
Aspects of moral education in *Bhaca mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* initiation rituals

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Abstract

Influences on cultural, social, economic and political life of the Bhaca as well as their Interaction with other cultures from within South Africa and other parts of the world have led to the erosion of older traditions and customs resulting in a replacement of values that have promoted immorality, crime and an increase in sexually transmitted diseases among others. Consequently, these forces have resulted in change in the structure of *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* female initiation ceremonies, thereby influencing the musical arts embedded in them. This article examines the educational content of the songs and dances and the role these musical arts play within *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* celebrations expressed by the Bhaca of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The article reveals that despite the influences on *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* female initiation ceremonies it is evident that certain elements have continued to a large extent as they used to be in the pre-colonial times, while others have undergone change to suit the current lifestyle of the people in South Africa. The songs have undergone changes especially in their texts, which have shifted focus from menstruation and marriage to include topical issues of a social nature and wellbeing, and as such the repertoire reduced.

Keywords. Bhaca, *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo*, initiation ceremonies, women and girls, psycho-social, cultural and spiritual aspects, song texts

Introduction

The Bhaca people from South Africa's Eastern Province have been faced with various influences in their cultural, social, economic and political life: colonisation, conversion to Christianity, Western education and technological advancement, among others, The impact of these forces has resulted in the erosion of older values, traditions and customs, replacing them with values that have promoted immorality, crime and an increase in sexually transmitted diseases (especially HIV/AIDS). Despite this impact on Bhaca culture and lifestyle, Bhaca women and girls have created their own revival customs related to girls' initiation through the revival of *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* ceremonies. This study examines the educational content of the Bhaca *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* initiation ceremonies which are

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transmitted through song, dance and drama. The song texts are used as tools for communication, as they form a crucial part of Bhaca cultural and oral traditional methods of transmitting indigenous knowledge. Education entails total human learning by which knowledge is imparted through a process in which a “society reproduces itself [by] passing on its main characteristics to the next generation” (Farrant 1991:18–19).

Mamtiseni and *nkciyo* initiation ceremonies are organised for girls of ages ranging from 6 to 18, and they are performed separately at different times of the year. The Bhaca believe that children’s incorporation into their society is highly dependent on and achieved through initiation schools. Furthermore, the study by Hammond-Tooke on Bhaca girls’ initiation indicates that initiation is a rite of passage that enables a person to move from one stage of life to another. Traditionally among the Bhaca this transition meant preparation of the girl for marriage, an indication to the society that she has become a woman and an adult member of the community (Hammond-Tooke 1958:20). However, discussions with Metu (2014) reveal that initiation currently implies the movement from girlhood to womanhood, and that such a change needs to be recognised by the community. The emphasis on the transition from girlhood to womanhood has occurred because girls no longer go straight into marriage after passing through the rite of passage, since they still have to attend primary and tertiary education before they could be considered ready for marriage.

According to Nozibele (2010), the Bhaca believe that customary education must be taught through *undalashé* and *isintu* (the old ways and the values of ubuntu). In fact, Bhaca girls who have gone through initiation concur with Nozibele and believe that all girls should go through the ceremonies and that one who does not might become thin and sickly.

In his studies among the Venda and other ethnic groups in South Africa, Blacking (1982) indicates that initiation schools serve similar purposes and that they are educational institutions in which culturally important information is transmitted through music and dance. Blacking continues that *domba*, the initiation for Venda girls, is particularly well known for the large body of information it conveys on aspects of psycho-social, cultural and spiritual aspects of adulthood. Indeed the same could be said for the Bhaca *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* initiation ceremonies in which music is the main tool for communicating and imparting moral, social, cultural, spiritual and political education. Furthermore, music and dance are viewed among the Bhaca as a means for social and personal development, through communal participation, as they are the activities inherent in the initiation ceremonies in which music is performed to foster physical development, health and wellbeing. Details of these ceremonies will be discussed later in this article.

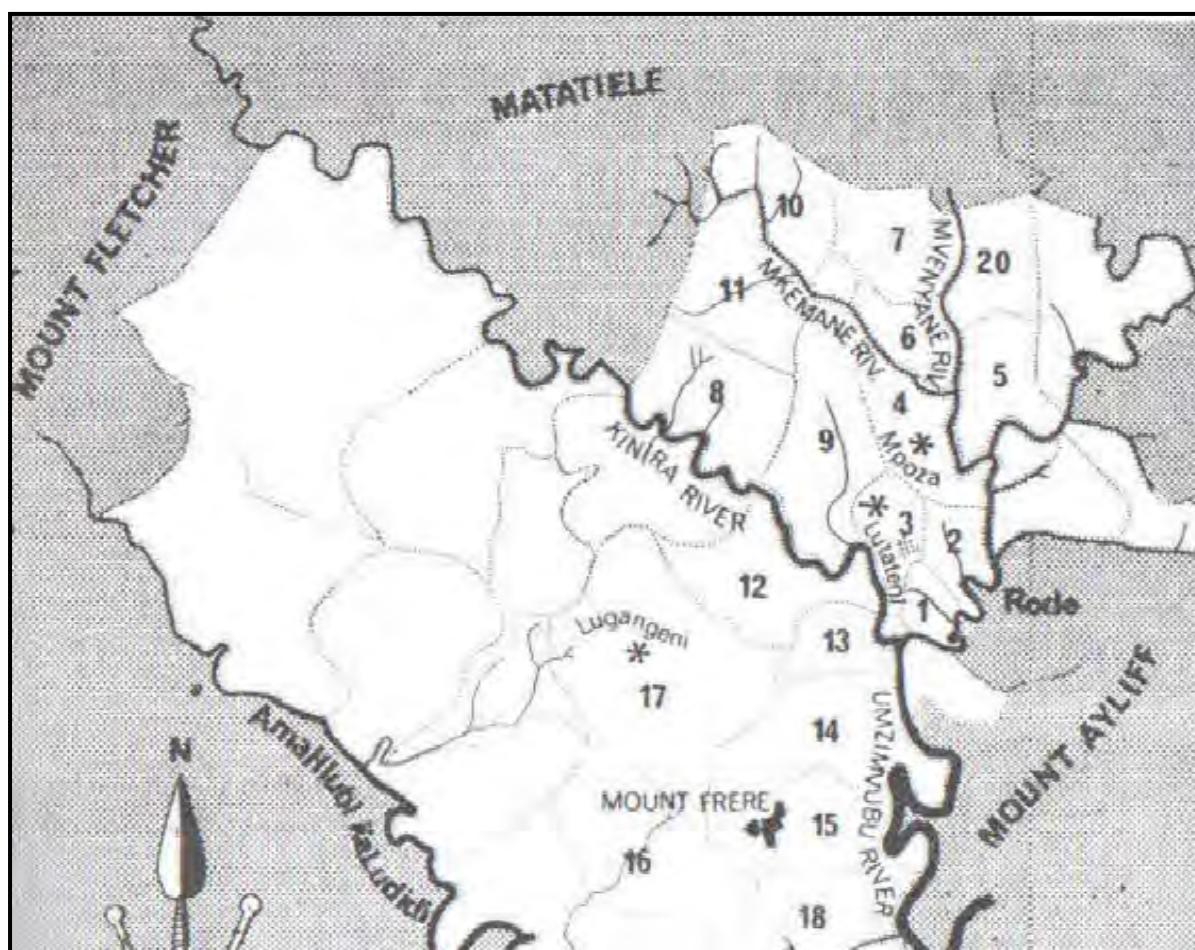
We investigate the specific role of music in the *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* initiation ceremonies. Special attention is given to the type and meaning of song texts used, as well as the reasons why they are used in particular ways. We also aim to show that song texts play an integral role as initiation school instructions, and that their utilisation in this context is intended to perpetuate cultural and religious values to ensure the continuity and survival of cultural traditions. The focus here is on the way in which song texts are used to announce, initiate and demarcate the different components of the *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* initiation ceremonies over a period of time. As such, music acts in a special way to signify, validate and incorporate the elements of the initiation ceremonies into the Bhaca worldview.

This article is a descriptive analysis of Bhaca *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* female initiation ceremonies and the role played by music in them. In terms of theoretical perspectives, what emerges from the study is that education in Bhaca initiation ceremonies hinges, on the one

hand, on physical development and health (specifically in relation to menstruation), and on the other hand, on moral and spiritual wellbeing. Furthermore, the Bhaca “learn new life styles from experiencing day-to-day life as individuals, families, communities, etc., which could be conscious or unconscious learning” (Reeler 2007:10–13). Learning of new lifestyles among the Bhaca has led to the formation of new ways of doing things and the formation of new identities. These new lifestyles have affected the performance of *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* ceremonies to such an extent that some elements have changed, while others have continued to be practised in the traditional way. That is why in this study we identify the features of change in the music.

Data for this article include material gathered primarily between 2010 and 2013, during which time we conducted interviews with various research participants, in particular Bhaca midwives, *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* initiates, and adults who attended initiation ceremonies in various towns and cities in the Eastern Cape. However, the analysis of *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* music and dances in this article is mainly based on 5 *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* female ceremonies and 20 recordings of songs and dances in which the data permit direct exploration of the role of musical arts in the ceremonies as well as the relative impact on them of colonisation, Christianisation, Western education and globalisation. For our analysis we used the audio and video recordings of songs, some of which we made from the *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* female initiation ceremonies recorded for us by our research assistants in the Eastern Cape during the period 2010 to 2013.

Figure 1: Map of Eastern Cape locating the Bhaca



Key:

Mhlotsheni	11. Xameni (apho kukho iTsewu)
Lutshikini	12. Sihlahleni
Lutateni	13. Cabazi
Mpoza	14. Mpendle
Siqhingeni	15. Lubhacweni
Ntsimangweni	16. Mvuzi
Colana	17. Lugangeni
Nkungwini	18. Mtshazi
Mgungundlovu	19. Tshungwana (Osborn)
Ngqumane	20. Nomkholokotho

Before proceeding it is necessary to describe briefly the historical background of the Bhaca people and their location in South Africa. The Bhaca originate from an area along the northern part of the Pongola River, near the Libombo Hills. This is the area on the present border between Mpumalanga and Swaziland (KwaBhaca Kingdom, 2010). Hammond-Tooke (1958:16) points out that in the 1700s the Bhaca were part of Zululand. However, their present location in South Africa is the Eastern Cape Province, more precisely in the following towns: Mount Frere, Mount Ayliff, Matatiele, Mount Fletcher, Mzimkhulu and Kokstad. The migration from the Libombo Hills to the Eastern Cape resulted in a cultural and linguistic mix as the Bhaca interacted and intermarried with the people they encountered in the new areas of settlement. The Bhaca speak a language known as IsiBhaca, which is a mixture of IsiZulu, IsiXhosa and SiSwati. The following map of the Eastern Cape shows the present location of the Bhaca in South Africa.

Mamtiseni and Nkciyo initiation ceremonies

According to Hansen (2001:13), in the early days Bhaca girls' initiation was centred on the first menstruation, which marked the transition from childhood to womanhood. Therefore, this development had to be celebrated by taking a girl into seclusion and performing rituals and ceremonies that would assist her in acquiring the required knowledge about adulthood and how to interact with other members of the society. Metu (2014) points out that in the early days initiation seclusions also served the purpose of preparing the girl for marriage, in that after the ceremony the girl was expected to be betrothed as she had acquired marriageable quality and status due to her attainment of physical maturity. Metu continues that due to the importance attached to marriage among the Bhaca, initiation ceremonies lasted a considerable period of time to allow for the initiate to be properly prepared and taken through all the lessons of the rituals and ceremonies.

During these initiation ceremonies the focus of performance was on physical development as well as customary education (Mthimkulu 2011). The lessons were conducted by adult midwives who spent time with the initiate, who was in turn supported by selected older girls

who had already undergone initiation. The lessons were conveyed through music and dance, rituals and ceremonies. What was important in these music and dance performances was that the initiate received assistance in interpreting the song texts, dance movements, mime actions, rituals and the accompanying attire. According to Hammond-Tooke (1958:19), initiation did not only involve lessons, rituals and ceremonies, but also included feasts (*umjadu*). Feasting was communal, especially at the end of the seclusion and initiation period. Hansen (1981) adds that the initiate also experienced learning through other modes of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), including taboos, proverbs and stories.

Taboos were used to facilitate the initiate's ability to memorise and store the knowledge acquired during initiation, and also reinforce the need for an individual's respect for elders, traditions and customs. Metu (2014) indicates that symbolism was also a mode of imparting knowledge. Metu continues that this is evident in the earlier practice, when at the end of the seclusion period the initiate appeared before the community dressed in a long goatskin skirt of a married woman, holding a spear, and wearing the twisted fat of the *umblonyane*³ in a coil round her neck. The act of appearing in public in a married woman's skirt was symbolic and indicated the public acceptance of dogma and values, while at the same time emphasising the initiate's attainment of new social status.

Hansen (2003) points out that, according to studies conducted by Kohler and Hammond-Tooke from the mid-1940s to the late 1950s, the pressure and influence of Christianity among the Bhaca increased to such an extent that initiation ceremonies underwent considerable modification. Evidence of modification could be seen in the change of their name to *ipati* (party). The term *ipati* was commonly used, as indicated by Platjies (2013), to stress the Bhaca embracing Christian values and the break with 'heatheness'.⁴ In this regard *ipati* was likened to the Western twenty-first birthday celebration. The emergence of *ipati* also ushered in the incorporation of Western and contemporary foods such as cakes, bread, *ijiki* (locally brewed beer) etc.

The *mamtiseni* initiation ceremony

The *mamtiseni* initiation ceremony is usually held at the end of November in order to accommodate those girls who attend school. This group is under the supervision of specially selected elderly women from the community who are assisted by specially selected older girls who have already been initiated. The supervising girls are responsible for organising and conducting the proceedings of the ceremony. However, the ceremony is generally supported by adults, who are parents of the participating members and experienced members from the community.

Mamtiseni involves customary education lessons imparted in various group activities that are conducted through music and dance. Currently the focus of the initiation ceremony is not on

³ When preparing for the ritual, the girl who will be having 'Umhlonyane' is the initiation ceremony has to ask other girls to gather at her house for a week. These girls should be from the same age group. (<http://enanda.co.za/2013/01/umhlonyana/>).

⁴ According to Hammond-Tooke (1958), the name *ipaty* was adopted by the Bhaca to avoid a ban on the practice of initiation ceremonies, which was considered to be fetishistic by missionaries. That is why during the 1940s initiation ceremonies among the Bhaca resembled Western-style birthday parties.

a girl's attainment of the first menstruation because of the specific time designated for it. However, issues concerning hygiene are still included among other topics such as morality, etiquette and decorum, household duties, and socio-economic obligations. According to Metu (2014), the initiates spend time learning the songs and dances that are interpreted for them by elderly women and those already initiated. Metu added that the involvement in *mamtiseni* has some effect of binding age-mates together into solidarity regiments. Furthermore, the sense of solidarity lays the basis for an identity which these girls are to revive once they complete the initiation, which is to announce their 'Bhacanness'. Hansen (2001) concurs, adding that the initiation served as a site of transmission to the initiates of some of the musical and performance practices which are associated with such an identity.

The music of *mamtiseni*

The music in *mamtiseni* expresses women's life experiences in certain song texts, dance steps, mime and attire. The repertoire of music during *mamtiseni* covers a number of topical aspects in the girls' lives, namely issues concerning fertility and health, politics, social structure, gender roles, and the promotion of peace within Bhaca society and beyond. Because of the diversity of issues to be covered during initiation, the repertoire of songs and dances is very wide in order to accommodate the topics included in the lessons.

Example 1: *Zemka Mangabangaba!* (They are leaving, vultures!)

Leader: *Zemka Mangabangaba!* They are leaving, vultures!

Chorus: *Zemka Mangabangaba!* They are leaving, vultures!

The song *Zemka Mangabangaba!* encourages the initiates to desist from bad conduct such as stealing, dishonesty, cruelty etc. The term 'vulture', in this regard, is used to describe destruction, evil, and inhuman and other forces that cause humans to be unfaithful and unkind. Furthermore, good citizens of Bhaca society are expected to be peace-loving, and as a result this song also encourages young girls to develop a sense of responsibility towards the creation of a peaceful atmosphere wherever they are and in whatever activities they are involved in with other people in the community.

Example 2: *Washiy' umakoti ekhala* (You are leaving a crying bride at home)

Leader: *Wandilinga!* You are testing me!

Chorus: *Washiy' umakoti ekhala,* You leaving a bride at home,
yewena u zo hamba la ekhaya! she will leave this home.

Leader: *Yhe wen'uzohamba* Hey you, she will leave!

Chorus: *Washiy' umakoti ekhala,* You leaving a bride at home, she will
yewena u zo hamba la ekhaya! she will leave this home.

Leader: *Hambubuye!* Go and come back! /Come Back!

Chorus: *Washiy' umakoti ekhala,* you leaving a bride at home, she will
yewena u zo hamba la ekhaya! she will leave this home.

This song deals with marriage and relationships with the opposite sex. The initiate is encouraged to act maturely and maintain the following qualities: patience, forgiveness, kindness, and humility in relation to all people regardless of their social status. It is emphasised that these qualities are helpful in relationships, as they contribute to the development of one's self-control and the ability to resolve conflict amicably. Customarily, divorce among the Bhaca is not encouraged, and that is why moral uprightness is promoted.

Example 3: *Inkululeko* (Freedom)

Leader: *Inkululeko uMandela wasinika* Freedom, Mandela gave us
inkululeko umandela! freedom!

Chorus: *Wasinik' inkululeko uMandela!* Mandela gave us freedom.
Wasinik' inkululeko uMandela! Mandela gave us freedom.

Leader: *UMandela, wasinceda, wasikhupha* Mandela helped us, he took
ebunzimeni, yinkululeko uMandela us out of Struggles, Mandela is freedom.

Leader: *Wasinik' inkululeko uMandela!* Mandela gave us freedom.
Wasinik' inkululeko uMandela! Mandela gave us freedom

The song *Inkululeko* (Freedom) provides evidence that girls learn about their political history at the *mamtiseni* ceremony. However, despite the song seemingly offering praises to the first post-apartheid South African president, Mr Nelson Mandela, as the one who gave South Africans freedom, the initiates are reminded to persevere in the maintenance of good moral conduct as much as Mr Mandela did when pursuing freedom for the people of his country.

After attending initiation, the girls usually meet as a cohort and practise some of the songs and dances they learnt during this period, which they perform to raise funds for their Christmas celebrations. By participating in these musical and dance activities, the girls unite to promote their interdependence through performing around the village as well as making some town visits. Furthermore, fund-raising during initiation is intended to unite the participants of the initiation ceremony as well as foster gender identity and independence.

The *nkciyo* initiation ceremony

Nkciyo is another Bhaca initiation ceremony for girls of the same age as *mamtiseni*. According to Nozibele (2010), in the early days *nkciyo* was known as *uhlolo lwamantombazana* (inspection of girls). This initiation ceremony focuses mainly on sexual education and issues around the consequences of engaging in sexual activity. Protection and safety for girls against contemporary ills such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases are dealt with intensively. This ceremony takes place under the supervision of respected and trusted adults from the community. During the ceremony, which is usually performed at weekends, girls are checked for virginity by specially selected experienced elderly women. During these gatherings the women not only test the initiates for virginity, but also spend much of their

time teaching songs and dances with moral content to them. Dumako (2011) adds that the emphasis of the ceremony is on teaching *ukuziphatha*, meaning to behave in a socially accepted manner, which implies total abstinence from pre-marital sex, respect for elders and general moral uprightness. According to Luthuli (2013), the emphasis on moral education and allowing the initiates to actively participate in discussions of issues such as abstinence from pre-marital sex has contributed to the reduction of teenage pregnancies in Bhacaland. From discussions with Jijana (2010), who has gone through *nkciyo*, we learned that the girls are compelled to follow the teachings of the initiation school as they are aware that they are under constant surveillance by the leaders of the initiation school and the entire community. Furthermore, Metu (2014) points out that the girls receive constant reminders and encouragement, on the one hand, from peers who have undergone *nkciyo* initiation, and on the other hand, by attending subsequent initiation ceremonies that take place within the community.

The following are some examples of *nkciyo* songs performed during the ceremony:

Example 4: *Ingulaza* (AIDS)

Leader: <i>Mholweni, Mholweni!</i>	Greetings, Greetings!
Chorus: <i>He mama kwenzekantoni?</i>	Hey mother what is happening?
Leader: <i>Sesaba ingculaza.</i>	We fear Aids.
Chorus: <i>Safa saphela sonke.</i>	We are all dying.

The song *Ingulaza* has been included in the initiation process in order to raise awareness of the consequences of being involved with multiple partners and in premarital sex. This song emphasises that a lot of people have died as a result of being infected by HIV, which ultimately develops into AIDS.

Example 5: *Chris Hani*

Leader: <i>Wayefe kanjani? Yehi!</i>	How did he die! Alas!
Chorus: <i>Yhe uyheyhe mama yehi, x2</i>	Oh mother, Alas!

The song is drawn from the political repertoire and it is based on the 1993 assassination of Chris Hani, who was a freedom fighter for the South African Communist Party (SACP) and African National Congress (ANC). Besides reminding the initiates of their political history, this song encourages the girls to make sacrifices in life in order to survive the harshness and difficulties encountered in society.

Example 6: *Udiniwe unozala* (A mother is tired)

Leader: <i>Udiniwe unozala.</i>	A mother is tired.
Chorus: <i>O hoboho ziyangoza.</i>	Oh yes trouble is coming.
Leader: <i>O thath' ukhukho s'yohlolwa.</i>	Take a mat and we go to be inspected.

Chorus: *O hoboho ziyangoza.*

Oh yes trouble is coming.

Leader: *O thatha is'camba s'yohlolwa.*

Take a mat and we go to be Inspected.

This song describes the difficulties that mothers go through in order to raise their children to be morally sound. It also encourages the initiates to take heed of the good advice they get from elders and through the lessons provided by the *nkciyo* ceremony.

Physical development, health and wellbeing

By nature *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* ceremonies are centred on physical development, health and wellbeing. Extended communications with Nozibele (2010) illuminate the views of those Bhaca girls and women who have undergone initiation and who describe their experiences during singing, mime and dance practices and performances, and the opportunities this affords them.

First, they interact socially as all the activities inherent in the initiation ceremonies are either conducted in small or large groups. By so doing, the initiates have a chance to develop a sense of community and togetherness.

Second, they exercise their bodies physically through the energetic dance steps, which involve clapping, leaping, jumping, stamping in response to rhythms of varying levels of intricacy as well as tempi. Beisman (1967) and Brown *et al.* (1981) concur with this view in their research on the contribution of music programmes and activities to the physical development, wellbeing and learning of children. In similar studies of health and wellbeing Clift and Hancox (2001) found that, besides the physical benefit of participating in singing, such as improved breathing and lung functions, one can also develop improved moods and stress reduction. Clift and Hancox continue that there are other dimensions associated with the benefits of singing such as wellbeing and relaxation, appropriate breathing and posture, socialisation, spiritual upliftment, emotional and heart development.

Third, they share experiences through continuous group activities when learning songs, dances, feasting and participating in other chores performed during the initiation ceremonies.

Fourth, they acquire shared knowledge which is exclusive to the initiated and greatly contributes to formation and reflection of Bhaca womanhood and identity. Furthermore, Metu (2014) adds that acquisition of knowledge that is restricted to the initiated promotes the attainment of emotional fulfilment through group membership.

Finally, they participate in music making and performance. The act of learning and performing music generally contributes to perceived good health, quality of life, as well as mental wellbeing. Research in this regard by Vanderark *et al.* 1983, Wise *et al.* 1992, Kahn 1998, and Coffman and Adamek 1999, among others, provides details on how music making contributes to good health, quality of life and mental wellbeing. Studies conducted by Clift *et al.* (2008) and Stacey *et al.* (2002) also reveal that participating in musical activities contributes to improved cognitive capacities such as attention, memory, learning, self-confidence and self-esteem, disciplining the skeletal-muscular system through the adoption of good posture, as well as developing a sense of purpose and motivation by being engaged in valued, meaningful and worthwhile activities.

Continuity and change

Political influences could be juxtaposed with those of conversion to Christianity and the effects point to the Bhaca people assimilating new belief systems and worldviews. Platjies (2013) points out that among the Bhaca the effects of colonisation and the introduction of Christianity are manifested in negative attitudes and comments such as ‘practising Bhaca traditions and customs is being *amaqaba* (uncivilised)’. However, this negative view has been countered by Botha (2000) in “Challenges of an African Renaissance in the 21st Century”. Botha acknowledges that there are changes and in some cases a decline in many South African people’s indigenous practices and way of life, but he also indicates that calls for promotion and revival have also increased over the years. Botha continues that even notable and eminent personalities such as former President Mbeki have been actively involved in promoting cultural practices such as initiation, among others, through the idea of the ‘African renaissance’.

Regarding the songs and dances performed in *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo*, it is evident that many indigenous songs used in the past have disappeared over the years, or their texts have been replaced by new ones to suit the current times, but the melodies have been retained. It has been very difficult to conduct a comparative analysis of the song texts and their melodies, as there are no recordings or manuscripts available from the earlier times. However, what is clear is that song texts have been adapted to suit the topics being covered in the lessons of the ceremony. Nozibele (2010) points out that some song texts have been changed to include current issues such as HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancies. Nozibele continues that some political and Christian issues have been included in the lessons and as a result the songs used for teaching have their texts modified. What is important here is that the interpretation and true meanings elicited from these songs are exclusive to the initiation group. Outsiders, the uninitiated, may draw their own meanings, but are not privileged to the same knowledge that the initiated acquire.

The songs have continued to be performed in an antiphonal manner, usually with a leader and chorus responding. The songs are usually performed at two levels: a) singing in call and response (antiphony) with the leader calling while the rest of the group responds in chorus; and b) hand clapping and stamping accompaniment. Some songs are specific to the ceremonies and are parts of the rite, but some can be sung at other times. All the dances of *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* are of a characteristic type often performed in groups, while at the same time allowing for solo performances that have a dramatic nature.

Dancing among the Bhaca is not only done for amusement, but it is also performed for purposes that signify respect, fertility, sorrow, joy etc. According to Mthimkulu (2011), singing and dancing performances during initiation have also included mimes representing aspects of domestic, social and socio-economic life. However, Mthimkulu adds that the nature of the initiation ceremonies has taken the format of *ipati* described in Hammond-Tooke’s study, and that the duration of seclusion has also been reduced to accommodate other social activities that the initiates have to perform in their homes and communities.

From the early days the attire worn by the initiates when performing dances for both initiation ceremonies has been *ibheshu*.⁵ However, the type of *ibheshu* used for initiation ceremonies currently is made from synthetic materials and cloth. The colours of the skirts vary depending upon the taste of the initiating midwives. However, from the videos we analysed it was evident that despite the skirts being made from cloth and other synthetic materials, the colour was that of animal skin print. Platjies (2013) points out that the size of the small skirt signifies the girl's state of being *intombi-nto* (being pure or being a virgin). Initially the initiates performed with bare chests, but as a result of increased accusations of 'public indecency' from Christian organisations, the girls wear T-shirts or beads. The initiates no longer go barefoot, but wear canvas shoes, especially when performing dances in public. The picture illustrates the change in the type of attire worn during initiation.



Figure 2: Mamtiseni initiates display their attire

Studies on initiation ceremonies from other ethnic groups within South Africa and beyond conducted by scholars such as Soga (1931), Laubscher (1975), Richards (1956), Hunter (1961), Hansen (1981), Dargie (1988), Levine (2005) Dontsa (2007) and Lumbwe (2009), among others, indicate that as much as these initiation ceremonies continue to be practised, some elements disappear completely, some undergo change, while others survive and continue in their traditional form.

⁵ *Ibheshu* is a raffia skirt made out of strips of animal skin. For the purposes of initiation and considering that the initiates are young and small in size, *ibheshu* is made relatively short to allow easy performance of agile dance movements such as jumping, galloping, stamping etc.

Conclusion

This article has provided a descriptive analysis of *Bhaca mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* female initiation ceremonies, and the role played in them by music and dance. To a great extent *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* songs and dances have continued to be the main vehicles for imparting moral instruction. However, it is evident that certain elements of *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* performances have continued by and large as they used to be in pre-colonial times, while others have undergone change to suit current lifestyles. Because of internal and external influences on *Bhaca* society, it is evident from the findings that, first, *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* songs have undergone changes, especially in their texts; second, the repertoire of songs performed during initiation ceremonies has been reduced in that issues concerning menstruation and marriage are no longer included in the focus of the lessons; third, the moral lessons embedded in the *mamtiseni* and *nkciyo* ceremonies have contributed positively to the reduction of teenage pregnancies among *Bhaca* people through the promotion of moral uprightness; fourth, the attire worn by the initiates has changed from *ibheshu* (skirt) made from animal skins to being made from synthetic material and cloth.

Local contemporary songs have been incorporated into the initiation ceremonies and have since taken on a prominent role and a higher status than indigenous music. The relegation of *Bhaca* indigenous songs to the periphery at initiation ceremonies has been the result of political, economic, cultural and social changes within South African society. The changes in the social structure of South African society have been influenced by many factors, including Christianity, education and globalisation, among others, and they have impacted on the initiation ceremonies described in this article.

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