESTHETICS AFTER APARTHEID

LOUISE MEINTJES With photographs by TJ LEMON

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TO MY BROTHERS

André, Andrew, Doug, and Dominic
Siyazi, Zabiwe
David, Aaron, Jairo, Tom

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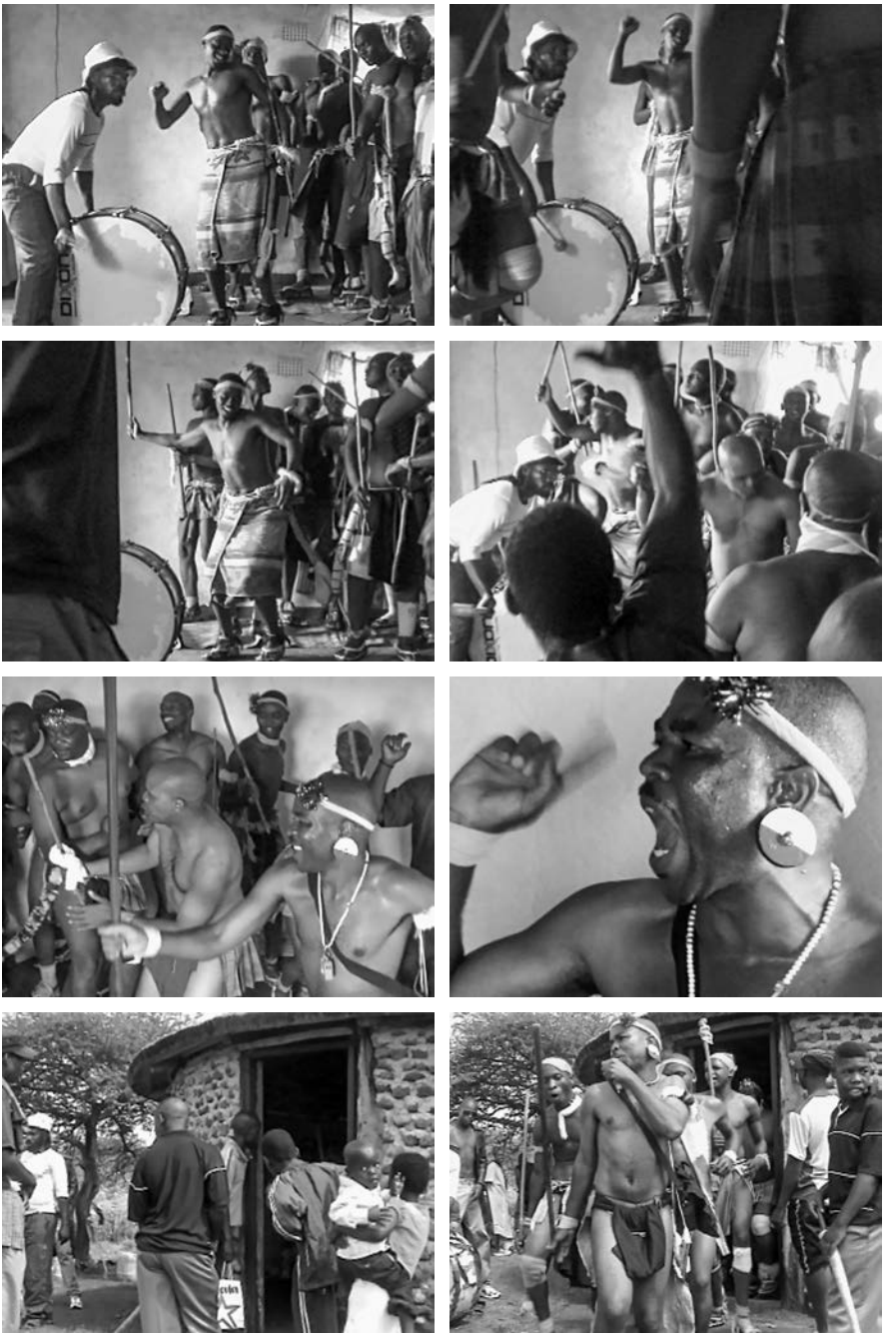

EsiPongweni, 25 December 2006. FROM VIDEO TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ngithanda ukubonga kakhulu amasosha asesiPongweni, Madulaneni, Nxamalala kanye nase Galibasi ngelikhulu ikusasa abangibonise lona kusukela ngo 1991. Kwabaligugu elikhulu kimina lokuba nabo ngomhla kuqoshwa ingoma engomeni. Ngibonga amagoso u Bangindawo Loli Zulu, Siyazi Zulu, Zabiwe Makhanya, Khethukuthula Dladla (esiPongweni), Mlamdo Zuma, kanye no Mancube Shezi (Madulaneni), Mashiya Dladla kanye no Thintha Dumakude (Kalibasi) no Zibuse Zuma, no Buhlalu Zuma (Nxamalala). Ngibonga nomndeni wakwa Siyazi Zulu ngokungemukelwa kwawo ngenkhulu imfudumalo ekhaya labo laba yikhaya lami lesibili. Ngibonga uMakhahlela no Mashawomthakathi, ngokungiphatha kahle nangomsebenzi omkhulukazi abawenzile. Ngiyafisa kakhulu futhi ukubonga umphakathi wase siPongweni ngokungamukela, ngokungifundisa nangobungane obenzekile. Ngizame kakhulu ukubonakalisa ubuciko bengoma nobungcwethi neselelo yamasosha nemindeni yabo ngendlela ekhethekile.

A Nadia and Nicholas Nahumck Fellowship from the Society for Ethnomusicology, a grant from the Josiah Charles Trent Memorial Foundation (Medical Ethics and Humanities), and the Arts and Sciences Council Research Fund at Duke facilitated my field research. Writing was enabled by a Rockefeller Fellowship in the Black Performing Arts at Stanford Humanities Center, an ACLS Frederick Burkhardt Residential Fellowship at the National Humanities Center, and a Mellon Faculty Book Manuscript Completion Fellowship from the Franklin Humanities Institute, Duke University. I

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Chapter 1, "Turning to Be Kissed," reworks a 2004 publication: "Shoot the Sergeant, Shatter the Mountain: The Production of Masculinity in Zulu Ngoma Song and Dance in Post-apartheid South Africa," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 13 (2): 173–201, accessible at http://www.tandfonline.com/.

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

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For their engaged participation in the becoming of *Dust of the Zulu*, I thank my friends and family. Paul Berliner's presence flows through this text.

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








/ / / INTRODUCTION

The Politics of Participation in Ngoma Song and Dance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Place of Conflict

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

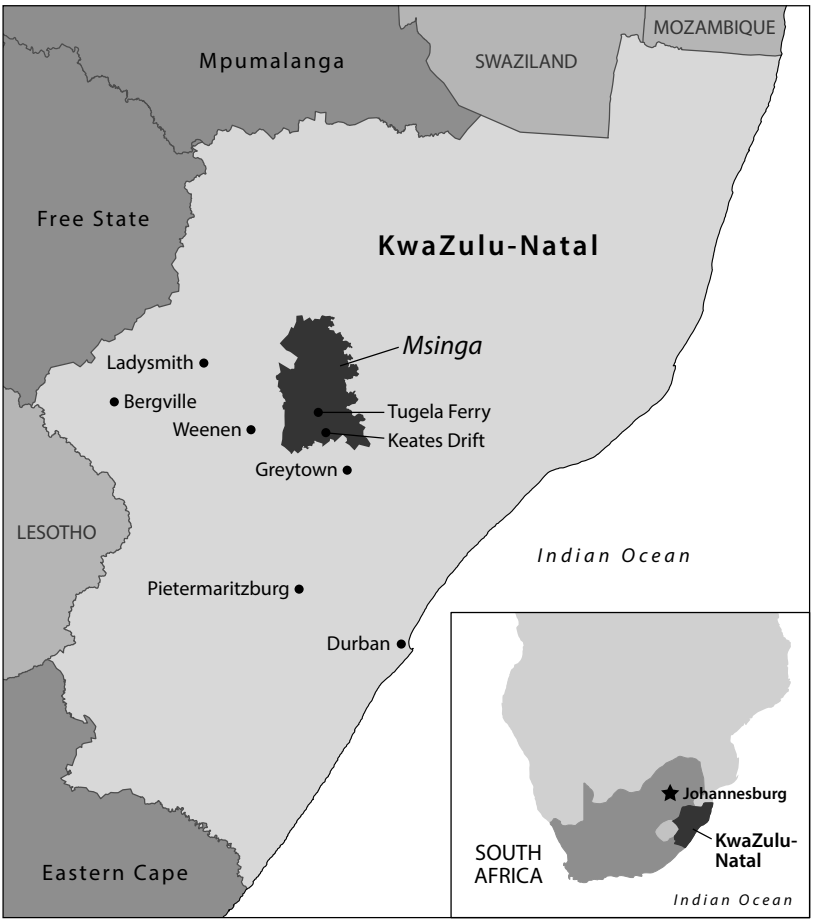
Also important to ngoma's story—to the way its aesthetics are also its politics—is Msinga's history as a long-standing zone of conflict. Once a buffer between Afrikaner settlers encroaching from the west, British colonials from the south, and the Swazi kingdom pressing down from the north, eruptions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

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

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

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

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

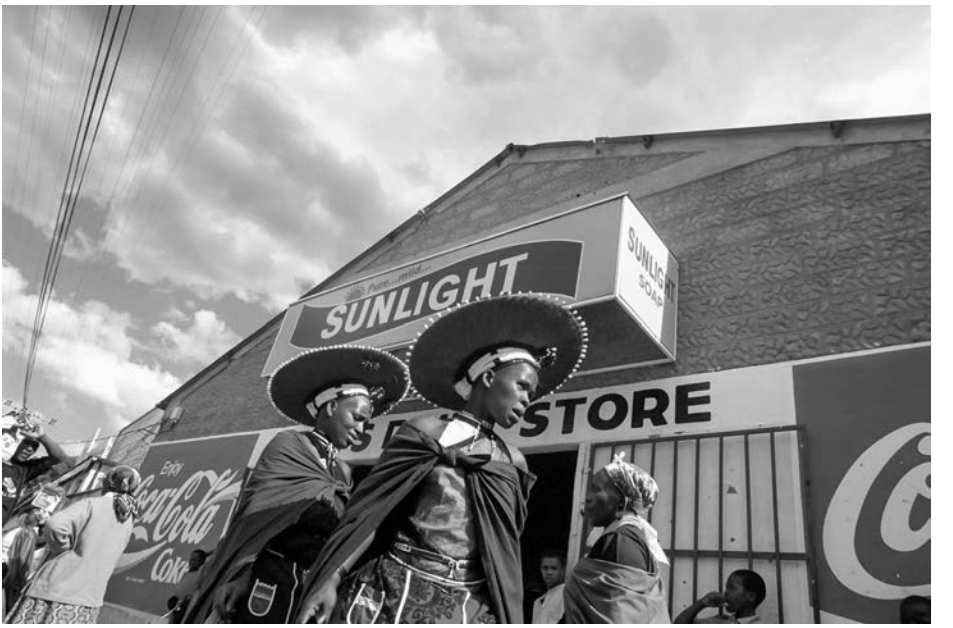


KwaZulu-Natal with the Msinga Local Municipality highlighted.

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

The Warrior Dance of the Migrant Laborer

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



Married women outside the supermarket, Keates Drift, 24 December 1992.
PHOTOGRAPH BY TJ LEMON.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

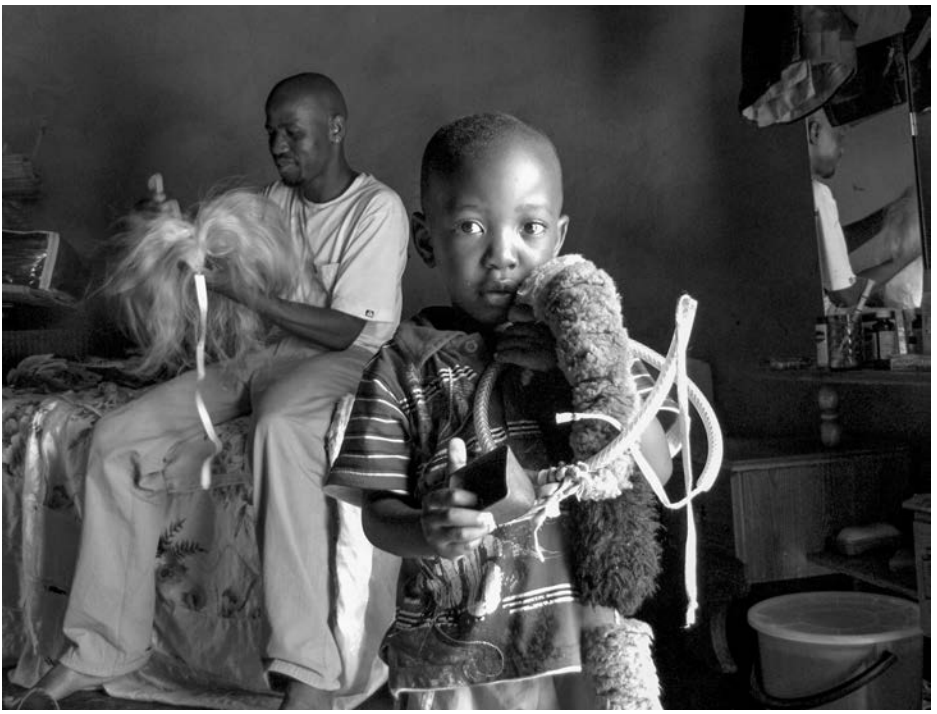
From the outside, the umzansi style is seemingly the most warriorlike, the most ferocious or aggressive, and so also appears as the most traditional of the three styles. The team I follow dances in the umzansi style.[21]

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

Ngoma's Body

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

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



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

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

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

Boys play at stick fighting, esiPongweni, 22 December 2013.
PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR.

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

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

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

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

Ngoma's Voice

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Force of Aesthetics

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

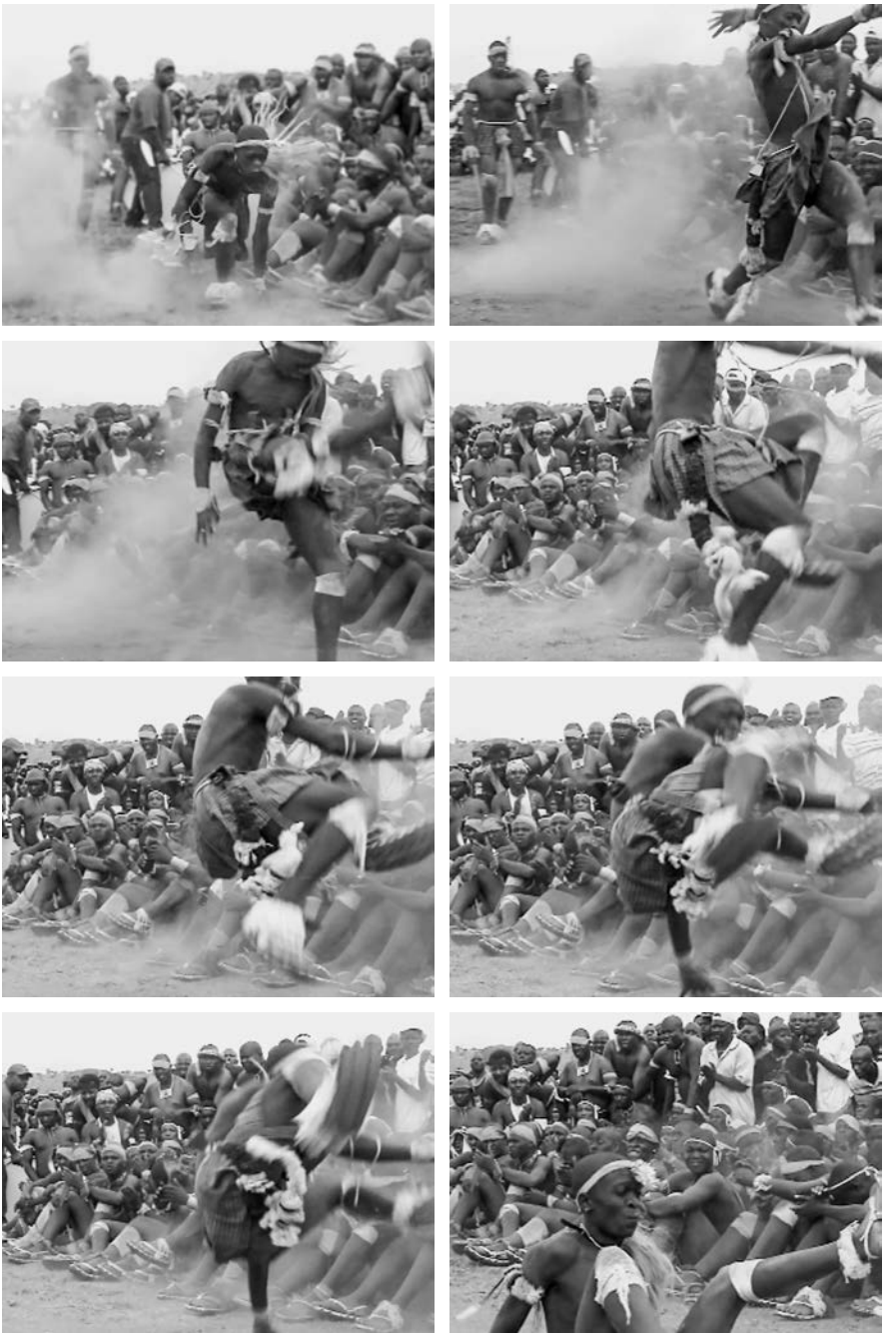
thetics offers a means to finesse the disruptions of violent politics. The force of aesthetics and the finesse of politics are coproduced through violence.

Registers of Representation

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

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

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



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

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

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

My screen shots are intended minimally as clarifying illustrations that redress the inadequacies of my language to convey an accurate image of a dancer in motion, let alone of dancers moving in response to one another. The sequences point to the action I seek to evoke and analyze. Maximally the screen shots, themselves terse evocations of the flow of movement, stand as a counterpoint to my written representation. Sequences beginning and ending the book are excerpted from a performance of 26 December 2006.[43]

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

The Finesse of Politics

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES

Introduction

1. The countless examples include "Day of the Zulu" (an episode in the *Secrets of the Dead* PBS television series, 2002), *Shaka Zulu* (a television miniseries [Faure 1986]), *Zulu Dawn* (Hickox 1979), *Zulu* (Endfield 1964), and dramatized Anglo-Zulu War battles (see Carton and Draper 2009; Hamilton 1998). Zulus (and stand-ins for Zulus) appeared in hyperperformative roles on British, European, and North American stages and in the circus through the nineteenth century (Lindfors 1999). Hong Kong's crack police unit, the Z Platoon or Zulu Platoon, most likely takes its name from a U.S. Navy SEAL unit that was deployed during the Vietnam War (Stolfi 2002). The Zulu are also appropriated in a celebratory spirit. For example, rapper Afrika Bambaataa's Universal Zulu Nation championed Zulu defiance, and the New Orleans Mardi Gras Zulu float makes much of regal excess.

2. Gray (2013) calls attention to the entanglement of form, embodiment, and history by articulating fado as genre, distinct from the idea of a genre that compels descriptive contextualization of a musical form. Whether emphasizing narrative circulation (e.g., Sumera 2013), trauma and recuperation (Pilzer 2012), memory and its elision (Schwartz 2012), or propaganda and instrumentalization (McCoy 2009), analyses of music and violence hinge on the visceral experience and the altered (usually heightened) affect violence and sound each provoke. These studies confront questions of uncertainty, whether that uncertainty is due to methodological limitations, semiotic polysemy, the aura of art, unpredictability of mediated reception, or skepticism over the veracity of narratives about violence. Donham (2011, 195) cautions against "succumbing to the apparent certainties" of stories about violence as a form of data; stories hold truth values for those who tell them, though such values may be opaque and ambiguous. Larasati (2013) reminds us that violent histories can lie beneath the surface of forms of beauty seemingly divorced from it, and Nelson (2008) presents artists using that beauty to remember violent pasts.

3. Beginning in 1846, the British administrators of the Natal colony set arid land aside, mostly on its borders, as communal African land, securing the remainder of the colony for the Crown and commercial agriculture (Ballard 1989). Mthembu (1994) chronicles the demarcation of Msinga as a reserve.

4. Zulu history, especially its nineteenth-century military history, is richly documented and fiercely debated. In summarizing Msinga's labor and conflict histories, I draw from Beinart (1992), Carton (2000), Carton, Laband, and Sithole (2009), Guest (1989), and McClendon (2002).

5. Located between the towns of Colenso, Weenen, and Tugela Ferry, Msinga is a magisterial district that lies within the Uthukela and Mzinyathi District Municipalities (Cousins and Hornby 2009). The chiefdoms are Emachunwini, Emabomvini, Emathenjini, KwaMabaso, KwaMajozi, and Engome.

6. EsiPongweni, Okalweni, Emvundlweni, Ethengela, and Esihlabeni.

7. I take this demographic description directly from Cousins and Hornby (2009), who provide the following statistics: 42 percent of the population is five to twenty years of age, as is the national average; 64 percent have lived in the area ten years or longer; 54.24 percent of the population is female, 45.76 percent male; 68 percent is illiterate. Trade and commerce account for 11 percent of economic activity (centered in the two largest towns of Tugela Ferry and Pomeroy, followed by Keates Drift), farming for 18 percent, and manufacturing and construction for 10 percent. As they note, this is a low level of productive economic activity. Cattle are the most important livestock. The number owned ranges with the prosperity of the household from none to a small herd. Most households own between ten and twenty cattle. Neil Alcock and Creina Alcock, "January/February 1981: A Very Curious Omission," Capfarm Trust Report (in "All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters" 2016), offers details about marijuana growing.

8. This poverty line is calculated per person per month. The real 2015 value is US$136 per month, converted using purchasing power parity rather than exchange rate. My thanks to Katharine Hall for providing these figures.

9. This figure excludes adults over fifteen years who are not economically active (for example, students and pensioners) and is extracted from the 2011 Census by Katharine Hall (pers.com., 28 November 2016).

10. Mandla Thembu (pseudonym), fax to Siyazi, 1999, quoted with Siyazi's permission.

11. Johnny Clegg, thirty-year retrospective show, 17 December 2010, Emperor's Palace, Kempton Park; reproduced on DVD of a similar concert (Clegg 2007).

12. Laband (2009) makes the provocative suggestion that if a southern African people should have earned the reputation of successful warriordom, it would more appropriately be the Sotho, who adapted to colonial styles of warfare and secured their independent kingdom, Lesotho. I contend along with Laband that it is the particular kind of performative quality of the Zulu warrior that secured his representation as a fighter over his Sotho neighbors.

13. Laband (2009) details how Shaka exploited the system to expand his dominion and his control over his subjects by cultivating their loyalty to the Zulu kingdom

over that to their local chiefdoms. Key to his ruling strategy were fostering regimental obligations (through booty portions) and consolidating regimental functions and living quarters in barracks that fell under royal management. Laband also elaborates on how the amabutho operated as an economic system.

14. Debates about Zulu colonial history and Shaka's *mfecane* (crushing) are revisited in Hamilton (1995). See also Laband and Thompson (1989) and Hamilton (1998). Prior to Shaka, the Zulu were but a minor clan caught up in a three-way struggle for land with the Ndwandwe and the Mthethwa (Whitelaw 2009).

15. Umzansi Zulu Dancers' Amended Constitution, 20 August 2005. Capitalizations in the original.

16. The *isicathamiya* Zulu men's choral tradition researched by Erlmann (1996) shares much with Zulu ngoma in terms of its networks, practices, and places and the communities from which it draws participants. Ngoma tends to draw more traditionalists, isicathamiya more Christians.

17. Ngoma also refers to therapeutic practices across the Bantu-speaking region of Africa. The shared characteristic seems to be the use of drumming. In Bantu languages, ngoma refers to the drum. (In Zulu, and more widely, *isangoma* is a healer.) Not all Zulu secular dance ngoma styles use the drum, but my contention is that they are the exception to the rule. Janzen (2000) details ngoma as a healing practice, including its variations across the subcontinent and the linguistic roots, and Van Dijk, Reis, and Spierenburg (2000) examine the social productivity of such ngoma healing and divination practices.

18. Large employers (such as mine owners, Durban manufacturing companies, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) organized dance competitions at least as early as 1921 (Erlmann 1991b). Badenhorst and Mather (1997) give some history of tribal dancing in the mines in the 1940s and 1950s. Donham (2011) summarizes this spotty history of competitive dancing to consider its legacy in a conflict that erupted among miners at a gold mine in 1994. Citing Tracey (1952), he brings attention to the active investment of white mine management in promoting ethnic distinction through dancing competitions. Erlmann (1991b) documents how Durban ngoma dancers, members of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union, were read as militant and feared as potentially violent. As a consequence, they were regulated through rules set by white mining officials in the 1930s. Erlmann argues that this was a form of "domestication" that turned a popular oppositional form into a tourist attraction. La Hausse (1984), cited by Marks (1989), suggests that one reason for the "faction fighting" associated with ngoma in the 1930s in Durban was competition over jobs. He also writes that ngoma was linked to Durban's criminal gangs, though Erlmann qualifies this point, suggesting the two groups may have shared more in dress and organization than in criminal activity. Carton and Morrell (2012) entwine ngoma's history with that of the martial art of stick fighting, which they track back to the late nineteenth century. Like ngoma did later, stick fighting came under anxious scrutiny and regulation, here by the authorities of the Natal colony. Moodie (1994) offers a social history of migrant mine labor, providing context for the dancing, though his text does not engage with performance. Concerning the expressive culture

of migrant laborers, three key music ethnographies of South African migrant labor inform this study. Erlmann's (1996) study of Zulu isicathamiya choral practice complicates the distinction between rural and urban space and identifies performance as playing a key role in carving out autonomous migrant social spaces. Coplan's (1994) analysis of Sotho migrant men's praise poetry, *sifela*, shows how eloquence is an achievement that is learned, practiced, and shaped by tough migrant experience. Pedi women domestic workers in James's (1999) study cultivate support networks through collaborative and pleasurable performance groups.

19. Postapartheid, some hostels have been transformed into family housing, though most are still men's residences. Women's hostels were also instituted during apartheid.

20. Erlmann (1991b, 95) also lists *isikhuze*, *isicathulo*, *ukukhomikha*, isiZulu, and isiBhaca as Zulu ngoma substyles. He describes isiBhaca as the dance that became known as "gumboot" dance (100). The isiBhaca to which the umzansi dancers I know refer is different from gumboot dancing. In naming only three substyles above, I follow the practice of these umzansi dancers. As Erlmann (1991b, 101) notes, umzansi is often referred to interchangeably with isiZulu or *indlamu*. Clegg differentiates the three Zulu styles by their kicking as follows. Isishameni dancers hold their bodies upright, stamping the right foot on the same spot "like a hammer." IsiBhaca dancers, when raising their bent legs, direct their knees into their armpits. Clegg identifies the name as onomatopoeic for the sound of the kneecap popping in the armpit's hollow. To build up for umzansi's high kick, dancers make dramatic use of horizontal space (Clegg, stage banter, Thirty Year Retrospective with Savuka, 17 December 2010, Emperor's Palace, Kempton Park).

21. Ngoma is a men's style, to which women's song and dance styles at Keates Drift show some similarities. Girls' singing and dancing is the highlight of *omemulo* and *okuqoma* (nubility rites). Singing solo calls and choral responses, they dance in a line, taking turns to step forward to solo. Weddings feature the singing and dancing of the bride and her unmarried friends. As at omemulo, women's dancing emphasizes footwork and stamping, with bent knee raised no higher than the hip. Women past childbearing age dance occasionally ceremoniously—for example, in welcoming dignitaries. Women of all ages of course dance informally, socializing at the homestead out of the presence of men. Those who attend church perform in collective worship, whether within apostolic, Zionist Christian Church, Shembe, or a range of other denominations.

22. Herding is likewise a training ground for BaSotho youths, who acquire the arts that underlie migrant praise poetry (Coplan 1994), and for Xhosa youths, who learn honor through stick fighting (Mayer and Mayer 1970).

23. Masculine sensibilities are shaped in relation to changing ideas about womanhood and to aesthetic expression of the feminine. I focus on ngoma masculinity as voiced and danced by men themselves. It is in the participating gaze of both men and women, youthful and older, experts and fans that these performers cocreate their art.

24. Studies of South African migrant and working-class male expressive practices suggest that performance (music, dance, oratory) is perhaps especially critical to the

formation and expression of changing masculinities in circumstances of oppression (Ballantine 2000; Brown 1998; Clegg 1982, 1984; Coplan 1994; Erlmann 1991a, 1996; Gunner 2010, 2014; Haupt 2001; Olsen 2014; Opland 1984; Qabula et al. 1986; Reynolds 1998). These studies show how men debated ideas about authority, competence, and respectability through the creative process in emasculating apartheid circumstances. Of necessity, men improvised and reworked their positions in the course of managing the improbability of freedom and equal rights during the apartheid era with its ever-intensifying and changing forms of regulation and oppression; male performance genres offered an arena for expression that was under their control. My focus lies in men's expressive forms, but these dynamics were not exclusive to men. James's (1999) ethnography considering the performance practices of Pedi women migrants offers a corollary. Gunner (1979) examines women's composition and performance of a predominantly male genre, praise poetry. Impey (n.d.) details women's displacement and migrant paths after forced removal from ancestral lands in northern KwaZulu-Natal, as expressed in their narrative and song. Steingo's (2016) ethnography of kwaito music shifts the focus to the "Born Frees," the generation who did not experience the struggle and for whom there is little promise of work.

25. The inclusion of gay rights in the nation's constitution and activism has opened new space for public discourse on genders and sexualities, and with this, new masculinity scholarship, largely oriented around urban ways of being (Donham 1998; Reid and Walker 2005).

26. In Feld's (1996a) analysis of the circulation of "pygmy" musical sounds, the increasing distance between the form of the original and of the copies of copies leads him to ask when and how the BaYaka and BaMbuti get to talk back to the copies and those who make them.

27. Clegg (1984) and Thomas (1988) further detail the organization of ngoma dance teams.

28. All dancers sing. I refer to team members as dancers, as they refer to themselves, rather than singer-dancers. Not all voices are equal: participants of course make distinctions among singing voices. To Mbusiseni, Zabiwe's voice is golden. (He strokes his throat while praising his leader's vocal projection.)

29. An understanding of the inextricability of song and dance in performance and with regard to the concept of music itself is foundational in African music scholarship. Bebey (1975), Blacking (1967), Chernoff (1979), Jones (1959), Keil (1979), Merriam (1982), and Nketia (1974) are some classic articulations of this relationship. In articulating song as "danced speech," Lomax (1968, 222) proposed that the metrics of song were drawn from the body rhythms of dance that in turn stylized the body movement of ordinary activities. In this way he roots song style in a thoroughly social and moving body.

30. In other words, by loosening the ineffaceable relationship between body and voice, I want to suggest that "embodiment" is not simply the "grain" of the voice fleshed out (Barthes 1977). My starting point is Porcello's (2012) explanation of why the easy presumption that "grain" refers (only) to timbral qualities is a misreading of Barthes. Harkness (2014) subsequently discusses the point.

31. I take inspiration from Lefevbre's (2004) space/time concept that encapsulates the interplay between time and space, not only their sometimes and temporary congealment. The interplay can be uneasy and incoherent. Lefevbre looks for qualitative differences and disruptions between time and space to discern what is at stake, that is, to articulate the politics of place. Migrancy is a space/time.

32. Here I articulate a position developed by Feld and Fox (1994), Feld (1996a, 1996b), and Feld et al. (2004) as "vocal anthropology," taken in a historical direction by Weidman (2006), into affective politics by Gray (2013), and colonial and nation-building sensory politics by Ochoa Gautier (2014). Faudree (2012) offers an overview. Adriane Cavarero (2005) mirrors vocal anthropology in her argument about the uniqueness of the voice. The uniqueness of a voice is essential to its politics. Without singularity, that voice has no materiality. Without materiality, the voice has no politics, that is, no mobilizing import in the world. In effect, without materiality, the voice is reduced to a metaphor. A prevalent turn in ethnomusicology describes the voice as embodied in order to mark musical performance as sensory and affective, or in an effort to bring attention to the fact that musical expression is material. This usage glosses over the polyphonic relationship between the (moving) body and the voice. It also sometimes backgrounds the sociality of vocalizing by foregrounding individual bodily experience or by generalizing embodiment in the figure of the universal listener. Music scholarship focusing on the technical experience of playing points to an intricate (and polyphonic) relationship among the performer's body, the crafting of a performance, and the experience of her or his musical voice: the hands' dance on a keyboard (Berliner n.d.; Gillan 2013; Sudnow 1978); the full-body experience of acoustic feedback (Baily 1995; Berliner [1978] 1990; Chapman 2005); the kinetically gestured interpretation of sung melodies by head, arm, hand, or fingers (Rahaim 2012).

33. Samuels (2004) argues that the ambiguity of indexical relations enables affective play with histories and contradictory everyday experiences that produce "cultural identities."

34. In country music, voice is bound to the word, but it also exceeds it (Fox 2004). By talking playfully about song (using rich reported speech, musical citation, and prosodics), country musicians and fans find ways of relating that are summarized in country music. The process of summarizing is at once a process of expansion in which songs become lived, voices debated, and ideas felt.

35. In profiling three artists, Feld (2012) presents their voices in dialogue with his and with others, close and far, thereby placing emphasis on the sociality of listening as integral to vocalizing. He draws attention to the potential of experimental maneuvering enabled by the interplay of political, spiritual, and musical processes for the musicians about whom he writes. Here, in a perfectly performed moment, voice exceeds the word. Wedded to politics as it is to the word, voice at once also exceeds politics, whether identity politics or other forms of struggle.

36. Here I combine ideas from studies of circulation that consider the violence of representation (Bishara 2013; Feld 1996a; Feld and Kirkegaard 2010; Feldman 1994; Gürsel 2012; Malkki 1997) with others that argue for circulation not as an after-the-

fact channel of distribution but as formative of the ideas that circulate. Circulation coupled with feedback is a site of culture (Lee and LiPuma 2002; Novak 2013). Cusick (2006), Daniel (1996), Feldman (1994), and Whitehead (2004b), among others, consider the circulation of poetic representations of violence in relation to injury itself. One challenge lies in inserting into close aesthetic analysis a perspective on violence that has temporality. When a sense of a continuous state of Zulu warriordom repeatedly storied into a bellicose essence feeds back into ngoma practice, the history of violence as a series of sporadic events that are produced by multiscalar geopolitics is obscured.

37. In studies of music and politics, scholars have approached silence most readily as a sign of censorship (Baily 2001; Davis 2005; Drewett and Cloonan 2006; Korpe 2004) or as symptomatic of trauma (Johnson 2011; Lafreniere 2000; Trezise 2001), in other words, as an absence. Scholars have paid less attention to ways that silence might be a necessary or likely condition that enables some semblance of social life to continue (Ochoa Gautier 2014, 2015) or to its role in the affective politics of listening (Gray 2013), that is, not as an absence but as a sign of intense presence (Schwartz 2012).

38. Feld ([1982] 2012) turns from an earlier emphasis on dialogism and dialogic editing to polyphony, that is, to covocalizing, an intimate intervocalizing in a relational space together—a space that coevolves with the vocalizing—rather than on call and response with accumulating feedback that shifts the terms of the conversation, approached as a form of negotiation.

39. Blau and Keil's collaborations are inspirational (Keil, Keil, and Blau 1992; Keil and Vellou 2002). Hoffman (2011) and Guilbault (2014) experiment similarly.

40. Steve Feld's formulation, for which I am grateful.

41. With low-light, black-and-white images in which the action does not rush out of the frame, Lemon (2010) captures the contrasting performance style and temporality of suited migrant men's late-night fashion competitions in hostels (Lundelin 2001, 71–73).

42. Laban notation in Lewis's (1992) appendix represents capoeira's flow.

43. Since Mead and Bateson ([1942] 1962) there has been curiously little exploitation of the screen shot in dance ethnographies. Noting the absence of the body in dance studies prior to the 1970s, when the focus lay rather on documenting choreographies and historicizing and contextualizing performances, Hahn (2007) remarks that the development of video technology transformed dance scholarship. Like the sound recording, video enables the documentation of extensive performances; repeated viewing (including at reduced speeds) facilitates close analysis of body movements. (Hahn suggests that the expense of film limited its use.) Yet, with the exception of Rahaim (2012), few written ethnographies that draw on extensive use of video in the field have carried their work method through onto the analytic page. Video has been essential to this study.

44. Imagining and acting is Steingo's (2016) formulation, discussing Rancière.

45. When working with Banning Eyre on a program about Zulu music for the radio show *Afropop* ("The Zulu Factor," Afropop Worldwide, http://www.afropop.org/wp

/6406/the-zulu-factor/) I recommended broadcasting a song about AIDS recorded by Umzansi Zulu Dancers. "I understand why you chose that one," Siyazi said. "I hope listeners will go and find the other kinds of songs we sing as well."

1. Turning to Be Kissed

1. Siyazi transcribed and we translated this section from a performance I recorded. Subsequent performance descriptions were similarly derived.

2. Intracommunity ngoma events specific to an isigodi (subward) take place on 25 December, a public holiday. (Christian associations are irrelevant.) Between Christmas and New Year, intercommunity events involving multiple teams happen.

3. Lead: Sibona thina sibon'inkanyezi / Sibona kancane. Chorus: *Sibon' inkanyezi / Sibona nabafana abancane baseJemistoni inhliziyo yami imhlophe ithe qwa*. Subsequent songs appear only in translation.

4. With regard to dialogics, I am thinking of Bakhtin's legacy in the musical work of Feld (2012), Gray (2013), and Ninoshvili (2011), and of Butler's in Duncan (2004), Jarman-Ivens (2007), and Johnson (2003), for example.

5. Ngoma and courting are also coupled in other practices. When boys travel the region to dance at *ukuqoma* parties (rites of passage signaling that a girl has chosen a lover or is eligible to do so), weddings, and other ritual events, they also court (Henderson 2011). Ngoma dancing often forms the centerpiece of *amapasi* (men's engagement parties). Likewise, at some weddings, ngoma dancers provide entertainment.

6. "Ibhanoyi," composed by Siyazi Zulu and Moses Nzuza (Umzansi 1994). Women travel mostly on foot, in minivan taxis, or on the back of pickup trucks. They usually cook on gas rings or open fires. Electricity was installed in homesteads at the furthest reaches of esiPongweni only in December 2013, twenty years into the new dispensation. For most people it is too expensive for cooking.

7. Market stresses have prompted change. A father customarily pays bride price on his son's behalf, but with intermittent earnings, Siyazi expects his son to contribute. He also wants proof that his son is capable of supporting a family before he marries.

8. Theophilis Shepstone, the colony of Natal's diplomatic agent to the native tribes who conceived of the location system and implemented the policy, moved nearly eighty thousand Africans into the colony's reserves in 1846 and 1847 (Ballard 1989).

9. In 1948, the Afrikaner Nationalists came to power and concocted the Bantu homelands as a cornerstone of apartheid policy. KwaZulu was one such homeland, comprising disparate portions of land north of the Tugela River. Like other homelands, it had a legislative assembly (from 1977); unlike other major homelands, KwaZulu refused faux independence.

10. Agricultural encroachment was especially intense through the 1920s and 1930s; an east coast fever outbreak of 1909 (Laband and Thompson 1989) and locust scourges around the twentieth century's turn are infamous.

11. Migrancy transformed the reserve (Harries 1993; La Hausse de Lalouvière 2009; Wright 2009).

12. The change in state policy (1960) left full-time employees as the only legal