MHANDE DANCE IN KUROVA GUVA AND MUTORO RITUALS: AN EFFICACIOUS AND SYMBOLIC ENACTMENT OF KARANGA EPISTEMOLOGY

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DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfillment / ~~partial fulfillment~~ (*delete whichever is inapplicable*) of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Graduate Programme in

Ethnomusicology, University of KwaZulu-Natal,

South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor ~~was~~ / was not used (*delete whichever is inapplicable*) ~~and that my Supervisor was informed of the identity and details of my editor~~. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an ethnography of *mhande* dance as a dynamic phenomenon that enunciates Karanga belief and normative values that are enacted through performance of *mhande* dance in its chief indigenous contexts: the *kurova guva* (settling the spirit of the dead) and the *mutoro* (rain making) rituals. Approached from an emic perspective, the study draws data from field research conducted between 2008 and 2010 among the rural Karanga of Shurugwi District in Zimbabwe. This study is an explication of *mhande* dance which provides the reader with cognitive understanding of the indigenous spiritual dance that embraces music, dance and gestures. The dance features both symbolize and spiritualize Karanga culture.

Karanga scheme of reality (*chivanhu*) embodies two worlds: the natural and the supernatural in which the natural is explained by the supernatural. The supernatural is the world of the spirits with God (*Mwari*) being the Supreme Spirit. According to the Karanga, the deceased become spirit beings that maintain the quality of life of their human nature. Thus the Karanga spiritual world is populated with good and bad spirits where the good are referred to as ancestors (*vadzimu*) and the bad are identified differently; for example, sorcerers (*varoyi*), alien (*mashavi*) and avenging spirits (*ngozi*). The Karanga believe in God who they venerate through their ancestors. Ancestors are empowered to overcome bad spirits and hence their siblings appease them in order that the spirits assist the humans to deal with challenges of life for which the natural world provides no solution. Karanga reality of the existence of spiritual beings is made to be a part of everyday life through the conduct of spiritual ritual ceremonies: *kurova guva* and *mutoro* wherein the performance of *mhande* dance occasions spirit possession. Thus, through its efficacious and symbolic features, *mhande* dance is experienced reality of Karanga epistemology (*chikaranga*).

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The Karanga, the largest subgroup of the Shona people in Zimbabwe comprising the Karanga, the Korekore, the Manyika, the Ndau and the Zezuru, are largely located in Masvingo Province and parts of Manicaland and the Midlands Provinces in southeastern and central locality of the nation (cf. Fig. 1.1). The Shona are mainly located in Masvingo, Midlands, Manicaland, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West Provinces while Bulawayo and the Matabeleland North and South Provinces are mostly inhabited by the Ndebele speaking people. Like the rest of the Shona, the Karanga believe in God, *Mwari*[1] the giver of life. They worship *Mwari* by way of their ancestral spirits who are categorised in three: family spirits (*vadzimu yemisha*); clan spirits (*vadzimu yemadzinza*), and great spirits (*midzitateguru*)[2]. With regard the rain ritual the great rain spirits (*majukwa*)[3] are closet to *Mwari*.
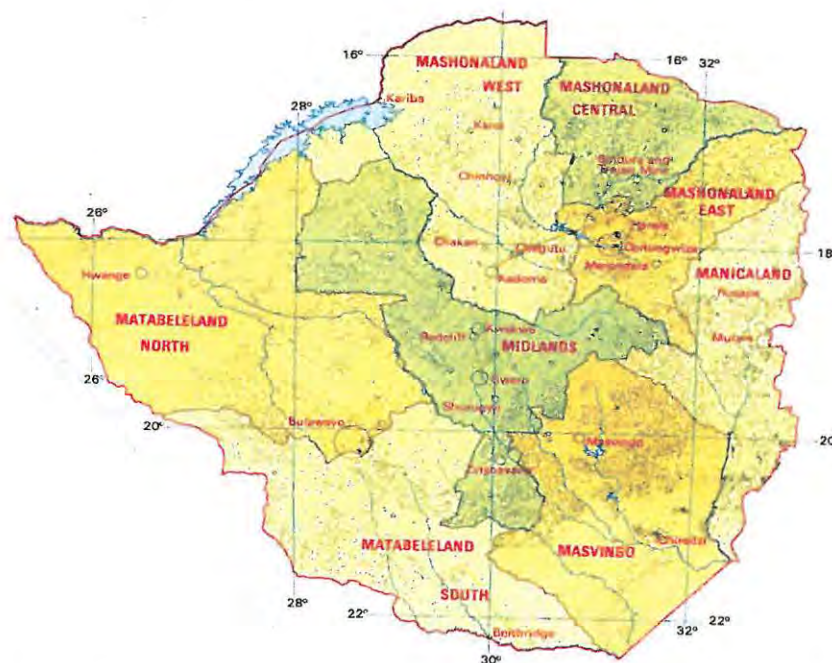
Fig. 1.1 Shona locations in Zimbabwe   [Extract from Makawa1985: 12 - 13]

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[1] *Mwari* is a Karanga word for the Supreme Being, God the Creator.
[2] *Madzitateguru* are the great grand ancestors.
[3] *Majukwa* are the great rain spirit mediums that reside at the territorial shrine and are closest to God.

The Karanga appeal to God on matters of communal concern like provision of rain through the mediation of the rain spirits (*manyusa*)[4] who they commune with during the rain ritual ceremony called the *mutoro*[5] ceremony. The ceremony fosters the intimacy between the spirits and their siblings through performance of *mhande*[6] dance which epitomizes the ritual by ensnaring designated rain spirits to embody their mediums (*masvikiro*)[7] in order to give appropriate counsel to the participants.

During my youth, my age restricted me from participating in performance of the dance at the *mutoro* ceremonies that were held in my rural home Chikwadze village in Bikita District even though I was eager to learn much about *mhande* indigenous musical tradition of my descent. Nonetheless, I observed at close range and at times also participated in the *kurova guva*[8] *mhande* dance performances conducted in my rural village. The *kurova guva* ceremony is a ritual that is conducted at least one year after the death of a husband or wife to the bereaved family. The ritual is meant to settle spirits of the dead by introducing them to the clan spirits and also welcoming the spirits back home for the Karanga believe that they (spirits) would be wandering in the forest. Performance of *mhande* constitutes the final event of the ritual in which the dance is performed until the chosen medium(s) get possessed by the spirit(s) and address the participants.

In both the *kurova guva* and the *mutoro* ceremonies, *mhande* dance incorporates singing, drumming, handclapping and dancing with gourd rattles (*magagada*)[9]. Drawing from my youth experience of being a participant observer at *mhande* events in *kurova guva* ceremonies, I found the singing and the drumming quite fascinating while the dancing left me perplexed because the foot movements were not as elaborate as I expected them to be. However, my attention could not be drawn away from the dancers who did not only occupy the centre stages, but they also amply captured the hearts and minds of all the other participants who, through utterances and actions, demonstrated their appreciation of the adepts' unelaborated movements.

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[4] *Manyusa* are district or community rain spirit mediums that advise chiefs on matters of rain.
[5] *Mutoro* is a rain making ritual which is normally conducted once a year.
[6] *Mhande* is the enacted voice of Karanga epistemology.
[7] *Masvikiro* (singular – *svikiro*) are spirit mediums.
[8] *Kurova guva* is a ritual that is meant to settle the spirit of the deceased.
[9] *Magagada* are gourd rattles that are worn on the dancers' feet when performing *mhande* dance

It was not till I turned 15 that I inquired from my father, Erimas Manyere Rutsate to explain to me why people who participated in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies greatly valued *mhande* dancing. The remembered part of his response to my investigation is presented hereunder:

Chishamiso chiri mukudzana mhande ndechokuti vadzimu vatinokoka nemitambo yatinovaitira vanenge vapfeka miviri yevadzani vachiishandisa kutiratidzira unhu hwavo.	The mystery in dancing *mhande* is that the ancestral spirits we lure through the ritual ceremonies we organize for them will have embodied the adepts and thus using their (adepts) bodies to articulate the ethos embedded in their personality.

(Rutsate 24/08/73)

My father's explanation of *mhande* dance movement system is analogous to Agawu's construal of a plural social view of African musical performance in which "Participants subscribe to an always-already connected ethos that mediates all relevant modes of expression, spiritual as well as physical" (2008 *Transcultural Music Review* http://www.sibetrans.com/trans/trans11/art08.htm date accessed 28/06/09). Dance is one of, if not, the most incredible mode through which Africans in general and the Karanga in particular make a statement about their perception of life. Among the Karanga, the distinct role of *mhande* dance is affirmed by its significance in their spiritual rituals: the *kurova guva* and the *mutoro*. Instead of satisfying my quest for understanding *mhande*, my father's description of the adepts' actions as a mode of concretizing the spiritual or implicit dimension of the dance further confirmed its complexity that I have had to grapple with to the point where I undertook this study in 2008 in order to gain a fuller understanding of this multifaceted indigenous musical art.

1.2 Research problem

The importance that the various ethnic groups in Zimbabwe attach their indigenous musical traditions, which they often refer to by the same names as their dance styles, is manifest in the existence of a wide range of dance genres such as *chidzimba* (Manyika), *muchongoyo* (Ndau), *mapfuwe* (Korekore), *mbende* (Zezuru) and *mhande* (Karanga). In view of this state of affairs, one may be obliged to think that much of

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the research that has been conducted on the music of the different Shona ethnic groups would have had an obvious bias towards dance; while in reality, prior to the present study, music research in Zimbabwe has tended to steer away from explicating indigenous dance. Tracing the lack of scholarly work on dance in the recent past, Judith Hannah states, "A system of palpable, vital signs, dance is a barometer of theology, ideology, worldview and social change. Yet dance does not figure prominently in religious or other non-dance scholarly disciplines" (Hannah 1988: 281). Hannah's remark has also been echoed by Georgiana Gore who voiced her concern about the scarcity of source materials on traditional West African dances that were ignored by those who wrote about the cultures that bore the dances (Gore 1994: 62). Furthermore, Hannah and Gore's observations were affirmed by Omofolabo Ajayi with regards to the Yoruba of Nigeria - who also integrate dance with significant aspects of their culture- when he asserts that "It is therefore very surprising to realize that dance has not been as seriously and systematically studied as other aspects of Yoruba culture whose meanings are, in fact, more enhanced precisely through the art of dance" (1998: 2). Instead of conceiving Ajayi's assertion from the broader cultural perspective incorporating elements such as language, religion, music and other artefacts; this study focuses on indigenous African musical art with particular reference to its different features that include songs, instruments, dance and the role of objects and music.

Among the earlier studies on indigenous music and dance of the Shona people in Zimbabwe that are closely linked to this research are: *The Soul of the Mbira: The Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe* (Berliner 1993 [1974]); Performance as Ritual – Performance as Art: Therapeutic Efficacy of Dandanda Song and Dance in Zimbabwe (Thram 1999) and Performance of *Mhande* Song – Dance: A Comparative and Contextualised Analysis (Rutsate 2007). Berliner's study focused on *mbira* music among the Zezuru with particular emphasis on songs, playing techniques and the role of *mbira* music. Thram's study of the therapeutic efficacy of the *dandanda* song and dance among the Zezuru makes reference to dance though there is no specific mention of the symbolic and efficacious statements made by the adepts' bodies when performing *dandanda*. My master's research on Karanga *mhande* song-dance contains insignificant information on the dance since it gives prominence to the structural analysis of the dance songs for the *mutoro* rain ceremony for the purpose of

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comparing the structure of *mhande* songs with the structure of songs from other Karanga song traditions.

Contrary to the insignificant treatment of *mhande* dance in my Master's thesis is the great importance its adherents ascribe to it. Thus this study is an outgrowth of my previous research and it is intended to address the key questions and broader issues about *mhande* dance that I have always wished to investigate. The three questions that are central to this study are:

- Why is *mhande* dance the defining element of the *kurova guva* and the *mutoro* ceremonies?
- In what ways do *mhande* dance features depict what the Karanga believe and value?
- How does *mhande* dance performance evoke ancestral spirits?

The questions that are meant to explore the broader issues about *mhande* dance are:

- Why are indigenous African spiritual rituals a preferred route for providing solutions to the challenges of life even in the context of Christianity and modernity?
- Is representation of indigenous African dances a text of postcolonial culture or another frame of knowledge construction?
- What is the value of documenting indigenous African dance in postcolonial set up?

It is therefore the thesis of this research to show that more than enacting the efficacy of *mhande* in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* rituals, the articulation of the dance features also symbolizes Karanga indigenous knowledge system or epistemology which is referred to as *chikaranga*[10].

1.3 Goal and rationale of research

Mhande dance performed in its original contexts of *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ritual ceremonies enacts Karanga indigenous knowledge system (*chikaranga*). The goal of this research is to explicate *mhande* by focusing on the efficacy and symbolism of the features of the dance.

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[10] *Chikaranga* is a Karanga equivalent for spirituality or epistemology.

This ethnographic study of performance of *mhande* dance in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* rituals is a doctoral research that explicates and documents the musical tradition in written text, pictures and images. In addition to empowering the Karanga by representing their indigenous knowledge system embedded in *mhande* dance in a form that is easily accessible, the research also positively contributes to scholarship in dance by significantly adding to literature in indigenous African musical practices that often embodies dance.

1.4 Literature review

While it may be common knowledge that most indigenous musical traditions embrace dance as an important component of music and that through its multiple modes of expression, dance is employed to articulate culture; this integrative nature of indigenous musical traditions in general and dance in particular might have been misconstrued by dance scholars from the West. In his book titled *Music in Human Life*: *Anthropological Perspectives on Music*, John Kaemmer's profound statement - "An important feature of the conceptual aspect of music is the way music is seen as fitting into a society's worldview or general scheme of reality" (1993: 61) - indicates that as much as people's perceptions of reality differ, so also does their music. The view of the separation between the mind and the body held in the West, which has elevated the mind over the body, is what may have complicated and hampered research in dance as substantiated by Gray Morris who argues, "Dance research always deals in some way with the body, but one of the challenges now is how to mend the dichotomy between mind and body that has marginalised dance for far too long" (1996: 10). As if to respond to Morris' concern and also underscoring the research emphases in dance, Cynthia Novack contends:

> Researchers who wish to redress the imbalance of mind over body may react by positing the body and movement as the primary reality .... Some researchers tend to look 'only at the movement itself' as if the body, movement and mind were independent entities, scarcely connected to the social and cultural ideas, interactions and institutions" (1990: 7).

Rather than redress the balance of mind over body, most indigenous dances embody the adherents' thoughts that are concretized through movements and gestures. This idea is supported by the dance research focused on rhythm that was conducted among

African Americans and Indians by Martha Graham and Eugene O'neill (1932) and cited by Amy Koritz:

> Our two forms of indigenous dance, the Negro [African American] and the Indian are as dramatically contrasted rhythmically as the land in which they ... [originate]. The Negro dance is a dance toward freedom, a dance of forgetfulness, often Dionysiac in its abandon and the raw splendour of its rhythm - a rhythm of disintegration. The Indian dance, however, is not for freedom or forgetfulness or escape, but for awareness of life, complete relationship with that world in which he finds himself: it is a dance of power, a rhythm of integration (1990: 92).

African American dance emanates in African musical practices since its proponents were taken as slaves from Africa to go and work on plantations in America. The dance rhythm that I believe was articulated through manipulation of instruments, movements and gestures was an expression of the adepts' thought of freedom. Correspondingly, the rhythmic coherence of the Indian dance gestures dramatises its adherents' perception of life. With reference to African musical arts, Herbst et al support the idea that dances express thoughts by postulating that:

> It is important to realize that dance is not only bodily action, but a form of intellectual activity – using a 'thinking' body. Executing a dance requires full utilisation of anticipatory and processual thinking, using exact memory recall of movements, spatial orientation, and synchronisation of movements with other dancers in relation to time, as well as space and range. These are coupled with continuous self awareness to conform one's movements within the constraints of culture and custom (2003: 218).

Rather than considering the rhythmic dimension of African American and Indian dances as bodily action, Graham and O'neill treated this musical element as cultural knowledge. This means that African American dance dramatises crises by stressing rhythm which stimulates movements that connote escape; likewise, the Indian dance enacts social relations. In this regard, Otto Karolyi writing about *The Traditional African and Oriental Music*, does not only conceive traditional African and Oriental music as "interwoven with extra-musical activities and as part of the complex texture of life", but also that "the close interaction between body and mind is visibly manifest in dance" (1998: 5).

What Herbst (Ed.) and others regard as constraints of culture and custom which can be interpreted as cultural beliefs, norms and values to which most indigenous dances

conform, is the reason the study of indigenous dances may be approached from a culture specific perspective. As viewed by Kofi Agawu that African music is integrated with social life rather than set apart, natural rather than artificial and deeply human in its material significance (2003: xi), dance styles are not only the products of different ethnic groups of people, but, through bodily action, they also are the material forms of life of the groups they represent. Agawu's assertion supports Peggy Harper's contention that "Ethnic dance is an integral function of a society in which the form and motivation of the dance are familiar to all members of the society as a statement of their life" (1967: 10). Thus ethnic dance conveys the nature of culture and community life (Chernoff 1979: 36). Among the numerous scholars who conducted culture specific studies of indigenous dance are: Omofolabo Ajayi (1998) *Yoruba Dance*; Stephen Friedson (1996) *Musical Experience in Tumbuka Healing;* Irene Loutzaki (2007) "Tiwi Dance Aesthetics"; Andree Grau (2003) "Understanding Style in Monastiri Dance", and Adrienne Kaeppler (2007) "Method and Theory in Analysing Dance Structure with an Analysis of Tongan Dance". This study on "*Mhande* dance: An efficacious and symbolic enactment of Karanga epistemology" compliments earlier scholarship on indigenous dance.

Ajayi's (1998) study of the Yoruba culture communicated through body attitude in dance investigated the aesthetics, the significance and the production of meaning of Yoruba dances in the events they occur. He views the continued existence of the dances against the socio-economic and political forces to which they were subjected as clear evidence of their importance in and ability to communicate Yoruba culture. His semiotics of movement and body attitude follows Peirce's epistemological approach of the 'symbolic sign' that regards body movements as "signals and symbols which give and collect information in a communication situation" (1998: 10). To this end, symbolism in Yoruba dance is similar to that of *mhande* dance performed in indigenous contexts of *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies.

The idea of giving and collecting information which is referred to in Ajayi's claim quoted in the foregoing paragraph may be described as the exchange that takes place between the humans and the spirits which occurs through performance of *mhande* dance. Similarly, the expression Stephen Friedson uses to show the symbolism of the *vimbuza* dance of the Tumbuka in Malawi is "When she divines, Lubemba 'dances

her disease' (*kuvina nthenda*)" (1996: 9). This means that *vimbuka* dance has the power to ensnare the spirit(s) to embody Lubemba and endow her with diagnostic power to divine and treat illnesses.

This study of *mhande* dance in its indigenous context together with Ajayi's and Friedson's among many other similar studies constitutes Africanist approaches to dance ethnography. By extension, dance is special, not only to the Karanga, the Yoruba and the Tumbuka, but also to many other cultures that perceive it beyond the adherents' body movements and gestures. The Tiwi, an Aborigine ethnic group of people, places so much importance to dance that, as Andree Grau puts it, "when discussing their attachment to their traditional culture, for example, Tiwi people often say 'we will never give up our dancing'" (Grau 2003: 174 citing Osborne 1974: 80). Grau goes on to underscore unity of most, if not all, elements of traditional Tiwi life as the optimal value of their dance. Thus Tiwi dance can be conceived as an enactment of its exponents' worldview or culture. In her endeavour to illuminate features of the Monastiri dance culture, Irene Loutzaki focused her study on the concept of style. Drawing from her observations of the dance performance, she says:

> By watching the dance, the attention is not what I, as researcher perceive and understand (analytic evaluation - movement differences, which are 'etic') but what the insiders, the actors of tradition understand as a system of knowledge (folk evaluation, which is 'emic') of how the various unrelated kinetic units - simple or complex - combine into meaningful motifs, which combine into dance according to a specific group of people (Loutzaki 2007: 303 citing Kaeppler 1998: 47).

Following Kaeppler's conception of dance as a specific system of movement or tradition, Loutzaki relied on the interpretations of the dance style provided by the culture bearers, the Monastiri. Kaeppler also analysed Tongan dance by focusing on the three parts of the body: legs, arms and head that constitute the Tonga movement system. She categorised the movements into two: the small units that do not have meaning in themselves, which she referred to as kinemes and the smallest units that have meaning termed morphokimes. The Tonga have a vocabulary for morphokimes - a combination of kinemes that is meaningful - which Kaeppler used in conjunction with kinemes and morphokimes to form an emic analysis of the Tongan dance (2007: 54 – 55).

Drawing from the scholarly studies of indigenous dances outlined in the foregoing paragraphs, it can be deduced that regardless of the perspective ethnologists or ethnographers take to approach their research in interpreting the movement systems of specific cultures, the significance the social actors attach to their movements and gestures constitutes the hallmark of indigenous dance research. The varying points of view incorporating the structural (semiotic, stylistic and emic analysis), the efficacious, the symbolic and the aesthetic dimensions from which the identified scholars advanced their dance research resulting in each study highlighting the importance of the dance features to the lives of their exponents clearly confirms the claim made in the deductive statement. In this research, *mhande* dance is approached from an epistemological perspective that engages all the aforementioned dimensions in order to articulate the essence of this indigenous Karanga spiritual musical practice that has not been interpreted prior to this study.

1.5 *Mhande* dance ethnography

Performance of *mhande* in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies is a spiritual practice that embodies Karanga culture which is mainly concretised in the dance features. Given that *mhande* dance is an 'embodied practice', it therefore aligns itself with a methodology that helps to explicate cultural knowledge that may otherwise be inaccessible. As such, this study is *mhande* dance ethnography in that the dance features incorporating singing, instrument playing and dancing convey Karanga indigenous spiritual knowledge system (*chikaranga*). This assertion resonates with one of the dance ethnographers; Deidre Sklar's contention that "Dance ethnography depends upon the postulate that cultural knowledge is embodied in movement, especially in highly stylized and coded movement we call dance" (1991: 6). She further observes that, more than being somatic, mental and emotional; knowledge embedded in dancing incorporates cultural history, beliefs, values and feelings (ibid). Sally Ness as one ethnomusicologist who writes on understanding the cultural in the embodiment of dance also affirms Sklar's idea by saying, "Body movement in dance may be understood as the embodiment of history, of existential givens, of social values, of symbolism, and/or of thought per se" (2004: 124).

Drawing from Sklar's and Ness's conceptualisations of dance ethnography it may be argued that *mhande* dance portrays the history of the Karanga through its style that was choreographed by their ancestors. When performed in its indigenous spiritual contexts of *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies, *mhande* dance is executed in accordance with Karanga cultural conventions which its culture bearers inherited from their forebears. In his response to the question "How do you come to label a dance as *mhande*?" Munamba said that:

Mhande ingoma kana kuti mudzanire unofambirana nemaimbire nemaridziro engoma zvinova zvakakochanidzwa nemadzitateguru edu kunova ndiko kwakabva tsika iyoyi yatakadzidziswa navabereki vedu. (Munamba 12/08/10)	*Mhande* is a voice or manner of dancing that corresponds with the singing and drumming, which art was created by our grandparents/ancestors from who we learnt this traditional practice that our parents taught us.

Munamba's description of *mhande* dance depicts a prevailing practice that resounds with its past. Probably the major reason *mhande* has stood the test of time is that the Karanga employ it as a means of enacting their spirituality because the dance is believed to have the power to bridge their physical and metaphysical worlds. *Mhande* dance features encompassing singing, drumming and dancing may be considered as a communication device or a voice (*ngoma*)[11] through which the ancestors (*vadzimu*)[12] connect with their siblings. To the Karanga, once *mhande* dance is performed, ancestors not only recognise it, but also respond to whatever is appealed for accordingly. For example, one way by which the settling of the spirit of the dead is confirmed within *kurova guva* ceremonies is the embodiment of spirit mediums symbolising the reincarnation of the ancestral spirits. This confirms the Karanga view that the spiritual world is a reality much as the natural world is and, as such, *mhande* dance represents the Karanga view of reality. As a *mhande* dance ethnographer, I therefore employed my observation and interpretive skills in order to illuminate Karanga epistemology (*chikaranga*).

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[11] The deep meaning of the term n*goma* is a constellation of *mhande* dance features that have the power to lure ancestral spirits.

[12] *Vadzimu* (singular – *mudzimu*) are ancestral spirits.

Following Jeff Titon's interpretation of ethnomusicology which seeks to answer two questions: What can we know about music, and how can we know it? (1997: 87), this research approached performance of *mhande* dance in its ritual contexts from two perspectives that correspond with Titon's questions, that is, the phenomenological dimension of the musical practice as Karanga lived experience and the interpretive or hermeneutic perspective of the researcher. In this sense, the ethnographic data for this study was therefore gathered through fieldwork which is aptly defined by Timothy Cooley as "the observational and experiential portion of the ethnographic process during which the ethnomusicologist engages living individuals in order to learn about music-culture" (1997: 4). In this study, a variety of methods were employed to solicit data from *mhande* dance cultural knowledge bearers and these included face to face interviews; indirect interviews (speaking to the possessed medium by way of an aide – another spirit medium); observation of *mhande* dance singers, drummers, dancers, handclappers and spirit mediums behaviours when performing their acts as well as fieldnote making on observations and casual dialogues.

In my quest to thoroughly understand Karanga cultural knowledge embedded in *mhande* dance as it is performed in the *mutoro* ceremony, I followed Munamba's and Marecha's advice that I had to inquire with the custodians of the *mutoro* rain ceremony who are based at Zame or Mabwe adziva (also popularly referred to as Matonjeni) territorial rain shrine. On 31 October 2010, Acting Chief Nhema, Marecha – one of his rain spirit mediums and I drove to Zame in the company of Mr Jenaguru Munyayi, a rain spirit medium who serves as an aide to Tateguru Manyanga (a woman who gets possessed by the great rain spirit called Manyanga), the guardian spirit medium who resides at the territorial shrine village named after her guest spirit. We arrived at Manyanga village at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and it took about one and a half hours before Munyayi who had gone to brief Tateguru Manyanga on the intention of my visit came back to where he had directed us to sit. Munyayi informed me that Tateguru Manyanga the spirit was available to converse with me on condition that I was not going to use any gadgets that capture pictures, images and sounds because the spirits prohibit the use of such equipment when they speak to the living. Upon my promise to abide by the stipulated condition, Munyayi subsequently led us to the hut where the spirit medium in her state of possession was. After introducing us (Nhema, Marecha and Rutsate) Munyayi went on to initiate the dialogue by

reiterating the purpose my visit to the sacred territorial shrine as that of seeking some depth of understanding of Karanga culture with particular regard to the place of *mhande* dance in enhancing the rain making process. Tateguru Manyanga began by commending me for being one of the very few Zimbabwean black researchers to have visited the territorial shrine in order to receive instruction on Karanga indigenous spiritual knowledge system from the guardian spirits themselves and then proceeded to talk about the revelation she had since received from her guest spirit which incorporated the strategy to be employed in revitalising the organisation and administration of the *mutoro* ritual by taking the necessary corrective measures on the mistakes made at national as well as community levels. She stated that:

*Hurumende yokutanga muZimbabwe yakasununguka yakatungamirirwa na Va*Mugabe *kusvikira pari zvino yakasudurudza madzishe muhutongi*

The first government for independent Zimbabwe that has been led by Mr Mugabe to the present reduced chiefs' powers in their jurisdiction for a long time

hwayo kwenguva yakareba zvakakonzera kuti zvinhu zvisafamba zvakanaka munyika medu muno.

resulting in numerous challenges encountered in this country.

Tateguru Manyanga *vanotumbuka pandiri vakandionesa kuti ndiwonesane no mutungamiriri wehurumende zvinofanira kuitwa kuti pasave nematambudziko munyika.*

The Great Manyanga spirit that embodies me revealed a strategy for rectifying the problems that were rocking the nation which I had to share with the leader of government.

Mugore ra2006 ndakava nomukana wokuyambira mutungamiriri Robert Mugabe *kuti vasimudzire chivanhu nokudzorera madzishe masimba evhu nevanhu vari mumatunhu avo.*

In 2006, I had the opportunity of giving counsel to President Robert Mugabe to promote our indigious knowledge system by empowering Chiefs with authority over land and people under their jurisdiction.

*Va*Mugabe *vakatambira yambiro yandakavapa vakavimbisa kuti vaizoizadzisa zvinova ndizvo zvavakaita zvokuti kwemakore anoraudzira maviri apfuura tirikuwana rubatsiro kubva kumadzishe mukugadziridza marongerwe nematambirwe emapira emutoro mumatunhu akasiyana siyana emunyika medu muno.*
(Manyanga 31/10/10)

Mr Mugabe accepted the advice I gave him and he promised to implement it which is what he lived up to such that for over two years we have been receiving support from chiefs on our endeavour to revitalise the conduct of *mutoro* ritual ceremonies in different communities country wide.

The following day, November 1, 2010 at about 6 o'clock in the morning I interviewed Munyayi at his house number 5385 Sizinda Township in Bulawayo who also denied

me the use of technological equipment to document the proceedings of that interview for the same reasons stated earlier on by the spirit medium at the territorial shrine. In addition to affirming what was said by Tateguru Manyanga, Jenaguru Munyayi provided detailed information on the manner of conducting the two Karanga spiritual rituals: *mutoro* and *kurova guva* ceremonies as follows:

Kugomo guru kwaManyanga ndiyo nzvimbo inosangana masvikiro kana kuti mhondoro dzose dzichindopiwa mirairo nemakwara. Ndipo panopiwa mitemo yenyika yose.

The Manyanga territorial rain cave shrine is the place where all designated rain spirit mediums obtain knowledge about our (Shona/Karanga) way of life and the means of translating it to everyday life.

Mutambo wemvura ibira rokukumbira dova kuvadzimu panzvimbo yakasarudzwa rinotungamirirwa nechembere neharahwa.

A rain ceremony is a ritual that is meant to appeal for wetness from the spirits inhabiting a designated place and the ritual is facilitated by elderly men and women.

Zvinotarisirwa kuti munhu wose anoinda kumutoro unofanirwa kugonya komwedzi wose zvakare hakudiwi munhu ane mabasa aosvibisa maoko akaipa. Doro rinovambwa mumuzinda kana raibva rinosengwa nechembere vari pamwe neharahwa vakatungamirirwa nembonga.

It is expected that all who participate in *mutoro* should refrain from sex for a whole month and none with bad deeds and unclean hands is welcome. Beer is brewed in the *mutoro* custodian home and when ready for consumption elderly women in the company of elderly men led by a woman rain spirit medium *(mbonga)*[13] carrying it to the local shrine.

Mbonga munhukadzi ane mudzimu wemanaisirwe emvura. Mbonga dzinogoverwa dova dzondoita nenzira imwe chete kunzvimbo dzadzo.

Mbonga is a woman who is host to a spirit that is involved in rain making. *Mboga* are conferred with wetness which they are expected to impart likewise where they stay.

Mbonga dzinobata pamwe chete nenhume dzinova dzinosutswa nevadzimu vane zvokuita nemvura.

Mbonga work together with rain priests that are hosts to spirits that are concerned with rain.

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[13] *Mbonga* is a Karanga term for a woman rain spirit medium who does not get married anyhow, but as per the dictates of the great rain spirits *(majukwa)*.

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Bira rokudzora mudzimu rinoitwa mushure megore rinoitirwa kuti mudzimu uchengete mhuri kunyangwe usati wasutsa.	A ritual for settling the spirit that is done a year after the deceased's death is meant for the deceased spirit to take care of its siblings even if the spirit would not have established a host.
Munhu wose kana achinge arara anofanirwa kugamuchirwa novokwake kumhepo kusanganisira nepano pasi. realms.	Every deceased member should be welcomed by beings of one's lineage in both the spiritual and natural
Doro rebira ramagadziro chirevo chinoitwa kubvira pamumera kuti vasiri vedzinza vakamuke ndokuti mudzimu uwuye uri wega.	The beer for the ritual for settling the spirit of the dead is a traditional custom that is instituted at the malt stage in order to set aside the spirits that do not belong to the ancestral lineage.
Mbudzi yeshungu chiga chinoratidza kuti zviito zvomutambo zvagamuchirwa kana kuti kwete. (Munyayi 01/11/10)	The sacrificial goat is a sign that reveals whether the acts of ritual process have been accepted or not.

Tateguru Manyanga's and Jenaguru Munyayi's contributions cited above are hereunder discussed in relation to the place of *mhande* dance in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* rituals. In order for *mhande* dance performance to attain the intended union of the humans and the spirits, that is, the establishment of a ritualised space (cf. Fig. 2.4, Karanga spirituality) wherein the humans interact with their ancestral spirits (*vadzimu*). Indigenous spiritual rituals (*mapira*)[14] should be conducted in accordance with Karanga ethos (*unhu*)[15]. This means that the success of a ritual ceremony (*mutambo wechikaranga*)[16] depends on the participants allegiance to the normative values of their culture which, for the Karanga, is much the same as what Clifford Geertz appropriately outlines as a people's ethos that embraces tone, character, and quality of life; its moral and aesthetic style and mood as well as the people's underlying attitude toward themselves and their world that life reflects (1973: 127). On the understanding that *mhande* dance is only an atom of the ritual ceremonies such as *kurova guva* and *mutoro* - the tone, character and quality of life of participants is expected to be resonant with that of their ancestors - the gods who inhabit them (ibid).

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[14] *Mapira* (singular – *bira*) are Shona/Karanga spiritual rituals.
[15] *Unhu* is Shona/Karanga ethos.
[16] *Mutambo wechikaranga* is Karanga spiritual ritual ceremony.

It is important to realise that the Karanga believe that the spirit beings dwell in and among the living throughout their lives and in this way they (spirits) direct the lives of those who adhere to the counsel provided by spiritually initiated beings who are supposed to be consulted regularly. Such understanding of spiritual experience pervades many African cultures as confirmed by Jacob Olupona who through his study of *African Spirituality: Forms, Meanings and Expressions* perceives African spiritual experience as "one in which the 'divine' realm interpenetrates into the daily experience of the human person" (2000: xxiii). Among the Karanga, in instances such as sicknesses that cannot be cured by natural means which require that people seek more 'rhythm' (spiritual power) than that provided by the wisdom of the physical world, people resort to the conduct of rituals as determined through divination. Such ritual ceremonies draw together humans and spiritual beings to engage in activities that include performance of *mhande* dance as a means of intensifying the spiritual power to help attain the goal of the ceremony.

Karanga indigenous spiritual ceremonies are supposed to be led by people whose behaviour resembles the ethos of their culture. I follow Gelfand's narration of ethos that describes the ideal Shona as "humble, kind, ready to share with others and never greedy for more than is his or her due in life. He or she adheres to those time-honoured ritual observances which bind together all members of the group both living and dead" (1981: 7). To the Karanga, for example, the expected role of officiating elders at spiritual ritual ceremonies is to enforce and execute cultural conventions such as dedicating ceremonial beer to the spirits. *Mutoro* ceremonial beer (*doro remutoro*)[17] should be brewed by elderly women (*chembere*)[18] whose behaviour is not only upheld by their communities, but who no longer engage in active sexual life. It is normal practice among the Karanga that if ceremonial beer tastes sour it would have been brewed by women (*chembere*) who lacked some of the qualities expected of them resulting in a ceremony that fails to attain its goal. Sometimes rain ceremonies can also be unsuccessful due to rain spirit mediums who would have engaged in sexual life during preparations for and execution of *mutoro* rituals. It is the duty of spirit mediums participating in any Karanga indigenous spiritual ceremony to cleanse

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[17] *Doro remutoro* is *mutoro* ceremonial beer.

[18] *Chembere* means elderly woman or women who no longer lead an active sexual life.

(*kupfupira*)[19] musical instruments, that is, drums (*ngoma*)[20] and leg gourd rattles (*magagada*) prior to the commencement of any ceremony. This is done in order to ensure that the musicians manipulate the instruments as directed by the ancestral spirits being appealed to in order that they (spirits) are attracted by the music.

By way of crystallizing the issues discussed in the foregoing paragraph, it may be deduced that the relationship between Karanga cultural values as part of the inner aspects of life embedded in ritual and its explicit facets incorporating various activities that these people engage in for their survival such as brewing beer, conducting rituals and performing *mhande* dance is a vital component of Karanga spirituality (*chikaranga*). To this end, ritual does not only "regulate the most personal and intimate relations of the individual and the supernatural power" (Lewis, 1992: 21), but it also serves as "a form of cultural communication that transmits the cognitive categories and dispositions that provide people with important aspects of their sense of reality" (1997: 2).

Performance of *mhande* dance in *mutoro* and *kurova guva* ceremonies in Karanga society is conceived as an enactment of the way of life of its exponents. By describing indigenous dance as "an integral function of a society in which the form and motivation of the dance are familiar to all members of the society as a statement of their way of life" Peggy Harper (1967: 10) affirms Karanga conceptualisation of *mhande* dance. The Karanga view of life which constitutes the physical and metaphysical spheres incorporating the cognitive categories: underearth (*ivhu*)[21], things (*zvinhu*)[22], human beings (*vanhu*)[23], ethos (*unhu*) and spirit beings (*vadzimu*) is articulated through *mhande* dance song texts, drum rhythms, bodily movements in dance and gestures including the use of objects such as handheld rods (*tsvimbo*)[24] or

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[19] *Kupfupira* is to cleanse.
[20] The surface meaning of the word *ngoma* is an indigenous African musical instrument made of a carved wooden resonator with its head covered by an animal skin.
[21] *Ivhu* is spiritual power manifested through the sacredness of the ground or earth in which ancestors were buried.
[22] *Zvinhu* are things incorporating vegetation, objects, land features and animals.
[23] *Vanhu* are human beings.
[24] *Tsvimbo* is a rod used by a sibling as a symbol of spiritual authority.

half moon-shaped axes (*makano*)[25]. The empirical features of *mhande* dance that articulate the imaginary or cognitive/spiritual phenomena of life which, on the one hand can be expressed as nature symbolizing the supernatural realm by way of gestures, objects and substances that portray transcendent meanings and, on the other hand, the supernatural explaining nature through the exposition of the hidden truths by spiritually initiated mediums brings to memory part of the fieldwork experience that I acquired when Erasmus Mangwengwende appealed for assistance from Chief Patrick Nhema in my presence.

The unanticipated death of Munamba (15 November 2009), one of my chief ritual specialists, led me to decide to approach Chief Nhema then in order to assist me to accomplish another data collection trip to the Matonjeni shrine that I had planned with Munamba prior to his death. On 12 December 2009, I visited Chief Nhema and after exchanging greetings with him I shared my sympathy for the loss of one of his rain priests, Munamba. I then proceeded to update him on the research work Munamba and I had accomplished before I went on to inform him about the outstanding plan of revisiting the territorial rain shrine; thus, I was in pursuit of his assistance to escort me to the shrine. The chief readily accepted my request and we were agreed to undertake the trip in July 2010. It was at that juncture when our conversation was interjected by one of the Chief's aides who came to announce the arrival of Mangwengwende who sought some audience with the Chief. Since I had worked with the Chief before when gathering data for my master's research, he authorised me to be a part of his village court and urged me to join in the hearing of Mangwengwende's case which he (Chief) presumed could inform my portraiture of Karanga culture.

After welcoming Mangwengwende, the Chief instructed him to outline the intention of his visit. Mangwengwende explained that he had since ventured into gold mining somewhere close to Dzikamidzi village in Shurugwi District over a period of six months following his acquisition of a prospectus license from the relevant government department. He also reported that before he commenced his project he approached the sub-chief of the area where his mine prospect was located in order to announce his business intentions. When he was informed by some of the fellow

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[25] *Makano* (singular – *gano*) are half moon-shaped axes that symbolize the weapons used to overcome evil spirits.

miners that the process leading to the receipt of permission to operate a mine from the custodian of the land, that is, the Chief could perhaps take him up to six months before he could get started, he decided to circumvent the it by bribing the sub-chief who welcomed the move to his personal benefit. The expedited permission enabled Mangwengwende to recruit his staff and subsequently commence work on his mining site.

While the prospecting that Mangwengwende carried out had shown that there was a lot of gold deposit at his site, about six months labour of non-productive excavation was not only suggestive of the imminent collapse of his mining venture, but such a demise also drove his employees to try and safeguard their jobs by advising him to divine the cause of failure of his enterprise. This challenge of investing without return left Mangwengwende with no option except to approach diviners to reveal to him the plight of his business. After consulting three diviners all of who explained his failed attempt as a sign (*chiga*)[26] signifying that the owner of the wealth, God (*Mwari*) together with owners of the land (*ivhu*) who are the spirits (*vadzimu*) and the guardian of the land (*mambo*); Chief Nhema in this case were unaware of his presence in the place he had invaded and hence could not release the wealth that was reserved for its rightful beneficiaries. Mangwengwende accepted the diviners' interpretation of his misfortune and he then gathered the courage to correct his misdeed by submitting to the Chief and adhere to whatever counsel he would receive in order to enable him to pursue his proposed project.

As I listened to Mangwengwende's story my mind flashed back to the conversation between Chief Nhema and the rain spirits at the Matonjeni cave shrine that I witnessed during the fieldwork for my masters research in 2004 (Rutsate 2007: 33 – 34) in which the Chief pleaded with the spirits to guarantee the sacredness of things that sustain human life. Chief Nhema presented his plea through a prayer (*kuvika*)[27] which was subsequently answered by the rain priests as follows:

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[26] *Chiga* (plural – *zviga*) is a misfortune that manifests itself in form of a sign for a ritual (*bira*).
[27] *Kuvika* is Karanga prayer to *Mwari* by way of the rain spirits (*majukwa*).

Ndanga ndichikumbirawo zvakare
kuti muite kuti vanhu vanditeerere
pave nokugarisana kwakanaka
mudunhu mangu.

Again, I am asking you to ensure that people submit to my authority in order that there is harmony in my district.

Itaivo kuti zvirehwa rehwa zvaiveko
makare kare zvionekwe nhasi uno kuti
vanhu vagoona nokunzwisisa simba
renyu pamwe nokukuremekedzai.
(Nhema 19/11/04)

Ascertain that the mysteries of the past manifest in the present such that people can experience and understand your power and venerate you.

The spirit's voice from the rocks responded to Chief Nhema's appeal in these remembered statements:

Nhema ndafadzwa nokuti unoziva
kunobva simba rohutongi hwako
zvichisanganisira kuchengetedzwa
pamwe nokuyananiswa kwevanhu
vaunotonga.

Nhema, I am pleased to learn that you know where the authority of your rule comes from together with the protection and harmony of the people under your jurisdiction.

Chienda zvako ufambe zvakanaka
uchiziva kuti mutoro wako uchareruswa

You can travel back safely knowing that your concerns will be addressed.

(Matonjeni spirit's voice, Fiednotes 19/11/04)

Chief Nhema's remarks on Mangwengwende's ordeal indicating that the spirits were restoring order in his community by bringing an awareness of the rhythm of life incorporating ritual to people who tend to take spiritual matters for granted echoed what was promised by the Matonjeni cave shrine spirits. In his own words, the Chief contented:

Nhoroondo yawandipira inoratidza
kuti wakadzidza kuti ivhu rine simba
nokuti waratidza kuti uri mumwe
appears
wevanhu vanga vasingaremekedzi
chivanhu chedu kusvikira dimikira
rokuti "kuyeuka bako wanaiwa
nemvura" rakazadzikiswa pauri.

The detailed narration of your venture has shown that you have since learnt that earth wields power since it

to me that you are one of those people who do not adhere to our traditional values to an extent that you realised its importance and apprehended it after you had fallen into trouble just as the Shona idiom goes " you recognize the shelter after it has rained on you".

Saka vakuru vakati "ndambakuudzwa
wakaonekwa nembonje pahuma". Ini
ndochiwedzera mafundufwa ako
nokukuripisa pakukanganisira ivhu

This is the reason our forebears proverbially put it "one who does not adhere to cultural conventions will be identified by scars on one's forehead".

kwawakaita kuitira kuti ndigokuparurira I now exacerbate your storms of life
nzira yokugadzirisa zvinokutambudza. by charging you for ill- treating the
spirits who own the land you
exploited so that I will disclose to
you the way to address your problem.

(Nhema 15/12/09)

The fine that Mangwengwende was expected to pay comprised a cow or ox (*mombe*) and two goats (*mbudzi mbiri*). Furthermore, he was supposed to provide the necessary requirements for organizing a ritual (*bira*) incorporating grain (*zviyo*) for producing malt, firewood for brewing beer (*huni dzokubikisa doro*) and snuff for the spirits (*fodya yavakuru*)[28]. The ceremony would serve to appease and appraise the spirits on proposed developments that are intended to sustain the life of the community members. For such a ritual, the venue of the ceremony would be the home of the Chief. It was also explained that it was at such a ritual where one of the goats and the cow/ox that would have been part of the fine were to be slaughtered as sacrificial animals. Participants would also engage in *mhande* dance performance to entice the spirits to possess their mediums in order that the designated embodied medium would give Mangwengwende counsel on normative values that would guide his operations. Chief Nhema explained that it is imperative to conduct a ritual prior to the commencement any mining venture in the area of his jurisdiction so that the proprietors are not only officially introduced to the owners of the mineral wealth deposits, but also that they, with the Chief's blessing, receive the authoritative message from the ancestral spirits to commence their mining activities. To this end, ritual is a means of evading risks such as loss of money and the despair caused by a dream that was nearly shattered as experienced by Mangwengwende. In support of this idea, Malidoma Some says, "The appeal to the ancestors through ritual is based on an understanding that catastrophe happens when you fail to seek their guidance" (1998: 150). By this, it can be argued that among the Karanga, ancestors (*vadzimu*) are the fountain of their siblings' philosophy of life (*chivanhu*)[29] and since this ontology is aurally transmitted, ritual (*bira*) becomes the avenue and *mhande* dance the doorway to the facts of life.

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[28] *Fodya yavakuru* is snuff for ancestors.
[29] *Chivanhu* is Shona/Karanga cosmology.

Chief Nhema's use of the idiom *'ivhu rine simba'* (earth wields power) cited above in his description of Mangwengwende's demise is a common expression among the Karanga who believe that their ancestors do not only have power over everything on and beneath the earth, but they also have dominion over the lesser and/or evil spirits. In his book *Africa's Three Religions*, Godfrey Parrinder, on the one hand, argues that land is generally sacred because it belongs to ancestors (1969: 53), and on the other, "African thought sees different powers in the world, not just as dynamism spread over the earth like jam. The powers differ among themselves, divine and human, good and evil" (ibid: 26). Thus Karanga thought is in line with Parrinder's contention of the existence of varying powers (*masimba*) of natural phenomena, and their (Karanga) reliance on ritual reflects on their desire to be endowed with dynamic power from their ancestors so that they can deal with situations over which they have no power. Performance of *mhande* dance in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies is a typical example the execution of this dynamism.

While *mhande* performers may have the energy to execute the different activities of the dance, their performance can never become dynamic enough to unlock the door to the spiritual realm unless they (performers) surrender their bodies to the spirits (*vabvutwa*) which will enforce and spiritualise the performance. The idea of *kubvutwa*[30] implies that once a performer gets empowered by the spirit s/he "crosses the threshold into another state of being" (Hanna 1988: 286). This means that ritual ceremonies (*mapira*) are meant for the spirits to embody their spiritual siblings in order that they (siblings) articulate actions that require the physical bodies and in return their hosts (spirits) enjoy the privilege of riding on the power of their guests. Such reciprocity of body with power is attainable through performance of *mhande* dance which, in this study, has been investigated with regards to its efficacy and symbolism.

1.6 Location of research

The field research for this thesis was conducted among the rural Karanga of Shurugwi District in the Midlands Province and also with two Karanga rain spirit mediums: the great grand spirit medium, Tateguru Manyanga who resides at Mabwe adziva or

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[30] *Kubvutwa* is the act of humans getting hooked onto spirit beings.

Zame territorial rain shrine in Matabeleland South Province in Zimbabwe and her aide, Jenaguru Munyanyi who stays in the city of Bulawayo.

Fig. 1.2 Research location   [Extract from Makawa 1985: 6]

The proximity of Shurugwi District to my residence in Gweru, the capital city of the Midlands Province is one among the reasons I chose the District as my research site. The other major reason that supported this choice is that through the research for my master's degree I had since established some rapport with some of the consultants with who I continued to work and solicit data for this study. Verification of information on Karanga indigenous knowledge system (*chikaranga*) embodied in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ritual practices and concretised through *mhande* dance performance was done by cross checking the data gathered from Shurugwi consultants with that provided by Jenaguru Munyayi[31] and Tateguru Manyanga[32] who represent the definitive source of Karanga cultural knowledge.

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[31] Jenaguru Munyayi is a rain spirit medium who serves as an aide to the guardian spirit medium, Tateguru Manyanga who resides at the Manyanga territorial rain shrine named after her.

[32] Tateguru Manyanga is the current guardian spirit medium residing at the Manyanga territorial rain shrine. Presently, she is facilitating the revitalization of the conduct of *mutoro* rain ceremonies country wide.

As informed by the master's research that I carried out in Shurugwi District in the Midlands Province and also at the Matonjeni territorial rain shrine in Matabeleland South Province in Zimbabwe - which areas constitute the same sites for the research of this study - the major reason for locating this study on the inhabitants of these areas has been that they are among the majority rural Karanga who have perpetuated their cultural practices which include performance of *mhande* dance in its original contexts of the *kurova guva* and the *mutoro* ceremonies. What makes the rural setting conducive for *mhande* dance to enhance the attainment of the goals of the ceremonies are factors such as the abundant supply of grain and clay pots for brewing ceremonial beer; the availability of people with prescribed qualities to brew beer, oversee the shrines, officiate and invoke spirits; the provision of appropriate venues such as shrines and kitchen huts; equipment including drums, gourd rattles and objects, as well as *mhande* master musicians who know how to appease spirits.

1.7 Research ritual specialists

The chief ritual specialists for this study comprised: the late Chief Patrick Nhema (died 17 January 2010); the late Cuthbert Munamba (died 15 November 2009) - rain spirit medium, diviner, healer and *mhande* master musician; Etwell Marecha - the rain spirit medium, diviner, healer, herbalist and *mhande* master musician (*nyanzvi yemhande*[33] or *mudzani wemhande*)[34]; Christopher Pasvani - a proponent of Karanga indigenous culture; Mrs (Mbuya) Sarudzayi Nhema - a Karanga culture bearer; Mrs (Mai) Sesedzai Munamba - an officiating elder; Matigimu Pepukaimose Chivenge - a *kurova guva* mentor; Elliot Machando - a *mhande* dancer; Tateguru Manyanga - the great spirit medium at the territorial rain shrine as well as a spirit medium and one of Manyanga's aides - Jenaguru Munyayi. Not all pictures of the ritual specialists that were consulted appear in this thesis[35]. The ones presented hereunder are for those who granted me permission to include their images in my documentation.

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[33] *Nyanzvi yemhande* is a *mhande* master musician who is heavily relied upon for the success of a ritual ceremony.
[34] *Mudzani wemhande* is a mhande adept.
[35] The consultants whose pictures are not included in this section were not willing to have their photographs inserted in any form of documentation.

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Fig. 1.3 Mr Cuthbert Munamba

(Rain spirit medium, diviner,
healer and master musician)

Fig. 1.4 Mr Matigimu P Chivenge

(Karanga cultural bearer and *mhande* adept)

Fig. 1.5 Mrs Sesedzai Munamba
(Officiating elder and *mhande*
adept)

Fig. 1.6 Mr Etwell Marecha
(Rain spirit medium, diviner, healer,
and master musician)

The data that constituted this portrait of Karanga culture embraced wide ranging information provided by spiritual ritual specialists from different orientations. Chief Nhema offered me the opportunities and information that reflected on his role as the custodian of Karanga cultural heritage which is often articulated through ritual ceremonies that are constantly held in different communities in his district. On behalf of his deceased father, the Acting Chief Gilbert Dhaidhai Nhema (eldest son) also assisted by connecting me to Etwell Marecha (cf Appendix I, DVD Video 1 clip 2 – 02:06). Marecha subsequently accompanied the Acting Chief and me to Mabwe adziva territorial rain shrine on 30 October 2010 where we had some audience with

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Jenaguru Munyayi and Tateguru Manyanga. The two spirit mediums (*masvikiro*): Cuthbert Munamba (cf Appendix I DVD Video 1 clip 1 – 02:17, 20:42) and Etwell Marecha (cf Appendix II Video 2) supplied detailed explanations on the structures of *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies in general as well as the configuration of *mhande* dance in particular. Their descriptions of *mhande* dance incorporated extra-musical ideas such as divination, symbolism and efficacy of dance gestures, use of objects and the two states of being: trance (*kunyaunywa*)[36] and possession (*kusvikirwa*)[37] that are brought to bear by the power of *mhande* dance which fosters spirit possession as the ultimate goal of the conduct of the ritual ceremonies.

Christopher Pasvani, Matigimu Chivenge, Mbuya Nhema and Mai Munamba provided data on Karanga cultural knowledge that informs and directs rituals (*mapira*). The information supplied by these ritual specialists together with the spirit mediums contributions was framed in Jenaguru Munyayi's and Tateguru Manyanga's expositions of Shona/Karanga view of reality as enshrined in spiritual rituals and enacted through performance of *mhande* dance.

1.8 Data collection, presentation and analysis

Comprehensive information about *mhande* dance contextualised in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ritual ceremonies was mainly gathered from the ritual specialists identified under Section 1.7 above through interviews and participant observation. With particular reference to data collection, two major challenges that I encountered comprise the identification of specialists and accessibility to documentation of data. I established that among the ritual specialists that were recommended to me during the initial investigative stage of this study were some who lacked the vocabulary to talk about the dance they thoroughly enjoyed and proficiently performed. There also were some who interpreted the *mutoro* and *kurova guva* ritual practices often through the use of modern language instead of Karanga technical vocabulary that resounds with *mhande* song texts. Faced with the challenge of identifying ritual specialists with appropriate discourse for interpreting *mhande* dance, I devised a plan of conducting preliminary interviews and participating in casual dialogue on indigenous ritual

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[36] *Kunyaunywa* is a state of being whereby the humans or siblings emotionally experience the spirits inhabiting their bodies.

[37] *Kusvikirwa* is a state of being whereby spirit mediums are embodied by their guest spirits.

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practices incorporating performance of *mhande* dance in order to come up with the specialists who I ultimately provided data for this study.

Depending on consultants' preferences, the strategies I employed in capturing data through interviews and observation of *mhande* dance performances ranged from use of video and audio equipment to fieldnote making. For example, Cuthbert Munamba, Etwell Marecha and Matigumu Chivenge were quite open to the utilisation of both print and electronic forms of documentation in soliciting data from them while on the contrary, Jenaguru Munyayi and Tateguru Manyanga shied away from audio and video documentation on grounds of their spiritual convictions and cultural conventions.

Following my futile attempt to video document *mhande* dance performance, particularly the spirit possession stage of the *mutoro* rain ceremony held in the evening of 29 October 2010 at Munyayi's home, I went on to inquire with Tateguru Manyanga (30/10/10) on what could have caused my video camera to fall to the ground and got damaged. In her response to my inquiry, Tateguru Manyanga said:

Kubvira panguva iyo vadzimu vakaona kuti mitambo yokukumbira mvura yakange isingachaitwe nemazvo vakatizivisa kuti timbomisa kutapwa kwemitambo iyoyi kusvika zvinhu zvazogadzikana.	Ever since the ancestral spirits observed that the conduct of the rain ceremonies was no longer in line with Shona/Karanga ethos they instructed us (guardian spirits) to stop the capturing of rain rituals up to a point when the ceremonies are revitalised.
Shoko iri ranga risati rapararira nokuti ndiri mushshsi rokukokorodza madziShe pamwe nemanyusa avo kuti vauye pano pamuzinda mukuru wemvura tivape dzidziso iyo vanozondopakurira kuruzhinji rwevanhu vemumatunhu avo.	This instruction has not yet been well disseminated because I am in the process of gathering chiefs and their rain spirit mediums to to gather at the territorial shrine To receive counsel they will take to their districts.

Manyanga (Fieldnotes: 30/10/10)

Having been informed about the latest developments regarding the state of affairs of the conduct of the *mutoro* ceremony, I sought advice on what I could do with the little footage of the *mutoro* ceremony which I had covered with minimum success and Tateguru Manyanga replied:

Tinozviziva kuti vana magara mune misikanzwa zvokuti kunyangwe vangu vanonditora mapikicha kunyangwe vachizviziva kuti midziyo yavo inofa. Ndinoti wakasununguka kushandisa chaunenge wakwanisa kusara nacho senzira yekupa yambiro kune vamwe vanenge vasina ruzivo rwezviera era zvemadzitateguru emitoro.

We are aware of your mischief since I also have children who photograph me even if they know Their cameras will be damaged. I advise that you use whatever you salvaged which is meant for those without knowledge and experience of the sacredness of everything linked to ancestral rain spirts.

(Manyanga - Fieldnotes: 30/10/10)

The bit that I managed to retain of the footage of the *mutoro* ceremony held at Munyayi's home is incorporated in Appendix II (cf DVD Paper Edit Video 1 clip 2 – 09:00 and 12:20).

In instances when I established that I could not obtain adequate information on certain aspects of the targeted rituals and dance through formal interviews, I resorted to spending time with the spirit mediums, particularly Munamba and Marecha who, in the course of our discussions, would share with me what their guest spirits would have revealed to them often through dreams. This explains why some of the quotations contained in this thesis are not part of the videos that I produced from the footages I made during the formal interviews that I conducted with the research consultants.

The interviews and observations carried out on my field trips provide comprehensive detail on the processes and conduct of *kurova guva* and *mutoro* rituals as well as the emic interpretations of the meaning and the purpose of *mhande* dance. The wide range of Karanga technical vocabulary for describing the two ritual ceremonies and the *mhande* dance concept which appears in this thesis is a preferred way of firmly anchoring the thesis from the perspective of Karanga language and dance adherents. In addition to transcribing the aural to written text of technical terms for explaining Karanga indigenous musical art – *mhande*, I produced three DVDs (cf. Appendix I and II Video I clip 1 running time 22:20; Video I clip 2 – 15:10, and Video 2 – 24:32) accompanying this thesis which contain some of the spoken terminologies for the cultural interpretation of the dance exponents' traditional musical practices.

My analysis of the empirically gathered data involved the editing of video footage, textual representations of audio transcriptions, translation of Karanga explanations into English and the interpretations of the ritual specialists exposition of *mhande* dance which constitute the author's fieldnotes. It is through fieldnotes that I also was able to represent my thoughts about what I observed and perceived of the two ritual practices. Barz proposed method of writing footnotes to indicate various voices in the field influenced my analytical interpretation of *mhande* dance. Gregory Barz states "Writing notes in the field is a much more interactive process, mediating between experience and interpretation and between preconception and reflection (Barz 1997: 49). Video documented interviews were conducted in Karanga and translations are found in the subtitles. The mode of qualitative data analysis that dominates this research necessitated the triangulation of data from interviews; observations and related literature review in order to validate the reliability of my interpretation of *mhande* dance.

1.9 Conclusion

It could be assumed – without knowledge about the level at which one interacts with and the intricacies involved in accessing the hidden knowledge of a given culture – that prior to this study I would have developed a deep understanding of *mhande* dance since it is the indigenous musical art that has been part and parcel of my life since birth. It is my search for and ability to speak Karanga language that has enabled the construction of the thesis which extends ethnographic knowledge and discussion around the engendered spirit dance and exposed the wisdom encapsulated in it. My engagement of the chief, spirit mediums, diviners, spiritual ritual officiating elders, *mhande* master musicians and other elderly culture bearers as ritual specialists to the fieldwork for this research has made it possible for me to develop a clear understanding of *mhande* dance as Karanga cultural knowledge. As such, my interpretation of *mhande* dance as an efficacious and symbolic enactment of Karanga epistemology begins with a discussion of Karanga cosmology from an ethnomusicological perspective, which constitutes Chapter 2 of this thesis. Karanga cosmology is embedded in and articulated through spiritual rituals; most common among them being the *kurova guva* and the *mutoro* as described in Chapter 3. Incorporated in these rituals is *mhande* dance which offers the experiential dimension

of the cultural knowledge. My interpretation of *mhande* dance is therefore presented in three parts: definition and description; structural analysis, and meaning comprising Chapter 4, 5 and 6, respectively. Summary, conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter 7.

1.10 Glossary of Shona/Karanga terms

Bira	Shona/Karanga indigenous spiritual ritual
Bvumiro	Response melodic or rhythmic pattern
Chembere	Elderly woman or women who no longer lead an active sexual life
Chiga	A misfortune that manifests itself in form of a sign for a ritual (*bira*)
Chikaranga	A Karanga equivalent for spirituality or epistemology
Chinyakare	Traditional practice
Chivanhu	Shona/Karanga cosmology
Doro	Beer
Doro rechikaranga	Karanga spiritual ceremonial beer
Doro remutoro	*Mutoro* ceremonial beer
Fodya	Snuff
Fodya yavakuru	Snuff for ancestors
Fuko	Spiritual beings attire worn by embodied mediums
Gano/humbwa	(Plural – *makano/humbwa*) Half moon-shaped handheld axe symbolizing the weapon used to overcome evil spirits
Huze yomutoro	Custodian for *mutoro* ceremonies for a community or district
Inzwi	Sonorous sound or voice
Ivhu	Spiritual power manifested through the ground in which ancestors were buried
Jukwa	Great rain spirit medium who resides at territorial shrine
Kubvumira	Response
Kuvhunzira	Seeking divine counsel from spiritually initiated diviners
Kubvutwa	Act of humans getting hooked onto the spirits
Kudandaura	Quality drumming that lures the spirits
Kudzana	Dancing
Kudzora mudzimu mumusha	Bringing the deceased's spirit back home

Kuimba	Singing
Kukayana	Alternation
Kukonya	Interrogation of a possessed spirit medium to identify itself
Kukumikidza	Dedication
Kunyaunywa	State of being whereby the humans or siblings emotionally experience spirits inhabiting their bodies
Kunzwanana	Coordination
Kuparura	Initiate
Kupfupira	To cleanse
Kuridza ngoma	Drumming
Kuringira	Alertness
Kurova guva	A ritual meant to settle the spirit of the deceased
Kushaura	Lead singing
Kusvikirwa	State of being in whereby the spirit mediums are embodied by their guest spirits
Kutsinhira	Interlocking
Kuturura	Ensnaring
Kuvhuramira	*Mhande* dance posture where the body is slightly bent forward by the waist
Kuvika	Prayer to *Mwari* by way of the great rain spirits (*majukwa*)
Kuvirutsa	Inciting performers though acts such as ululations
Madzaniro	Manner of dancing
Madzikirira	Obstruction or interference
Magagada	Gourd rattles worn on dancers' feet when performing *mhande* dance
Maimbiro	Manner of singing
Majukwa	(Singular – *jukwa*) Great rain spirit mediums that reside at territorial shrine
Manyusa	District/community rain spirit mediums who advise chiefs on matters of rain
Mapa	Community rain shrine
Mapira	Shona/Karanga spiritual ritual ceremonies

Maridzire engoma	Manner of drumming
Mashavi	Alien spirits
Masvikiro	Spirit mediums
Mbavarira	*Mhande* music
Mbonga	A woman rain spirit medium who does not get married anyhow, but as per the dictates of the great rain spirits (*majukwa*)
Mbudzi yeshungu deceased	Sacrificial goat for the wrong the siblings did to the prior to the settling of the spirit
Mhande	The enacted voice of Karanga epistemology
Mhepo	Spirit being
Mudzimu	Ancestral spirit
Munhu	Human being
Mutambi	Dancer
Mutambo	Ceremony
Mutambo wechikaranga	Shona/Karanga spiritual ritual ceremony
Mutoro	A rain making ritual which is normally conducted once a year
Mwari Creator	A Karanga word for the Supreme Being, God the
N'anga	Diviner/traditional healer
Ngoma	An indigenous African musical instrument made of a carved wooden resonator with head covered by animal skin
Ngoma	A constellation of *mhande* dance features that have the power to lure ancestral spirits
Ninga	Hidden/hiding place
Njuzu	Water spirits or spirit beings who live under water
Nyanzvi yzemhande	*Mhande* master musician who is heavily relied upon for the success of the ritual ceremony incorporating the dance
Mudzani wemhande	Mhande adept
Shauro	Song leadership
Simba	Spiritual poer or force

Svikiro/homwe	Spirit medium
Tsika	Traditional practice
Tsvimbo	A rod used by a sibling as a symbol of spiritual authority
Tsinhiro	Interlocking
Unhu	Shona/Karanga ethos
Zvidavado	Dancers improvisations
Zviga	Misfortunes
Zvikamu	(Singular – *chikamu*) Ritual events
Zvinhu	Things incorporating vegetation, animals, objects and land features
Zvirehwa rehwa	Mysteries or mysterious happenings

CHAPTER 2

SHONA/KARANGA MUSICALITY: AN ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL VIEW

2.1 Introduction

The Shona in general and the Karanga in particular conceive music in a holistic way such that singing, instrument playing and dancing performed in a given context constitute their musical art. This means that my account of Shona/Karanga musicality is interdisciplinary. It is worth clarifying that by using the term 'musicality' I reference music that is fundamental to the cultural system of its exponents. For example, when *mhande* dance is considered in its indigenous contexts of the *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* ceremonies, it consists of explicit and implicit patterns symbolizing Karanga culture. The symbolic components of *mhande* dance comprise the vigorous but dignified foot movements implying honor for the ancestral spirits, the intense and intricate drumming by performers who are energized by the spirits and the calm but forceful singing depicting a kind way of summoning the spirits. Not only are these *mhande* dance acts symbolic, but they are also efficacious in that they have the power to ensnare the ancestral spirits to posses their hosts, the mediums. The effects of *mhande* dance are embedded in the dancers' foot movements, the rattling sounds of the gourd rattles (*magagada*) worn on the dancers' feet, the handclapping, the drum patterns that the spirits are acquainted with, the singing voices that resemble the voices of the ancestral spirits, the hand-held rod (*tsvimbo*) or moon-shaped axe (*humbwa* or *gano*), the snuff (*fodya yavakuru*) and the costumes (*fuko*) associated with particular spirits.

The idea of dance as a symbol of culture is candidly acknowledged by Meki Nzewi who postulates, "From the origin of a person to a person's imponderable future the human body is civilization's most poetic and aesthetic asset when it communicates in dance as a transforming, spiritualizing state of being. Africa is a goldmine of such body-poetry and body-aesthetics" (2007: 207). To this, I take the equivalence of 'Africa is a goldmine' to '*mhande ininga*' as embraced in the theory I offer for this research: *Ngoma yemhande ininga yechikaranga* (*Mhande* dance is the enacted voice of Karanga epistemology). Given that the goal of my research is to explicate *mhande*, it is inevitable that I interpret Karanga culture since the dance is, on the one hand, embedded in the culture, and on the other hand, a means by which the Karanga enact

the conceptualization of their universe. For this reason, my interpretation of *mhande* dance is a holistic study of Karanga culture. This is made possible through the use of the ethnomusicological approach to the interpretation of *mhande* with particular emphasis on Shona/Karanga musical behavior as well as the cosmological and spiritual perceptions of the musical life of the Shona/Karanga people. The discussion of Shona/Karanga musicality therefore encompasses the ethnomusicological approach to the study of music, Karanga musical behaviour, culture and identity as well as Shona/Karanga cosmology and spirituality.

2.2 Ethnomusicological approach to mhande dance interpretation

Ethnomusicology has been defined differently by different scholars. According to Timothy Rice, Merriam's definition of ethnomusicology as 'the study of music in culture' and that view even modified to 'music as culture' and 'the relationship between music and culture' has remained one of the core concepts in the discipline ever since (Rice 1987: 469). Rice himself also offered a theory of remodeling ethnomusicology which emphasizes the study of 'formative processes' in music whereby ethnomusicologists should ask and attempt to answer the question: How do people historically create and experience music? (ibid: 473). Since culture embraces many facets of human life, ethnomusicology has had to draw its approaches from many other disciplines to enable it to adequately analyze music. Thus, ethnomusicology is an interdisciplinary study of music as culture. Given that in Karanga culture, bodily movements and gestures that are considered to be a dance form of their musical behaviour are meant to express their way of life; the study of such a musical art therefore becomes an interdisciplinary study of Kaaranga musical tradition.

I believe the nature and significance of non-Western music described as: music which lives within people and articulating what matters to them (Bakan 1999: 18), is a kind of language that is culturally rooted and socially enacted, whose purpose is to convey meanings (Blacking cited by Nettl 1995: 1), and with particular reference to African music, that which is integrated with social life rather than set apart, natural rather than artificial, and deeply human in its material significance (Agawu 2003: xi), should have played a big role in shaping the discipline of ethnomusicology. Numerous

ethnomusicologists' ethnographies confirm this point. Moreover, Kay Shelemay asserts that it is in the domain of ethnographic method where ethnomusicologists alone "have most successfully and creatively occupied a disciplinary space midway between anthropology and musical scholarship" (Shelemay 2001: 2). A typical example, which resonates with this research, is that of dance ethnography. Deidre Sklar ascribes 'portrait of a people' to ethnography as its literal meaning. "To examine dance from an ethnographic perspective", Sklar expounds, "is to focus on dance as a kind of cultural knowledge. Dance ethnography depends upon the postulate that cultural knowledge is embodied in movement, especially in highly specialized and codified movement we call dance" (Sklar 1991: 6). Gay Morris profoundly sketches out the grounds for dance ethnography thus:

For excellent reasons, dance academe today is eager to site dance within interdisciplinary framework, to raise the level of dance scholarship itself by drawing on academic traditions of longer standing, and, by engaging with what is valuable to dance from other disciplines, to lessen the risk of reinventing the wheel. The major thrust of this interdisciplinarity has been towards contextual studies of dance … (Morris 1996: 15).

Drawing from Morris' contribution, dance ethnography is both an interdisciplinary and interactive approach. On the one hand, my interdisciplinary study of *mhande* dance incorporates the physical, social, intellectual, political, spiritual, psychological, and emotional dimensions of Karanga musical life, and, on the other hand, the interactive perspective consists of symbolic objects, gestures and states of being: trance (*kunyaunywa*) and total possession (*kusvikirwa*). In so doing, I intend to crystallise *mhande* dance features in order to accomplish Adrienne Kaeppler's motivation for dance ethnography:

Ethno-scientific analysis as used in anthropology seeks to analyze culture in such a way that the resulting description would be comparable to a grammar which enables an investigator to learn to speak a language. Such a description of dance would give a reader the information necessary to operate as a member of the society he is studying with regard to any activity that includes, or could include dance (Kaeppler 1972: 173).

In order to interpret *mhande* in such a way as to attain the depth of understanding of this dance in a manner Kaeppler is alluding to, I propose to adopt Margaret Drewal's offer cited by Joan Frosch that "Striving to understand indigenous categories, rather than superimposing categories of our own, leads to a potential to understand the cultural intentions of the practitioners" (1999: 250). I take Drewal's categorization to refer to the way African indigenous people conceptualize ideas and phenomena that constitute their universe from a holistic point of view, which is contrary to the Western scientific way of compartmentalization of knowledge and phenomena that comprise the exponents' worldview.

In my interpretation of *mhande* dance, I follow John Blacking's approach to ethnomusicology for three reasons: he launched his own worldview of musical culture by synthesizing ideas from many disciplines, he maintained particular interest and competence in the study of dance and ethnochoreology (Nettl 1995: viii), and his study of the music of the Venda, among them, the Karanga, is most closely related to my research. To me, Blacking's lasting heritage is accurately put across by Suzel Reily as:

Blacking genuinely believed in the power of music and he contended that people's general health depended on the musical opportunities made available to them. For this reason, he placed great importance on ethnomusicology, the discipline that investigates the way in which different societies around the world organize their musical activities and the impact of these diverse alternatives on the people involved in them (Reily 2006: 1).

Directly linked with Blacking's belief in the power of music in enabling people to lead comfortable lives is the hypothesis of my research: to investigate *mhande* dance gestures that make possible the achievement of the goals of the *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* ceremonies, that is, the receipt of rain and the settling of the spirit of the dead, respectively.

2.3 Karanga musical behavior: A biography of Simon Muzenda's musical life

The musical life of the late Simon Muzenda, presented hereunder, is representative of what I consider to be the musical behavior that informs my discussion of Shona/Karanga musical culture. Mr. Muzenda, Zimbabwe's first Vice President who died in August 2003, was a Karanga by descent, who never had the opportunity to receive any formal classes in music. He lived a life that I categorize into three main episodes: first, the earlier part comprising a strong rural background endowed with his exposure to and participation in performance of *mhande* dance in its indigenous ritual contexts; second, the middle part constituting a solitary life as a political prisoner divorced from indigenous musical practice in community following which he joined the battle of waging the war of liberation from Zambia and Mozambique, and the third and final phase of a cosmopolitan and presidium. Mr. Muzenda, nicknamed *Mudhara* (old man) Mzee and popularly known as Comrade (Cde) Mzee, occasioned an enduring legacy of living a Karanga indigenous musical life by constantly engaging the people gathered at the various socio-political occasions he graced in *mhande* dance performance. In his summary of Ngwabi Bhebe's comprehensive outline of Muzenda's contributions to Zimbabwean culture and the arts, Nhamo Mhiripiri says:

> The old man, who is remembered by most Zimbabweans for his love for song and dance, saved himself during the defense when he sang a traditional song in court that also contained the controversial word *"Pfumojena"* (white spear). For Muzenda, art, dance, and culture are not neutral but could be used to provide the nationalist movement with solid background and underpinnings in order to win the hearts and minds of the African people (2009: 93).

Pfumojena is a *mhande* war song that was composed and sung during the time Zimbabwe was colonized by the British. In much the same way as the old man used the song to defend his case in court, *Pfumojena* was sung as an appeal to the ancestral spirits for their intervention in the fight against the enemy. Muzenda had to win the hearts and minds of the prosecutors, legal practitioners and judges by way of the ancestors who he incited through the music of their creation. It can therefore be argued that Cde Mzee ostensibly exploited his lived experience of the power of song and dance, and equally, ritual in providing solutions to life's problems.

In addition to performing *mhande* dance at political rallies and other ceremonies which he officiated, Muzenda would also ritualize all such occasions by involving custodians of indigenous culture, in their rank and file, that is, chiefs, diviners and officiating elders, in the organization and administration of the code named 'Mzee rallies and/or functions', all of which became very popular and well attended. When interviewed by Bhebe in 1999, he confessed his firm value for and reliance on ritual through his narration on how he convinced spirit mediums to board a plane from Zambia to Mozambique during Zimbabwe's war of liberation by saying:

We told them that it would be wise to appease the ancestors so that they could board the plane and when we get to Tete (in Mozambique) we would brew beer and persuade our ancestors to bless the trip, by telling them that they boarded the plane against their wishes .... They knew that I was a Rozvi descendent, who was supposed to know that boarding a plane was against the will of traditional spirits. I agreed with them but claimed that it was possible to ask the permission of the ancestors to do the normally forbidden things (Bhebe 2004:202).

> Muzenda is a descendent of the great Rozvi dynasties of the *moyo/moyondizvo* that are reputed to have ruled over precolonial Zimbabwe and built the legendary Great Zimbabwe Monuments (Mhiripiri, 2009: 85). To the Shona/Karanga, asking the spirits to provide counsel or rather, divination is the primary event of a ritual process and as such, it is common practice among people who live in rural communities as well as the cosmopolitans because these people encounter similar life challenging problems.

Following Muzenda's death in August 2003, the launch of the first two Zimbabwe government organized national rituals (*mapira*), namely, the Mzee Commemoration *Bira* in 2004 and *Bira reNyika reMvura* (National Rain Ritual) in 2005, has borne testimony of the effectuality of Cde Mzee's ability to design and use ritual as a vehicle for addressing the challenges of life. The idea of crafting ritual serves the purpose which Malidoma Some plainly states, "Ritual offers the opportunity to relieve a tension from which words can no longer release us. Perhaps a great number of social issues can be resolved not by creating more institutions but creating more rituals tailored to suit them" (1998:161). It is therefore vital to consider the extent to which the government designed rituals may have assisted the participants to realize the normative value of ritual.

The first Mzee *Bira*, held in August 2004, that is, a year after his death, and spearheaded by the then Minister of Information and Publicity in the President's Office, Professor Jonathan Moyo, was an overnight event that was held in Ascot Stadium in the Midlands Province capital city, Gweru. It drew together indigenous music and dance performers representing different ethnic groups of people in Zimbabwe, top government officials including the then Governor of the Midlands Province, Cephas Msipa, chiefs and many other people. The *Bira* resembled the *kurova guva* ceremony in three respects: its timing of at least a year after the death of the person for which the ritual is held; its duration which is the same as the all night event of the *kurova guva* ritual, and the performance of indigenous music. However, these three components of the ritual are entities that require more dimensions that enable the luring of spirits to inhabit the ceremony and empower it to accomplish the desired goal of resolving issues affecting the well-being of the participants. The commemoration ceremony, which I attended since it was held in Gweru my home city, was a mere social gathering where the audience listened to eulogies juxtaposed with performance of indigenous music. Most probably, as a result of people's failure to have their spiritual desires met by this *Bira*, subsequent annual Mzee *Biras*, which were renamed Galas, took the form of commercialized entertainment featuring popular music artists. In this regard, the name Mzee was retained as a marketing strategy since Muzenda had a passion for music, especially indigenous musical art.

In his attempt to forestall the drought that had hit the nation over the previous two consecutive agricultural seasons, President Robert Mugabe, in 2005, declared that a National Rain Ritual, *Bira reNyika reMvura* be held on a given date in all the cities, towns and districts in the country. The effects of the drought were also exacerbated by the state's economy that was sharply declining. This one and only national rain ritual did not produce the desired result of receipt of rain nationwide. Nonetheless, since this national rain ceremony was not meant to take the place of the annual rain ceremonies that had always been conducted at community levels across the country, some isolated communities, among them, Shurugwi District continued to hold rain rituals (*mitoro*) that culminated in receipt of rain and production of grain that was often enough to assist in supplementing government efforts to feed the nation.

Drawing from the biography of Muzenda's musical life, I can adjudge that he perceived music in ritual context as a means of both articulating culture and sustaining life. He mirrored his view of music as an enactment of indigenous Karanga culture characterized by aspects such as respect for and adherence to counsel from community leaders, that is, chiefs, diviners and elders who officiate at rituals; conceiving the past as determining the present and the future; reliance on use of ritual and in particular, music as a means of solving life threatening problems, and a holistic regard of indigenous knowledge enshrined in ritual as experienced reality of the fusion of practice and theory, body and mind as well as the natural and the spiritual realms. Such may be the exponent's definition of music from which I extort the cultural dimensions portrayed in Shona/Karanga musical practice. These dimensions are discussed in detail under the headings: Shona/Karanga culture, cosmology and spirituality.

2.4 Shona/Karanga culture

My discussion of Shona/Karanga culture is framed in dance because the Karanga use dances to enact their way of life. By dance I mean spiritual ritual dance such as *mhande* which constitutes singing, instrument playing, handclapping, ululation and dancing. This dance is used to ensnare ancestral spirits to assist the human beings to manage the challenges of life over which they (humans) have no power to deal with. Ritual dance which is thoroughly discussed in chapter 3 and herein after referred to as dance, is as diverse a concept as culture. To this, Sally Ness posits, "Dance presents the analyst of human movement with a distinctive opportunity for cultural study, given the content of its choreographic symbolism" (2004: 124).

The content of the choreographic symbolism of *mhande*, which is analyzed in Chapter 5 incorporates both the tangible and intangible dimensions of the dance. The analysis of the dance also embraces the philosophical underpinnings of the content of this dance as inferred through the participants' descriptive statements of *mhande*. This implies that *mhande* gestures have transcendent meaning. Thus the dance articulates Karanga culture because its empirical features symbolize the norms, values and belief of the social actors. Since there is no Shona word that is an equivalent of the English

term culture, my discussion of Shona culture therefore begins with an attempt at defining this concept, culture.

A review of selected definitions of culture that have been offered between the 1940s and the post-colonial period by scholars from different academic orientations incorporating anthropology, sociology and ethnomusicology is merged with dance ethnographic narratives in order not only to situate Shona/Karanga dance in the scholarly debate on culture, but also to locate Karanga culture in the ethnomusicological viewpoint of dance ethnography that resounds with Karanga conceptualization of life.

2.4.1 Culture/dance definition

Culture is an English term that has been derived from the Latin word *cultura*. In all its early uses, culture was taken for a noun for the process of the tending of crops and animals (Williams, 1983: 87). Cassell's Latin-English Dictionary portrays *cultura* generally as agriculturally inclined though it also has been given meanings referred to by terms such as cultivation, mental culture, reverence and respect (1944: 145). This way of analyzing culture from two main perspectives: practical (activity) and theoretical (mental) tends to reflect on the Western scientific thought of the separation of body and mind. Contrary to this is the non-Western holistic view not only of thought and human body, but also of the fusion of the visible and invisible worlds, which, among the Karanga, is articulated through dance. This truism appears to be strongly affirmed by Philip Bohlman and Bruno Nettl who contend:

> To John Blacking, music conveys everything but itself. If musical structures per se are non-referential, then their meanings cannot be found in "scientific" musical analysis, but only in the constructions that people put upon them within particular social and cultural milieus. That this idea has become established as a fundamental precept of the discipline today is largely the result of Blacking's insistence that it should be, and it is the greater part of his enduring legacy to ethnomusicology that its practitioners nowadays take it as axiomatic that musics are special kinds of symbol systems and special kinds of social actions which people use to communicate and make sense of their worlds (1995: 26).

As a current ethnomusicologist and dance ethnographer, I uphold Blacking's enduring legacy by delineating *mhande* dance in the *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* ceremonies.

Mhande dance is social action in much the same way as agriculture, from which the word culture has been derived, is a human activity. This makes the human body that produces actions be subjected to social and cultural research. Thus, Helen Thomas says, "The body is both marked by culture and 'speaks' of and to cultural practice, self, and history" (2004: 7). *Mhande* dance denotes Karanga culture and its gestures speak to the participants' human and spiritual selves. My ethnographic study of *mhande* is an enterprise that follows Deidre Sklar's predication that:

Dance ethnographers put their movement observation and analysis skills to work towards understanding people. That is why we peer beyond dance toward all aspects of life and perceive dance in the contextual web of social relationships, environment, religion, aesthetics, politics, economics, and history (Sklar 1991: 7). I consider Sklar's contribution to imply that different dance ethnographers perceive dance differently and it is in her use of 'we' where I join her by conceptualizing *mhande* dance as a Karanga way of life.

The varying perspectives from which dance can be studied ascribe complexity to this concept. The term culture has also been viewed by various scholars as a very complex concept to define. In Raymond Williams' claim:

> Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in English language. This is so partly because of its intricate historical development, in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought (1983: 87).

Echoing Williams' assertion, Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn examined more than 100 definitions of culture and distilled the following definition:

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts. The essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values. Culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditioning elements of future action (1952:181).

Distinctive achievements among different groups of people worldwide differ in many ways. However, these achievements may be categorized as theoretical, productive and experiential. Each of these categories, from a western scientific standpoint, is a culture system. On the contrary, the non-western view of the three categories is that they make up one whole system or culture. This is particularly so when perceived from the dance point of view. In support of this idea, Kamae Miller posits:

"To dance is to relate one's self to the whole of the universe. Our bodies are at once the receiving and transmitting stations for life itself. It is the highest wisdom to recognize this fact and train our bodies to render them sensitive and responsive to nature, art and religion" (1997: 27).

Mhande dance is not only a distinctive achievement of the Karanga, but it also comprises both explicit and implicit phenomena. Gestures, objects (e.g. rattles, rod) and substances (e. g. snuff, beer) are the explicit features of the dance. These phenomena symbolize communion between human and spiritual beings. The values attached to everything associated with *mhande* dance are in accordance with the way the Karanga reverence their ancestral spirits from who they inherited their social values. Ness aptly expresses the ideas about *mhande* dance presented in the foregoing statements by saying, "Body movement in dance may be understood as the embodiment of history, of existential givens, of social value systems, of symbolism, and/or of thought per se" (2004: 124). Considered in its indigenous contexts of the *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* ceremonies, *mhande* dance consists of explicit and implicit patterns symbolizing Karanga culture, which calls for its explication. As if to proffer a rationale for my explication of *mhande*, Nzewi succinctly points out:

African cultural narratives, like the African musical arts matrix, normally have multi-faceted rationalizations, interrelationships and interpretations. African dance is not just an artistic-aesthetic deployment of the body. Supporting cultural narratives are encoded in the meta-linguistic public staging of the dance as body poetry. To cognitively interpret the theoretical framework that informs the obvious visual and/or sonic artistry entails much more than isolated discussion of artistic evidence. The deep extra-artistic narratives – the cultural intention and other human – communal – spiritual – health issues that are evoked – must be explicated (Nzewi 2007: 227).

About two decades after Kroeber and Kluckhohn's distilled definition of culture, Clifford Geertz expressed his concern for the variety of interpretations of this concept by stating, "The term 'culture' has by now acquired a certain aura of ill-repute in social anthropological circles because of the multiplicity of its referents and the studied vagueness with which it has all too often been invoked" (1973: 89). He went further to offer his own description of culture:

> In any case, the culture concept to which I adhere has neither multiple referents nor, so far as I can see, any unusual ambiguity: it denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life (ibid: 89).

By comparison, the components of Geertz's culture concept are similar to Nzewi's analytic dimensions of dance. Perhaps the simplification of the definition of culture that Geertz intimates is one in which culture is viewed as experienced reality like in the form of dance. Geertz's culture concept is what I may refer to as the *mhande* culture concept in that it is historically transmitted, symbolic and enacts inherited conceptions of Karanga life.

I affirm Geertz's simplification of the sophistication of the definition of culture that focuses on meanings embodied in symbols like is true of Karanga *mhande* dance gestures. However, Geertz's reference to historically transmitted pattern of meanings inversely espouses the complexity of his analysis of culture. The socio-political and economic history of African people, for instance, has been greatly influenced by western domination which was ushered in through colonization. As a result, indigenous cultural practices have either resisted change, suffered decline or went into extinction. Williams (2005:5) considers Hyde Park to have been in his right frame of mind when he gave a lecture titled 'Culture and its Enemies' in which he criticized the idea of nations getting obsessed with wealth and production while there are other things of greater importance to the life of a people. Park unequivocally conveys his argument as cited by Williams:

The men of culture were those who had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of the society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanize it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the best knowledge and thought of the time (ibid: 5).

Mhande dance has a history that dates back to pre-colonial Zimbabwe. During Zimbabwe's colonization from 1890 up till 1980 when the nation became independent from the British rule, the Karanga continued to perform *mhande* dance in rural communities and working environments including farms, mines and urban settlements because it embodied the best knowledge about their life. Muzenda's performance of a *mhande* song as part of his defense in court discussed in Section 2.3 of this chapter typifies Park's reference to the use of the best knowledge, which, according to Muzenda is the Karanga indigenous knowledge system concretized in *mhande* music. Thus *mhande* dance survived along side scientific knowledge that was brought about through the introduction of formal education and Christianity. When Harry Triandis says, "Culture is a shared meaning system found among those who speak a particular language dialect, during a specific period, and in a definable geographic region" (2002: 16), he situates culture. Language is a very important tool for communication. In this thesis, Karanga language is used to investigate in detail the symbolic patterns of the culture of its proponents as articulated through *mhande* dance.

The other dimensions of culture that Triandis mentions in his definition of culture: time frame (specific period) and geographic location imply that specific cultures can influence or be influenced by other cultures over time and place resulting in cultural continuity and change. Chief among the factors that have contributed to cultural change are: colonization, Christianization, industrialization, globalization and technological advancement. Among the definitions of culture that suit these developments is one that has been coined by Lane, "Culture is a combination of independent, gradually changing elements – including assumptions, beliefs, values, practices, and institutions – that is distinctive to a particular society" (2004: 27). While *mhande* dance has not been immune to changes often enforced by the factors mentioned above and discussed in detail in Chapter 4 its function and meaning have remained the same. By way of affirming the stability and perpetuation of African

indigenous cultural aspects through various artifacts, and also confirming their accommodation in popular cultural contexts, Appiah says:

> For all the while, in African cultures, there are those who will not see themselves as Other. Despite the overwhelming reality of economic decline; despite unimaginable poverty; despite wars, malnutrition, disease and political instability, African cultural productivity grows apace: popular literatures, oral narrative and poetry, dance, drama, music and visual art all thrive (1992: 157).

Appiah's assertion of the effects of Western culture on African cultures is reflective of what obtains in Shona/Karanga culture. The majority of the Shona/Karanga people who have lived and continue to live in rural areas have sustained ritual practices in which *mhande* dance is performed in their original contexts while those who migrated to urban settings in pursuit of employment have either constantly visited their rural homes in order to participate in ritual practices, or else they have assigned some selected ritual aspects to new contexts and objects. For example, performing indigenous religious music and dance in beer halls and offering commercially brewed beer to ancestral spirits are some of the contemporary forms of ritual that are prevalent among Shona/Karanga cosmopolitans.

Drawing together the varying perceptions of culture that have been presented in the foregoing discussion, it can be argued that an ethnomusicological study of dance is tantamount to the interpretation of culture because dance, particularly African dance, enacts the way of life of its exponents. Merriam endorses this notion when he construes, "Although the ethnomusicologist studies a product of the humanistic side of man's existence, he must at the same time realize that the product is the result of behavior which is shaped by society and culture of the men who produce it" (1964: 25). Merriam's endorsement of the interpretation of dance as a culture has also been reiterated by Magda Zografou and Mimina Pateraki who state:

As Adrienne Kaeppler observes, it cannot be considered adequate to pinpoint whatever message we receive from the visually perceived manifestation of any choreography, because this visible dimension constitutes only one component of a larger social action. In order to develop an opinion of what and how a dance

communicates in a specific circumstance, we must comprehend it as a holistic entity (Zografou and Pateraki 2007: 117).

Thus dance culture is a poetic drama of the life of the people who are represented by it. What makes it possible for dance to be a poetic drama of a people's life is emphatically put across by Blacking:

> Music is a synthesis of cognitive processes which are present in a culture and in the human body: the forms it takes and the effects it has on people, are generated by the social experiences of human bodies in different cultural environments. It follows that any assessment of human musicality must account for processes that are extra-musical, and that these should be included in an analysis of music (1973: 89).

My holistic interpretation of *mhande* incorporates the cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual factors which embrace the extramusical ideas that the dance enfolds. *Mhande* articulates the identity, belief and values of its adherents, the Karanga. The discussion of these elements is therefore presented under the headings: cultural identity, cosmology and spirituality.

2.4.2 Cultural identity

The word 'Shona' is a coinage whose origin is hard to trace. "The derivation of the word Shona", says Michael Bourdillon "appears to have been used first by the Ndebele as a derogatory name for the people they had defeated. The Shona did not call themselves by this name and at first disliked it" (1976: 31-32). Bourdillon's suggestion for the emergence of the term Shona appears to stem from Harald von Sicard's observation that "Shona (Svina) is generally regarded as a derogatory name … it was applied by Ndebele conquerors to the indigenous population" (1950: 138). *Svina* is a Karanga word whose English equivalent is 'dirt', the reason it is deemed to be derogatory. In order for the term '*svina*' to refer to people, the prefix *ma* was added to it to become Masvina and consequently Mashona. The unification of Shona dialects in the 1920s was commissioned by the then Southern Rhodesia government and Clement Doke, the linguist, recommended Shona to be the official language. In his report published in 1931, he argues against the imposition of the term Shona to be representative of different ethnic groups' dialects by indicating that:

It has been widely felt that the name "Shona" is inaccurate and unworthy, that it is not the true name of any of the peoples whom we propose to group under the term "Shona-speaking people", and further that it lies under a strong suspicion of being a name given in contempt by the enemies of the tribes. It is pretty certainly a foreign name and as such is very likely to be uncomplimentary (1931: 78).

Despite the inappropriateness of the use of the word Shona as an umbrella term for different ethnic groups' dialects as expounded by Doke, the Rhodesian government proceeded to pronounce it as policy that Shona be officially taught as a language in schools. The Zimbabwean government adopted this policy which is adhered to up to the present moment. Given that Shona is both an academic construction and foreign imposition, it therefore does not represent any indigenous Zimbabwean culture. Since, according to Kariamu Welsh-Asante's expression "the broad categories of African dance, Zimbabwean dance, particularly Shona and Ndebele, are located by cultural, temporality, and by genre" (Welsh-Asante 2000: 8), my research on *mhande* has mainly been focused on the Karanga with the inclusion of Shona in instances where there are areas of commonality among the ethnic groups in question.

As stated in chapter 1, there are five subgroups of the Shona people who speak at least one of the Shona language dialects: Karanga, Korekore, Zezuru, Manyika and Ndau. The Shona who live in rural communities are located according to their ethnic groupings, which are named after their dialects. Those located in urban settings have also established social units based on ethnic lines. Thomas Turino observes that "Zimbabwean social identities were, and often still are, strongly based on region of origin. Indigenous Shona dances are still associated with specific rural regions and social groups" (2000: 64, 65). Chief among the factors that group the Shona are: sharing a common place of origin, common ancestry, verbal and gestural language, religious beliefs and dance. These factors have not only helped the Zimbabwean ethnic groups of people to have a sense of historical continuity, but have also promoted the tradition of territorial independence. For example, intermarriage among the Shona and the Ndebele has neither deconstructed the Ndebele location in the west nor the Karanga location in south east Zimbabwe. Moreover, the displacement of the Karanga from the west by the Ndebele did not lead to the relocation of the Karanga territorial rain shrine at the Matopo Hills in Matebeleland South Province. To the present, *mhande* dance is performed day and night at the Matonjeni shrine village in

Matopo Hills, which is surrounded by Ndebele communities. The illustration below represents the location and sphere of influence of the Matonjeni shrine.
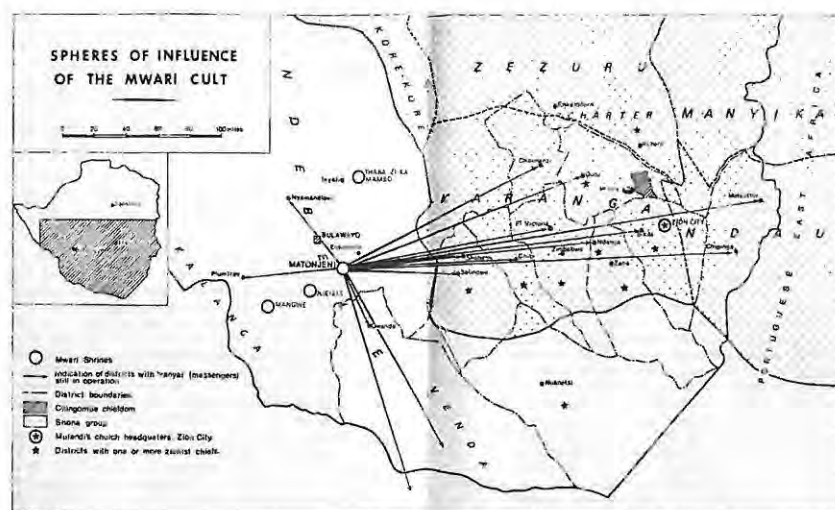
Fig. 2.1 Matonjeni territorial rain shrine   (Extract from Rutsate 2007)

One of the prominent, if not most prominent indigenous practices by which the Shona ethnic groups are identified is ritual dance. This is so because of the importance attached to it by its proponents as reported in Wikipedia/Dance in Zimbabwe, 2 May 2009, "Dance in Zimbabwe is an enormously diverse and important aspect of the Zimbabwean culture, tradition, spirituality and history. There are many ritual dances reflecting the lifestyles of the people". For instance, *mhande* dance is associated with the Karanga, *dinhe* with the Korekore and *muchongoyo* with the Ndau. This implies that when a Shona or Ndebele hears the word *mhande*, what quickly comes to mind are the people with who it is associated, that is, the Karanga and also the region where they are mainly located in southeast and central Zimbabwe.

Performance of *mhande* dance in the *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* ceremonies is one of the, if not the most important feature of these rituals. To affirm this point in part, Turino reports, "People interviewed said that their regional dances were simply the ones that they knew and enjoyed, and it was 'natural' for them to continue performing them after they got to the city" (2000: 64). Enjoyment is certainly one of the aspects that ascribe importance to dance as supported by the fact that I grew up enjoying, observing and participating in *mhande* performances and have also witnessed the dance performers express their pleasure in dancing for and with the spirits in the

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ceremonies that I documented for this study. The spiritual importance of *mhande* is undoubtedly an even more essential aspect of the importance of the dance to the rituals. This claim is confirmed in Wikipedia/Dance in Zimbabwe, 2 May 2009 which states, "Dance to Zimbabweans is a very spiritual, powerful tool that carries on traditions, and chronicles the important events of their history and culture". *Mhande* is a spiritual dance which dominates the final events of the rituals because its gestures have the power to ensnare ancestral spirits in order that they (spirits) inhabit the ceremonies by embodying their mediums. This reality is supported by Ojo Bakare and Minette Mans who observe that, "To the casual onlooker, the hidden messages of certain movements and gestures might pass unnoticed, but to cultural insiders these are the aspects that give importance to the dance, allowing for communication not only with other people, but also with God and/or ancestral spirits" (Bakare and Mans 2003: 217). As if to echo the significant role of *mhande* dance in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies, John Blacking says:

> ... once the performance is under way the intrinsic meaning of the music as form in tonal motion may affect the participants. Many sequences of body movement are not entirely neutral, in that they have physiological consequences and evoke a specific range of somatic states, feelings, and corresponding thoughts (1977: 4).

Since time immemorial, *mhande* dance has been performed by Karanga ancestors who disseminated it both aurally and orally. *Mhande* is therefore a voice that these ancestors quickly recognize and readily respond to when they hear it performed by the surviving members of their families and communities. Gestures are an important feature of dance language. More than offering a key to what the Karanga believe and value, *mhande* gestures distinguish its adherents from other ethnic groups of people in Zimbabwe.

The verbal and gestural languages of Shona ethnic groups of people facilitate the bonding of members of each social unit. Those who belong to each ethnic group hold in common a set of traditions, for example, song-dance performances that are not shared by others with who they are in contact (De Vos and Romanucci-Ross, 1985:18). With regards mahande dance, these practices have not only thrived and survived through Western hegemony in rural areas where social bonding has been

stronger than in urban settings, but they have also penetrated and lived side by side with modern or professional musical practices in towns, cities and mining areas. By perpetuating traditional practices such as performance of indigenous dances in religious rituals as handed down by their ancestors, and also providing entertainment in rural and urban areas, the Karanga uphold their cultural heritage.

Among the Shona, spirituality or indigenous religion greatly influences their identity as well as their future aspirations, which are directed by their ancestral spirits. "Indigenous Shona religion" Turino argues, " broadly defines the ethics of living and the meaning of practice in relation to the ancestors – owners of the land and concrete representatives of the past" (2000:15). The status accorded ancestral spirits by the Shona, which is that of being the owners of the land, entitles them (spirits) to be responsible for what happens to and what is practiced by those living on their land.

2.5 Shona/Karanga cosmology

In order to develop a fuller understanding of *mhande* dance, it is imperative to consider the way the Karanga view their world. This disposition is affirmed by Curt Sachs who alludes:

> "In the ecstasy of the dance man bridges the chasm between this and the other world. The dance becomes a sacrificial rite, a charm, a prayer and a prophetic vision. It summons and dispels the forces of nature, heals the sick, links the dead to the chain of their descendents ..." (1963: 4).

Moreover, John Kaemmer avers, "An important feature of the conceptual aspect of music is the way music is seen as fitting into a society's worldview or general scheme of reality. The link between worldview and music often influences the significance given to music" (1993: 61). In much the same way as they consider families to exist forever by way of communing with their ancestors in managing life's challenges, the Karanga's perception of the physical and spiritual worlds being sewn together is illustrated by their regular conduct of spiritual rituals such as the *kurova guva* and the *mutoro* in which *mhande* dance features prominently. In Karanga culture, ancestral spirits communicate with the living in a variety of ways. Signals, symbols and dreams are the most common means by which human beings communicate among themselves and with their ancestral spirits. For example, prior to conducting the *kurova guva*

ceremony, it is believed that one of the deceased's siblings would encounter some misfortunes which are signs (*zviga*) that indicate the deceased spirit's desire to be officially introduced to older spirits and also to enable its heir to be installed. In his discussion of when the *kurova guva* ceremony is normally held, Michael Bourdillon writes:

The ceremony is often delayed until the spirit of the deceased is divined to request it by making someone ill, and in this unsettled atmosphere, if the ceremony is unduly delayed for any reason, any misfortune is readily interpreted as a demand by the spirit to be settled in the ranks of the family spirit guardians (Bourdillon 1976: 244).

When asked to explain what normally happens prior to conducting a *kurova guva* ceremony, Matigimu Pepukaimose Chivenge described the experiences leading him to be conferred heir to his deceased father, that is, receipt of his father's rod (*tsvimbo*) symbolizing his spiritual authority as head of the family left behind by the deceased, which event occurred at a *kurova guva* ceremony that he organized and narrated as follows (cf DVD video 1 clip 1 – 01:35):

Zvandinoziva maererano nezvokurohwa kweguva, zvinhu zvakakosha.	*Kurova guva* according to my understanding is a very essential thing.
Kutanga kwazvo risati rarohwa guva, munhu unotomborwadziwa nezvinenge zvaiitika.	Prior to settling the spirit, one suffers the pain of misfortunes encountered.
Kana uchinge warwadziwa kana kuoneswa nechiga chokuti dzingava mombe dzinofa, vangava vana vanorwara, nokufirwa nomukadzi kana kufirwa nani.	After suffering the pain of misfortune in form of signs such as cattle dying, children falling sick and the death of a wife or whoever it may be.
Wongozofamba woenda kudzin'anga kuti undonzwa kuti chii chandirwadza	This compels one to go and inquire with diviners on the cause of the misfortunes.
Semaitikirwe azvakaitirwa pendiri, ini ndambenge ndine basa roudzidzisi ndikange ndaita makore mana ndichidzidzisa asi ndikangozonzi handigoni basa.	The misfortunes that I encountered are as follows: after serving as a qualified teacher for four years, I was dismissed from work on the pretext that I was said to be incompetent.

Asi pandakati ndindotsvakawo vamwe vakandiudza kuti kwete hakusi kusagona basa koga asi kuti pane chimwe chinhu chakaitika. Ndakainda kundotvsaka. Somunhu akanga achipinda chechi, ndakanga ndisingadaviri zvachose kuti kune zvinhu zvechivanhu.

In sharing my demise with others, I was advised that incompetence was not the actual reason for my dismissal but something else had happened. I went to seek divine explanation. Since I belonged to the church, I did not believe in indigenous knowledge system.

Saka vamwe vakazondiudza kuti chimboenda pana mai avo vechechi yechipositori.

Those who knew my religious standing advised me to approach an apostolic church prophetess.

Ndakaenda ndikandoona mai Chigoma. Mai Chigoma vakandiudza vachiti nyaya yako kuti iite kwazvo baba vako vanoda kuti vagadziriswe.

I went to see Mrs Chigoma who said that my deceased father's spirit was to be settled in order for me to be reinstated to my job.

Handina kuzvidavira saka ndakandoudza mukoma mwana

I did not agree with her so I went and gave the report to my cousin brother wababamukuru ainzi Tererai. Tererai.

Tererai akati zvakanaka hande tindoona kuti chii.

Tererai welcomed the report and he invited me to join him on making further inquiry on the cause of my plight.

Asi munhu wakanyatso kuzondidudzira chaizvo chaizvo ainzi tete mai Jinjika *anga ari ku*Bikita *ku*Nyarumwe.

The diviner who provided the most convincing explanation was Mrs Jinjika, an aunt who lived in Nyarumwe village, Bikita District.

Vakanyatsonditsanangurira kuti zvokuchechi kwako ndezvokuchechi kwako unenge mutambo kana kuti ikirabhu.

She clearly explained that my being a member of the church was like being a member of an association or club.

Kana uchida kuti zvinhu zvikunakire gadzira baba vako.

If I wanted things to come right for me I was supposed to settle my father's spirit.

Kana wagadzira baba vako unozosimuka wodzokera zvako kuchechi kwako.

After settling my father's spirit I could then go back to your church.

Kunyangwe ndakanga ndanzwisisa tsanangudzo yatete Jinjika ndakambopikisana nazvo ndikaramba ndichiti hazviiti.

Even though I had understood Mrs Jinjika's explanation, I continued to resist her counsel because I could not make sense of it.

Ndakafunga zano rokundotsvaka basa kuHarare kuit ndikwanise kuriritira mhuri yangu zvakanaka.

I came up with a plan to go to Harare to look for employment so that I could look after my family well enough.

Nomusi weChitatu, mazuva matatu tabva kwatete Jinjika ndakafuma ndichioneka ndichienda kunokwirirwa mabhazi ekuHarare.

On a Wednesday morning, the third day after visiting Mrs Jinjika, I left for the bus station to connect a Harare bus.

Pandakanosvika pachiteshi chebhazi pakasvika varume vatatu vakandibatirana vachienda neni kudare raMambo vachiti ndini munhu wavakange vachitsvaka zvikuru vasingatsananguri chikonjero chacho.

Soon after I arrived at the bus station, three men came and dragged me to the Chief's court while they indicated that I was the person they had been looking for without giving the reason as to why.

Takasara kusvika padare raMambo varume vakange vakandibata vatodaidzira kuti vabata munhu wakavata nomukadzi muduku waVashe Mambo vakati ndirohwe.

Before we arrived at the Chief's court the men who were holding me shouted that they had apprehended the man who had hsd sex with one of the chief's younger wives and the chief ordered that I be beaten.

Ndakasungirirwa pamuti ndikarohwa kusvika masikati pakazonzi ndichisunungurwa ndiende.
(Chivenge 11.04.09)

I was tied to a tree and was beaten and left there until late afternoon when it was instructed that I be released.

Chivenge eventually followed the counsel given by Mrs Jinjika after he experienced more pain when he was beaten for a crime he had not committed. Drawing from the detailed narration of his lived experience of the events that occur prior to the execution of the *kurova guva* ceremony, it can be argued that the misfortunes (*zviga*) that signify the vulnerability of family members owing to their separation from the deceased parents have always been and continue to be indigenous Karanga spiritual metaphors. This necessitates the engagement of spiritually initiated people such as diviners (*n'anga*) to accurately interpret *zviga*. Shona diviners who sometimes operate under the banner of the Christian church are referred to as *vaporofita* (prophets), *mapositori* (apostles) and *maZioni* (Zionists). The truthfulness of *chiga* is validated by the concurrence of interpretations offered by a reasonable number of diviners consulted. Chivenge received similar explanations on his misfortunes from five diviners before he finally took action. With regards the *mutoro* ritual, *zviga* are also experienced in form of droughts, severe hailstorms, and destruction of crops by pests and wild animals. When confronted with such misfortunes, the Karanga chiefs consult

rain spirit mediums (*masvikiro/manyusa*) who in turn will seek counsel from God (*Mwari*) through the mediation of great rain spirits (*majukwa*).

The phenomena that constitute Shona/Karanga conceptualization of their universe are: God Creator (*Mwari Musiki*), ancestors (*vadzimu*), alien spirits (*mashavi*), ethos (*unhu*), human beings (*vanhu*), things (*zvinhu*) and underearth (*ivhu*). These visible and invisible phenomena are components of Shona indigenous knowledge system called *chivanhu*. A cosmic illustration of these elements of the Shona/Karanga worldview is presented in Fig. 4.

The Shona in general and the Karanga in particular believe in the existence of the Supreme Being they call God the Creator (*Mwari Musiki*). The other name given to *Mwari* is *Musikavanhu* (Creator of human beings). *Mwari* controls the universe and the Shona worship him by venerating their ancestors (*vadzimu*). The spiritual beings who qualify to be ancestors are the organic members of the family lineage or ethnic group who will have distinguished themselves by strictly adhering to the ethos or normative values of the communities to which they belonged as human beings.

"The society of these glorious dead," Dominique Zahan argues, "represents a perfect community. Unlike that of the living, where we find 'good' people and 'bad' people, 'pure people and 'impure' people, 'handsome' people and 'ugly' people, that of the dead is exempt from contradictions, tensions, and oppositions" (2000: 11). Among the bad people in Karanga communities are sorcerers (*varoyi*) and those who disguise themselves as diviners (*n'anga*) for economic gain. Genuine *n'anga* are distinguished by their precise ancestral lineages and crisp counsel that yields positive outcomes. For example, Munamba's ancestral lineage from the least to the greatest spirit comprises: Chibatavaroyi, Chipindamakomo, Peresu and Bako (Munamba 11/08/09).
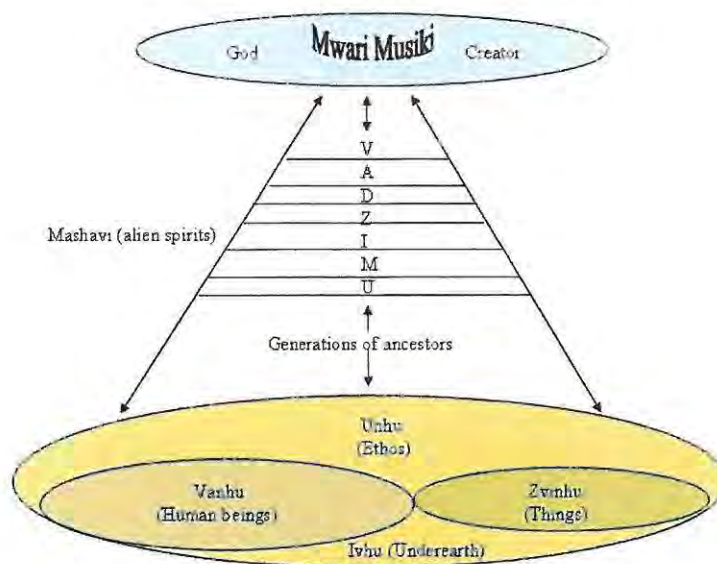
Fig. 2.2 Shona/Karanga worldview relations of elements   [Designed by author, 2010]

The essence of spirituality among the Karanga is the invocation of ancestors to enable families to lead normal if not perfect lives by overcoming and eliminating imperfections of human life. In this regard, there is goodness of fit between Karanga spirituality and Olupona's description of the religious heritage of Africa:

> More than anything else, Africa's religious heritage bestows upon its people a worldview and a value system; it bestows a personal and social orientation to life. As Africa enters the twenty-first century, it faces new spiritual, social and economic challenges, which it must surmount with resources from its own religious and cultural heritage. Africa's sense of the family, holistic approach to life, her dancing, singing, expressing herself freely in an uninhibited manner and patience are great assets to the global community (2000: xxiv).

The Shona hierarchy of ancestors, *vadzimu* as illustrated above places the supreme powerful God (*Mwari*) at the apex implying that he is not only distanced from human beings, but he also overlooks and watches over everything that his spiritual and human beings engage in. Human beings (*vanhu*) commune with *Mwari* by way of generations of their ancestral spirits (*vadzimu*). *Vadzimu* can be categorized in two main groups: the good and the bad. Succinctly, *vadzimu* are *makombwe* or *majukwa* (great spirits), *vadzimu vomusha/mhondoro* (family/clan spirits), *ngozi* (avenging spirits), *varoyi* (witches or sorcerers) and *mashavi* (alien spirits). All *ngozi*, *varoyi* and some *mashavi* are bad spirits while the rest of the spirit beings as listed above are

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good. *Makombwe* or *majukwa* are *vadzimu* that are closest to *Mwari* and are appealed to on matters of communal, societal or territorial concern such as asking for rain to prevent droughts and seeking protection against warring invaders. *Vadzimu vomusha* are those spiritual beings who, while on earth, elevated themselves through their strict adherence to the ethos (*unhu*) of their communities, chief among which are: purity; refraining from jealousy and use of harmful medicines; honesty; humility and respect (Aschwanden 1989, Gelfand 1962, 1973 and Rutsate 2007). Diviners (*n'anga*) are the hosts (*masvikiro/homwe*) of the spirits who are endowed with the power of revealing hidden knowledge on events of life as well as giving counsel and treating the sick and those suffering from misfortunes.

The good that *vadzimu* do is often opposed by bad spirits that tend to cause strife among humans by interfering with their (humans) good intentions such as conducting rituals for settling the spirits of their deceased relatives. With particular reference to avenging spirits, Michael Gelfand says, "The Shona also explain evil in man as due to possession by an aggrieved or angered spirit *(ngozi)*, who wishes for revenge on an individual or family by which it was wronged when alive" (1973: 60). *Ngozi* among the Shona is commonly associated with a son or daughter beating up or killing his or her father or mother and also one's failure to meet the required portion of the bride price (*roora*) particularly the mother-in-law's cow (*mombe youmai*) before her death.

Another category of bad spirits is that of sorcerers or witches (*varoyi*) that can be grouped in two: one made up of those who get possessed by the spirits of their relatives who were witches and the other is of those who, by their very nature, have the desire to harm or kill others for no apparent reason. The latter group of witches often uses harmful medicines and/or magic to victimize unsuspecting individuals. A typical example of victimization is one that Murimoga Matenda outlined during the dialogue that took place while people were waiting for the commencement of the *kurova guva* ceremony that was held at Munamba's home on 11 August 2009, which went thus:

Handizombofi ndakakanganwa chitsinga	I will never forget the magician pain
chakandibaya mugumbo rangu	that was injected into my right foot
iri rorudyi rava kufamba jeya.	which resulted in it facing sideways.
Izvi zvakaitika gore rapera apo	This took place last year while I was
ndaienda kumunda kwangu	on the way to my field such that the
mangwanani ndikaswera ndavata pasi.	ended while I lay down in pain.
Ndakadzungaira kutsvaka rubatsiro	I toiled in vain to search for help
kuzvipatara nokumakereke	from clinics, hospitals and churches.
zvikashaya basa.	
Ndakatozoponera pano	I eventually was rescued by
paVaMunamba vandtsanangurira	Munamba (here in this home) who
kutikune munhu anogodoka	explained to me that someone who
nokukohwa kwandoita gore negore	is jealousy about my yearly bumper
ndiye akandiisira chitsinga	harvests buried some magic on the
munzira yangu.	path to my field.
Mushonga wandakapiwa naVaMunamba	The medicine that Munamba gave
ndiwo wakapedza kurwadza kwegumbo	me is what healed the pain in my
rangu kusvika parizvino.	foot from then to date.
(Matenda 11/08/09)	

Among the *mutoro* ceremony songs that I collected for my master's thesis is the song titled '*Haiwa yowerere*' literally translated as 'No more crying out' whose text is appropriate for providing counsel to people who encounter social ills such as the one Matenda was subjected to.

Song title:	Haiwa yowerere
Type of music:	*Mhande* dance song for mutoro ceremony
Performers:	Marishongwe Village *mhande* dancers
Date recorded:	19 October 2004
Transcription:	Jerry Rutsate

Translation of song lyrics

Sh (1st melody)	*Haiwa yowerere* (x2)	No more crying out (repeated)
Sh (variation)	*Mwana muduku*	Young ladies say no to any proposal
	kunyengwa ramba	for love
Sh (variation)	*Unozotsika mamba murima*	You may conceive unexpectedly
Sh (variation)	*Mwedzi muchena*	Bright moonlight has made me be
	wandiparira	vulnerable

Fig. 2.3 *Mhande* counselling song: Haiwa yowere

Meaning of song

The song is meant to draw the communities' attention to the fact that prevention is better than cure. For example, upon the understanding that his ability in farming could challenge many among who may be those who are hosts to bad spirits, Matenda ought to have prevented falling into a magician's trap by divining his operations.

I have chosen to use this song for three main reasons. Firstly, because on 21 January 2009 Munamba informed me that following his conversion and commitment to Christianity, Tizirai Marongwe who led the singing of this song at a *mutoro* ceremony that I attended in 2004 had since dissociated himself from indigenous religious practices. Secondly, Munamba's illness that lasted from July 2009 till his death on 15 November 2009 has made it difficult for Marishongwe village majority population that used to struggle to corordinate the singing of the song with Marongwe and Munamba to comtinue to draw wisdom from it since none of them can lead the song. Thirdly, the song text which always varies according to the evils experienced by

different people in different communities is meant to help the people understand that regardless of the nature of the concerns of life, the solutions lie in the the social actors' reliance on the cosmic structure of their society. All this points to the fact that *mhande* dance embraces Karanga wisdom that is enshrined in their cosmology. My empirical study of *mhande* dance illustrates Shona/Karanga cosmology, which Miller's appears to have explained as:

> Our study should begin with what we are able to understand of the highest realization of the truth that has been given to the world. We must begin from the top and not from the bottom, from spirit, not matter, from God, not humanity. To dance is to relate oneself to the whole of universe (1997: 21, 27).

The Shona/Karanga's highest realization of the truth is their belief in God (*Mwari*) who they worship by venerating their ancestors that draw their wisdom from God. *Vadzimu* are the only spirit beings that mediate between God and human beings.

Mashavi are a category of spirits that that do not belong to ancestors (*vadzimu*). Essentially *mashavi* are bad spirits that are neither appeased nor venerated because they generally are a cause of concern to communities. Among *mashavi* are the spirits of those who would have died under circumstances that denied them opportunities to be accorded proper rituals both at their deaths as well as at the appropriate times for settling their spirits. For example, if someone went out hunting and died in the bush such that s/he would never be located, or if one died in a disaster like the one that occurred in 1972 at the Hwange (Wankie) Coal Mine in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) where scores of people were trapped in a collapsed tunnel such that their bodies could not be retrieved for burial. The spirits of people who die in situations of such nature are deemed alien or foreign spirits in the sense that they do not belong to family spirits who constitute ancestral spirits since they would have died in separation from their families and hence no funeral rituals were performed during their burial. Included among the alien spirits are the spirits of those who would have failed to adhere to the ethos of their culture before departing to the spiritual realm. This means that, according to the Shona, the life that a human being lives while on earth is what his/her spirit being reincarnated continues to lead. While *mhande* dance is not normally performed at burials, it is an essential part and always marks the climax of rituals for

settling the spirits of the dead. *Mhande* does not only communicate with and ensnare ancestral spirits, but it also results in the possession of those mediums that are embodied by alien spirits. In order to determine the type of spirit embodying the possessed medium, officiating elders ask the spirit to identify itself (*kukonya*)[38] and if it fails to give names of at least three ancestors in their order of seniority that spirit is categorized as alien.

Among the Shona/Karanga, when people die, they are buried either in graves about two meters deed into the ground or in caves that are located in hills that are found in different districts nationwide. Caves are sequestered burial cites for high-ranking community leaders such as chiefs (*madzishe*) and great spirit mediums like rain spirits. The Matonjeni cave shrine on the Matopo Hills in Matebeleland South Province in Zimbabwe is a typical example of where some of the ancient Karanga chiefs and rain spirit mediums were buried. It is a Shona belief that the ground and cave into which people that would have held high ranks in community were buried become sacred. This means that if one attempts to do something on such space deliberately or unknowingly, s/he is bound to encounter some mysteries that would only be explained through divination (*kuvhunzira*)[39]. The myth surrounding underearth supernatural power (*simba revhu*) is what is portrayed in Karanga sayings: *ivhu rinoera* (underearth is sacred), *ivhu rine simba* (underearth is powerful/forceful) and *ivhu rinotsamwa* (underearth can become angry).

The ostensible rudiments of Shona philosophy of life (*chivanhu*) are hemmed in an intangible force which in Karanga is referred to as *simba*[40], a word whose English equivalent is power or force. In *chivanhu*, *Mwari* possesses the greatest untainted power while the spiritual and earthly beings are endowed with robust[41] and modest[42] powers, respectively. The power that the human beings possess only enables them to control the natural world. Shona cosmology is therefore an ontology that fits the apt explanation by Dominique Zahan that "In the eyes of the African, the cosmos does not constitute a fixed, cold and mute world. On the contrary, it is a world charged

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[38] *Kukonya* is to interrogate a possessed spirit medium to identify itself.

[39] *Kuvhunzira* is the act of divination.

[40] *Simba* is spiritual power or force.

[41] Robast power is the force that overcomes the power of the evil spirits.

[42] Modest power the human beings' ability to deal with the problems of the natural world.

with meanings and laden with messages, a world which 'speaks' (Zahan 1979: 81). As if to espouse and elaborate on Zahan's contribution, Ninian Smart contends:

> The focus, in many societies, upon ancestors in fact indicates a different and broader conception of society from that normally entertained in much of today's Western world. The dead remain alive, in a sort of limbo and can be appealed to for help. This wider feeling for a society which includes both the visible and invisible members implies a stronger sense of tradition. It also reinforces the sense of family solidarity. The ancestors represent one class among a cloud of invisible beings and forces which populate the African landscape (2000: 346).

The African landscape and indeed the Shona landscape are populated with visible and invisible beings wherein the invisible have greater power than that of the visible beings. The human being (*munhu*) typifies Shona worldview in that s/he speaks in much the same way as the world s/he belongs to speaks. A particular example of the world that speaks is the Karanga territorial Matonjeni cave shrine where there are rocks (*mabwe*) that speak. I witnessed these rocks at Matonjeni speaking to Chief Nhema in 2004 when I had accompanied him to this rain shrine as narrated in my masters thesis (Rutsate 2007: 31-34). In his book entitled *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture and History in the Matopo Hills of Zimbabwe,* Terence Ranger notes, "I refer to the idea that the rocks themselves speak and I also refer to the speech of the men and women who live among them" (Ranger 1999: 3). Part of Chief Nhema's prayer (*kuvika*) to the rain spirits (*majukwa*) or the rocks that speak was a request that the spirits restore the spiritual or mystical forces that would be spoken about (*zvirehwa rehwa*)[43] as a way of drawing people's attention to the importance of observing their cultural belief, norms and values in order to keep away from the storms of life.

When I interviewed Chief Nhema to explain to me what he meant by '*zvirehwa rehwa*', he went on to give two examples of myths. Firstly, he referred to the harvesting of wild fruits (*kukohwa michero yomusango*). He indicated that people are expected to observe the prescribed manner or ethos for gathering fruits such as waiting until they are ripe. Any breach of the ethos may result in either the harvesters encountering misfortunes or the trees failing to produce more fruit if not dying away.

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[43] *Zvirehwa rehwa* are mysterious happenings.

Secondly, when one happens to be by a spring of water (*chitubu*) one is not supposed break the ethos enfolding such sacred sources of water like giving a negative comment that the water is dirty. Making negative remarks about the spring of water that has been provided by God and monitored by the water spirits signals disrespect for the spiritual beings and such behavior may result in one's disappearance as one might be swallowed by the earth (*kumedzwa nevhu*) or else the spring might dry up. In the event of one disappearing, his/her family members would have to seek divine intervention for the revelation of the whereabouts of their relative. The disappearance of one under such circumstances is often explained as a sign (*chiga*) for angered water spirits (*njuzu*)[44]. In such a case, the person would not resurface. There are instances where one might disappear because s/he is to be trained by water spirits to become a healer (*n'anga*). It is in such occurrence that the family of that would-be healer is required to conduct two rituals: one to venerate the spirits for selecting and accepting him/her and the other for welcoming the *n'anga* back home. It is in such rituals that dance and in particular *mhande* among the Karanga plays a prominent role in enhancing the attainment of the goals of these ceremonies. Thomas Lewis presents an explanatiom of the significance of music and dance in fostering life by contending that:

> Music and dance, like the use of costume and other props, dramatic reenactment, repetition of spoken phrases or actions, etc., help to establish a ritual; ritual, in turn, seems to help one draw closer to, identify with the basic never-ending rhythms of life, nature, the cosmos" (1992: 21).

The rudimentary concepts of Shona worldview: *Mwari*, *vadzimu*, *mashavi*, *unhu*, *vanhu*, *zvinhu* and *ivhu* surmise the idea of supernatural power. Shona language that relates to spiritual life is metaphorical in that it comprises proverbs (*tsumo*) and idioms (*madimikira*). Shona proverbial and idiomatic speech which constitutes part of everyday language of communication among the Shona often portrays their cosmology (*chivanhu*). This speech is crafted in such a way that it does not only spell out the dualities of life: bad and good; misery and joy; poverty and prosperity, but it is also an earthly language with spiritual meaning. For instance, the proverb like *Mudzimu wakupa chironda wati nhunzi dzikudye* literally means that if an ancestral spirit wounds one, that invites flies to pester the wounded. The actual meaning of this

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[44] *Njuzu* is/are spirit being(s) that live under water or water spirits.

proverb is that if one does not uphold one's cultural conventions s/he is likened to the wounded who is prone to a wave of attacks from his/her enemies (*nhunzi*). There is goodness of fit between this proverb which is aligned to the negative side of life and some of Chivenge's experiences alluded to earlier on. By refusing to implement the counsel befitting the misfortunes that he had been subjected to, Chivenge's life was ridden with problems that he had no power to overcome. This resulted in, among other things, the loss of his job on unjustified grounds and the indiscriminate death of his cattle, both of which sources of income helped him to sustain the life of his family. As if the misfortunes he bore were not enough, Chivenge also faced trial for a purported crime of having committed adultery with the chief's wife and was subsequently tormented before he was eventually acquitted. On his second consultation meeting with Mrs Jinjika the diviner, Chivenge was warned that if he continued to be adamant about settling his deceased father's spirit then the next wave of attack on him was meant to take his life. In his own words, Chivenge said:

Kubva gore iroro ndakaziva kuti	Ever since that year I have come to
zvinhu zvechivanhu hazvipikiswi.	realize that the rhythm of Shona
	indigenous knowledge system cannot
(Chivenge 11/04/09)	be contested.

An example of a Shona idiom that echoes Chivenge's confession is *Muromo womunhu hauwiri pasi* meaning words of advice that are spelt out by a human being are never in vain. The words referred to in this idiom are the words of wisdom given to human beings as counsel from ancestors. *Chenga ose mananga hapana rakaora*, literally translated, consider all pumpkins good for none is rotten, is a Shona proverb whose focus is on the bright side of life. Its spiritual meaning is that the words of wisdom which are likened to pumpkins always mean well and, since there is no pumpkin with a nasty taste, none of those words will cause harm. According to Chivenge, following the conduct of his father's *kurova guva* ceremony, everthing fell in place for him as had been revealed through divination. The diviners' words were confirmed in that Chivenge received a letter of reinstatement to his job while the *kurova guva* ceremony that he had organized was in session and it was not long after he was back at work that he was promoted to the position of the head of school. In addition he explained that he was extremely humbled by the respect rendered to him

by people in his village, his workmates and those he interacted with in other social settings.

When a Shona person who would have led a life that depicted the normative values upheld in her/his culture dies s/he becomes an ancestral spirit (*mudzimu*) that regains its physical body and speech through embodiment of a sibling. To this, Anthony Ephirim-Donkor says that the ancestral world is within and without, because the location of the ancestral world is an innate phenomenon prevalent wherever the individual is found (Ephirim-Donkor 1997: 139). *Munhu* therefore occupies a central position in the Shona landscape. With reference to Placide Tempel's (1959) interpretation of the Bantu-speaking people's conception of forces within their worldview as denoted by the key root "*ntu*" as in *muntu*, and its equivalent in Shona, "*nhu*" as in *munhu*, Smart says that force-beings may be spirits, persons and ancestors, but they may also be things (Smart 2000: 149). What I refer to as things (*zvinhu*) are objects such as the hand-held, moon-shaped axe (*gano*) used by *mhande* adepts and musical instruments, that is, three indigenous African drums and leg gourd rattles (*magagada*) used by *mhande* performers; animals, mostly goats and cattle that are slaughtered for blood sacrifice to ancestral spirits, and substances including snuff and ceremonial beer which the social actors share with their ancestral spirits.

While a human being (*munhu*) is pivotal in Shona cosmology s/he, however, possesses little power to be able to adequately manage his or her own life. The reason spirit beings (*vadzimu*) are prevailed upon to embody human beings is to enable them (humans) to overcome life threatening challenges such as misfortunes, droughts, diseases and witchcraft. Since there are good and bad spirit beings, the Shona have constructed rituals that are mainly targeted at ensnaring ancestral spirits to come to their aid in times of need. *Mutoro* and *kurova guva* are two of the most important rituals that have greatly sustained the survival of the Shona people. An interesting observation on how some scholars have conceived rituals in the African context has been documented by Parrinder who says, "Some students of African life watch rituals, …, and then declare that Africans have no doctrines and that their religion is 'not thought out but danced out'" (1969: 25). It is evident from this observation that though some scholars of African culture have not been able to explicate African indigenous knowledge system embedded in their ritual dances, in the African sense,

and indeed in the Shona/Karanga sense too, dance is a doctrine that embraces and articulates African thought about life. Little wonder the theory offered for this research is '*Ngoma yemhande ininga yechikaranga*' translated as '*mhande* dance performance is the enacted voice of Karanga epistemology'. *Mhande* does not only concretize Karanga thought through its somatic gestures, but it also voices part of this knowledge system by means of songs, prayers and invocations that accompany the dance. Moreover, *mhande* dance gestures, on the one hand, express Shona/Karanga life force, and on the other, continuity with the past through repetition of patterns such as foot movements and drumming. By extension, this dance unites the community. Thus *mhande* dance can also be perceived as a strategy for minimizing the prevalence of witchcraft by fostering solidarity among the social actors.

2.6 Karanga spirituality

The Shona/Karanga worldview is an ontology whose experienced reality is what I consider to be Karanga spirituality (*chikaranga*). *Chikaranga* involves musical communication between human beings and their ancestral spirits which occurs in the context of spiritual ceremonies. From Lewis point of view, "Music identifies individuals and a people collectively with the physical and spiritual universe, or cosmos. Music (and/or dance) involves or induces the world of cosmos itself into being" (1992: lxx). Music, particularly dance, has the power to bridge the physical and spiritual worlds. This is the reason the Karanga use *mhande* dance to appease and entice their ancestral spirits to embody them and inhabit their physical world. According to Rebecca Sager:

> Music's power to create transcendent experience is evidenced worldwide. In a revolutionary gesture, John Blacking placed his transcendent power of music at the core of his social theories (1983b, 1995c). In his theory, music's motivational force links 'self' to 'other', or to 'other self', to spirit possession. Blacking insisted that transcendent states were natural, normal and even necessary for the full development of a human being. He would argue that it was through the intense experience of transcendence that people could best realize their full potential both in terms of their personal growth as well as their relationships with others (2006: 143).

Blacking's assertion that transcendent states are natural and normal was echoed by Elliot Machando, a *mhande* dancer during a casual talk that occurred early in the morning as men sat by the fire waiting for the formalities to wrap up the *kurova guva* ceremony that had been held at Munamba's home. In his exposition of the experience he had had during the overnight *mhande* dance performance at that ceremony held on 12 August 2009, Machando said:

Paripo pandakambonzwa kunyaunywa ndikapotsa ndasvikirwa apo ngoma yakanga yadandaura magagada achidavirira zvainge zviri nani.

There was a moment when I was emotionally moved to the extent of getting quite close to a state of spirit possession when the drumming was very tight and intense being satisfactorily coordinated by leg gourd rattle sound.

Ndinoda kupupura zvandinoziva kuti pose panotambwa mhande nomazvo, munhu wese anobatwa nemanzwira zvinoreva izvo kuti munhu wese anosvikirwa nemudzimu asi handi yose midzimu inotaura pamitambo, kunongotaura ine kodzero yoga.

I would like to profess that wherever mhande is performed in the proper manner, each person or participant becomes spiritually moved implying that everyone gets possessed by the spirit but its not all spirits that speak at the ceremonies, it is only the one(s) designated that speak.

Handina zvangu kuzosvikirwa kusanganisira nemivo varume maivapo nokuti VaMunamba vanorwadziwa nomuviri wavo saka mhande yakazenge ichitungamirirwa nevechiduku vanofarirra nziyo dzisinganyanyo farirwa navadzimu uyezve vanochimbidzika.
(Machando 12/08/09)

I did not get possessed and the same was the case with all of you men who are there because Mr. Munamba is nursing his body that is in pain such that performance of mhande was led by the youths who like songs that are often not the spirits favourites and their tempo is quick.

In support of Machando's reference to the kind of musical performance that facilitates spirit possession, Alfred Metraux (1958) cited by Rouget states, "If the music and dance are pleasing to the spirits to the point of ensnaring their will, this is because they are themselves dancers who become carried away by the supernatural power of the rhythm" (1985: 116). In addition, the power and significance of music and dance in religious ritual or spirituality has also been advanced by Diane Thram who observes that:

In the sacred context of Chipwa (annual rain ceremony) and *biras* (occasional ceremonies) performance of Dandanda is purposefully used to communicate with the ancestral spirits. The music-making (singing, dancing, drum and gourd rattle playing) that constitutes Dandanda provides the key element of familiarity and therefore continuity from ceremony to ceremony, not only because participants engage in performing it, but also because it is the vehicle that together with the ritual handclapping and spoken address, establishes communication with the spirits (1999: 89 – 90).

Dandanda is an indigenous religious dance that is associated with the Zezuru of Murehwa District in Zimbabwe. This dance is similar to *mhande* in that it is performed in sacred ritual contexts and it employs singing, dancing, drum and gourd rattle playing to ensnare the spirits. Among the Karanga, sacred rituals (*mapira*) are spiritual ceremonies (*mitambo yechikaranga*). The foregoing discussion of *chikaranga* is illustrated in Fig. 2.4

Karanga rituals (*mitambo yechikaranga*) consist of cumulative events that result in the accomplishment of the goals of the ceremonies. A ritual event is any empirical occurrence, for instance, in the *kurova guva* ceremony the event of escorting the spirit back home (*kudzora mudzimu mumusha*)[45] involves participants walking in a single file to and from the deceased's grave, invocation as a means of beseeching the spirit to team up with them, pouring water on the goat's back until it shakes its body to signal spirit's acceptance of blood sacrifice of the animal that is to be slaughtered and its meat consumed by every participant as a way of celebrating family reunion with the ancestral spirit. The features of a *kurova guva* ceremony which are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 comprise five main events: misfortunes (*zviga*); divination (*kubvunzira*); escorting the spirit back home (*kudzora mudzimu mumusha*); *mhande* dance performance, and blood sacrifice (*mbudzi yeshungu*)[46] in which the participants engage in observable actions that invoke the spirits (*vadzimu*) to participate in the ritual. In the first three events which do not involve performance of *mhande* dance the participants are in total control of their actions. It is in the *mhande* dance event where participants are subjected to emotional experiences resilting in conscious and unconscious deployment of the body in executing the dance features and dramatising spirit possession. This occurs as a result of social actors getting hooked to the spirits

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[45] *Kudzora mudzimu mumusha* is a ritual for escorting the deceased spirit back home when settling it.
[46] *Mbudzi yeshungu* is a goat that is used as blood sacrifice for amending the siblings' misdeeds to the deceased relative.

who would have inhabited the ceremony in response to *mhande* dance as a mode of communication.
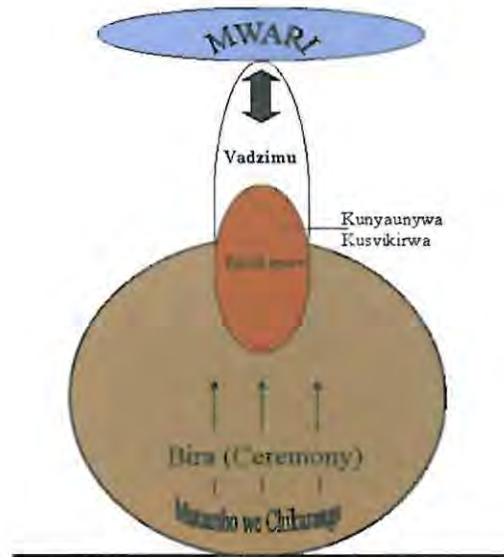
Fig. 2.4 *Chikaranga* (Karanga spirituality)

The conscious (*kunyaunywa*) and unconscious (*kusvikirwa*) states into which the participants are plunged through *mhande* dance performance represent a ritualized space of the ceremony connoting the convergence of the physical and spiritual realms. My exposition of Karanga spiritual ceremonies (*mapira*) therefore follows Malidoma Some's interpretation of a ceremony as an anatomy of ritual. He propounds, "There is ritual each time a spirit is called to intervene in human affairs. The structure of the ritual is what I would like to call ceremony because it can vary from time to time and from place to place" (1995: 32). Karanga ritual ceremonies (*mitambo yechikaranga* or *mapira*) always consist of events (*zvikamu*)[47] that are interwoven in accordance to the participants' strict observance of the ethos (*unhu*) that dictates the social actors' expected behavior toward the ritual practice in question. The events of a ceremony such as *kurova guva* may vary from one community to another, but its core elements which are divination and performance of *mhande* dance recurr in all ceremonies held in Shona/Karanga communities. These two elements represent the spiritual and empirical perspectives to ritual that are replicated and articulated in *mhande* dance. The conceptualization of music as an event that embraces culture is what Ruth Stone

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[47] *Zvikamu* (singular – *chikamu*) are ritual events.

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refers to as music event. She expounded the music event concept in a manner that befits the foregoing delineation of *mhande* dance in Karanga ritual by stating that:

> The music event interaction incorporates the presence and influence of surrogate participants to a much greater degree than in everyday life. The more the performance incorporates ritual and religious aspects, the more likely it is to involve surrogate participants in the form of spirits and predecessors. These personages must be considered as an important aspect of the total social structure, and their incorporation into music events is of interest to the ethnomusicologist (1982: 131).

The inclusion of the ritualistic dimension to the spiritual life of human beings as enshrined in Karanga spirituality (*chikaranga*) underscores the significance of rites (*mapira*) in sustaining human life by bridging its physical and metaphysical spheres. Rituals such as *kurova guva* foster family unity. The cultural heritage embedded in these rituals is the hidden knowledge on life challenging events that is extracted through divination as well as the reincarnation of ancestral life experiences articulated through singing, dancing, freedom of performative expression and expression of emotional experience. Further, material resources including animals, features such as shrines and equipment used in rituals are not only other components of Karanga cultural heritage, but they are also an important part of *chikaranga*. Thus performance of *mhande* dance articulates Karanga culture. The reason the Karanga value the system of cultural knowledge that includes performance of *mhande* dance which they inherited from their ancestors is that each time they act upon it in accordance with divine counsel sought from spiritually initiated individuals (*n'anga*) who reside in their communities they achieve the intended goals of the ritual ceremonies. To this end, *chikaranga* is celebrated as the force that provides release and solace in an otherwise meaningless world (Carrette and King 2005: 1). Thus *kurova guva* and *mutoro* rituals are vital to the Karanga in that through the execution of the events of these rituals participants ride over the challenges the ceremonies are meant to address.

2.6 Conclusion

Mhande dance replicates Karanga holistic view of life by way of fusing the immanent (body) with the transcendent (spirit). Karanga cosmology embodies their indigenous knowledge system (*chivanhu*) that includes God (*Mwari*), spiritual beings (*vadzimu*, *mashavi*), human beings (*vanhu*), and objects and substances (*zvinhu*). This knowledge system is preserved in form of rituals and mirrored through performance of *mhande* song and dance. Karanga music or more specifically dance is not only employed by human beings as a means of communicating with their spiritual beings, but it is also a way of uniting the natural and supernatural worlds as well as cementing relationships between the living and their ancestors. Thus the interaction of the physical and spiritual beings which is fostered through *mhande* is an ontology that the Karanga refer to as *chikaranga*.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 KARANGA SPIRITUAL RITUALS

3.1 Introduction

No one who has lived for long in rural sub-Saharan Africa can fail to be struck by the importance of ritual in the lives of the villagers and homesteaders and by the fact that rituals are composed of symbols (Turner 1973:1100).

To say ritual as cited above by Turner, which in Shona may be referred to as *bira* or *mutambo wechikaranga*, is inevitable to the Karanga people is not an overstatement. In his discussion of the position of the *kurova guva* ceremony in everyday life, Munamba echoes Turner's assertion by saying:

Mutambo uyu unotidzidzisa tsika nemagarire amadzitateguru edu zvinova ndizvo zvinoita kuti tirarame upenyu hwakanaka.
(Munamba 11/08/09)

This ritual (*kurova guva*) teaches us about our great grandparents *traditional* way of living which enables us to enjoy life.

It is through rituals (*mitambo yechikaranga*) that the Karanga humans connect with their spirits. The *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* are the most dominant and esteemed rituals among the Karanga and hence they form the core of the discussion of ritual in this Chapter. In order to provide a depth of understanding of these two principal Karanga rituals, their consideration is hereunder prefaced with an interpretation of ritual embracing various scholars' theoretical frameworks and philosophical perceptions of this concept.

3.2 Ritual: Theoretical and philosophical underpinnings

Research that has been undertaken to provide an explanation of human behavior has revolved on human systems of communication. Human beings communicate verbally as well as by means of gestures. Various scholars have referred to gestures that express religious idea as ritual. According to Cathrine Bell:

> The idea of ritual is itself a construction, that is, a category or tool of analysis built from a sampling of ethnographic descriptions and the elevation of many untested assumptions; it has been pressed into service in an attempt to explain the roots of religion in human behavior in ways that are meaningful to Europeans and Americans of this century (1997: 21).

Going by the interpretations of ritual by European and American scholars, among them Catherine Bell, Robertson Smith, James Frazer and Victor Turner (British), Bronislaw Malinowski and Clyde Kluckholm (Americans) as well as Emile Durkheim and Sigmund Freud (French), the majority of who carried out their studies in the so called 'primitive' societies, ritualism can be conceptualized as a notion that encompasses three levels of abstraction of this tool for understanding societal practices. These levels are hereunder referred to and illustrated as the empirical, epistemological and ontological dimensions of ritual analysis (cf Fig. 3.1).

ONTOLOGICAL
(Truth/Fact/Belief)

Symbol
Virtuality
Culture

Structured whole

EPISTEMOLOGICAL
(Knowledge)

Communication   Performance

Formality   Communality   Tradition

Function - Structure

EMPIRICAL
(Observable)

Gestures   Objects   Substances   Enactment

Nature - Discourse
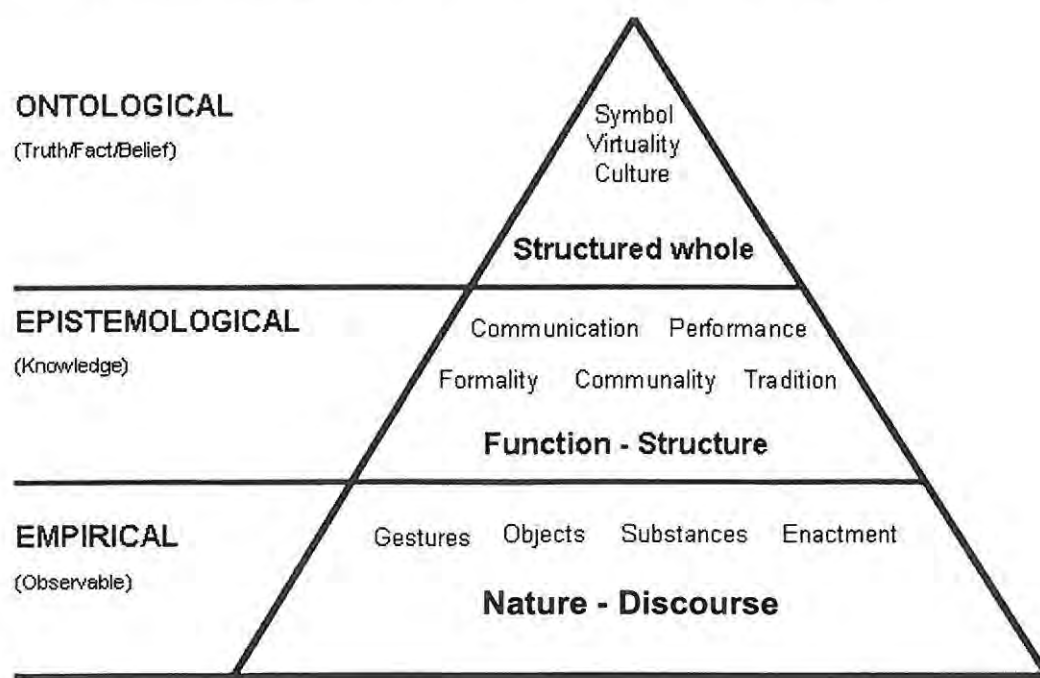
Fig. 3.1 Ritual analysis

Phenomenologists, for example, Rudolf Otto (1869 – 1937) and Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890 – 1950) have argued that the observable phenomena constituting ritual such as gestures, objects, substances and dramatization of thought and knowledge are deemed to be the only human behaviors through which meaning could be experienced. In this regard, acquisition of knowledge occurs by way of gaining first-hand experience of it through observation and active involvement in ritual activities. Apparently, this manner of conceptualizing ritual appears to resonate with both Durkheim's location of the origin of the fundamental categories of thought in the concrete empirical details of enacted practices (Rawls 1996: 430) and the kind of human activity which has been referred to by Aristotle as praxis. In Durkheim's

argument, human behavior constitutes an epistemology on which the theory of enacted social practice is grounded. According to Aristotle, praxis is one of the three basic activities depicting human knowledge. The other two are poiesis and theory (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Praxis, 21/03/09). The ultimate goals for theory, poiesis and praxis are truth, production and action, respectively.

Knowledge has been investigated from two philosophical positions: belief, implying knowing what is true, which involves the mind and experience referencing knowledge of what is real, which involves the physical senses. When conceptualized as an epistemology, rituals are not only actions that convey human thought, but they also are activities that concretize beliefs. To this end, ritualism occasions the transcendent dimension of the invisible world. This is affirmed by Bell's contention that "Theoretical descriptions of ritual generally regard it as action and thus automatically distinguish it from the conceptual aspects of religion, such as beliefs, symbols, and myths. Ritual, like action, will act out, express, or perform these conceptual orientations" (1992:19). In line with Bell's claim, defining ritual as action does not imply that the ritual activity excludes the participants' theoretical ideas about themselves and their environment. Echoing Bell's proposition while approaching it from an etic's perspective, Turner, in his essay titled "Symbols in African Ritual," observes that:

> Ritual is not just a concentration of referents, of messages about values and norms; nor is it simply a set of practical guidelines and a set of symbolic paradigms for everyday action .... It is also a fusion of the powers believed to be inherent in the persons, objects, relationships, events, and histories represented by ritual objects. It is a mobilization of energies as well as messages (1973: 1102).

Having conducted his studies among the Ndembu people of Zambia, Turner's interpretation of ritual may have been informed by the way Africans view their world in two parts: the physical and the spiritual realms, wherein ritual is their confluence. Aloysius Lugira aptly puts it, "African people feel the power and energy of the spirit world that is all around them" (1999: 92). Furthermore, drawing from his study of ritual among the Tsembaga of New Guinea, Roy Rappaport defines religious ritual as "the prescribed performance of conventionalized acts manifestly directed toward the involvement of non-empirical or supernatural agencies in the affairs of the actors"

(1979: 28). The powers or agencies which Lugira, Turner and Rappaport refer to are what the Africans regard as the ancestral spirits that are framed in the performative aspect of a ritual. These spirits are embedded in and symbolized by humans and the objects and substances that they use to shape a ceremony that embraces a ritual event. Prayers, invocations, song and dance and other gestures constitute messages in ritualization.

When ritualization is viewed from an ethnophilosophical perspective, the three analytic dimensions of ritual: empirical, epistemological and ontological, become a crucible at the stage when spiritual forces merge with natural forces to ritualize the ceremonial event. It is in this event that participants engage themselves in song and dance performance. Such a ritualized event subsumes a ritual space. Malidoma Patrice Some postulates that "Whatever happens in a ritual space, some kind of power is realized if given a freedom in which to live. The forces aroused in the ritual function are like a power plant into which every individual is hooked" (1995: 42). Some is an African whose study of ritual among the Dagara of Nigeria has been approached from an emic point of view. Not only does he affirm Lugira's, Rappaport's and Turner's contentions of the underlying forces that impel the natural and supernatural energies, but Some also goes on to state that ritualization occurs in a particular environment, for instance, a shrine, or a kitchen hut. Everything that takes place in a ritual space including use of objects and substances as well as music and dance performance contributes toward the creation of an environment that is conducive to ensnare the spirits to inhabit the space and everything contained therein. Moreover, Some goes on to argue that "In ritual, one has to have participants who are invisible .... And because we take the risk or the initiative of putting a request to the spirits to intervene in our affairs, their coming turns our activity into a ritual" (1995: 42).

The ambit of definitions of ritual offered by different scholars represents, on the one hand, the objectivists' perception of it as an idea or fact and, on the other hand, the empiricists' view of it as experienced reality. This, therefore, clearly indicates that different people perceive ritual differently. Bell ratifies this point by saying that ritual has been pressed into service by Europeans and Americans in order to explain human behavior in a way meaningful to them. This meaningful way can be taken to be the scientific approach to the analysis of ritual. Scientific accounts on meaning of human

life have valued the mind and ignored the body. "We human beings have bodies," Mark Johnson recounts and continues:

> The centrality of human embodiment directly influences what and how things can be meaningful for us, the ways in which these meanings can be developed and articulated, the ways we are able to comprehend and reason about our experience, and the actions we take. Our reality is shaped by the patterns of our bodily movement, the contours of our spatial and temporal orientation, and the forms of our interaction with objects. It is never merely a matter of abstract conceptualizations and propositional judgments (1987: xix).

It is clear that Johnson is advocating for the elevation of bodily activity as a form of articulating knowledge. He does so in order to avert the skepticism shrouding ritualism, which Christopher Small adroitly describes, "The word ritual, like myth, has a bad press these days, being taken in common speech to mean any action that has been repeated so many times that it has lost any meaning it may once have possessed" (1998: 94). When reduced to mere action, ritual loses its power, but when ritual action enacts the participants' special and temporal orientation, it is empowered and becomes meaningful.

While in all cultures ritual is generally considered as a structured human activity it, however, is not often apprehended as experienced reality. This is what makes it difficult to coin a concise definition of the term ritual, more so when in some cultures there may be no equivalent or closer term(s) to it. For example, when Rappaport, Some and Turner view the powers at play in ritual as an amalgam, Bell conceives the same as renitent forces. She posits, "Ritual is a type of critical juncture wherein some pair of opposing social or cultural forces comes together. Examples include the ritual integration of belief and behavior, nature and culture, the real and the imaginative ideal" (1972: 16). The imagined ritualized stage or critical juncture in a ritual function as expressed by Bell is what makes her definition a theoretical one. The dual mental and physical perceptions and conditions of humanity constituting ritual are apprehended by Bell as unlike poles that attract each other and ritualize the occasion at their point of fusion. She, however, does not make reference to the magnetic force that draws the opposing forces together as well as the magnetic field in which this reaction occurs, which may be considered to be the spirit beings and the human beings, respectively. It can be assumed that Bell's analysis of ritual draws from the

scientific idea of the separation between thought and reality, the visible and invisible, and the sacred and secular. This distinction, which has stemmed from the disseverment of the mind and body, has an obvious bias toward theory or abstraction that does not embrace experienced reality.

At this juncture, the definitions of ritual that have been discussed indicate that it enfolds power or force. Ritual analyses punctuate two phenomena: the visible and the invisible. It is the emphasis on the separation of and relationships between these phenomena that distinguish the definitions of ritual. Among the definitions of ritual that do not make specific reference to its power considered herein are those by Small, Durkheim and Bell. In Small's view:

> Ritual is a form of organized behavior in which humans use the language of gesture, or paralanguage, to affirm, to explore and to celebrate their ideas of how the relationships of the cosmos (or part of it), operate and thus of how they themselves should relate to it and to one another (1998: 95).

Small's emphasis on relations that are dramatized in ritual is echoed by Durkheim who takes ritual as "the means by which individual perception and behavior are socially appropriated or conditioned" (1965: 463). Both Small's and Durkheim's definitions of ritual focus on its functions of affirming, exploring, celebrating and strengthening relationships among beings through gestures. Actually, Small extends this idea to consider a symphonic performance as a ritualized ceremony. This means that performers' actions in a symphony are harmonized to meet the aesthetic desire. However, this does not necessarily mean that these gestures symbolize social bonding as perceived by Durkheim because the power that fosters communion among beings seems to be missing in this equation of cementing relationships. The power in ritual is what distinguishes ritual action from everyday ordinary action. Bell concedes that ritual is "a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities" (1992: 74). While this definition is focused on the empirical dimension of ritual, which, however should not be mistaken for ordinary everyday activity, its implication may transcend the corporeal with particular regard to the manner in which ritual is crafted and structured to achieve its intended goal. As if to elaborate on this idea, Bell goes on to explain that ritual incorporates gestures that symbolize a culture's belief system,

normative values and state of being incarnated. Taking *kurova guva* ritual as an example, its features which include verbal and gestural greetings, sharing snuff and beer, invocations as well as performance of *mhande* song and dance are ways by which living beings dramatize the communion with and embodiment by their spiritual beings. A *kurova guva* ceremony becomes a ritual only when it achieves the goal for which it is held that is, when the ancestral spirits come to inhabit and heal the human beings.

Ritual has not only been interpreted differently in different cultures, but it has also been recast in different occasions and spheres of life. Multiculturalism, television and tourism are chief among the forces that have heavily impacted on the present day conceptualization and contextualization of ritual. The move to make ritual become compatible with changes brought about through migration, industrialization and technological advancement has resulted in boundless reactions as befittingly expressed by Hughes-Freeland and Crain that:

> Ritual is an increasingly contested and expanding arena for resistance, negotiation and the affirmation of identity. As global markets bring diverse groups into different forms of contact, so these groups strive to determine their present interests and future identities by controlling representations that range from live performance to hypermedia (1998: 1).

Given that ritual in indigenous communities has been very profound in enforcing social bonding, enacting normative values of its social actors and providing physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual healing to participants, it has been embraced by modern society not only as a tool for providing entertainment, but also as a means of making people identify with modernity. For example, ritual is used as a way of entertaining tourists at tourist resort centers in different parts of the world. By extension, ritual is an income generating activity. Much of the content for electronic media revolves around ritualism. The various exegeses of ritual connote its weight on human life. McCauley and Lawson confirm this point in part by saying that "Rituals often occasion an astonishingly wide range of interpretations not only from observers in the field but even from the participants themselves" (2002: 9). This being the case, the next question to be asked is 'How can we meaningfully interpret ritual in today's world?' In Deidre Sklar's view:

A useful epistemological model must accommodate culturally based alternatives for structuring and processing bodily experience. Since movement systems are not merely formal variations on the possibilities of manipulating bodies but ways of thinking that embody different structures for thinking, the movement system of one cultural tradition cannot be accurately or fully understood using the vocabulary and aesthetic logic of another (2001: 91).

Sklar's proposed epistemological model for interpreting ritual lays emphasis on the use of culture specific vocabulary for referencing human behavior that approximates ritual activity. This means that the observable features of ritual such as gestures can only be understood when what they symbolize is explained in the participants' language.

Since the goal of this study is to explicate Karanga epistemology (*chikaranga*) which is articulated through *mhande* dance, my discussion of Karanga ritual mirrors the insights drawn from my consultants' perceptions of the *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* ceremonies as spiritual rituals. The Karanga lead metaphorical lives framed in rituals which espouse gestures that enact their thinking. This idea has been vividly expressed by Clifford Geertz who asserts that "In ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world" (1973: 112). Edwin Smith tersely conveys the same idea by stating that "Africans are adepts in the use of metaphor. They habitually think and speak in pictures" (1952: 20). He goes on to expound his notion of African metaphor by pinpointing the compatibility of indigenous knowledge system with Western scientific knowledge as follows: Africans are intuitively or inductively aware of what modern physical science teaches: there are more things than appears to the senses. They are capable of abstract thinking than is sometimes recognized (ibid: 34). Typical examples of abstract concepts in Karanga are terms such as *chikaranga* and *unhu* whose English equivalents are spirituality and ethos, respectively.

My discussion of *mutoro* and *kurova guva* ceremonies as conceptual tools for understanding Karanga spiritual rituals (*mitambo yechikaranga*) dwells more on the *kurova guva* ritual events than the *mutoro* events which I explained in detail in my masters' thesis. This discussion is mainly substantiated by data collected from Shurugwi District in Zimbabwe between 2008 and 2010.

3.3 Kurova guva ceremony

Kurova guva literally means to 'strike a grave' implying opening up the grave to allow the deceased to come out of it. *Kurova guva* is a ritual that is held at least one year after the deceased's burial. This practice is prevalent among the Karanga who live in rural areas and some metropolitans with strong rural background who always perform burial rituals at the funerals of husbands, wives or elderly members of the bereaved families. Thus the ceremony is meant for elderly people particularly husbands and wives who would have left siblings behind.

Kurova guva ceremony is a process that comprises several events which are carried out over a period of two or more months. My considered categories of the *kurova guva* events are: misfortunes or signs (*zviga*); divination (*kubvunzira*); bringing the spirit back home (*kudzora mudzimu mumusha*); *mhande* dance, and blood sacrifice (*mbudzi yeshungu*).

3.3.1 Signs (*zviga*) event

Though it is a norm among the Karanga to conduct *kurova guva* ceremonies at least one year after the deceased's burial, the ceremonies are normally delayed until the spirit to be settled signals its readiness to engage the ritual through sign(s) which could be in form of misfortunes that siblings encounter. According to Munamba:

Tinozviziva kuti kutsi kwegore guva
romufi rinofanira kuti rirohwe asi
haringorohwi pasina chiga chinenge
chatungamira.

While we know that the deceased's spirit is to be settled a year after we do not do so before we receive a sign.

Zviga mutauro wevadzimu kwatiri
unotiyambira kuti tigare takatarisira
of
kutishanyira kwavanoita nguva nenguva
vachitiyambira muzvinhu zvakasiyana
zvoupenyu.
(Munamba 12/08/09)

The spirits speak to us through signs and this urges us to keep watch of their mode

communication that gives us advice in many areas of life.

Munamba' explanation of why it is necessary to wait for the sign before proceeding to the next stage or event of the ceremony underscores sustained communication between the unsettled spirits and their family members. This idea is affirmed by Chivenge in his narration of the preliminary event of *kurova guva* ceremony presented

in chapter 2 encompassing the experiences he went through before he organized a *kurova guva* ceremony for settling his father's spirit. Essentially, he was dismissed from his job on grounds of unsubstantiated reasons and while he was on a journey to seek employment, he was apprehended and thoroughly beaten for a purported crime. It is clear from Chivenge's account of signs (*zviga*) that these appear in different forms. Probably if one encounters a sign and tries to give it one's own meaning there may be a possibility that a different sign or signs may appear and this may continue up to a point when one gets obliged to seek divine revelation of the meanings of the complex encounters. In other words, signs persist until the spirit's desire as communicated through the sign(s) is met. Signs associated with settling of the spirit of the deceased (*kurova guva*) are often encountered by progenies. Thus signs (*zviga*) occur to siblings to the family of the deceased's spirit to be settled.

3.3.2 Divination (*kubvunzira*) event

The Karanga worship God (*Mwari*) by means of venerating their ancestors who perform an intermediary role. The ancestors are therefore empowered by God to assist their siblings to deal with challenges of life. In this sense, spirituality is considered to be a way of explaining and addressing what obtains in the physical world. This is made possible through the existence of spiritually initiated individuals or diviners (*n'anga*) among the people who live in different communities. Munamba who was one of the ritual specialists who provided data to this research was a diviner who lived in Marishongwe village in Shurugwi District. I was privileged to video document Munamba in his state of possession while he was also in his full attire depicting spirituality (cf Fig. 3.2).

Diviners identify themselves through their spiritual attire (*fuko*) which represents the spirits that embody them. Embodied by Chibatavaroyi, Munamba defined divination (*kubvunzira*) as follows:

Kwatinoti kubvunzira kushandisa maringazuva awa anotionesa zviga zvisingaonekwi noruzhinji.

Divination is the use of these (in front of him) bones and sticks that reveal meanings of signs which are hidden to many.

(Munamba 11/08/09)

Fig. 3.2 Munamba possessed in *fuko* (spiritual attire)

Among the Karanga, bones and sticks (*maringazuva lit.* sun-facing) are diviners' spiritual icons for the wisdom to discern the metaphors of life. Each diviner normally uses either bones or sticks, but Munamba was a unique diviner who used both types of emblems. His explanation of the two types was:

Mhando mbiri dzemaringazuva idzi dzinomirira maziso maviri sokuona kwatinoita.	The two types of icons stand for two eyes like the ones through which we see.
Zvinoita kuti umwe munhu anenge ane ziso rimwe, anoona zvake zvisina kufanana neane maviri.	It is possible that a person may have one eye, s/he may see but not as much as one with both eyes.
Maziso maviri andinawo anotaridza mhepo dzinovheneka kubudikidza neni. (ibid)	These two symbols I use signify two spirits that embody me for revelation.

Drawing from Munamba's exposition of what spiritual icons for revealing meanings of signs are and how they are used, it can be argued that different diviners may provide interpretations that may not necessarily convey the similar messages for the same signs. In order to understand how the Karanga handle divination we have to consider the procedure that they follow.

When misfortunes befall a member of a given family that would be expected to conduct a *kurova guva* ceremony, firstly, the elders of the extended family/clan consult one another to try and establish if there would be any connection between the

sign(s) and the settling of the deceased's spirit. Once their intentions become clear, the elders go on to suggest at least three diviners they would approach to seek revelation on the sign(s). They also propose the dates when some selected representatives of the clan would be expected to visit the diviners. After consultating the designated diviners, the team that would have gone divining would then present their findings to the rest of the extended family members. If the revelations generally concur then the members follow the advice on how to organize the ceremony and if the revelations are varied, fresh consultations with newly selected diviners would have to be carried out. It sometimes happens that even though several diviners would have been consulted, the members might be convinced by a particular diviner's revelation such that they adopt the advice connected with it. Such was the case with most of the family/clan teams that approached Munamba as he confirmed it:

Mubasa rangu rokuvheneka *iri ndashanyirwa namapoka edzimhuri* *dzakawanda kusanganisira vamwe* *vanobva kumatunhu ari kure zvikuru.*	The revelation I do has attracted many family teams, some from communities that are far away from here.
Mapoka mazhinji evanondishanyira vanoti *chinovakwezvera kwandiri kujeka* *kwemiono neyambiro yandinovapa.* (ibid 2009)	Majority teams that come to consult with me indicate that the clarity of my revelations and counseling is what attracts them to me.

The Karanga esteem divination as confirmed by Munamba that family members are prepared to travel long distances, which are costly, in search of quality of revelations. This implies that quality revelations result in successful ceremonies that provide solace to members of the families that embrace them in conducting *kurova guva* ceremonies. As such, accurate revelations of signs (*miono yakajeka yezviga*) form the bases of the healing that is sought by surviving members of families who organize the ceremonies for settling the spirits of their deceased relatives.

3.3.3 Bringing the spirit back home (*kudzora mudzimu mumusha*) event

Guidelines on the preparation of the ceremonial beer constitute the major advice given to team members of families that have to organize *kurova guva* ceremonies. Once the beer is ready for consumption, the *kudzora mudzimu mumusha* event would commence with a family traditional practice where members of the immediate family

together with members of the extended family of the spirit to be settled gather in a room in which the beer is kept in order to witness an invocation of the spirits to be presented by a designated officiating elder. Chivenge describes this practice as follows:

Tisati tandotora mudzimu, tinotanga nokumukumikidza kuvadzimu vakuru nechikari chedoro ratinochera toridira pasi tozopa umwe nomumwe anenge aripo kuti amwe kusvika chikari ichocho chapera.
(Chivenge 11/04/09)
(cf. DVD 1 Video clip 1 – 05:08)

Before we go and fetch the spirit we first dedicate it to elder spirits through beer from a small pot which we pour onto the ground and then give it to all present to consume and empty the pot.

The dedication of the beer to the spirits as well as the introduction of the spirit to be settled to elder spirits resonate with the fact that *kurova guva* is a spiritual ritual and as such the spirits have to preside over the events of the ceremony. Dedication can also be considered to be a way of inviting spirits to pave the way clear for the smooth execution of the events of the ceremony.

With particular reference to the *kudzora mudzimu* event of the *kurova guva* ceremony that was conducted for Mamoyo, Mrs Sesedzai Munamba's sister-in-law at Munamba's home in Marishongwe village, Shurugwi District. This ritual was conducted in the evening in a room that did not allow enough light for the video camera to capture the proceedings. However, I observed that all the people in the room sat down facing the pots of beer and the dedication was conducted by Mrs Munamba who began by explaining that she had to lead the proceedings of this stage of the ritual event because the spirit to be settled was that of the deceased female who happened to be her sister. This means that a deceased male is officiated by a male sibling and a female for female deceased. It is also a Karanga cultural practice that any officiating elder at a *kurova guva* ceremony should be quite closely related to the deceased whose spirit would be settled. This happens so for the reason that such a relative would know at least three generations of the ancestors who belong to hierarchy of the lineage of spirits to which the deceased's spirit would be introducd. Mrs Munamba followed the procedure for dedicating the beer to elder spirits and the spirit to be settled as explained by Chivenge and at the end of this act participants

clapped their hands with women ululating and men whistling as they stood up and left the room.

I managed to video document the second and third (final) stages of the *kudzora mudzimu mumusha* event, which are the march to the grave site and an invocation of the spirits by the Mamoyo' grave, respectively since this occurred outdoors where there was sufficient light. While some participants joined the procession led by Mrs Munamba – carrying a pot of beer on her head – in order to march to the grave site, others remained at home making preparations for the event to come such as tuning drums by the fire [cf. DVD 1 Video clip 1 – 06:45].

The march to the grave is always done in single file. Marching in single file signifies a single Karanga way of life to be adhered to by all – walking the same way (*tsika nditsikewo*). The idea of stepping where someone has stepped (*cf.* Fig. 3.3) is indicative of following a route that has been tested, tried and trusted by the ancestors. Procession march also obligates members to watch one another steps and hence everyone takes responsibility in the observance of cultural conventions. This means that the perpetuation of Karanga belief, values and traditions ought to be enhanced by all members of the specific culture. In addition to sharing the responsibility of disseminating culture, members in procession watch one another's backs to denote support and protection resulting in unity of purpose.

Fig. 3.3 Marishongwe village *kurova guva* participants marching to the grave site

In their march to the grave, participants carried gourd leg rattles (*magagada*) (*cf.* Fig. 3.3) and a drum (*ngoma*) (*cf.* Fig. 3.4) both of which are *mhande* dance musical instruments that symbolize Karanga aesthetics as well as the implied efficacy that incites the spirits to participate in the ceremony.

Fig. 3.4 Participant carrying drum to the deceased's grave

As the participants drew close to the deceased's grave by the burial site, they took off their shoes (cf Fig. 3.5).

Fig. 3.5 Participants taking shoes off near the grave

To the Karanga, bare feet signify siblings' humility before and respect of ancestors. In addition, the feet serve the purpose of enabling the body to be in direct contact with the land in which some of the spirits reside. It is an act which anchors the humans

spiritually in that they receive support from the spirits who reside in the atmosphere as well as those who stay underearth.

On arrival at the grave site, Munamba walked round Mamoyo's grave [cf. DVD 1 Video 1 – 07:50] as he went to sit next to his wife [ibid 08:30] who had placed the pot of beer by the end of the grave in which the deceased's body was laid while the rest of the participants sat in horse formation close to Mrs Munamba. The act of walking around the grave connotes the idea of surrounding it with a wall in order to leave an outlet through which the expected spirit emerges. Munamba referred to his action as "*kukandira mudzimu hwema*" meaning "to give the spirit a sense of direction".

When everyone had settled down Mrs Munamba invoked the spirit being settled by pouring beer onto the ground as she invoked the spirits as follows:

Mamoyo tauya kuzokuchingamidza kuti udzoke mumusha.	Mamoyo we are here to welcome you back home.
Tinoshuvira kuti ugarisane zvakanaka nevawakavakidzana navo.	We urge you to be a good neighbour to those who belong to your communities.
Kubudikidza nedoro iri ratinogoverana newe tinokoneswa kuti vemadzinza vakutambira.	By sharing this beer we witness that you have been accepted by the great ancestors.
Tinokuchingamidzavo zvakare kuti utungamirire nokuti dzivirira mhuri yawakasiya.	We also welcome you in order that you you guide and protect your siblings.
Mhemberero yokudzoka kwako enderera mberi kubukidza nokutamba mhande kumba. (Mrs Munamba 11/08/09)	The celebration of your return shall be continued in the home through performance of *mhande* dance.

Mrs Munamba's invocation ended with handclapping, ululation and whistling as the participants stood up and marched back home singing the *mhande* song Tovera mudzimu dzoka which literally means "spirit come follow us.".

3.3.4 *Mhande* dance event

This event which occurred in Mrs Munmba's kitchen [cf. DVD 1 video 1 – 10:06] commenced before 7 o'clock in the evening when the participants were served with beer which they drank in preparation for the dance performance. Within fifteen

minutes of beer consumption Munamba spontaneously burst into singing the song Haiwa yowerere and the rest of the participants responded in singing. When the drummers joined in they failed to coordinate with the singers, which error was quickly apprehended by Munamba who suddenly stopped leading the singing of the song and proceeded to take over the lead drum [DVD 1 Video 1 – 11:05]. As such, the performance of the song had to be restarted following the exchange of drumming that resulted in tightening it (performance) to enable the smooth execution of the dance features incorporating singing, drumming, handclapping, dancing and gesturing.

"Haiwa yowerere" [cf. transcription pp. 155] was followed by "Kurera haizinyore" [cf. DVD 1 Video 1 – 14:53; transcription pp. 160]. Since the event was gaining momentum, some participants stood by the doorway that was allowing light into the hut at the same time when it was getting dark such that my video camera could not capture the performance images. I then resorted to the use of an audio recorder to record the rest of the songs that were performed thereafter. Kurera haizinyore was followed by "Nzira dzomusango" [cf.transcription pp. 1158-159]. The three songs; "Hiawa yowerere; Kurera haizinyore, and Nzira dzomusango" belong to the type of *mhande* songs which Etwell Marecha refers to as minor songs [cf. DVD 2 – 14:41] that are inclined to the *mbavarira* category of *mhande* since they are meant to impart to participants guidance and direction on the way of life of their forbears. While a variety of songs were sung at Mamoyo's *kurova guva mhande* event, the songs were not categorized as they ought to have been in accordance with Marecha's explanation of the four genres: *nyere*; *mbavarira*; *vavhimi* and *mhande* in their sequential order [cf. DVD 2, 00:05 – 04:59]. This failure may be part of an explanation for the particular event's inability to occasion spirit possession as is normally expected.

3.3.5 Blood sacrifice (*mbudzi yeshungu*)

Around 6 o'clock in the morning following the night performance of *mhande* dance, participants at Mamoyo's *kurova guva* ceremony gathered in front of the kitchen hut wherein the dance was performed in order to observe the proceedings of the animal sacrifice. A she goat (*mbudzi kadzi*) is the animal that was used for blood sacrifice. Munamba [cf. DVD 1 Video 1, 16:32 – 20:41] contended that a goat of the same sex as the deceased had been and continues to be the animal that is slaughtered for blood

sacrifice at *kurova guva* ceremonies as a way of correcting the mistakes that the siblings will have commited prior to the settling of the deceased's spirit.

Fig. 3.6 Blood sacrifice goat (*mbudzi yeshungu*)

Mrs Munamba led the proceedings for sacrificing the goat by presenting a short prayer to the spirit that was hoped to have been settled and her prayer went thus:

Mamoyo, *ichi ndicho chipfuwo chatinoti upedzere shungu dzako dzose pachiri kuti mhuri yako igogara zvakanaka.* (Mrs Munamba 11/08/09)	Mamoyo, take this domestic animal as a sacrifice for your bitterness (*shungu*) in order that there be peace in your family.

Drawing from Mrs Munamba's prayer, the animal sacrifice is atonement for whatever the deceased would have been displeased with before her death. Soon after saying the prayer she went on to pour some water at the back of the goat and her action was replicated by her brother (in green top) and other close relatives [cf, DVD 1 Video 1 picture in picture 17:16]. According to Munamba:

Kudira mvura pamusana pembudzi kunoitirwa kuti pagova nechiratidzo chokuti mutambo wataita wafamba zvakanaka here kana kuti kwete.	Water is poured at the back of the goat in order that it gives a sign to indicate the success or failure of the ceremony.

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Kana wafamba zvakanaka mbudzi inotiratidza nokuzunza muviri wayo asi ikasazunza zvoreva kuti panenge pane zvinoda kugadziriswa zvinozoda kubvunzirwa. (Munamba 11/08/09)	When the goat shakes its body it signals success but if it does not do so it would mean that something would require some attention and that would call for divination.

The goat shook its body after six people had poured water on it and participants clapped hands, ululated and whistled in acknowledgement of the success of the ceremony as symbolized by the goat's action.

Before the goat was slaughtered a hole was dug in front of the entrance to the kitchen hut [cf. DVD 1 Video 1 – 19:52]. The hole was meant to be the burial place for the blood and the bones of the goat. The hole is so positioned that everyone who would step on the buried blood and bones of the sacrificed goat would be welcome to the family of the settled spirit. After slaughtering and skinning the goat, all its meat is roasted and subsequently consumed by all the participants. The end of the event was announced through a pot of beer that was given to the participants to drink and then depart as and when they were ready to do so.

3.3 *Mutoro* ritual ceremony

The term *mutoro* is a Karanga word for a rain making ritual that is held once a year before the onset of the natural rainy season in Zimbabwe, that is, between August and October. This ritual has been conducted since time immemorial because each time it was held it always resulted in receipt of rain which enhanced farming activities. In order to underscore the discussion of *mutoro*, I begin by explaining the essence of religious ceremonies, *mapira* or *mitambo yechikaranga* to the Karanga. Among many of their life sustaining activities, the Karanga have thrived on an agro-based economy. Their possession of large numbers of cattle and family members is one of the factors that enabled them to heave their productivity. It could happen that in the event of a drought, the Karanga would sometimes find themselves helplessly watch their cattle dying and crops withering. Experiences of such nature may have contributed to what led the Karanga to realize their limited power to control important phenomena such as rain, the God-given fertility of the earth (Aschwanden, 1989: 218) upon which their livelihood is heavily dependent. Following their belief in the all powerful Supreme

God (*Mwari*) by way of their ancestors and in accordance with their custom of perceiving and conversing in gestures, the Karanga constructed the *mutoro* rain ceremony (*bira remvura*) as a conscious way of soliciting spiritual intervention in order to avert problems associated with lack of rain.

It is important at this juncture to briefly discuss Karanga discourse that is closely related to the terms: religion, myth, ritual, ceremony, symbol and spirit, all of which constitute the hub of my discussion of the *mutoro* ceremony. There are no indigenous Karanga words for religion, ritual and symbol. According to Gelfand, "Before Christian missionaries came among them, the Shona had no words in their language for sin, or faith, or soul, or, for that matter, for religion" (1977: 6). Just as Some says "in Dagara there is no word that translates as symbol" (1998: 149), so also is the case with Karanga. His way of explaining the unavailability of the term symbol due to its close association with the word spirit is equally applicable to Karanga conceptualisation of symbolism. Among the Karanga, spiritual symbols such as rods (*tsvimbo*) and costumes (*fuko*) are accorded as much respect as the spirits they stand for. These symbols also signify the immanence of the spirits to human beings, that is, the visible and the invisible intertwined into a whole. These are myths (*zvirehwa rehwa*) that are often narrated in form of stories (*ngano*) which, to the Karanga, are conceived as earthly stories with spiritual meanings. Aschwanden describes Karanga myth as "something which exists as symbolic reality and is believed as a story, or is then consummated as an experience" (1989: 9). In view of Karanga perception of rain as fertility, Aschwanden goes on to give an example of a myth as:

> The ancestors who give and sustain the fertility represent the actual connection between heaven and earth. First, however, the Karanga stress the fact that those who have now become ancestral spirits were separated once, through death, from the living: this corresponds to the separation of heaven and earth. When the ancestral spirits maintain the fertility of their descendants afterwards, however, then heaven and earth are again sewn together (ibid: 14).

The Karanga term for ancestors is *mhepo* (sin. and pl.). Ancestral spirits (*mhepo*) are identified by names because they are known by their siblings and the Supreme Spirit (*Mwari*) is their one and only God. Thus, everything that happens in their natural world is not only influenced by, but also directly connected with the spirits. If spirituality is viewed as religion then it can be said that the Karanga lead religious

lives. As such, Benjamin Ray observes that "As numerous scholars have recognized, African religions are part and parcel of the whole fabric of African cultural life. Religious phenomena are thus closely interwoven with social, psychological, and moral dimensions" (1976: 16). In Karanga conception, religious phenomena such as invocations, song and dance performance and spirit possession are characteristic features of the *mutoro* ceremony. The Karanga word that means the same as ceremony is *mutambo*. While all ceremonies (*mitambo*) enfold the social and moral dimensions of human life, a few transcend these spheres to incorporate the psychic orbit. This purview, which is a sphere of power, is what I consider to be the ritualized space. *Mitambo* that embrace the psyche are known as *mapira* (sin. *bira*). As such, *mutoro* is a ritual *(bira)* in which the human and the spiritual forces interact.

3.4.1 Post independence influences on *mutoro* ritual practices

The attainment of independence in Zimbabwe in 1980 saw the birth of a new government which brought about changes that were embraced differently by different people. It is necessary at this juncture to discuss some of the post independence changes that impacted on the conduct of *mutoro* ritual ceremonies.

Prior to independence, chiefs had jurisdiction over rural communities in Zimbabwe to an extent that their authority enabled them to institute justice on wrong doers. The elevation of sub-chiefs and the introduction of Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) and Ward Development Committees (WADCOs) by the Zimbabwean government resulted in some of the leaders of the Committees wielding more power than chiefs. In their capacity as custodians of culture, Karanga chiefs experienced problems in trying to perpetuate cultural values such as observing the day of rest (*chisi*) which is connected with the *mutoro* ritual. The chiefs' lack of control over people in their communities was exacerbated by the shift in trial of cases from chiefs' courts to village courts manned by magistrates. With regards to the *mutoro* ritual, chiefs ought to liase with the custodians of *mutoro* (*huze dzemutoro*) and rain spirit mediums (*masvikiro emvura*). These mediums are of higher status than other mediums which include diviners and traditional healers commonly referred to as *n'anga*. The founding of the Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA) months after independence elevated the status of *n'anga* to a point where

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the Association confirms and authorizes rain spirit mediums, which essentially is the responsibility of the great rain spirit mediums with the assistance of rain spirit mediums in different communities. While rain spirit mediums are not diviners per se, it so happens that some rain spirit mediums also serve as diviners and healers, for example, the late Munamba. As such, the formation of ZINATHA tended to complicate the operations of rain spirit mediums to an extent that some of them refrained from joining the Association. The late Munamba and Marecha are among those who decided against ZINATHA membership. I witnessed a typical case of conflict in authority between ZINATHA and rain spirit mediums while the Acting Chief Gilbert Nhema, Marecha and I were getting ready to travel to the territorial rain shrine.

On 30 October 2010 at about 7 o'clock in the evening, John Ndawana, son to the late *mutoro* overseer for Shurugwi District, Ndawana the rain spirit medium who died in 1982 visited the Acting Chief who welcomed him into the room where the three of us (Acting Chief, Marecha and I) were. John Ndawana produced a document that had been signed and stamped by ZINATHA conferring him as the *mutoro* overseer (*svikiro guru romutoro*) for the district and he was asking the Acting Chief to add his stamp on the document to show that he (Ndawana) had authority to carry out the duties of the *mutoro* overseer. The Acting Chief sought an explanation from Ndawana as to why he still needed his (Chief's) stamp since ZINATHA had confirmed him to be the overseer. Ndawana responded by saying that he had apprehended three families working on a day of rest (*chisi*) and therefore he wanted the Chief's authority to go and arrest them in order to bring them to his (Chief's) court. The Acting Chief took advantage of the presence of his village rain spirit medium, Marecha by inviting him to share his view on Ndawana's issue. Marecha began by giving a background to Ndawana's issue by saying that when he (Ndawana) approached the late Chief Nhema to inform him that the spirit of his father had selected him as its medium, the then Chief asked him (Marecha) and other rain spirit mediums in the district to give Ndawana some counsel. Part of our counsel was that he was obliged to go and present himself before the guardian rain spirit medium at the territorial rain shrine, which advice he implemented and gave a report back to the rain spirit mediums that he had been asked to put his house in order first before he would be advised on the next step

he was supposed to take. One of Ndawana's identified concerns was his marital status whereby he then was single but living with a girlfriend.

Ndawana's response to Marecha's account was that he had since put his house in order but had not gone back to the territorial shrine as directed, instead he went to ZINATHA. Marecha further advised Ndawana that if he genuinely wanted to be conferred a rain spirit medium he had to stick to the advice given by rain spirit mediums. After he had been briefed on Ndawana's endeavours to become a rain spirit medium, the Acting Chief wound up the discussion of the issue by reiterating Marecha's advice and he also ruled that he was not going to stamp Ndawana's document since it was not in tandem with Karanga cultural conventions that rain spirit mediums use documents that are generated by people in leadership positions such as chiefs and leaders of associations.

This study has established that prior to 1982; Shurugwi District had always had a *mutoro* overseer as confirmed by two consulted rain spirit mediums: Marecha and Munamba. The death of the last known overseer Ndawana 1982 left a gap that has not been filled to date for several reasons; among them are the unavailability of a worthy progeny in the Ndawana family to be embodied by the spirit, the ZINATHA influence on matters to do with rain making and the general lack of cohesion among community members resulting from leadership conflicts. A case in point to explain lack of cohesion among community members is the Juliana issue outlined in my master's thesis. Against the wish of the late Chief Nhema, Juliana, with the support of a sub-chief imposed herself as the *mutoro* overseer for Shurugwi District. The Juliana issue urged the Chief to go and present the issue to the rain spirits at the Matonjeni territorial shrine on 19 November 2004 and I accompanied him on his mission (Rutsate 2007: 30 – 34). I had hoped to gather first hand information on rain making from the spirits at the territorial shrine but it did not materialize since I was advised that I was supposed to make at least two visits in order for me to be permitted to speak to the spirits. As part of my fieldwork for this research, Munamba and I had planned to revisit the Matonjeni shrine in September 2009, but the trip failed to materialize because by then Munamba was detained in hospital due to the illness from which he never recovered until his death in November 2009. The alternative plan I made with Chief Nhema also failed following his death in January 2010. On 28 October 2010 I

approached the Acting Chief Gilbert Nhena seeking his assistance in supporting my research efforts and introduced me to one of the rain spirit mediums in his district, Etwell Marecha who informed me that all the venues including Matonjeni at the territorial rain shrine were no longer operational. The closure of the majority venues at the territorial shrine was part of the process of revitalizing the *mutoro* ritual practice as outlined in chapter 1.

3.4.2 *Mutoro wanhasi* (Present day *mutoro* ceremonies)

In pre-independent Zimbabwe, each rural district was governed by a chief who was then referred to as a paramount chief. Each chief would have several sub-chiefs to assist him to govern the district. This meant that the chiefs would authorize everything that would take place in any part of their districts. Following the stripping of some of the powers of paramount chiefs in post-independent Zimbabwe, most sub-chiefs have since assumed the chiefs powers and hence they governed their areas of jurisdiction without any consultations with paramount chiefs. This development has had a negative impact on the organization of *mutoro* ceremonies that have been and still are being conducted in a variety of ways because the breakdown of liaison in chieftaincy was also transferred to rain spirit mediums that ought to corporately advise chiefs on matters to do with the *mutoro* ritual, but have not been working together.

Regardless of the variations ascribed to it, post-independent *mutoro* process as discussed in my master's thesis comprises four events: *kuparura* (initiate); *kuvika* (prayer); *kukumikidza* (dedication) and *kuturura* (ensnaring or bringing down). The *mutoro* process is initiated by gathering from community members tokens of appreciation (*rupanga*) in form of money for thanking the rain spirits for the receipt of rain in the preceding season. In addition, preparation of ceremonial beer is said to be done by elderly women. Only one rain priest would take the token of appreciation to the territorial shrine where s/he would present it as s/he prays for rain. Once the beer is ready for consumption, the rain priest would dedicate it to the rain spirits in the presence of a select group of participants gathered by a local shrine. This event would then be followed with *mhande* dance performance in the home where the beer would have been brewed.

3.4.3 *Mutoro wechinyakare* (*Mutoro* in relation to Karanga conventions)

My account of *mutoro* ceremony as it ought to be draws data from interviews on and dialogue about the traditional mutoro ritual as explained by people who have been and still are closely connected to it including rain spirit mediums and organisers of mutoro events. Just like for the present day *mutoro* ceremony, four events constitute *mutoro wechinyakare*, however, these events are conceived differently.

3.4.3.1 *Kuparura* (initiate)

In *mutoro wechinyakare*, the initial event (*kuparura*) involves the gathering of tokens of appreciation (*rupanga*) in form of grains, particularly *rapoko*, millet and maize as well as snuff for the spirits (*fodya yevakuru* or *chambwa*) and also preparation of the ceremonial beer. To this, Tateguru Manyanga said:

Takamisa dzimwe nzvimbo dzose dzomugomo rino guru nokuti dzanga dzichitambira mari nokudaro matura angaogara asina chinhu.	We stopped all other venues on this great mountain from operating because the guardians were receiving money and that left the barns empty.
Hatishandisi mari kupfupira mbeu tinoda mbeu dzinenge dzakohwewa kuti tidzipfupire. (Manyanga 31/10/10)	We do not use money to fertilize and protect the seed grains, instead we need the grains from the previous harvest.

Tateguru Manyanga's contribution was in relation to the present day *mutoro* practice which incorporates money as a form of token of appreciation (*rupanga*). The *rupanga* grains are meant to be stored in the barns at the territorial shrine village and subsequently used as food and drink by the village dwellers and visitors alike.

The first stage of beer preparation, which is the dedication of the grain to the rain spirits, is to be conducted by the community *mutoro* custodians (*huze dzemutoro*) at a sacred place (*nzvimbo inoera*) on a mountain where only elders from *huze yomutoro* family are authorized to go. For example, the Magumise family on behalf of Nhema village in Shurugwi District is authorized to climb up Svika Mountain to a point which is believed to have been the burial place for the great rain spirits of the area. Marecha [cf. *Mhande* dance: an enactment of Karanga epistemology video clip 2,

explains that the late Chief Nhema conferred the *mutoro* crest on the Magumise family [cf.DVD 1Video 2, 06:33 – 06:45]. Dedication of the grain for making beer is normally done in the morning and after its dedication to the spirits it will be placed in an excarvation in the rock so that the spirits will ask for rain to soak the grain overnight. On the following day the Magumises would go and collect the soaked grain and give it to elderly women in their family who would process it into malt and thereafter grinding it in order to brew the beer.

3.4.3.2 *Kuvika* (prayer)

When the Karanga present issues to the spirits and request their help they do so in a particular way that is likened to a prayer not only because it is targeted at an identified audience, but because it is also a mode of communication that is reserved for important beings, the spirits. According to Marecha:

Rwendo rwokugomo guru kumabwe adziva rwendo rukuru rwunofambwa nemapoka avamiririri vematunhu akasiyana siyana. (Marecha 30/10/10)	The pilgrimage to the great territorial rain shrine is so important that it has to be undertaken by teams representing different communities.

The groups of people Marecha refers to would include rain priests and *mhande* musicians representing district communities such as Shurugwi. Prior to the introduction of faster modes of transport groups from Karanga communities would take days to walk to the territorial shrine. The use of modern transport such as buses has seen a reduction in the size of groups, but two members per team is the least acceptable as indicated by Tateguru Manyanga. Participation by at least two people in praying for rain is logical since the dialogue that occurs between groups and the rain spirits has to be committed to memory so that the representatives would provide appropriate feedback to community members. At least two priests who are to be sent to the territorial shrine are chosen by the rain spirit mediums of a given district and recommended to the guardian spirits that may either confirm or decline their appointment mainly based on whether the priests meet the rain spirits expectations. This means that in order for the prayer to be acceptable, the quality of life of the rain priests should resonate with the standards or ethos set by the great rain spirits (*madzitateguru*). One thing that would enable the approved rain spirits to conduct

successful prayers is that they would also be rain spirit mediums such that their guest spirits would help them to lead priestly lives.

Through the prayers, rain priests furnish rain spirits with specific details such as quality of the soil of the land of the community from which they would have come and the terrain of the land which helps to determine the nature, frequency and quantity of rainfall required for each community. By extension, the priests would also request that the rainfall season be free of disasters such as pests that destroy crops, diseases that attack animals and lightning that claims people's lives.

3.4.3.3 *Kukumikidza* (dedication)

The *mutoro* ceremony is dedicated to the rain spirits by community custodians (*huze dzemutoro*) who normally conduct the ritual event by the burial cave sites upon sacred mountains, for example, in Nhema village in Shurugwi District, the Magumise family elders would leave their home around 7 o'clock in the morning of the day of the ceremony and walk up Svika mountain being led by an elderly woman carrying a pot of beer. On arrival at the site, the officiating elder would instruct the woman carrying the pot of beer to place it at a designated point while the rest of the group members sit in horse shoe formation facing the pot. Before presenting his invocation to the rain spirits, the officiating elder would take some snuff and throw some of it to the ground as he names the spirits in chronological order of their lineage from the latest to the earliest. He would also dedicate the beer to the spirits by pouring some of it to the ground as he converses with them. The invocative message would be focused on announcing and committing the ceremony to the spirits.

At the end of his invocative statement, the officiating elder would then fetch the beer and distributes it to all the participants. This dedication ritual would be expected to be completed before 12 noon in order that the group members would proceed to join the majority participants from the community who would be gathered by the shrine at the foot of the mountain. The act of communing with the spirits through an invocation as well as sharing beer and snuff with them (*kupira*) is believed to empower the social actors who would then descent the mountain singing the song Yave nyama yokugocha (Its meat for roasting). This is a hunting song that portrays the idea of a successful

hunt and in the case of the *mutoro*, the bad spirits would have been subdued by the rain spirits that would have been appealed to through the dedication ritual event.

3.4.3.4 *Kuturura* (ensnaring or bringing down)

Performance of *mhande* dance dominates this final stage of the *mutoro* process. This stage begins with a form of prayer (*kuvika*) which entails *nyere* (whistle), *mbavarira* (dialogue) and *vavhima* (hunt) song and dance performances. In Marecha's words:

Kuimba nokudzana kunoitwa	The singing and dancing done at the
Kumavambo ebira kunosanganisira	beginning of a ritual incorporating
nyere, mbavarira nekuvhima kuri	whistle, dialogue and as prayer to the
kuvika kumadzinza maduku	younger generations of the great spirits.
emadzitateguru. (Marecha 30/10/10)	

Mhande dance participants signal to the spirits through *nyere* that they are engaged in a ceremony which would have been organized for them (spirits). Most *nyere*, *mbavarira* and *kuvhima* songs are performed by the shrine which is an enclosure with a small hut in the center that is built of poles and thatched with grass. If the ceremony is conducted in accordance with the *mutoro* cultural conventions, a designated rain spirit medium from among the mediums that get possessed by the younger generation of spirits can enter the hut and thereafter emerge possessed and gives counsel to the participants. It normally would rain before the participants leave the shrine and go to the home where the beer was brewed. This would take place by about end of day leading to an overnight performance of *mhande* song and dance. *Mhande* dance performance lures the great spirits that are believed to be easier approached by night when there would be peace and tranquility.

3.4 Conclusion

Among the Karanga, *kurova guva* and *mutoro* rituals are practices that sustain the lives of their practitioners. It is important to note that each of the events of the *kurova guva* ceremony: *zviga* (signs/misfortunes); *kubvunzira* (divination); *kudzora mudzimu mumusha* (bringing the spirit back home); *mhande* dance, and *mbudzi yeshungu* (blood sacrifice goat) as well as those of the *mutoro* ceremony: *kuparura* (initiate); *kuvika* (prayer); *kukumikidza* (dedicate), and *kuturura* (ensnare or bring down) denotes action undertaken by people in order to solicit spiritual intervention in matters

that the humans are incapacitated to deal with. In other words, these religious rituals are organized and executed by people who try to adhere to, but sometimes deviate from the ethos that govern the organization and administration of the ceremonies. Both the absence and the unsuccessful conduct of indigenous religious rituals incorporating *kurova guva* and *mutoro* result in hardships for which the people affected find no solution except they seek answers through divination. *Kurova guva* and *mutoro* rituals represent two levels of spiritual intervention that is, revelation of signs or misfortunes experienced by family/clan members which is provided by spiritually initiated individuals (*n'anga*) and wisdom on issues of communal concern obtained from *Mwari* (God) and delivered by way of guardian spirits including rain spirits. These ritual ceremonies embrace *mhande* dance that is capable of enticing the ancestors to unite with and empower their siblings to adequately address life challenging circumstances.

CHAPTER 4 *MHANDE* DANCE: DESCRIPTION

4.1 Introduction

Mhande is a term that refers to the indigenous religious musical genre of the Karanga. This genre incorporates features comprising singing, drumming and dancing, which actions connote the invisible dimension of the spiritual beings that are not only attracted by the actions, but they (spirits) also embody the humans. *Mhande* gestures that include singing spirits' favourite songs, playing the drum pattern that is recognizable by the spirits and making foot movements that resemble ancestors choreographed style are referred to as *kudzana* in Karanga and it is this immanent perspective of the musical art that may be equated to the English term, dance. Viewed this way, the other observable features embracing spirits attire (*fuko*, use of material objects such as rods (*tsvimbo*) as well as substances, that is, ceremonial beer (*doro remvura*) and snuff (*fodya yevakuru*) are not part of *kudzana*.

The Karanga are known to have perpetuated *mhande* since time immemorial. This is also evidenced by the fact that its features comprising songs, drum rhythms, choreography and use of material objects have been pervasive in education, entertainment, Christianity and modern culture. Among the most common co-curricula activities in Zimbabwean schools and colleges of education is dance drama, which often includes *mhande* dance performance. Following Muzenda's[48] legacy of leading a life driven by a tradition of ritual and *mhande* dance, it has since become a trend that selected school and community traditional dance drama groups are invited to perform at political gatherings and government functions, which performances are documented through print and electronic media in order to disseminate such musical heritage to many, particularly those living in urban areas who are less exposed to indigenous ritual musical practices. In addition, *mhande* dancers living in urban environments have not only adopted recontextualized (a common practice in ethnomusicological studies) their dance style by embracing it as a way of providing entertainment in beer halls and at sponsored competitions such as the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Festivals, but they have also drawn many people,

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[48] Muzenda is the late first Vice President of Zimbabwe who was a Karanga who valued and constantly engaged himself in rituls incorporating performance of *mhande* dance.

especially the Karanga, to an awareness and appreciation of their most prominent, if not most important indigenous musical practice, *mhande*.

Following the advent of Christianity and modernization, most Karanga people have been converted to Christianity and have generally relied on scientific approaches to solve problems they encountered including cure of diseases. However, with regard to sicknesses requiring spiritual healing, many have resorted to ritual whenever Christianity and scientific means failed to address their challenges. For example, in relation to *kurova guva* practice, the majority of the Karanga who live in urban areas transport the bodies of their deceased relatives to their rural homes so that proper rituals are done at burial and also when settling their spirits. *Mhande* constitutes the core event of these ritual ceremonies because it has the power to lure the spirits to embody their mediums and inhabit the ritual. As such, *mhande* dance is considered to be the defining element of indigenous Karanga spiritual ceremonies.

In this chapter, the description of *mhande* focuses on two of its indigenous contexts - *mutoro* and *kurova guva* that give it a two pronged character: tangibility and dynamism. The observable features of the dance constitute the tangible dimension of its character while the vitality of *mhande* as denoted by the attendance of the spirits is enhanced by the adherents' strict adherence to the ethos that governs the conduct of the rituals incorporating the dance. Thus Karanga language juxtaposed with English explanations is used in order to ensure cognitive understanding of this indigenous musical art (Nzewi 2007: vii).

4.2 Definition of *mhande*

In light of the ideas about *mhande* dance presented in the foregoing introduction, an inclusive and contingent definition of this Karanga indigenous musical art should embody the nature, character and purpose of the dance as perceived by its adherents. The nature of *mhande* dance, which subsumes the fusion of behaviour and culture through the adepts' symbolic acts, communicates Karanga reality about the existence and service of invisible or spiritual beings among human beings. *Mhande* is

characterised by its authentic features[49]: music (melodies, song texts and drum rhythm); choreography (dance style) and gestures (bodily movements). Other *mhande* features include actions and use of cues and objects) that constitute the performative dimension of the dance. More than being symbolic, *mhande* features are also efficacious in that they are powerful enough to draw the spiritual beings to intervene in and provide solutions to the challenges of life that are encountered by their siblings – the purpose for which the *mutoro* and *kurova guva* ceremonies are constantly held in predominantly Karanga communities so as to correspondingly avert droughts and provide solace to social actors. The Karanga view of the power of *mhande* in particular and in general, the Shona view of the same is affirmed by Hugh Tracey who following the prolonged observation of musical practices of the Shona/Karanga postulates that their music "is not looked upon as a thing but rather a means of force. If it has force enough of the right kind, then it should produce the right effect" (1967:49). Tracey's claim was affirmed by my field experience when I witnessed a *mhande* adept getting possessed as the performance of *mhande* music and dance reached its climax at the *mutoro* ceremony held at Jenaguru Munyayi's home on 30 October 2010.

On 11th August 2009 while the Karanga of Marishongwe village in Shurugwi District were gathered at the late Cuthbert Munamba's home waiting for the commencement of a *kurova guva* ceremony, the author participated in the dialogue conducted by the participants by inquiring on what they considered to be the defining element of the imminent ritual ceremony. All the participants were agreed to the fact that since *mhande* 'characterized'[50] their way of life that they translate through rituals, it therefore was the focus of the ceremonies. When asked to define *mhande*, Munamba, the late *mhande* master musician (*nyanzvi yemhande*) said:

Mhande ingoma yechikaranga.   (Munamba 11/08/09)
Mhande is the enacted voice of Karanga epistemology.

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[49] *Mhande* dance authentic features are the Karanga conventional musical features or the 'ought to be" musical practices that were constructed by the ancestors and passed down the generations.

[50] *Mhande* characterizes the culture of its exponents by concretizing Karanga epistemology (beliefs, norms and values).

The three concepts that constitute Munamba's definition: *mhande*; *ngoma* and *chikaranga* are not mutually exclusive components of the dance for the reason that they always are contextualised in Karanga indigenous spiritual rituals (*mapira*) as implied by the term *chikaranga* that is explained in detail later in the interpretation of this definition. Thus Munamba's conception of *mhande* can be graphically presented as illustrated in Fig. 4.1.
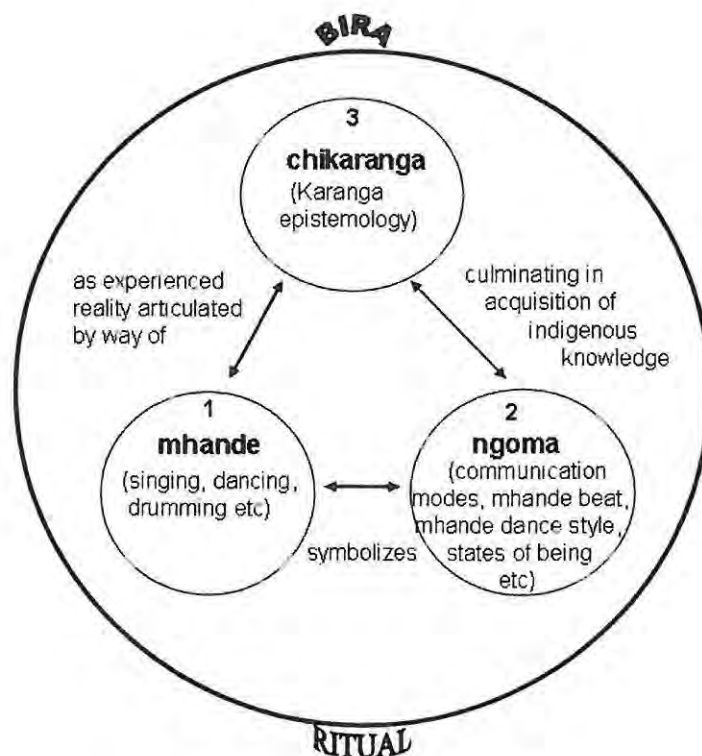

Fig. 4.1 Scheme of Karanga view of reality

The outer circle, which suggests Karanga holistic conception of life (cf. Fig. 4.1) represents a spiritual ritual (*bira*) in which performance of *mhande* dance occurs. Each of the three inner circles embraces elements of the indigenous musical art, *mhande*, by which it is identifiable. The double-headed arrow between *mhande* and *ngoma* elements indicates that *mhande* features are symbolic and the same are concretized in *mhande* dance. Between *ngoma* and *chikaranga* elements is another double-headed arrow which denotes that *ngoma* symbolizes and embodies *chikaranga*. As illustrated by yet another double-headed arrow between *chikaranga* and *mhande*, *chikaranga* is engendered in *mhande* which articulates it. In order to

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provide a fuller understanding of Munamba's definition of *mhande*, detailed explanations of each of its constituent concept are presented hereunder.

4.2.1 *Mhande*

According to Munamba

mhande imhando yokushava inosanganisira zviito zvakasiyana siyana zvinoti kuimba, kudandaura, kudzana nezvimwe zvidavado zvokuvirutsa mutambo[51].	*mhande* is a musical style that incorporates a variety of activities including singing, invocative drumming, dancing and other acts[52] that aid ignition of a ceremony.

(Munamba 11/08/09)

Munamba's account of *mhande* signifies that this concept focuses on the immediate features of the dance that constitute the surface structure of this indigenous musical practice that is explicated in Chapter 5. Embraced in his description of *mhande* are indigenous terms such as *kudandaura*[53], *zvidavado*[54] and *kuvirutsa*[55] that demonstrate Karanga cognition of their musical art. Implied in his vocabulary is the idea of dynamic action as in the use of the word *kudandaura* (invocative drumming) and the phrase *zvidavado zvokuvirutsa mutambo* (acts that aid ignition of ceremony) that represent the transcendent meaning of *mhande*. In this sense, *mhande* features are therefore symbolic.

4.2.2 Ngoma

The word *ngoma* belongs to many indigenous African languages, among them: Ndembu – Zambia; Zambia; Akan – Ghana; Venda – South Africa, and Shona/Karanga- Zimbabwe. This signifies that *ngoma* is a term that is commonly used to describe most indigenous African musical arts. In his reference to *ngoma* as the Karanga conceive it in *mutoro* and *kurova guva* rituals, Munamba asserts:

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[51] *Mutambo* refers to the broader view of *mhande* which incorporates the context, ritual.

[52] Cues, ululations, handclapping and use of handheld objects are the other activities that enhance performance of *mhande*.

[53] *Kudandaura* is a Karanga term that refers to quality of drumming as dictated by cultural standards and it also implies that the sound produced by such drumming has far reaching effects in that it lures the spirits.

[54] *Zvidavado* (sing. *chidavado*) are participants' individual creations that are an equivalent to improvisation.

[55] *Kuvirutsa* is a way of inciting performers through acts such as ululation.

Kana tichiti ngoma tinenge tisingatauri nezvezviridzwa zvatinodaidza nezita iri chete. Iri ivara rakamirira zvinhu nezviito zvakasiyana siyana zvinosanganisira nziyo nemaimbiro, zviridzwa nemaridziro, madzaniro nemidziyo inoshandiswa mumitambo yechikaranga. Izvi zvose inzwi ratinoshandisa kutaura nokuyanana nevadzimu kuti vatibatsire kugadzirisa matambudziko anotiwira muupenyu hwedu.
(Munamba 11/08/09)

Our interpretation of *ngoma* is not confined to musical instruments we name so. This term entails different phenomena that include songs and singing style, instruments and playing techniques, dance style and material objects used in Karanga indigenous spiritual ritual ceremonies. All these constitute a voice that we use to communicate and interact with our ancestors in order that they assist us to address life challenges we encounter.

In essence, Munamba's exposition of *mhande* features that constitute the *ngoma* phenomena underscores the multifaceted voice of *ngoma* elements that has the capacity to reach out to different spirits. A Karanga word that conveys the same meaning as *ngoma* that is no longer in common use is what Etwell Marecha referred to as *dumba* (Marecha 2010). *Mhande* features become *ngoma* only when executed in Karanga indigenous spiritual ritual ceremonies that enforce the ethos[56] that creates an environment that is conducive for the spirits to engage with their siblings in making the ceremony become a success. Embedded in Munamba's elucidation of *ngoma* elements is a culturally constructed standard of executing *mhande* features that was instituted by its creators, the ancestors, and has been passed on from one generation to another. For example, the *mhande* song titled Rwunofa rwukasiya rumwe (One dies leaving children) that was recorded by Hugh Tracey in 1958 when performed by the Duma (Karanga) people of Bikita District - available in the International Library of African Music - was also sung in a similar way by participants at the *kurova guva* ceremony held at Munamba's home in Marishongwe village as documented by the author on 11 August 2009 [cf. transcription, pp. 163].

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[56] Karanga ethos is a cultural standard of norms, values and traditions that resonates with the indigenous knowledge system of its bearers.

Rwunofa rwukasiya rumwe

Fig. 9 *Mhande ngoma* song example: Rwunofa rwukasiya rumwe

This means that the song melodies and texts in particular and dance features in general are primarily performed according to the styles and techniques that were created by the ancestors. As such, these features constitute the authentic voice called *ngoma* within which Karanga epistemology (*chikaranga*) is framed.

4.2.3 *Chikaranga*

Chikaranga is experienced reality of the existence of spirit beings as enshrined in Karanga indigenous knowledge system and articulated through *mhande* dance. According to Munamba:

Chikaranga itsika yamadzitateguru edu yatinocherechedza mumitambo yemhande inoita kuti tiwadzane navo.	*Chikaranga* is a way of life of our grand-parents which we enact in *mhande* ceremonies that enable us to unite with them.

(Munamba 11/08/09)

He views *chikaranga* from two dimensions: conjectural and experiential. The imaginary perspective to *chikaranga* is that it is a term that denotes cognitive understanding of Karanga indigenous knowledge system which focuses on the union of the spiritual and physical realms and consequently the co-existence of human and spirit beings. This thought is realisable through the execution of rituals such as the *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* in which *chikaranga* is embedded in *mhande* features and enacted through performance of *mhande* dance. The presence of invisible beings (spirits) in the ceremony is pronounced by the dance performers entering into two states of being: trance (*kunyaunywa*) and possession (*kusvikirwa*) that ascertain the interaction and exchange that takes place between spiritual and human beings. Through embodiment, the spirits act together with the humans in performing *mhande* and the efficacy of the dance gestures that occasion the union of the humans and spirits is reciprocated by the spirits counsel and healing rendered to their siblings.

4.3 Performance aesthetics

Among the rural Karanga, *mhande* dance is always performed in the context of indigenous religious rituals, the most prevalent being the *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* ceremonies that are respectively meant to ask for rain from God by way of the rain spirits and settling the spirits of the dead. This means that *mhande* dance does not only embody its adherents worldview, traditions and values but it also embraces performative attributes which incorporate participation, repetition and coordination that highlight culturally constructed standards of performance. The description of performance of *mhande* dance presented in the foregoing statements is similar to Nzewi's citation of Blacking's (1976a) interpretation of Venda music as "often an

adventure into reality, the reality of the world of the spirit in which individual consciousness is nurtured within the collective consciousness of the community" (Nzewi 2007:228 citing Blacking). Karanga reality of the world of the spirit that is empowered to deal with problems of human existence demands collective efforts by humans in conducting rituals for purposes of attaining the goals of the ceremonies. The idea of community and unity is well represented through the *mhande* dance circular formation where participants' focus is thrust on dancers and drummers much like the dance is directed at the attainment of the goal of the ritual in which it is performed.

Given that *mhande* dance performance is meant to lure the spirits to participate in the ceremonies, it is expected that the human or observable participants reflect the characters of those that embody them. In his description of the qualities of *mhande* dance participants, Elliot Machando said:

Makare kare vanhu vaibvumirwa kutamba mhande vainge vari vebve zera uyezve vane unhu hunoyemurika.	According to our forbears, only the mature and well behaved people were authorized to participate in performing *mhande* dance.
Kuita uku kwakare hakuchanyanyi kutevedzerwa mazuva ano nokudaro vechidiki vave kubvumirwa sezvo vamwe vevabve zera vasingachatambi mitambo yechikaranga nokuiti vave vemabasa nevemakereke. (Machando 12/08/09)	This traditional practice is currently no longer enforced such that the youth are involved since some among the mature no longer take part in Karanga indigenous ceremonies because of job and church commitments.

Machando's observation of the involvement of community members of varying age groups in ritual ceremonies that incorporate *mhande* dance was evidenced by the attendance at the *kurova guva* ceremony held at Munamba's home that was documented by the author on 12 August 2009.

While participants at a given ceremony are at liberty to perform any *mhande* activity of their choice, among such social actors will always be those who are accorded the community status of master musicians (*nyanzvi dzemhande*). These musicians include both male and female members though lead singing (*kushaura*), drumming and use of handheld objects are predominantly a male domain while ululation is exclusively for

females. Both males and females perform *mhande* dance. *Mhande* master musicians distinguish themselves by demonstrating their abilities to execute *mhande* features as they ought to be, that is, as inherited from their ancestors as well as extemporise on the authentic phenomena.

4.3.1 *Mhande* authentic phenomena

Mhande dance performances bring to light the observable facts and experiences that are inclined to the traditional musical practices of the performers' ancestors. The observable facts are those *mhande* features that are conceived as *ngoma* – the voice that speaks to and is recognized by the ancestors. The elements of *mhande* dance that constitute its authentic phenomena can essentially be categorized in two: the explicit or empirical aspects and the implicitly gendered attributes aligned to the order of existence. The observable and audible features of *mhande* that comprise its formal empirical details that package the meaning of the dance are: dancers' body gestures (posture, foot movements, facial and emotional expressions); musical instruments (drums-*ngoma*, leg rattles-*magagada* and handclap-*kuuchira*); handheld objects (rod-*tsvimbo*); substances (beer-*doro*) and snuff (*fodya*); drum rhythms and songs. These empirical features of *mhande* only become symbolic when charged by an invisible force or power, that is, spiritual power which is greater than that of the humans. In *mutoro* and *kurova guva* ceremonies, *mhande* dance features symbolize ethos (*unhu*), indigenous knowledge system (*chikaranga*), dynamic power or force (*simba*) and embodiment (*kunyaunywa nokusvikirwa*). These concepts comprise the hidden or implicit dimension of *mhande* dance. In this sense, the aesthetics of *mhande* dance is evaluated through the cultural standards that were instituted by the ancestors. Munamba aptly expressed this idea by saying:

Mitambo yechikaranga inofanana newatinawo pano nhasi wekurova guva ndiyo zvikoro zvechivanhu.

Karanga spiritual ritual ceremonies like the *kurova guva* we have today are centres for teaching and learning our traditional practices.

Chivanhu ichi ndidzo tsika dzemadzi-tateguru edu dzinoratidzirwa nenyanzvi dzemhande.

Our forbears' traditional practices constitute this ontology which is enacted by *mhande* master performers.

Tsika idzi dzinosanganisira maimbiro, maridziro engoma nemadzaniro.
(Munamba 11/08/09)

These practices include manner of singing, drumming and dancing.

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Munamba's (2009) contribution on the standard against which *mhande* dance features are judged in terms of what they are worth affirms Blacking's (1986a) assertion on the assessment of aesthetics in Venda music which is done in "terms of effectiveness in accomplishing social objectives, and also in terms of power and accuracy of a performance according to cultural standards" (Nzewi 2007:227 citing Blacking). The three ways of describing the quality of performance: *maimbiro, maridziro engoma* and *madzaniro* outlined by Munamba are embraced as the focus of my discussion of the authentic phenomena of *mhande* dance features.

4.3.1.1 *Maimbiro* (Manner of singing)

Mhande songs exist in the minds of the performers and their memorisation is aided by the frequency of ritual practices in which they are performed. For this reason, *mhande* lead singers often participate in most, if not all the ceremonies that feature *mhande* dance. Marecha, a spirit medium and a *mhande* master musician refers to the songs that used to be sung at the beginning of the *mhande* events of the *kurova guva* and the *mutoro* ceremonies by saying:

Mushure mokunge vatungamiriri vomutambo vakumikidza doro kuvadzimu paguva romufi kana kuti pagomo rakavigwa madzitateguru vachienda kunzvimbo inotambirwa mutambo vaiimba rwuyo rwunonzi Baya wabaya mukono unobaya dzose. *Rwuyo urwu ndorwokudzingira mhepo dzinenge dzichida kupindiridza.*	Following the dedication of the ceremonial beer to the ancestors by the officiating elders at the grave of the deceased whose spirit is to be settled or at the cave grave for the great spirit, the elders would walk to the venue of the ceremony singing the song titled Baya wabaya mukono unobaya dzose". This song is meant to scare away evil spirits that may interfere with set plans.
Mutambo wemhande waizoparurwa norwuyo rwokuti Mbavarira inoda vane dare *apo vainge vamisa rwuyo rwokusimudzirana tsvimbo* – Baya wabaya.	The song Mbavarira inoda vane dare would then be sung soon after singing the song for holding clubs against the enemy – Baya wabaya to initiate *mhande* dance performance.

(Marecha 30/10/10)

Marecha stated that both songs: "Baya wabaya mukono unobaya dzose" and "Mbavarira inoda vane dare are" rarely sung presently because the ritual events in which they used to be performed are no longer prevalent and also the songs are unfamiliar to most *mutoro* participants. Among the reasons contributing to lack of prevance of the two songs are: the social distance between parents and their children due to the persuit of education as wellas the impact of mass media and chritianity. Marecha went on to give the meaning of the song Mbavarira inoda vane dare by first providing some of the lead lines (*shauro*) as follows:

Mbavarira inoda vane dare	Song and dance performance is for those in concert with spirits
Mbavarira chizenga namatare	Song and dance searches and cleanses ceremonies
Ndozivepi ndiwe wakaruvamba mashayamombe	Which is the way since you (Mashayamobe) initiated it

In his explanation, Marecha indicated that the song is used as a way of identifying the mediums that get possessed by bad spirits and sending them away from the venue of the ceremony, which is the reason they would claim not to know where they would go as expressed in the lyrics of the third lead line above. He describes this process by saying:

Pane zviga zvekodzero yokuva pabira remutoro kana kudzora mudzimu saka vane kodzero ndivo vedare nokudaro asina kodzero unorwiwa naye.	There are some criteria that qualify participation in ceremony for rain making and settling the spirit of the dead and those who meet the requirements from the quorum while those who do not are dismissed.
Panonyaradzwa mbavarira kunoketwa vane shangu, zvipfeko zvitsvuku, mari, nguwani, zviringa zuva nematumwa.	Once the singing of song stops all those with shoes, red attire, money, hats, watches and magic are isolated.
Kunodiwa vane zvipfeko zvitema kana zvine muvara wedenga nokuti ndiwo mavara anofukwa nedzinza kana rabuda.	The preferred colours for attire black and blue because they are the colours of materials worn by spirit when it manifests itself.

(Marecha 30/10/10)

The cleansing process which is outlined above that paves the way for the performance of *mhande* dance in the *kurova guva* and the *mutoro* rituals is done in order that this important event of the ceremony will entice the desired spirits to inhabit the ceremony and enhance the goal of the ritual.

The form of *mhande* songs is primarily designed for three voice parts: the lead (*kushaura*); the response (*kubvumira*), and yodelling (*kutsvivira* or *magure*). The singing of *mhande* songs is led by singers (*vashauri*) who are considered by their communities to be master musicians by virtue of the fact that they are able to accurately articulate the rhythms, melodies and texts of songs that were aurally transmitted by generations of ancestors. For example, the melodic lines for Rwunofa rwukasiya rumwe transcription below show the complimentary fundamental vocal lines: *kushaura* and *kubvumira* that require to be interlocked with *kutsivira* so as to render the song its full texture.

Rwunofa rwukasiya rumwe
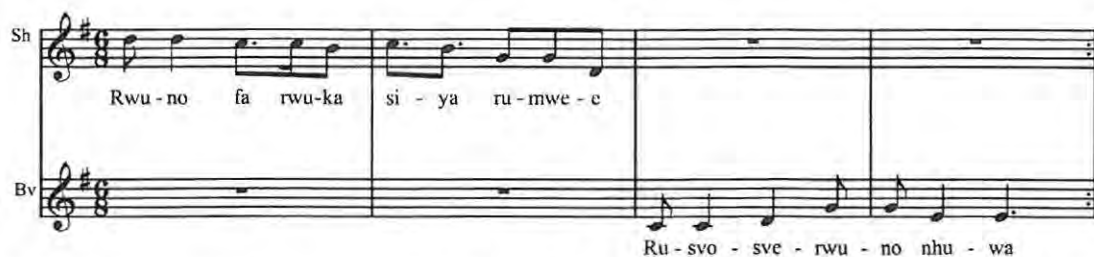
Fig. 4.3 *Kutsinhira* song example – Rwunofa rukasiya rumwe

According to Marecha:

*Kuimba magure hakusinyore nokuti
zvinotora nyanzvi mbiri: mushauri
nemubvumiri kuti vaenzanise manzwi
avo ndokuti mutsiviri akwanise
kurukira inzwi rake murwuyo. Zvakare
inzvwi romutsiviri magure nokuti
mutauro unonzwisisika nemadzinza
chete. Nokudaro semi vezvinyorwa
hamungakwanisi kuunyora sezvo
unopiwa wakasiyana nguva nenguva
kumunhu nemunhu.*

Yodelling is not an easy art of singing because it takes two master musicians: lead and response singers to coordinate their voices such that the yodelling can be intertwined to the song. In addition, yodelling is a language that is understood by great spirits only. As such, you who are into writing cannot easily do it because it appears different from time to time.

Kwamazuva ano nyanzvi dzokuimba mhande dzavashoma naizvozvo vatsiviri vava kunetsa kuwana saka mitambo mizhinji yechikaranga ichitadza kusvutsa madzinza.

Most Karanga spiritual ritual ceremonies fail to attrack the spirits because *mhande* master singers are rare to come by such that those who respond are few too.

(Marecha 11/08/09)

Each lead singer is capable of leading at least one favourite song but there are some whose repertoire for both *mutoro* and *kurova guva* rituals exceed ten songs. Munamba was one such a lead singer (*mushauri*) who accounted for his aptitude in singing *mhande* songs by postulating that:

Kubvira kare ndisati ndatomboziva kuti ndaizova svikiro ndakakura ndichikwanisa kuti ndikangonzwa vanhu vachiimba rwuyo ndairwubata.

Way back before I knew that I was to become a spirit medium I grew up being able to commit to memory any song I would have heard people sing.

Pandakazenge ndava svikiro ndakapiwa dzimwe nziyo kuhope nevadzimu.

When I became a medium the spirits taught me some of the songs through dreams.

(ibid 2009)

The idea of the spirits sharing *mhande* songs with lead singers (*vashauri*) through dreams may, by extension, imply two things: i) that they (spirits) also aid the memory of the singers, and ii) that the closer the *mushauri* is to the spirits, the more s/he draws her/his songs from them. Thus, among the Karanga, lead singing (*shauro*) ascribes *vashauri* with the status to lead performances of *mhande* dance at ritual ceremonies, more so if one's repertoire is wide.

Given that at any ceremony where *mhande* songs are sung there would normally be more than one lead singer, lead melody lines that mainly comprise authentic creations that carry the weight of their creators, are performed by different singers who weave them such that the resultant density of the music underscores the authority and continued existence of the spirit beings among their siblings. In addition, the response melodies which are sung by the majority of the participants are answering phrases that play a fundamental role in anchoring the ideas that are introduced in melodies sung by lead singers. As such, the response melodies for different songs are repeatedly sung throughout the song performances meaning to say that their repetition reinforces

communication between the spirits and their siblings. On the whole, the repetition that underlines the singing of *mhande* songs coupled with the regular conduct of ritual ceremonies in which the songs are performed are among the factors that contribute to the non-existence of rehearsals for *mhande* performances as pointed out by Marecha that:

Nyanzvi dzokuimba, kuridza ngoma nokudzana mhande hadziiti chaunga, vanongosangana musi webira. Vakafa vaive nyanzvi ndivo vanobuda munyanzvi dziripo nhasi.	*Mhande* dance master singers, drummers and dancers do not conduct rehearsals, they just gather on the day of the ceremony. The spirits of the deceased master musicians are the ones that manifest themselves through the reigning master musicians.
(Marecha 30/10/10)	

It is evident from Marecha's foregoing description of the expertise of *mhande* performers that the rituals that embrace this dance are not only directed by ancestral spirits, but that the features articulated by master musicians are also symbolic of the embodied spirits.

4.3.1.2 *Maridziro engoma*

Since *mhande* drumming in both the *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* ceremonies is a spiritual act, the performance is preceded by an invocation of the spirits conducted by a master drummer as a way of dedicating the drums to the ancestors. With regards to how exactly this ritual act is conducted, Marecha says:

Dzisati dzaridzwa, ngoma dzinoturirwa basa nenyanzvi yokuimba nokuridza kubudikidza nokuchera doro nokurisveta kwava kufurira ngoma/matumba.	Before they are played, a master musician seeps some beer and sprays the drums prior to tuning.
Ngoma idzi dzinogona kubva mumisha yakasiyana siyana ndokusaka pakaiswa chifurira matumba.	These drums can be obtained from any home in the community hence it is necessary to cleanse them.
(ibid 2010)	

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When performing *mhande* dance, there are three drums that are normally played. This study has established that these drums have not been given specific names except to refer to them according to their roles, that is, lead drum (*ngoma yekushaura* or *shauro*), response drum (*ngoma yokubvumira* or *bvumiro*) and yodelling drum (*ngoma yokutsivira/yemagure* or *gure*). There are usually two drums on which the *mhande* lead pattern is played whereb the one produces a high tone and the other a low tone approximately an interval of the fifth apart.
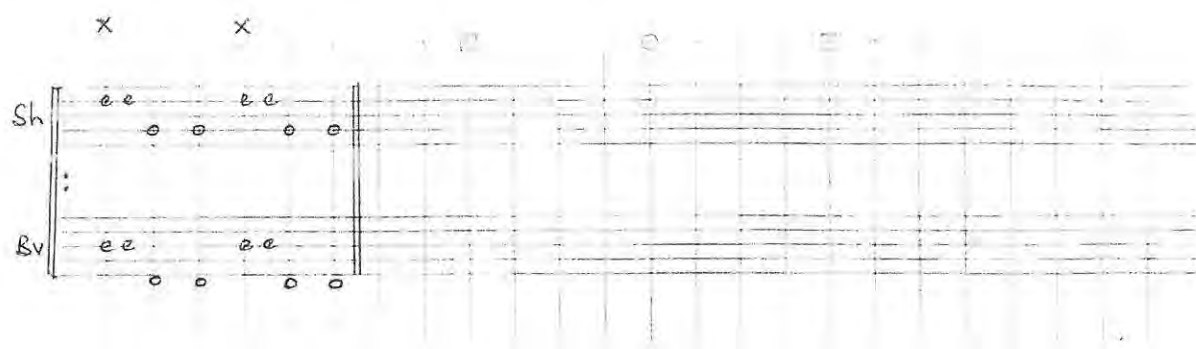
Fig. 4.4 *Mhande* fundmental beat

The interlocking drum executes varying patterns that interlock while keeping to the beat of the lead and response drums. All the drums are normally played by men. It is conceived as a cosntant reality among the Karanga that men play a leading role in drumming is because they are believed to be equal to the task of articulating drums for long periods without getting tired in the course of a performance because they are physically stronger than women.

It has since become common practice in most Karanga in rural communities that they make use of two drums for performance of *mhande* dance in conducting the *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* ceremonies due to the scarcity of master drummers in communities that have been negatively impacted upon by the migration of some people into urban centres in search of employment and the conversion of others to Christianity through missionization. Of the two drummers, one plays the lead drum that produces the fundamental beat repeatedly throughout the performance while the other performs the role of the response drum as well as that of the yodelling drum. When compared with a performance that embraces three drums, the texture of the

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music in a performance that employs two drums is not only less dense, but it is also less appealing and tends to either take much longer to appease the spirits to participate in the ceremony or else completely fail to draw them (spirits) to possess the designated mediums. While, on the one hand, the reduction of drums in *mhande* performance can be said to compromise the density of the music, it is believedm on the other hand, that the rhythm played on one lead drum maintaining the fundamental beat of the dance is still recognizable by the ancestors that get drawn to it each time it is properly performed. In Munamba's words:

Pangoma mbiri dzatinoridza kana tichitamba mhande imwe yacho inotungamira ndiyo ine iznwi rinononokera rakakochanidzwa nemadzitateguru edu vakaritambidza kwatiri tikaribata nezheve inotaura kuti ndiro kana kuti harisiri iro.
(Munamba 11/08/09)

One of the two drums played when performing *mhande* dance leads by playing the slow *mhande* beat as it was composed by our ancestors and passed on to us and we caught it by ear that helps us to identify whether or not it is the right beat.

The *mhande* beat is conceived by its creators and adherents as characterised by two main qualities: drumming played to a slow tempo (*ngoma inononokera*) and the tones constituting the drum pattern or the beat (*inzwi rengoma*). The slow tempo does not only enable the dancers to produce dignified movements[57], but it also resembles a motion that signifies the authority of the spirits. Two tones constitute the *mhande* fundamental beat: the one played with outstretched fingers tapping the edge of the drum head and the other produced by a cupped palm tapping the centre of the drum.

This lead pattern (*kushaura*) pertains to the basic foot movement for *mhande* dance that is also referred to as *kushaura*. [cf.DVD 1 Vidoe 1, 14.00 – 14.20]. Such manner of dancing *mhande* (*madzaniro emhande*) where the feet are slightly lifted above the ground in much the same way as the drummers/ hands are slightly lifted above the head of the drum signifying the intimacy between the spirits and their siblings.

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[57] *Mhande* dance is performed to slow, stately and less elaborate movement since it was composed to enhance the veneration of ancestors.

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4.3.1.3 *Madzaniro*

Foot movements constitute the core of *mhande* dance features. As such, Marecha conceives *mhande* dancing (*madzaniro*) as analogous to singing (*maimbiro*) and drumming (*maridziro engoma*) by saying:

Makumbo ndiwo shauro yekudzana
mhande inobvumirwa nedzimwe nhengo
dzemiviri izvi zvose zvichitsivirwa
no(kuimba kunoitwa nemanzwi.

(Marecha 30/10/10)

The feet comprise the lead part in dancing *mhande* and the rest of the body parts respond to their movements while the singing voices knit all the actions.

By tying gourd rattles (*magagada*) onto their feet, *mhande* adepts (*vadzani vemhande*) dancers enhance the leading role of foot movements in dancing *mhande* in that the sound of the leg gourd rattles resounds with and reinforces the lead drum rhythm. [cf DVD 1 Video 1, 15.50 – 16.10].

The mode of dancing *mhande* (*madzaniro*) that corresponds to singing, drumming, foot movements with leg rattles and other body gestures is what the Karanga believe to have been birthed by their ancestors. Marecha affirms this assertion by postulating that:

Kukayana kwengoma, maimbiro,
madzaniro nemagagada mudzaniro
unova chiga chaivo vanodzanirwa.
(ibid)

Drumming, singing and dancing with leg rattles coordinate in a manner that signifies the dictates of those to who the dance is performed.

To further confirm the idea supported by Marecha, Machando, in his exposition of *mhande* choreography, states:

Kudzana kwatinoita mhande kuri maringe
nezvirango zvakatemwa nevadzimu
vedu zvinosanganisira kuvhuramira
nokutambisa nemaridzirwo engoma
tsoka zvinoenderana yenzwi remhande.

(Machando 12/08/09)

Our way of dancing *mhande* corresponds with our ancestral spirits' choreography of the dance which includes posture where the body is slightly bent forward by the waist and making foot movements that emulate the rhythm of the lead drum.

According to Machando, the basic foot movements of the dancers are direct imitations of the compound triple beat played by the drummers. In this sense, when dancing, *mhande* dancers always face the drummers. The posture that the dancers have to take

in order to make it easy for the feet to move slightly above the ground, which is likened to sweeping (*kutsvaira*) using a traditional broom (*mutsvairo*), is one in which the body weight is distributed between the upper and lower parts of the body by slightly bending it forward by the waist. The Karanga term for such a posture is *kuvhuramira* [cf Fig. 4.5].

Fig. 4.5 *ande* dance posture (*kuvhuramira*). Mrs Munamba (extreme right) watching the dancers

Kuvhuramira also includes the positioning of hands bend upwards by the elbows in such a way that they enact the idea of summoning the spirits. The Karanga believe that the dance style which incorporates the *kuvhuramira* posture and the foot movements that resemble the *mhande* rhythm was choreographed by their ancestors and has since become the cultural standard for identifying the dance. The dancers' foot movements are correlated and intertwined with the drummers' rhythms in that some dancers' movements relate to the lead drum rhythm while other dancers make movements that fill in the spaces created by the former dancers.

Mhande dance style essentially confines movement to the dancers' feet that stamp the ground as if to summon the spirits in to come and participate in the ritual ceremony that is meant for them. In majority cases, *mhande* dancers are said to acquire their skills through dreams or direct observation and imitation of performances by master musicians. On the whole, *mhande* dance performance aesthetics pertaining to singing,

drumming and dancing are conventions that are deeply entrenched in Karanga culture. The idea that some *mhande* dancers acquire some performance szkills through dreams means that these master musicians inherit their expertise from their ancestors rather than obtain them by way of formal training. In addition, the way the musicians set themselves on the dancing arena where the dancers face the drummers, effects communication and also enhances smooth coordination of the dance features. In this way, the two performing groups may be perceived to represent the human and spiritual beings interacting by way of *mhande* dance. To this end, Karanga perception of *mhande* performance aesthetics resonates with the spiritual purpose that the dance features promote in that they are meant to connect the humans with their ancestral spirits resulting in embodiment and possession of mediums. This perception confirms Nzewi's conception of the aesthetics of African musical arts that "The philosophy of the artistic in indigenous African societies prescribes that aesthetics is to be perceived in the contexts of creative intention and practical outcome" (2007:35). Karanga ancestors' creative intention embedded in *mhande* dance features is concretized by their siblings who enjoy the counsel and the healing that accompany the performance of this indigenous musical art.

4.3.2 Pervasive performance aesthetics

Following the mobility of the bearers of *mahnde* dance, most of the authentic performative features of this cultural practice have since permeated contexts other than those for which they were originally created. This may be explained by the fact that the repetitive nature of the features, which helps with remembrance, might have led to its easy import into contexts such as Christianity, school/college extra-curricula activities, popular entertainment and dance festivals.

During Zimbabwe's colonization, the introduction of missionary work converted many Karanga to Christianity wherein they were discouraged from following their traditional practices of worshipping God through the mediation of their ancestral spirits. Given that veneration of spirts included performance of *mhande* dance, the converted Christians were also discouraged from engaging in *mhande* dance in church since it was considered to be an evil practice. Instead of completely disregarding their

indigenous dance, most of the converted performed church music when in church and *mhande* dance when back in their communities. Some of the Christians have also adapted the *mhande* beat to accompany the singing of hymns in church worship. Gospel music has since become a very popular genre in Zimbabwe because most of the praise and worship groups in different churches have resorted to composing, recording and marketing their music. Among the famous gospel artists whose music is grounded in *mhande* dance beat are Mechanic Manyeruke, Elias Musakwa and Fungisai Zvakavapano. Church music groups and gospel artists may have preferred to embrace the *mhande* beat in their music because of its slow tempo that facilitates effective communication of the sacred messages conveyed in song texts. Furthermore, these musicians have based their musical arrangements and creations on *mhande* musical experiences of the communities in which they were brought up. By extension, one of Zimbabwe's most popular music artists, Oliver Mutukudzi has also embraced the *mhande* beat in some of his compositions, for example, Mwana wamambo.

The *mhande* style, which, in popular music, is often played quicker than normal, is one of the most popular dance styles that dominate co-curricula activities in education institutions in Zimbabwe because it features prominently at functions and ceremonial activities. The institutions include primary and secondary schools, colleges as well as police and military academies of music. The authentic *mhande* dance features that are commonly taught in these institutions incorporate playing the rhythm for the lead drum and singing popular songs, for example, Kurera haizinyore.
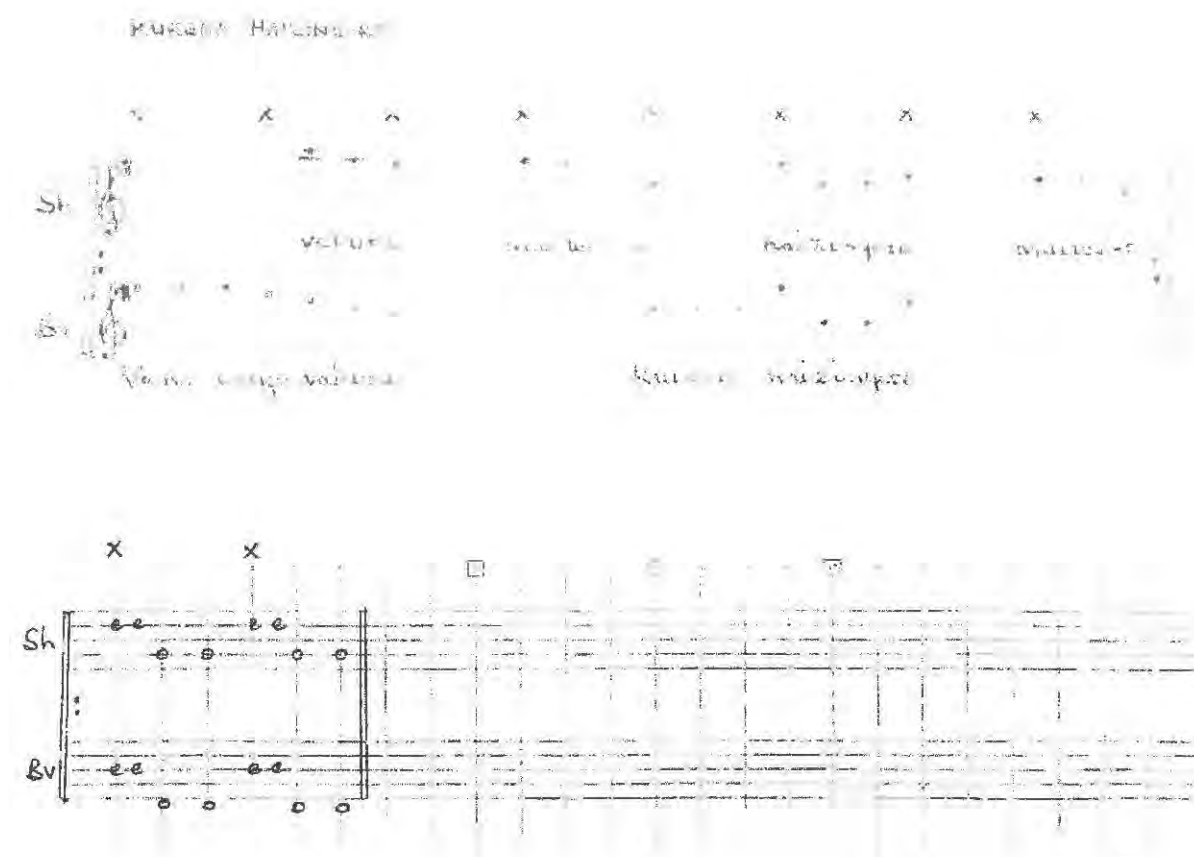
Fig. 4.6 *Mhande* popular song: Kurera haizinyore and fundamental drum beat

The staged performance of *mhande* dance emphasizes elaborate and sequenced movements that are a departure from its original choreography where the dancers' feet hardly leave the ground. In most instances, *mhande* performance is completely decontextualized and in isolated occasions such as annual events, it is recontextualized as dance drama where the performers act out what ought to take place in a ritual ceremony that embraces the dance. Staging *mhande* dance performance separates the performers from the audience and contradicts the norm – participation by all members – which is one of the characteristics of the authentic aesthetics of the musical art. The decontextualisation and recontextualisation of *mhande* dance features erode the power of the dance to ensnare the spirits and subsequently subscribe to it the role of entertainment.

In most urban settlements it has become a common practice that the Karanga who patronize beer halls have often been drawn together in order to entertain themselves by performing their indigenous music. These performances have mainly featured

dance genres, that is, *chinyambera*, *mbakumba* and *mhande*. Among all these, it is *mhande* dance that has captured the attention of many observers perhaps because of its unique gestures that have the potential to occasion emotional experience. Though they may not have power to attract the spirits, authentic *mhande* dance features such as song melodies and texts, drum rhythms and foot movements denote spiritual immanence. Conceived this way, *mhande* dance has been incorporated in many public functions including independence celebrations, political rallies and graduation ceremonies that tend to be emotionally charged. Analogous to these occasions is the issue of Muzenda's trial in court that is presented in chapter 2 in which he drew the attention of the spirits by singing a *mhande* song. More than providing entertainment to participants and audiences at public functions, *mhande* dance gestures that are connected to the spirits also relieve the social actors.

As stated earlier in the introduction to this chapter, *mhande* dance has also penetrated the economic sphere through two sponsored dance festivals: Jikinya Traditional Dance Festival for primary and secondary schools and Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition for adult groups. In both festivals dances are categorised according to their purposes and participating groups compete for prize money. Since *mhande* is a spirit dance, various groups that stage its performance at festivals dramatise the other attributes of the rituals that envelope the dance. The groups do this so as to demonstrate their understanding of the dance storyline. Thus the adjudication of the dance does not only focus on the observable features of *mhande*, but it also emphasizes the art of stage performance that compromises the authentic aesthetics of the dance. As such, staged performances of *mhande* dance have tended to portray several variations from the real features of the dance resulting from rearrangements and recreations instituted by participants belonging to different groups.

4.4 Participants

Participation in performance of *mhande* entails participation in the rituals that embrace the dance. As such, in *mutoro* and *kurova guva* ceremonies, there are two categories of participants: the visible and the invisible. The humans constitute the visible while the spirits comprise the invisible participants.

4.4.1 Visible

Participation in articulating *mhande* dance features in the two rituals is open to all the people who attend the ceremonies, however, the participants' levels of participation differ. These levels can be grouped in three: the least involving the advanced in age; the medium consisting of amateurs and the high embracing the experts. The old aged Karanga who no longer have the energy to actively participate in performing *mhande* dance often officiate at the ceremonies and also give counsel to the rest of the participants. Machando clarifies participation in *mhande* dance by stating that:

Vanhu vose vanenge vari pamutambo wemhande vakasununguka kudzana asi vanosiyana mukukwanisa kwavo.

All participants at a *mhande* ceremony are at liberty to perform the dance features although their levels of proficiency differ.

Nhano dzokumavambo kwemhande dzinowanzotungamirirwa nevaya vanoparura mutambo kuitira kuti nyanzvi dzigozopindira kana mutambo wadziya.
(Machando 12/08/09)

The early stages of *mhande* dance performance are led by amateurs so that the experts join in after the warm up.

Drawing from Machando's contribution, both amateurs and experts or master musicians are required to participate in performance of *mhande* dance. Due to their general lack of knowledge and skills, amateurs are not expected to strictly adhere to *mhande* cultural conventions when executing the dance features. For example, the lead drummer may struggle to constantly play the *mhande* beat resulting in performers failing to coordinate their performance. The Karanga allow such circumstances to obtain in order to afford the amateurs who they consider to be learners to acquaint themselves with the grammar and syntax of their indigenous musical practice. In his discussion of how Africans introduce participants to the indigenous ensemble music experience, Nzewi confirms the Karanga view of accommodating amateurs by saying, "To become competent in repeating a short theme is tough, but the reward is in developing a steady hand, as well as the ability to listen to others" (2007:225). This means that when Africans in general take part in indigenous musical practices and the Karanga in particular perform *mhande* dance features, they learn different aspects at both individual and group levels simultaneously. The nature and character of *mhande* dance comprising: lead and response singing and drumming; making alternate

novements in dancing; handclapping to cross rhythms and appropriate use of cues and objects fosters coordination.

Mhande dance expert performers or master musicians have the capability of refining their performances to resound with Karanga aesthetic principles. In other words, master musicians who include singers, drummers and dancers execute *mhande* dance in such a way that its features mirror cultural standards of performance that were designed by their ancestors. One of the master musicians (*nyanzvi yemhande*), the late Munamba explained this category of *mhande* dance participants which he belonged to as follows:

Kareko varungu vasati vauya munyika medu muno nyanzvi dzemhande dzakange dzakawanda nokuti vanhu vazhinji vaigara mumaruzevha uyezve kwakange kusina makereke adayi kutakashira nemaruwa.

Long ago before the whites came to this country there were many *mhande* dance experts because the most people lived in rural areas and also there were no churches that have been planted in all communities.

Mazuva ano nyanzvi dzavashoma nokuti vamwe vedu ava makirisitu asingafariri mitambo yechikaranga nokudaro zvinokwanisika kuti imwe mitambo isabudirira nokunge yashaya nyanzvi dzinovirutsa mitambo.

Nowadays there are few experts because some among us have become Christians who do not like to participate in indigenous religious rituals such that some ceremonies may fail to succeed due to shortage of experts who ignite ceremonies.

Nyanzvi idzi dzinovirutsa mitambo kubudikidza nezviito zvakasiyana siyana zvaiitwa nevadzimu zvinova zvinovakwezva.

These experts ignite ceremonies through various activities that were done by their ancestors so the actions lure the ancestral spirits.

Kazhinji nyanzvi dzemhande vanhurume vabve zera nokuti vechiduku vanenge vachiri kudzidzira.
(Munamba 12/08/09)

In most cases *mhande* experts are mature males because the youths will still be learning.

Going by Munamba's detailed account of *mhande* experts, it is evident that these performers are a special category of participants in ceremonies that embrace the dance in that through their actions, they make possible the interaction of the human and spirit beings. One clear sign of an indigenous ritual ceremony that is inhabited by invisible participants or spirits is embodiment which occurs in form of two states of consciousness: trance (*kunyaunywa*) and possession (*kusvikirwa*).

4.4.2 Invisible

Performance of *mhande* dance features including singing, drumming and dancing has the power to foster *kunyaunywa* and *kusvikirwa*, which states denote involvement of the spirits - the invisible participants to the *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* ceremonies. By extension, the presence of the spirits at a ritual event is not only registered through the articulation of Karanga cultural heritage embedded in *mhande* dance features, but it is also enacted through extra-musical activities. For example, in *mutoro* and *kurova guva* rituals, ceremonial beer is not just another aspect of the ceremonies, but it is particularly important in enhancing or diminishing the mood and ultimately the outcome of the ceremonies. For instance, beer that does not have the right taste is a sign of something that has not been in order regarding its preparation and/or brewing process and any such thing adversely affects the frame of mind of the participants. Conversely, beer with good taste signifies the brewers' conformity with ethos resulting in its acceptability by the spirits whose participation heightens the ceremonies. Ceremonial beer is also a feature of *mhande* in that the dance performances normally commence after participants who drink beer would have consumed some while those that do not take beer would have been served with unfermented brew called *mangisi*. Participants will continue to take these substances during breaks in performances in order to re-energize the bodies that execute *mhande* dance.

Ceremonial beer drinking is often accompanied by snuffing (*kusvuta fodya*). While beer revitalizes the body in dance, snuff is efficacious in that it draws the invisible beings (spirits) close since it directly affects the consciousness of its consumers making their bodies susceptible to embodiment. To this, Munamba contends:

Fodya yatinosvuta pamitambo yechikaranga inehwema hwemadzitateguru edu hunovakwezvera kwatiri kana tichiisvuta nehana dzeduwo dzichisendamira kwavari.	Our ancestors sense the snuff that we take at the indigenous spiritual ceremonies and hence they are drawn to us while snuff directs our hearts and conscience to connect with them (spirits).

(Marecha 12/08/09)

Snuff (*fodya yemadzitateguru/yemadzinza*) is a means of connecting humans with their spirits in the same way as does ceremonial beer (*doro rebira*) and *mhande* dance. In addition, the use of objects such as rods (*tsvimbo*) symbolizes the presence of the spirits. According to Marecha, a rod (*tsvimbo*) is:

mudonzvo womudzani unova mucherechedzo wedzidza rinotumbuka paari. (Marecha 30/10/10)	a dancer's rod (*mudonzvo*) which connotes the ancestral spirit that embodies him/her.

In this regard, ceremonial beer, snuff and rod do not only symbolize Karanga physical and spiritual spheres, but they also compliment *mhande* dance gestures, music sounsd and invocations in bridging the two realms of life.

4.5 Music

In so far as Karanga *mhande* is always framed in spiritual contexts and conceived as a holistic musical art integrating music and dance, the discussion of any individual component of the dance has to inevitably incorporate other dimensions of this musical art. This Karanga conceptualization of music is shared by other African cultures as affirmed in *Musical Arts in Africa* that "Generally, the music and the dance are not thought of as separate and are often allocated the same name" (Herbst, Nzewi and Agawu 2003: 220). This research presents two ways of explaining *mhande* form structure – one by Cuthbert Munamba and another by Etwell Marecha.

4.5.1 Munamba *mhande* form structure

Munamba describes Karanga *mhande* dance musical form as follows:

Zvinhu zvatinokoshesa mumhande kunzwanana, kuringira nokukayana kunoita vatambi vayo vachitaura nevari kumhepo. (Munamba 12/08/09)	Coordination, alertness and alternation are characteristics most valued by *mhande* performers in their communication with the spirits.

According to Munamba, the three elements: *kunzvanana* (coordination), *kuringira* (alertness) and *kukayana* (alternation) constituting *mhande* dance musical form comprise a mode of communication between the humans/performers (*vatambi*) and spirits (*vari kumhepo*).

4.5.1.1 *Kunzwanana* (Coordination)

The Karanga holistic idea of music parallels its performance in that coordination is the foundational element in learning *mhande* dance. Apart from the fact that prior to this study I had observed and participated in singing songs and drumming *mhande* rhythms at many *kurova guva* ceremonies wherein coordination of participants acts was prioritised, part of my fieldwork experience further affirmed the primacy of this musical event. At a *kurova guva* ceremony held at his home on 11 August 2009, Munamba led the singing of the song "Haiwa yowerere" and when the drummers joined in the performance he stopped the singing and took over the lead drum to demonstrate how to play it in order to coordinate the singing and the drumming.

When asked to explain why he decided to discontinue the singing, Munamba said:

Mazuva ano tine dambudziko rokuti nyanzvi dzemhande dzava shoma saka tinotopota tichidzidzisa nziyo dzisingazikanwi nevakawanda sorwandaimba rwusingakurumidzi.

Presently our challenge is shortage of *mhande* master musicians and hence we often teach unfamiliar songs like the one I have sung whose tempo can be said to be slow.

Pandangonzwa kuti ngoma yanga isinganzwanani nokuimba kwandange ndichiita ndasundwa nazvo zvokuti ndangoerekana ndatoibata.

After realising that the drummers had failed to coordinate the style with the singing, it moved me so much that I found myself sitting behind the drum.

Mushure mokunge ndaenzanisa ngoma nokuimba ndazosimbaradza kuimba nokudzana zvikapfumbidza mutambo.

Having coordinated the drumming with the singing I went on to coordinate the singing and dancing in order to liven up the performance.

(Munamba 12/08/09)

While in each Karanga community there are some *mhande* master musicians, there however, is no such thing as permanent groups that perform at different ceremonies. It is possible that some of these musicians may fail to participate in certain rituals for various reasons and their absence would create problems in coordinating performance of *mhande*, hence Munamba demonstrated how such a challenge could be dealt with. Going by the description of his experience narrated above, it is evident that no matter how proficiently one articulates the drum or performs whatever *mhande* activity, her/his ability to coordinate her/his act with other performers is more important than the competence with which s/he may perform. Once coordination has been established

emphasis shifts to accuracy which does not only heighten the performance, but it also demands maximum concentration.

4.5.1.2 *Kuringira* (Alertness)

Mhande music performance which involves singing in lead and response pattern paralleled with handclapping, drumming (lead and response) and dancing demands that participants at both individual and group level pay particular attention to what they ought to do. According to Munamba, *kuringira* comprises:

zviito zvakasiyana siyana zvinoitwa nevatambi vemhande zvinoratidzira kuti vakadzokedzana mumutambo.	*mhande* performers' different actions that show they are maximally involved in the performance.
(Munamba 12/08/09)	

Mhande musicians always make sure that their drums are in tune prior to the commencement of the performance by placing them close to fire in order to tighten the skins. *Mhande* drummers play their instruments in such a way that they have to produce cross melorhythms coordinated with handclap and interlocked with leg gourd rattle rhythms that are also intertwined with vocally sung melodies. The drummers are supposed to be mindful of the drum tones that signify that the drums have gone out of tune in order that they call for a break in performance to enable them to tune them up.

The length of time that it takes to perform each *mhande* song where none of the songs has a definite length is another factor that promotes participants' concentration in that each performer is expected to keep to maintain their parts and yet coordinate well with others as they sometimes may continuously perform a piece for ten or more minutes. Moreover, the fact that, on the one hand, the performance is spontaneous and on the other hand, performers' entry points to the performance differ, ensures participants' supreme level of alertness given that *mhande* music performance does not employ the services of a director or conductor.

4.5.1.3 *Kukayana* (Alternation)

Mhande musical activities are performed in a manner that emphasizes alternation in the sense that for each activity, performers coordinate each other and one another's

activities as they interlock their musical art. How the Karanga make sense of musical arts coordination is the domain of alternation. In actual fact, alternations are building blocks for coordination. Lead singing alternates with the singing of response parts and similarly, the left hand alternates with the right hand in drumming and the left foot alternates with the right foot in dancing. Taking drumming as an example, the lead drummer plays a repeated fundamental pattern comprising what may be referred to as the *mhande* beat on which the performance hinges.

Fig. 4.7 *Mhande* song example for *kukayana*: Dziva remvura

The beat is made up of a repeat pattern which corresponds to the two phrase structure for *mhande* songs such as Dziva remvura (cf. Fig. 5.7). Two distinct phrases for this song are the lead (*Sh*) and response (*Bv*) phrases: *Wriona dziva remvura* and *woye wariona dziva remvura hore*, respectively.

While the repeated *mhande* beat can appear to be a simple activity to a causal onlooker who does not conceive it as a spiritual magnet, its challenge is in playing it consistently. More than keeping out of the space of the lead drummer, the response drummer extemporises the theme and by so doing endows it with a fuller density commonly referred to in Karanga as *ngoma inodziya* which means the drumming that spurs the dancers.

Whereas the three terms: *kunzwanana; kuringira* and *kukayana* that Munamba used to describe the structure of *mhande* music can be relied on in "articulating theories of ... [Karanga] musical practice", "words can never sufficiently convey what musical arts making communicates as a unique system of non-verbal discourse and human behaviour in ... [Karanga tradition])" (Nzewi et al 2008: 1). It is possible then to say that the three structural elements of *mhande* do not only represent the empirical dimension of the dance comprising performers' bodily movements, musical instruments/objects and gestures, but they also engulf ethos that encompasses musicianship and musical experience which reflect on communication with the spirits. It is in performance that these musical elements attain a communicative role as confirmed by Agawu who views ethos as a means of fostering "interpersonal exchange and affirmation even while making room for extending the boundaries of what is expressively possible" (Agawu 2008 www.sibetrans/trans/trans11/art08.htm 21/07/10). In this sense, Karanga understanding of music is also similar to Agawu's notion of African music as text when he argues, "To be properly understood, African music must be approached at the level of musical language domesticated in various 'compositions' and at the level constituted by a supplementary but necessary critical language" (2001:9). In relation to *mhande* dance, a composition entails song melodies and lyrics, drum rhythms and handclapping, dance style and gestures that are symbolic and have transcendent meaning.

4.5.2 Marecha *mhande* form structure

Like Munamba, Marecha views the structure of *mhande* dance form three perspectives by stating:

Mumutambi wemhande mune kushaura, kubvumira nokutsivira zvinova mutauro unokwezva madzitateguru.

(Munamba 112/08/09)

Mhande performance features embrace the lead, the response and the interlocking attributes which constitute a voice that attracts the ancestors.

The three aspects: *kushaura* (lead), *kubvumira* (response) and *kutsivira* (interlocking pattern) are evident in singing, drumming, dancing and handclapping.

4.5.2.1 *Kushaura* (lead) and *kubvumira* (response)

All *mhande* songs have lead vocal lines which are referred to as *shauro* (abbreviated *Sh*) in the transcriptions in this thesis. Lead lines (*shauro*) carry the themes of the songs and therefore these lines have to be sung by voices that should be projected above other voices. Similarly, *mhande* drumming employs lead two drums which produce light and high tones. When singing *mhande* songs, the lead voice, which most African music *authors* have termed a call, invites a response in order for it to be well anchored. The response lines are called *kubvumira* or *bvumiro* (abbreviated *Bv*) in the transcriptions. *Bvumiro* melodies are not only different from, but they also essentially use lower notes compared to *shauro*. Out of the three drums that are normally played in *mhande* dance performance, the response drum produces the lead rhythm qt q deeper level than the lead drum with high tones. In relation to dancing, the response (*bvumiro*) to the *mhande* beat articulated by the feet with leg rattles takes different forms including body gestures such as the use of hands and handheld objects as well as cues, ululation and whistling. Hand clappers incorporate *bvumiro* by artculating duple against triple beat which idea structuralists or scientific musical scholarship has referred to African music rhythmic configuration as 2 against 3 or 3 agaist 2 metric patterns.

Mhande dance lead (*shauro*) and response (*bvumiro*) phrase patterns are interlocked (*kutsivirwa*) with what in Karanga are called *magure*. With regards singing, *magure*, also commonly known as *huro* involves singing vocables – syllables such as *ha hiya ho* – that are executed in such a way that the resultant melodies weave through the lead and the response melodies. *Magure* in drumming are played on *tsviviro* drum that produces patterns that interlock with the beat played on the lead and response drums.

4.6 Dance

Mhande dance style which, as discussed in this Chapter that most mhande adepts are endowed with the dance style through dreams, is believed to have been choreographed by Karanga ancestors virtually focuses on the manner in which dancers merge their foot movements with the drumming and other gestures in order to asign to the style the meaning that it ought to carry. As such executing *mhande* dance which involves bodily action and thought on how to carry it out resonates with the description by Herbst and others that:

> Executing a dance requires full utilisation of anticipatory and processual thinking, using exact memory recall of movements, spatial orientation, and synchronisation of movements with other dancers in relation to time, as well as space and range. These are coupled with continuous self-awareness to conform one's own movements within the constraints of culture and custom (Herbst et al 2003:218).

Mhande dance style combines the authentic and the improvised patterns. Both the fundamental drum rhythm and the basic foot movements constitute the memorised patterns or the past of the dance while its other sound patterns and gestures comprise the improvisations which are the performers' creations. It may therefore be difficult, if not impossible, to design a comprehensive way of transcribing these choreographic perspectives to the dance and, as such, constant reference to images on video accompanying the analysis of the dance style is made in Chapter 5.

4.7 Manifest level of attentiveness and participation

The two main factors that augment attention and participation in *mhande* dance performance are the venue and individual elaboration of *mhande* characteristic choregraphic theme. In *kurova* guva ceremonies, *mhande* dance is performed in round grass thatched huts that are often used as kitchens.

The circular shape and confined physical spaces of the huts draw participants together and also direct their attention at the dancers who are centrally positioned in the dancing arena. This arena may be considered to be the convergence zone for vocal and instrumental sounds that that make musical sense to the performers. Given that all participants have to share the limited space within the hut, their intimacy fosters unity of purpose to such an extent that those with ulterior motives feel out of place and

often voluntarily withdrawt. Once performance of *mhande* dance ensues, all the people in the hut would be expected to take part in some dance feature of their choices so that nobody engages in any unrelated activity. This means that even those who are physically and/or emotionally challenged as well as those who are too old to be actively involved are well catered for because their hearts and minds are captured (*kubvutwa*[58]) by the effects of the actions of other performers.

Performance of *mhande* dance in *mutoro* ceremonies is usually conducted at two venues: a rain shrine (*mapa*) and a kitchen hut in the home where the beer was brewed. *Mapa* are generally cited by hills or mountains where the great ancestors are believed to have been buried. Those who are mandated with the custody of the *mutoro* ceremony for a given community (*huze dzemutoro*) for example, the Magumise family in the community where Chief Nhema resides, are the only ones who would be entitled to climb up Svika Mountain - the habitat of the spirits - so as to evoke the spirits to take part in *mutoro* ceremonies. After invoking the spirits *huze dzemutoro* join the rest of the participants who would be gathered by the shrine at the bottom of the mountain. According to Marecha:

Vomumba magara muchibuda dzinza romutoro vokwaMagumise ndivo vane pfupiro yokuvika mutoro.	The Magumise family - through which the ancestral rain spirit has always manifested - are those who pray for rain.
Pavanopedza kuvika vanoimba rwuyo rwokuti Baya wabaya *vachienda kundosangana noruzhinji pamapa muzasi megomo.* (Marecha 30/10/10)	After the prayer, they sing the song Baya wabaya as they come down the to connect with others by the shrine beneath the mountain.

On the one hand, the singing of the song Baya wabaya implies the waging of a war against the evil spirits' interference and, on the other hand, it symbolizes the paving of the way for ancestors to amicably interact with their siblings. The siblings who are entitled to participate in *mhande* dance performance at the shrine are those that are approved by the ancestors (*madzitateguru*) on the basis of their sound knowledge of,

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[58] *Kubvuta* is a Karanga term for the act of being taken over unaware of what will have happened. As such, this can be conceived as a level of attentiveness where participation occurs without any conscious effort from the participant.

adherence to and experience with indigenous ritual practices. Any participants who fail to meet such criteria are disqualified from participation. Being a custodian of rain making (*huze yemutoro*) is a status which is a step below chieftaincy. *Huze yemutoro* shares the same status as a community rain spirit medium (*svikiro yedunhu*). For instance, Magumise is the *mutoro* custodian for Nhema community in Shurugwi district while Marecha is the rain spirit medium. Even though Magumise and Marecha operate on the basis of clearly defined roles, the two work in consultation with each other in order to patently advise the Chief.

This research has established that Karanga traditional practice of performing *mhande* dance by the shrine is diminishing due to the scarcity of experts, among them *mutoro* custodians (*huze dzemitoro*); rain spirit mediums (*masvikiro emvura*), and master musicians (*nyanzvi dzemhande*) who are adequately qualified and experienced to play the leading roles in the conduct of *mutoro* ceremonies. This observation was confirmed by the Guardian Spirit (Tateguru Manyanga) at the territorial rain shrine who asserted that:

Takaona kuti zhinhu zvizhinji zvinosanganisira matare emitoro zvanga zvisingafambiswi nemazvo kwemakore akawanda apfuura zvikakonzera matambudziko akawanda munyika yedu.	The ancestors (*madzitateguru*) saw that over the past several years many things including the *mutoro* rain rituals were not properly conducted and this resulted numerous problems that have been experienced in our country.
Kuti tizvigadzirise, takatanga nokuonesa mutungamiri wenyika kuti adzorere masimba evhu kumadzishe kuitira kuti atibatsire kukotsvanidza masvikiro atinoshanda nawo kusimudzira matare emumatunhu emunyika ndokuti tifambe mugwara remadzitateguru. (Manyanga 31/10/10)	In order to rectify the wrong practices, we convinced our President (Robert Mugabe) to restore chiefs authority over the land so that they assist us to draw together spirit mediums through who we work to promote and direct the way of life of our ancestors.

Tateguru Manyanga acknowledges that irregardless of an appropriate monitoring system, traditional rituals have thrived. However, this has resulted in varying conceptions to individual practices such as the *mutoro*. This is the reason Tateguru Manyanga advocates for the revitalisation of authenticity in executing rituals which are our ancestors' creations. In that way, the spirits involvement in indigenous ceremonies is enhanced.

In support of Tateguru Manyanga's concern over the flaws that are embedded in the current conduct of *mutoro* rain rituals, Marecha observes that:

Kareko mutoro waitambirwa pamapa asi zvazvino wava kutambirwa mudzima.	*Mhande* dance in *mutoro* ceremony used to be performed at shrines but in modern times it is conducted in homes.
Sokuona kwangu vanhu vakawanda vave nezvibatabata saka vakasunhunguka kuva munzvimbo yavakajaira pane yamadzinza.	This can be explained by the fact that most people's impurities cause them to feel more comfortable in homes than at places associated with ancestors.
Zvakare zvibatabata zvinokonzera kuti madzinza atadze kutumbuka pane vanokodzera zvoita kuti nyanzvi dzemhande dziite shoma kozotungamirwa nevakadzidzira vasingakwezvi vadzimu.	In addition, impurities inhibit embodiment of designated *mhande* master musicians leading to their shortage, which gap is filled in by trained performers who are unable to appease the spirits.

(Marecha 30/10/10)

Drawing from Marecha's observations, it may be argued that the status of *mhande* dance in the *mutoro* ceremony as well as that of its performers (musicians) is compromised by the majority participants' impure ways in which they lead their lives and their means of attaining musicianship. Divinely appointed musicians[59] perform *mhande* dance in a manner that empowers it to ensnare the spirits thus, ascribing to it the status of a defining element of the *mutoro* ceremony. Conversely, trained musicians who rely on their intuition in attempting to entice the spirits degrade the eminence of the spirits as well as the significance of the dance and that of the *mutoro* ritual.

In both *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies performance of *mhande* dance is essentially an enactment of ancestral spirits involvement in assisting their siblings to manage life challenging issues. In this sense, participants' attention is particularly paid to performers who are closely linked with the spirits. These chief actors include officiating elders who invoke the spirits, master musicians who beguile the spirits and

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[59] Divinely appointed musicians are those that are endowed with the dance skills through dreams and family lineage inheritance.

spirit mediums that are embodied by the spirits whose quality of life determines the degree of success of the critual ceremonies.

4.8 Purpose of mhande dance

Mhande dance serves a multidimensional purpose which incorporates communication between humans and spirits, spiritualization of rituals, harmonization of the physical and spiritual worlds, healing, social bonding and a means of fighting the evil spirits. *Mhande* dance is a mode of communication that enables the Karanga to enter into dialogue with their ancestors. This means that *mhande* dance gestures "convey supernatural essence ... [wherein] the abstract become more concrete" (Hanna 1987: 110). Thus, *mhande* is dynamic in that it is invocative and persuasive enough to spiritualize ritual ceremonies that embrace the dance. As such, through performance of *mhande* dance *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ritual ceremonies "help to restore ... [the Karanga] to ... [their] traditional values and renew their commitment to a spiritual life" (Lugira 1999: 13). Marecha affirms this idea in his reference to the transcendent meaning of the *mhande* song "Mbavarira inoda vane dare" which entails the benefits participants accrue from conducting indigenous rituals such as *kurova guva* and *mutoro* that merge *mbavarira* (*mhande* dance or *ngoma*) and ritual ceremony (*dare*) into practices that invite the spirits to inhabit the ceremonies (*matare*).

Mhande dance harmonizes the spiritual and physical worlds through the human body in dance and use of objects such as rods (*tsvimbo*) and substances comprising ancestral snuff (*fodya yemadzinza*) and ceremonial beer. In this sense, *mhande* dance gestures are symbolic of the presence of the supernatural (spirits) in natural form. These gestures are efficacious to spirits as well as humans. For example, the music that the spirits connect with has force enough to cause them to engage in performance and in order to do so they (spirits) embody their siblings. Embodiment has mutual benefit in that it also offers physical and emotional healing to humans. Essentially, *mhande* dance facilitates the harmonization of the world of Karanga ancestors with that of their siblings and as a result the two worlds become a community. Such is a community that is implied in the song Mbavarira inoda vane dare (*mhande* dance is for those in communion with spirits). This view of community may also be likened to

what Malidoma Some asserts that "The general health and well-being of an individual are connected to a community" (1998: 21).

By drawing community members together, *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies also facilitate participants' social bonding. Conceived from the *mhande* dance perspective, bonding is evident in participants coordinated activities that override their differences. Munamba emphasised this point by saying:

Vaimbi, varidzi vengoma, vadzani nevamwe vose vatsigiri vemhande tinoti munhu mumwe chete nokuti vanobata pamwe chete kuzadzisa chinangwa chimwe chete	*Mhande* singers, drummers, dancers and other partiipants constitute a whole because they foster the attainment of a single goal.
Kuita uku kunotunza kuti vanhu vose ava vabatane vagarisane zvakanaka. (Munamba 12/08/09)	This team work unites and harmonizes these social actors.

Given that *mhande* dance makes it possible for participants at *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies to relate well with one another, it is therefore logical to assume that such a smooth relationship enhances close association with spirits. This line of argument affirms the meaning of the song Mbavarira inoda vane dare – dancing is dialoguing with ancestors. However, it is also understood that in the course of dialoguing with ancestors evil spirits may, through false pretence, intrude the ceremony (*dare*). In order to guard against any such intrusion, *mhande* dance is also employed as a weapon for disarming the enemy through performance of songs like Tora wuta hwako [cf. Appendix III, VCD track 2].

Fig. 13 *Mhande* song: Tora wuta hwako

Literal translation of words of the song

(*Sh*) *Nyuchi dzinoruma*   Bees sting

(Bv) *Tora wuta hwako toda kuenda*   Fetch your bow and arrow we want to
      dzinoruma   go and sting like bees

Actual meaning of song

Having communion (*dare*) with ancestors is likened to going out hunting honey where the hunter has to fight the bees in order to access the honey. This means that the evil spirits are aware of the positive outcome accruing from the unity of siblings and their ancestors and they (evil spirits) try to stand in the way. The ammunition of ancestors is their unity as in the use of the word "we" and hence the music/dance they perform together. Thus, by means of this ammunition, embodied ancestors overcome the evil spirits that are a disjointed armed force.

The multifaceted role of *mhande* dance presented in this section of the Chapter clearly reveals its connection with and articulation of Karanga ontology.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter the description of *mhande* dance has addressed its contexts, nature, character, form, meaning and purpose. This research has revealed that the Karanga have a vocabulary for the form structure of *mhande* dance. This structure embraces three main elements of its features: *kushaura* (lead), *kubvumira* (response) and *kutsinhira* (interlocking) as well as three attributes of its aesthetics: *kunzwanana* (coordination); *kuringira* (alertness) and *kukayana* (alternation) which components relate to the empirical and the dynamic nature of the dance, respectively. This dual nature of *mhande* dance enables it to connect its surviving adherents with their ancestors.

CHAPTER 5 MHANDE DANCE: AN ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on answering one of the key questions to this study: Is representation of indigenous African dance a text of postcolonial culture or another frame of knowledge construction? *Mhande* dance is a frame of Karanga cultural knowledge (*chikaranga*) because it is the means by which the Karanga connect with their ancestors. *Chikaranga* is not only framed in indigenous rituals including *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies, but it is also enacted through *mhande* singing, drumming and dancing.

The Karanga perceive the somatic gestures of *mhande* dance as a vehicle for communicating with their ancestors because the gestures bear the culture with which the spirits identify. As such *mhande* features are symbolic of the spiritual force that sustains human life. This functional role of *mhande* can be likened to Charles Seeger's view of music as communication of "worldview as the feeling of reality" (Seeger 1977 cited in Feld 1984: 1). To the Karanga, *mhande* dance is the means by which they experience the reality of life that incorporates the physical and the spiritual dimensions referred to by Nzewi as the "tangible and intangible coordinates" (2007: 11). This Karanga purview of *mhande* dance as a scheme of reality does not only resonate with Agawu's proposition that "In so far as they constitute complex messages rooted in specific cultural practices, the varieties of African music known to us today may be designated as text" (2001: 8), but it also complicates the analysis of the dance.

Given that indigenous African music in general and Karanga *mhande* in particular is a powerful non-verbal communication symbol, my attempt at expounding *mhande* dance discourse follows Blacking's claim that if there be any single universal method for analysing all music, it can never be scientific or else the scientific should be humanistic in that the "different interpretations of symbols become relevant in analysing their creation and use in society: all ethnic perceptions of the semiotics of music must be taken into account" (1982: 15). Blacking's contribution is partially affirmed by Kaeppler who used the adopted anthropological emic analysis to analyse dance in order to make theoretical statements about movement systems that embraced

native points of view (Kaeppler 2007: 56). My explication of *mhande* dance, which draws from contributions by Agawu 2001, Blacking 182, Kaeppler 2007, Nzewi 2007 and Seeger 1977 quoted above comprise: the use of analytical discourse in the structural analysis of what the Karanga consider to be the authentic features of the dance; the description of the semiotics of the somatic gestures of the dance, and the translation of Karanga culture. Thus the ethnographic data of *mhande* presented in this thesis is representative of an emic analysis of the dance involving the use of Karanga terminology juxtaposed, where applicable, with ethnomusicological epistemology.

5.2 Analytical discourse

Mhande dance establishes the *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* rituals that ascribe to it its meaning. This means that an analysis of *mhande* dance embraces the analysis of its contexts - the rituas that represent Karanga ontology. In this sense, *mhande* cannot be equated to dance as argued by Kaeppler that "In many non-Western societies there is no indigenous concept comparable to 'dance' and a larger view of structured movement systems is not regarded" (1991: 12). The focus, by dance scholars of European tradition, on choreographic structure of movement systems as informed by the scientific approach on which the discipline of musicology is founded, has not regarded the larger view of structured movement in indigenous musical practices of non-Western cultures. Contrary to structural analysis of dance by scholars of European tradition, American dance scholars focused on "dancing people" (Giurchescu and Torp 1991: 1) as mainly dictated by their anthropological academic orientation. More recently, ethnochoreological studies of dance, particularly by those scholars who are members to the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) ethnochoreology[60] study group, have added variety to perspectives on the study of indigenous dance traditions.

Although European and American dance scholars approached dance analysis from varying perspectives: empirical and ethnological, respectively, word or speech became the hallmark of their study of dance symbols. The difficulty of representing

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[60] Ethnochoreology is defined as the study of dance in contexts outside the western world. Most ethnochoreologists believe that it is necessary to understand a culture in order to understand its movement traditions (Sadie, Vol. 8, 2001: 362).

indigenous musical practices through speech and written language has been highlighted by many scholars, among them: Charles Seeger (1977), John Blacking (1982) and Kofi Agawu (2001, 2003). In laying out his view to this, Anthony Seeger says, "The situation is particularly difficult in societies with little tendency toward such kinds of analytical speech. But there are other linguistic resources at our disposal for understanding music" (1979: 374). The Karanga are a typical example of a culture with limited *mhande* music vocabulary that had not, prior to this study, been written down. The Karanga discourse for *mhande* music is therefore used wherever it applies to the dance features and appropriate explanations in English are provided for such indigenous concepts. The two videos accompanying this thesis have been employed as resources that support my analysis of *mhande* music and dance for the purpose of producing the textual documentation of the dance. The structure of *mhande* music for which there is no Karanga language of expression, is represented through transcriptions of song melodies, drum rhythms and handclap patterns in pulse notation system. The fundamental drum beat and the dance style are illustrated in pictures captured from video images that constitute full views of the structures of the movement patterns. Similarly, the performers' alternations are graphically presented in pictures.

5.3 Analysable features of the dance

In the *mutoro* and the *kurova guva* ceremonies, *mhande* dance is a Karanga bodily movement idiom that embodies structural patterns that constitute the style and meaning of the dance. Fundamental to this holist perception of *mhande* is the fact that the dance employs the body, on the one hand, as a manifestation of Karanga conceptualization of life in the physical world and, on the other hand, as a symbol of the spiritual sphere of life. In this sense, the Karanga use *mhande* dance gestures to enact their view of the physical and spiritual worlds. These gestures incorporate singing (*kuimba*), drumming (*kuridza ngoma*), bodily movements (*kudzana*) and use of objects such as rods (*tsvimbo*). *Mhande* is therefore a musical tradition that presents the analyst with the challenge of delineating and representing these dance features. This study analyses features of *mhande* dance incorporating songs, drum rhythms, handclap rhythms, foot movements and other bodily movements and gestures. The

analysis represents the structural patterns resulting from the performers' execution of the authentic dance features.

According to Marecha, the original sequence of performance of *mhande* dance is categorised in four: i) *nyere* (whistle); ii) *mbavarira* (dialogue); iii) *kuvhima* (hunt), and iv) *mhande* (lure/ensnare). *Nyere* incorporates singing by the throat which is also commonly known as *huro* or *magure*, drumming *mhande* beat and dancing to *mhande* style that is, slightly lifting the feet when dancing (*kupukuta pasi*). *Nyere* serves a dual purpose: to pronounce the commencement of the ceremony to the spirits since the ritual is meant for them and to attract the attention of the spirits. When performing *nyere* the singing comprises vowels and syllables only since the music is a way of calling the ancestors. In contrast, *mbavarira* embraces the singing of words that portray the ancestors' dialogue with their siblings. The dance pattern for *mbavarira* involves *kupukuta pasi* as well as dancing while lifting the feet (*kusimudza tsoka mukudzana*). By so doing the dancers reinforce their communication with the spirits. Thus *mbavarira* is a way by which Karanga humans express their desire to unite with their ancestors whose way of life they simulate through the conduct of the inherited ritual ceremonies and the *mhande* dance. In this sense, the words of the song "*mbavara inoda vane dare*" denote the idea of setting an environment that enables the performers to be in concert with the spirits.

5.4 Structural analysis of the dance music

The objective, scientific study of music which resulted in the establishment of different systems of notating music sound and forms of movement, has been beneficial to Western music and criticised for excluding the perpective of the more valued social conventions in non-Western musical traditions. In this way there is a sense in arguing that structural analysis of music or the semiotics of music has been declared to be inadequate to represent indigenous musical practices especially stylised movement systems or dances. According to Ajayi, "Semiotics, the science of signs in human society, has had a significant impact on conventional approaches to the analysis of body movements" (1998: 10). However, the Western scientific analysis of

dance through Benesh Movement Notation[61], for example, which is considered to be the representation of movement only, has been blamed for ignoring the context, social and historical process out of which the musical texts arise (Tomaselli 1999: 29). By arguing that "Music's autonomous structure is only one of many elements that contribute to its import", Joseph Kerman (1985: 72) affirms Tomaselli's criticism of musical semiotics. In a move to deviate from the formalist and technical writing on semiotics, Tomasselli's definition, "the study of how meaning occurs in language, pictures, performance, and other forms of expression" (ibid) embodies a broader understanding of the concept which resonates with Karanga view of *mhande* dance.

With particular reference to *mhande* dance, the features such as stylized movement patterns, gestures, words and sounds that may be represented do not only have a history, but they also are cultural conventions that convey the meanings that were designated to them by their creators. This way of conceiving authentic *mhande* features in relation to their transcendent meaning is analogous to Jacques Derrida's explanation of current semiotics as "semiology constructed on the model of the sign and its correlates: communication and structure" (2002: 17). Thus in this study, the structural analysis or representation of *mhande* dance features through signs: words and pictures constitutes the analysable dimension of the dance while the feelings and sense of connection with the spirits that the adepts make of these features comprise the hidden perspective to *mhande* dance. As such, and for the purpose of this thesis only, this chapter focuses on the characteristic features of *mhande* dance as a text whose significance is presented in chapter 6.

5.4.1 Note on transcriptions of mhande songs

In this thesis, *mhande* songs, the fundamental drum rhythm and handclap patterns are mainly notated through the pulse notation system and for most songs whose audio recordings could easily be processesed, some staff notation approximate equivalent transcriptions are also presented. In pulse notation, the complex rhythmic dimension of *mhande* music in particular and indigenous nusic of other African traditions is

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[61] Benesh Movement Notation, also known as dance script or choreology, is a figurative representation of the human body employed in documenting any form of dance. The five lines of the Benesh stave coincide with the head, shoulders, waist, knees and floor (from top to bottom) and additional signs are used to notate the dimension and quality of movement (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benesh_Movement_Notation 01/10/10).

represented by vertical lines of same distance between them which are referred to as pulse lines.

A music manuscript with twenty four pulses across the page has been used to transcribe *mhande* songs, drum rhythm and handclap pattern. Each pulse line stands for a small unit of time that does not have a specific duration as is the case in Western music. Andrew Tracey aptly explains the purpose of a pulse by indicating that it clarifies rhythmic relations by specifying the approximate entry of a note in performance of African music (1988: 44). Thus the Pulse Notation music manuscript comprises which comprises twenty four pulse lines across the page may have been determined by the length of most indigenous African song cycles and indeed Karanga *mhande* dance song cycles too. Like Western music notation pulse notation uses a five line staff and the treble clef to represent the pitch dimension of the music.

The transcriptions of *mhande* music presented herein represent the rhythmic, melodic, form and textual aspects which correspond to the structural elements offered by Marecha and Munamba as discussed in chapter 4. Marecha's proposed *mhande* form structural elements are the lead (*shauro*), the response (*bvumiro*) and the interlocking (*tsiviro* or *magure*) traits. Munamba's *mhande* dance analytical elements comprise coordination (*kunzwanana*), alertness (*kuringira*) and alternation (*kukayana*). Pulse Notation system only represents *mhande* songs and not the dance gestural features,

Each melodic line is marked by dots (· · ·) placed against the articulated pulse lines and individual notes in parenthesis (·) represent alternative notes constituting variations of the main melodies. The rendition of *mhande* dance is dictated by the fundamental rhythm played on the lead drum which I refer to as the guide beat. The guide beat is marked by an (x) placed against the first pulse of each triple beat.

Fig. 5.1 *Mhande* guide beat

An **x** written against a pulse line marks the accented pulse of a triple pulse beat as indicated in the illustration of the *mhande* guide beat above.

Pairs of dots written in form of colons (:) together with double bar lines appearing at the beginning and the end of song transcriptions indicate that the two part songs are generally sung repeatedly since the music does not have definite ending. Thus the length of a song becomes a song cycle such that a song that is made up of eight beats has a twenty four pulse cycle. The transcriptions are written without bar line divisions because the lead (*shauro*), response (*bvumiro*) and interlocking (*tsiviro*) melodies and rhythmic patterns of the music accentuate different pulses of the guide beats. Interlocking lines and patterns have not been notated because they are so highly improvised that it becomes difficult to represent them through fixed or prescriptive notation.

The singing of *mhande* songs ought to employ three voice parts: lead (*shauro*); response (*bvumiro*) and interlocking, but among the present day Karanga there are hardly any musicians who are able to execute *magure* and hence *shauro* and *bvumiro* dominate the majority songs. *Shauro* is abbreviated (**Sh**) and *bvumiro* (**Bv**) and these vocal codes appear against respective melodies of all the songs transcribed. Only the treble clef is used in writing song melodies for two voice parts: lead and response that respond to or overlap each other with incidental harmony. The music is written in key G major for all songs as if they are sung to one key when in actual fact the only reason for adopting this key is that it accommodates the melodic ranges of notes for most songs within the stave such that the use of ledger lines is minimized. *Mhande* song melodies basically move by step and the melodic contours are therefore indicative of the fact that the music is heavily dependent on the speech tone of Karanga language.

The fundamental melorhythmic drum pattern comprises two main tones that are produced by playing by the edge and the centre of the drum. The pulses showing articulations made by the edge of the drum are marked by an (**e**) while an (**o**) represents those that are played by the centre of the drum. The hand that produces sound on the drum is shown by the letter (**R**) for the right and (**L**) for the left hand as

indicated beneath each pulse of the mhande beat. The handclap that articulates the beat is marked by (**x**) and a big dot (•) is used for the response pattern.

5.4.2 Song transcriptions

In this thesis, the *mhande* musical analysis follows Marecha's and Munamba's interpretaions of the form structure of the dance music. Thus the emic analysis employed in representing *mhande* music in this study encompasses the use of Karanga terminology juxtaposed, when applicable, with the analytical musical discourse of the West. 12 songs in total constitute the repertoire of song transcriptions presented in this Chapter. 5 out of the 12 songs are examples – one for each of the three categories or genres of *mhande* dance songs: *nyere, mbavarira, kuvhima* and and two for the *mhande* category as Marecha presented them. The other 7 songs are examples of the most common *kurova guva* and *mutoro* mhande dance songs that are performed in different Karanga commnities. These songs comprise what has been referred to by Marecha as the minor songs for the *mhande* category. All transcriptions generally follow this order – staff transcription, other transcription, song lyrics translation and song meaning.

Song 1: Title	Wo iye iye (*Nyere* song) [cf. Appendix II, DVD 2 – 06:00]
Performed by	Etwell Marecha
Performance venue	Marecha's home, Nhema village Shurugwi
Docunted by	Jerry Rutsate
Date	30 October 2010

| (*Sh*) [1st phrase] | *Wo iye iye iye* |
| (*Bv*) [1st phrase] | *Ho ha wo wo* |

| (*Sh*) [2nd phrase] | *Wo iye iye iye* |
| (*Bv*) [2nd phrase] | *Ha wo ha ha woye* |

We iya iye

Sh: Wa iyo iye u-iye

Bu: Wo ha wo iyo

Wa re iye iya iye

Wo ha wo iyo

ha wo ha ha wo ye

Drumming   Handclapping

R L R R R L R R

The lyrics for this song comprise syllables or vocables sung to *kutsivira* or *magure* singing technique.

Marecha explains the *magure* technique of singing by the throat as a way of singing that Karanga ancestors crerated and often employed in singing such that it became a preferred way of performing mhande dance songs. *Magure* is a code that ancestral spirits can easily decode.

Song 2: Title   Mbavarira inoda vane dare [cf. Appendix II, DVD Video 2 – 08:44]

Performed by   Etwell Marecha

Performance venue   Marecha's home, Nhema village Shurugwi

Docunted by   Jerry Rutsate

Date   30 October 2010

(*Sh*) [1st lead line]   *Mbavarira inoda vane dare*

(*Bv*) [Response]   *Ha ho woyere woye woye ho ha he ha aiwa* (vocables)

(*Sh*) [2nd lead]   *Mbavarira chishongo chamatare*

Mbavarira inoda vane dare

Mbavarira inoda vane dare

Mhande music is for in concert with the spirits

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Mbavarira chishongo chamatare

Mhande music embelishes ceemonies

This song like all *mbavarira* songs is said to be dialogic in that its text informs the participants in ritual cerenonies about the forbears' cultural belief and values that are meant to direct their siblings' lives. This is the wisdom which the siblings apprehend by way of performing *mbavarira* song(s) while at the sane time confirming with their ancestors the receipt of their (ancestors) guidance and counselling.

<u>**Song 3**</u>: Title	Tevera Gweru [cf. Appendix III, DVD 2 – 10:07]
Performed by	Etwell Marecha
Performance venue	Marecha's home, Nhema village Shurugwi
Docunted by	Jerry Rutsate
Date	30 October 2010
(Sh)	*Tevera* Gweru *tevedza* Sanyati
(*Bv*)	*Ha hi ya ha woyere* (vocables)

Tevera Gweru

Tevera Gweru

Womitevara Gweru tevetu Sanyati

re

Hahiye iva wayere

Drumming

Handclapping

This is a song about hunters hunting down animals along Gweru and Sanyati Rivers from where they (animals) quenched their thirst. Hunting animals is analogous to the idea of fighting bad spirits in ritual ceremonies. In this sense, killing animals in hunting expeditions is as much of a measure of success as suppressing and/or sending away bad spirits from rituals in order to attain the goals of the ceremonies.

Song 4: Title   Haiwa iye woyere [cf. Appendix II, DVD 2 – 11:52]
Performed by   Etwell Marecha
Performance venue   Marecha's home, Nhema village Shurugwi
Docunted by   Jerry Rutsate
Date   30 October 2010

(*Sh*)   *Ha iye ha woye iye he woye*
(Bv)   *Ha he woye woye*

Haiwa yowere

This is a *mhande* major song meaning to say it is capable of enticing great spirits that have a close connection with *magure* which constitute the song text,

Song 5: Title   Ndaniwa nemvura [cf. Appendix II, DVD 2 – 14:41]

Performed by   Etwell Marecha

Performance venue   Marecha's home, Nhema village Shurugwi

Documented by   Jerry Rutsate

Date   30 October 2010

(Sh)   *Ho ha yowerere*

(Bv)   *Ndaniwa nemvura ndichibva* Zame *ndaniwa*

Ho ha yowerere
Vocables

Ndaniwa nemvura ndichibva Zame *ndaniwa*

Rain has fallen on me while returning form Zame

This is a *mhande* minor song because it is not connected with the attraction of spirits since it merely spells out the rain spirits' successful mediation in provision of rain in answer to the rain priests' prayers (*kuvika*) presented at Zame (territorial rain shrine).

The melodies for both the lead *(Sh)* and response *(Bv)* parts of all the 5 songs representing the 4 *mhande* song genres: *nyere, mbavarira, kuvhima* and *mhande* generally move by step in a downward trend. Such melodic pattern is indicative of the

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fact that the melodies denote Karanga speech tone. This relationship between language and music signifies that *mhande* music embodies extra-musical ideas for the culture it represents. Melodic contour of the 5 song transcriptiosare presented below.
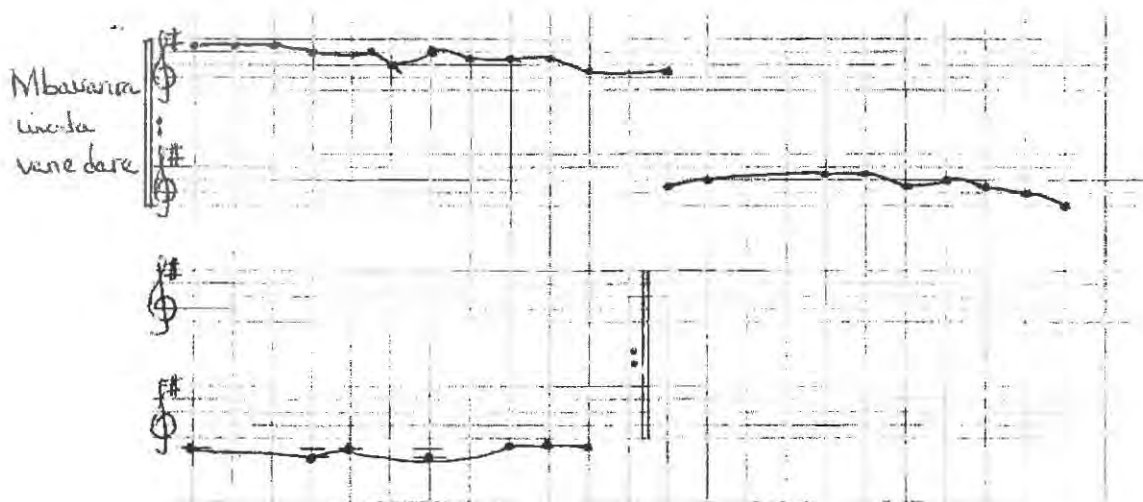
Song transcriptions for 7 other *mhande* songs

Song 6: Title   Nzira dzomusango [cf. Appendix III, VCD track 1]

Performeed by: Marishongwe village participants at *kurova guva* ceremony

Performance venue: Cuthbert Munamba's home

Documented by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: 11 August 2009

(Sh) [1st phrase]   *Ndorumwa neshumba nzira dzomusango*

(Sh) [2nd phrase]   *dzine minzwa*

(Bv)   *Nzira dzomusango nzira*

Ndorumwa neshumba nzira dzomusango dzine minzwa

I get attacked by lion(s) in bush paths that have thorns

Nzira dzomusango

Bush paths

Nzira dzomusango

Waking in bush parts is likened to the idea of social actors who adopt ways of living other than the ones instituted by their ancestors and quenscequently encounter problems such as stepping on thorns and being attacked by a lion which experiences might result in pain and loss of life, respectively.

Song 7: Ttitle   Kurera haizinyore [cf. Appendix I, DVD 1 Video 1 – 14:53
                                      Appendix III, VCD track 3]

Performed by: Marishongwe village participants at *kurova guva* ceremony

Performance venue: Munamba's home

Documented by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: 11 August 2010

(Sh) [1st phrase]	*vakura maiwe*
(Bv) [1st phrase]	*Vana vangu vakura*
(Sh) [2nd phrase]	*haizinyore maiwe*
(Bv) [2nd phrase]	*kurera haizinyore*

KURERA HAIZINYORE

Vana vangu vakura

My children are grown up

Kurera haizinyore

Rearing them is not easy.

Children's upbringing is a big challenge because they are more vulnerable to those with evil intentions than adults. Thus the song is a gratitude to the ancestors who guide and protect their siblings.

Song 8: Title   Hurombo [cf. Appendix III, VCD track 5]

Performed by: Nhema village participants at *mutoro* ceremony

Performance venue: Samson Magumise's home

Documented by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: 30 October 2010

Hurombo

(*Sh*) [1st phrase]   *Hurombo hoi hoye*

                         Poverty oh hey

(*Bv*) [1st phrase]   *Haiwa vakomana woye*

                         Ah no men hey

(*Sh*) [variation1]   *Huromboyi vakomana mudzimu nditarire*

                         What a poverty ancestors protect me

(*Sh*) [variation2]   *Huromboyi vakomana ndakanga ndaroyiwa*

                         Men poverty of bewitchment

(*Bv*) [2nd phrase]   *Hoi hoi ha hai ha here*

                         Vocables

HUROMBO

Among the Karanga, one's failure to have food enough to sustain oneself and the family is a clear sign of poverty. Such poverty demands spiritual intervention for it may be caused by bad spirits.

Song 9: Title   Rwunofa rwukasiya rumwe [cf. Appendix III VCD track 4]
Performed by: Nhema village participants at *mutoro* ceremony

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Performance venue: Magumise's home

Documented by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: 30 October 2010

(*Sh*)   *Rwunofa rwukasiya rumwe*

(*Bv*)   *Rusvosve rwunonhuwa*

Rwunofa rwukasiya rumwe

One dies leaving siblings behind

Rusvosve rwunonhuwa

Its like the smell of an ant having passed by

Rwunofa rwukasiya rumwe

Performance venue: Magumise's home

Documented by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: 30 October 2010

(*Sh*)   *Rwunofa rwukasiya rumwe*

(*Bv*)   *Rusvosve rwunonhuwa*

Rwunofa rwukasiya rumwe

One dies leaving siblings behind

Rusvosve rwunonhuwa

Its like the smell of an ant having passed by

Rwunofa rwukasiya rumwe

Death does not imply the deceased's disappearance from the physical world because their spirits remain connected to their siblings through the conduct of rituals that embrace practices that are not only recognised by, but also attract them (spirits) to participate in the ceremonies.

Song 10: Title	Haiwa yowerere [cf. Appendix I, DVD 1 Vidoe 1 – 10:06]
Performed by:	Marishongwe village participants at *kurova guva* ceremony
Performance venue:	Munamba's home
Documented by:	Jerry Rutsate
Date:	11 August 2010

(Sh) [1st line]	*Kuri kwedu taingo korisa*
	If it were home we would rejoice
(Sh) [variarion1]	*Haano matumba VaMabwaire*
	Here are the challenges Mabwaire
(Sh) [variation2]	*Godi godi ndaingokoniwa*
	I tried and tried in vain
(Bv)	*Ha ha he ha he ha he ha he haiwa he ha ha ha haiwa yowerere*
	Vocables

Haiwa yowere

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This song suits both the *kurova guva* and the *mutoro* ceremonies. To sing *haiwa yowerere* is to express denial of life challenging encounters. Taking *kurova guva* for example, the unsettled spirit longs for the comfort of the home. On the other hand, the siblings to the deceased are subjected to circumstances or signs for which they try to find solutions without success. The answer *haiwa yowerere* lies in satisfying the spirits that reciprocate by providing solace of life to their siblings.

Song 11: Title   Tora wuta hwako [cf. Appendix III, VCD track 2]

Performed by: Nhema village participants at *mutoro* ceremony

Performance venue: Magumise's home

Documented by: Jerry Rutsate

Date: 30 October 2010

Tora wuta hwako

(Sh) Nyuchi dzinoruma

Bees sting

(Bv) Tora wuta hwako toda kuenda dzinoruma

Fetch your bow and arrow we want to go and sting like bees

Having communion (*dare*) with ancestors is likened to going out hunting for honey where the hunter has to fight the bees in order to access the honey. This means that the evil spirits are aware of the positive outcome accruing from the unity of siblings and their ancestors and the (evil spirits) try to stand in the way. The ammunition of ancestors is their unity as in the use of the word "we" and hence the music/dance they perform together. Thus, by means of this ammunition, embodied ancestors overcome the evil spirits that are a disjointed armed force.

Song 12: Title	Dziva remvura [cf. Appendix I, DVD 1 Video 2 – 09:00]
Performed by:	Nhema village participants at *mutoro* ceremony
Performance venue:	Magumise's home
Documented by:	Jerry Rutsate
Date:	30 October 2010
(Sh)	*Wariona dziva remvura*
(Bv)	*Woye wariona dziva remvura hore*

Wariona dziva remvura	Have you seen the pool of water
Woye wariona dziva remvura hore	Oh yes you have seen the pool of water in the form of rain cloud

DZIVA REMVURA

Sh
Wa-rio-na dziva remvura

Bv
woye   wa-rio-na dziva remvura hore.

HANDCLAPPING
Sh
Bv

DRUMMING
Sh

Bv

R L R R   R L R R

This song is about the rain making process that results in the receipt of rain. The term 'pool of water' (*mabwe adviva*) refers to Karanga territorial rain rock shrines located in Matebeleland Province in western Zimbabwe. It is believed that when the rain spirits who reside in the rocks ask for rain from God, he (God) turns the pool water into rain clouds (*hore*) that give rain [cf. Appendix I, DVD 1 Video 2:   04:20 – 06:33].

Melodic contours of the 7 songs presented above
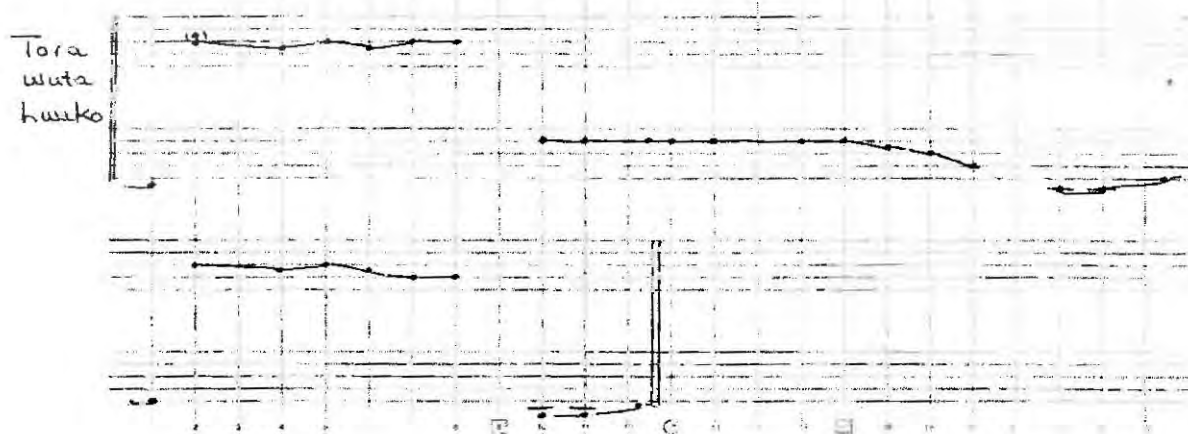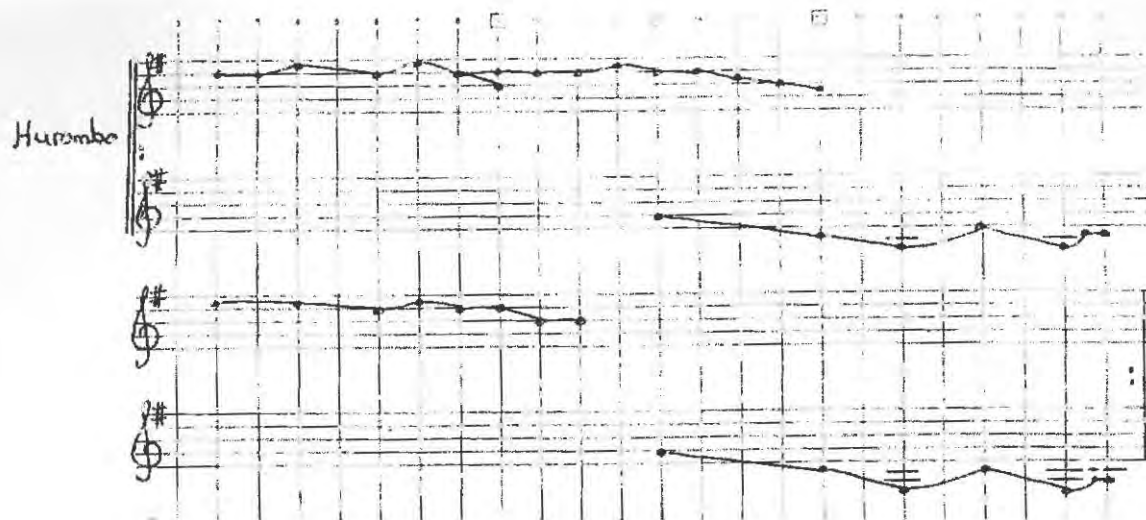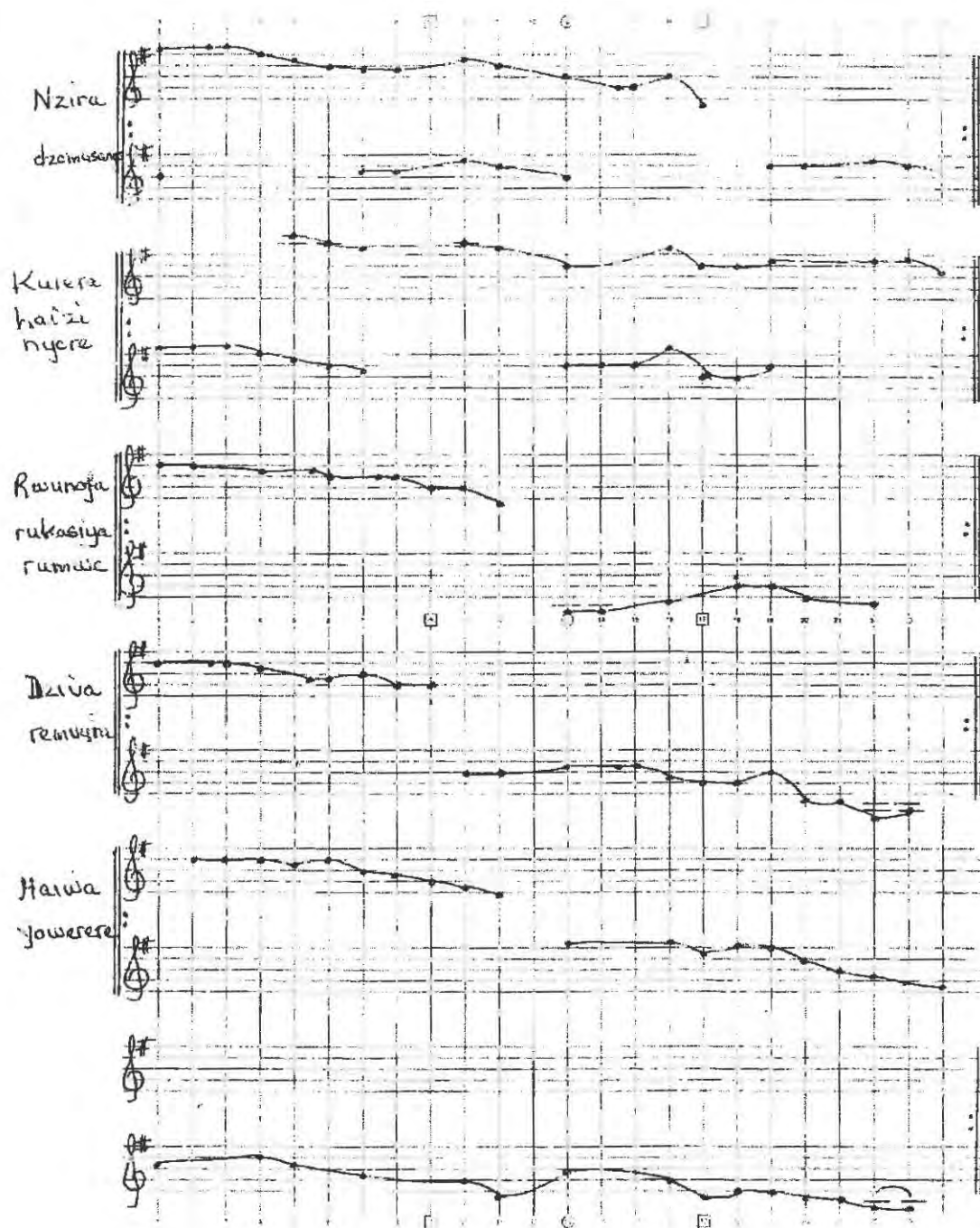
The melodic contours for the 7 songs represented above are quite similar to those of the other 5 songs presented earlier in this chapter and the overall song analyses presented hereunder outlines the characteristics that account for the similarities.

5.4.3 Song analyses

The analysis of the 12 song transcriptions presented above is conceived from four dimensions: metric, melodic, texture and form.

5.4.3.1 Meter

In all the 12 song transcriptions, the lead (Sh) and response (Bv) parts are generally articulated in alternation, that is to say the response comes in after the lead. This song structure affirms one of Munamba's three basic attributes of *mhande* music: *kukayana* (alternation). It is important to note that in order for singers to competently alternate their melodies, they have to be precise in observing their entry points. For example, considering the entry points in the song "Tora wuta hwako", the lead (Sh) starts singing on the second pulse of the first beat up to the second pulse of the third beat and the response (Bv) enters on the first pulse of the fourth beat. (Bv) continues up to the first pulse of the ninth beat when the lead takes over on the second pulse of the same beat into the second pulse of the eleventh beat. The response joins in again on the first pulse of the twelfth beat to complete the song cycle and also begin another cycle by ending its short phrase on the first pulse of the first beat.

Fig. 5.2 Song meter example – Tora wuta hwako

Such precision of the metric sense of the music demands a high degree of alertness (*kuringira*) to be demonstrated by the performers. Moreover, exactitude in alternation enhances smooth coordination (*kunzwanana*) where the singers are expected to have a mental picture of the other part as they perform their own part. Such metric sense is what may be referred to as *mutinhimira*[62].

5.4.3.2 Melodic contour

The melodic structure of the songs can be viewed from two perspectives: intervallic and contour. For both the lead and response parts, *mhande* music essentially moves by step as evidenced in the 12 transcriptions. This implies that *mhande* melodies are greatly influenced by Karanga speech tone in that the rise and fall of melodic pitches resonates with speech inflections of the words as illustrated in the transcription for the song Nzira dzomusango presented below.

Nzira dzomusango

Fig. 5.3 Melody speech tone relationship song example – Nzira dzomusango

In all the songs, the lead and response melodic contours portray a downward trend. This may be explained by the idea of alertness (*kuringira*) in which the performers use the music to draw the attention of the more powerful or higher authority, the ancestors by singing high first following which the descending melodies signify descending spirits who are invited to inhabit the ceremonies organised for them by their siblings.

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[62] *Mutinhimira* is a Shona/Karanga word for a musician's acuity for musical rendition.

5.4.3.3 Texture

The lead and response parts of *mhande* music are basically independent from each other in respect of their melodies and lyrics. These parts are respond to each other and any harmony that may occur in instances when the two parts overlap as in Tovera mudzimu dzoka is considered to be incidental.

Fig. 5.4 Song texture example – Tovera mudzimu dzoka

Given that the transcriptions presented herein are skeletal in that they do not contain all the features of *mhande* song performance such as interlocking patterns (*kutsivira/magure*), an explication of *mhande* song texture is inadequate without reference to *magure*, which is an art of singing in which vocables (syllables that are sung to fundamental melodies that are normally performed by deep voice parts, for example, *ha he ha ho*) interlocking and weaving through the lead and response parts. This style augments the density of *mhande* vocal music.

5.4.3.4 Form

Mhande vocal music is basically founded on a two phrase structure comprising the lead and the response parts as in the songs 'Dziva remvura", "Haiwa yowerere", "Rwunofa rwukasiya rumwe" and "Tovera mudzimu dzoka". The two phrases

constitute a song cycle[63]. Which entails the repetitive nature of the the music. However, the repetitiveness appears in different forms for example, the lead and response melodies may be repeated once in order to end up with a song cycle made up of four phrases - often with some variations - like in "Nzira dzomusango", "Kurera haizinyore", "Tora wuta hwako" and "Hurombo".

5.4.4 Drumming and handclapping

The length of a cycle for the *mhande* lead and response drum pattern as well as the handclap rhythm is 2 beats each comprising 3 pulses and this rhythmic phrasing corresponds to the two-phrase song structure. Marecha described the pitches of the *shauro* and *tsinhiro* drums as follows:

Inzwi reshauro rakakwirira zvingafananidzwa nevari kumanhenganya kumhepo ukuwo tsinhiro ichimirira vari pasi panyika nevari muvhu.	The lead drum produces high that represents the spirits who high above the earth while the response drum provides deep that resembles the humans on earth and the spirits who reside beneath the earth.

(Marecha 30/10/10)

It may be inferred from Marecha's contribution that the higher pitched or lead drum (*shauro*) summons the spirits while the lowly pitched or response drum (*bvumiro*) spurs the adepts to interact with the spirits. When gleaned from *mhande* drumming point of view, the convergence zone for the humans and their ancestors is what Marecha postulates:

Ngoma yemagure ndiyo inofarirwa nemadzinza.	Interlocking rhythm patterns are the ancestors' favourite drum sounds.

(Marecha 2010)

Since the interaction between the Karanga ancestors and their siblings is a dynamic process, the rhythms that are produced by interlocking (*magure* or *tsiviro*) drum players are not only too intricate to be transcribed, but they are also too varied to be

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[63] A song cycle is the length of a song comprising two or more phrases that are performed repeatedly with some improvisations which are spontaneously created by individual musicians.

prescribed. The competence with which *magure* drummers articulate their drums is a clear testimony of embodiment. This is the reason it is difficult, if not impossible, to transcribe *magure*.

In playing the *mhande* guide beat on the lead drum, the drummer accentuates the first pulse of a triple beat. The lead handclaps simulate the accent of the guide beat and in this way these handclaps authenticate the guide beat. The response handclaps sustain *mhande* beat in two ways: they substantiate the *mhande* fundamental drum rhythm which comprises a double guide beat and they also elevate the fundamental rhythm through the deconstruction of the sense of the guide beat by occasionallyshifting accents from the count of 3 to the count of 2. Thus the combination of the lead (*shauro*), the response (*bvumiro*) and interlocking (*magure*) handclaps constitutes a complex rhythm that does not only correlate as well as contrast with drum patterns, but it also results in a rendition that defines the *mhande* metric sense that is enacted through dancing.

5.4.5 Dancing (*kudzana mhande/mutambi*)

Through this research, it has been established that while the Karanga do not have a vernacular term for the English word 'dance', their conception of dance is expressed through two terms: *kudzana mhande* and/or *mutambi* which translate to 'dancing' in English. Dancing signifies action and the Karanga focus on performance more than they concern themselves with speech about the action. Essentially therefore, dancing is their form of speech. This purview of dance may have resulted from the experiences that the performers of *mhande* dance accrue from the deployment of their bodies in executing different activities incorporating singing, drumming, choreographing and articulating other bodily gestures. The experiences that the *mhande* dancers acquire constitute the efficacy of the dance which is explicated in Chapter 6. Basically, *mhande* dance performance enables the spirits to empower their siblings by embodying them. Thus my analysis of *kudzana mhande* focuses on what can be referred to as the three primary features of the dance: foot movements with leg gourd rattles; other bodily gestures, and singing which are the means by which *mhande* musicians lure the spirits.

Going by Karanga conceptualisation of dancing that has been explained above; singing is a component of dancing for two major reasons: i) dancers are often singers and singers dancers too, and ii) because singing communicates verbally and non-verbally, it therefore elevates dancers from a physical to a spiritual plane – to dancing with the spirits. As such, singing interlocks the features of dance and hence it is conceived as *magure* or *tsviviro* in relation to dancing. By the same token, foot movements with leg rattles constitute the lead (*shauro*) and the response (*bvumiro*) as embedded in other bodily gestures. *Mhande* dance costumes mainly comprise the attire that is worn by spirit mediums, particularly when they are possessed.

5.4.5.1 Foot movements with leg rattles

Performance of *mhande* dance highlights the dancers' foot movements that emulate the drum rhythms. Drawing from my close observations on how the *mhande* dancers in Marishongwe and Nhema villages in Shurugwi District employed their feet when performing *mhande* dance in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies, I established that their movements occurred i) in defined spaces; ii) to denote a particular status; iii) in a particular direction; iv) towards a particular location; and v) in accordance with the accents of the drum rhythms.

One of the characteristic features of dancing (*kudzana mhande*) is that the participants form themselves into a circle that leaves some free space or a dancing arena in the centre. This space is meant to accommodate the dancers' foot movements and other bodily gestures as well as to ensure an uninhibited use of objects such as rods (*tsvimbo*). Munamba is holding a rod in his left hand as he dances with two other dancers on the arena. While the dancers often dance facing the drummers, there are moments when they can make some half or full turns (cf Fig. 5.5). Munamba has turned to face other dancers – in order that they could communicate with each other through body language. The variety of movements performed by *mhande* dancers' inculde the dancers' alternate movements of feet (*kukayana kwemakumbo*), twisting (*kuzeya*) and turning around (*kutenderera*).

Fig. 5.5 Munamba turns around to face other dance *mhande* dancers

In performance of *mhande* dance, foot movements are accorded a prominent role as asserted by Marecha:

Foot movements lead in attracting the spirits (Marecha 12/08/10)

Mhande dance choreography confines the feet to the ground such that the resultant movements are not elaborate. It may be assumed that in initial performances of *mhande* dance the unelaborated foot movements might have been subdued by other well pronounced phenomena such as drumming to an extent of playing down the status of this major feature of the dance. Thus it can be argued that the Karanga devised gourd rattles (*magagada*) that are tied to the dancers' feet so that they (*magagada*) would enhance the weight of the foot movements by articulating, in auditory form, the somatic gestures executed by the feet (cf Fig. 5.6).

The size of the gourd rattles also adds value to the elevation of foot movements in performance of *mhande* dance. To this end, the gourds used in making the rattles are supposed to be large enough to enable the seeds inside them to move long enough distances in order that they remit well projected sounds that subdue the drums and vocal sounds. Furthermore, *magagada* are normally kept in kitchen huts for two main reasons: keeping them away from humid conditions that would affect their sound quality, and tuning them through the heat of the fire that is used for cooking meals.

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Tuning the drum enables them to produce the tones as desired by the conventions of the culture bearers.

Fig. 5.6 Dancer in the center with leg gourd rattles (*magagada*)

Mhande dancers dance while they face the drummers. This is done in order to facilitate communication and coordination between these two groups of performers that compliment each other in spearheading the dance. On the one hand, foot movements in dancing *mhande* are a defining feature of the dance, and, on the other hand, the *mhande* fundamental beat played on the lead and response drums is meant to hold the performance together. In this sense, drummers are like conductors who direct performances. Besides facing the drummers, the dancers can either slightly spring up and down, but remaining in the same position or else they can move in two planes: up and down as well as forwards.

Since the beat that binds *mhande* performance is located in drumming and nuanced in other features including foot movements, drumming therefore signifies the location of the dance which is the reason dancers always dance facing the drummers. As such, drummers spur the dancers and conversely, through their foot movements and other gestures, dancers concretize the accents in drum rhythms.

5.4.5.2 Other bodily gestures

Foot movements in *mhande* dance performance are articulated alongside other bodily gestures that incorporate the use of hands, handheld objects and body language. The hands are often folded up by the elbow to be parallel to the ground and in such a position the dancers points in the direction of the drummers [cf. Appendix I DVD 1 Video 1 – 13:27]. As performances of mhande dance unfold, the dancers move their folded hands forwards and backwards in imitation of invoking and inviting the spirits to participate in performance of *mhande* dance.

It is often the case that each *kurova guva* and/or *mutoro* ceremony is attended by at least one or two spiritually initiated people, particularly men who are entitled to carry rods (*tsvimbo*), for example, Munamba who performed several getures but repeated one of them [cf. Appendix I, DVD 1 Video2 – 13:23, 13:58]. It is customary among the Karanga that the rods of the deceased fathers are handed over to the eldest sons at the stage of settling the spirits. By pointing outwards, Munamba portrayed the idea of seeking to be in conert with the spirits who happened to be away from the stage hat was set for them.

Mhande dance bodily gestures that can be conceived as signifiers comprise: posture, feet; foot movements and body language. According to Etwell Marecha:

Vadzani vemhande vanotevedzera nokutaridzira zviito zvemadzinza anotumbuka pavari. (Marecha 2010)	*Mhande* dancers imitate and display the characters of generational spirits that embody them.

I follow Marecha's assertion in discussing the *mhande* bodily gestures listed above. The bowing posture (*kuvhuramira*) that the dancers adopt when performing *mhande* dance is a signifier of the depreciating body of the signified great grandparents (*madzitateguru*). The importance that the Karanga ascribe to the feet in *mhande* dance is an import from the idea of the wisdom required in walking the journey of life. Thus the foot movements represent the little unelaborated steps of the signified (*madzitateguru*). In articulating *mhande* dance, there are times when the adepts display behaviour(s) such as shaking their bodies, jumping or falling to the ground and all these signify change of state of being. In other words, these acts are signifiers

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of embodiment (*kunyaunywa, kusvikirwa*), that is, the ancestors (*vadzimu*) embodying their mediums (*vadzimu*).

5.5 Semiotics of *mhande* dance: An emic analysis

The semiotics of *mhande* encompasses the dance gestures, the culture bearers' musical and gestural language and the symbolism of bodily movements as well as costumes, objects and substances that are employed in performance of *mhande*. A delineation of *mhande* features that has been presented in the foregoing sections of this chapter has focused on characteristic features of the dance. In this section, an explication of *mhande* dance features in terms of what they ought to be constitutes semiology of this Karanga musical culture. *Mhande* dance phenomena to be considered comprise: voices and words; bodily gestures and objects.

5.5.1 Voices and words

When conceived as an element of *mhande* dance, voice incorporates song melodies as well as drum and handclap rhythms. Munamba affirms this view by saying:

Zvinhu zvatinoita mumhande zvinoti	The three *mhande* activities:
kuimba, kuridza ngoma nokuuchira	singing, drumming and
zvinoumba chinhu chimwe chatinoti inzwi.	Handclapping constitute a whole
(Munamba 2009)	which we call voice.

A Karanga term that means the same as voice is *inzwi. Inzwi* denotes the idea of catching the sound by ear (*kunzwa inzwi*). Voice (*inzwi*) is also apprehended for what it is because it is recognised to be so. *Mhande* song melodies are a voice in that they are not only sung and heard by their adherents, but they are also recognised as such by their audience (*vanzwi*). *Vanzwi* is a term that refers to those who hear from a distance (*vanonzwa varikure*). This viewpoint resonates with the understanding that in Karanga indigenous musical practices such as performance of *mhande* dance there is no audience since all in attendance are expected to participate. In this sense, the audience (*vanzwi*) is invisible. What is visible or rather audible in this case are song melodies that signify their source or creators – the invisible beings or ancestors. This means that the song transcriptions (*zvinyorwa zvenziyo*) presented herein are a sign (*mucherechedzo*) of the signifier – the voice (*weinzwi*) of the signified – the ancestors

(*revadzimu*). By extension, words of songs (*mashoko enzviyo*) are packages of messages (*inhurwa*) that are voiced through song melodies (*dzinoimbwa*).

In performing *mhande* dance singing of songs is juxtaposed with drumming and handclapping. *Mhande* drum rhythm (*ngoma yemhande*) is a specified drum sound pattern and hence it is a communication code, that is, a voice that is similar to song melodies. Since *mhande* beat - as discussed in the previous Chapter - is a cultural heritage; its sound pattern is a signifier of the creator of the drum style. By expansion, handclapping can be said to be a voice in a voice since it impels signification.

5.5.3 Objects

Performance of *mhande* dance essentially embraces three objects: drums (*ngoma*) handheld rods (*tsvimbo*) and leg gourd rattles (*magagada*). These objects signify Karanga epistemology (*chikaranga*) that is enacted through their manipulation in *mhande* dance performance. One way in which this view has been substantiated through the fieldwork to this study was that the participants at the *Kurova guva* ceremony for settling Mamoyo's spirit held at Munamba's home ensured that they carried *magagada*[64], *ngoma* and *tsvimbo* to the grave site where they were going to welcome the spirit back home. Correspondingly, Christopher Pasvani, in his explanation of Karanga music dance and ritual culture indicated that:

Chikaranga chinosanganisira ngoma, tsvimbo, magagada, fuko nehakata.	Karanga culture incorporates a constellation of singing, drum playing, dancing, rattle sound, handclapping and ululation as well as use of rods, spiritual attire and revelators (*hakata*).

[cf. Appendix I, DVD Video 2 – 03:08]

Pasvani's list of elements of Karanga culture is dominated by the objects that are used in performing *mhande* dance to show that the objects of the dance are valued because they concretize the knowledge system of its adherents.

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[64] *Gagada* is a Karanga term that refers to a leg gourd rattle that symbolises the meaning of *mhande* dance choreography.

5.6 *Mhande* as an ethnographic text: Translation of Karanga culture

In an effort to try and understand how the Karanga make meaning of *mhande* dance or more precisely the phenomena of *mhande* dance, I chose to adopt an ethnographic approach which focuses on dance as a type of cultural knowledge. This means that *mhande* dance features are a portrait of the Karanga with particular regard to their history, values, religious belief system and symbolic codes. These cultural traits have been advanced through *mhande* dance features that appear in aural, visual and tangible forms which are voice, gestures and objects, respectively. Among the rural Karanga are the "indigenously rooted exponents whose mental explorations continue to advance ... [*mhande* dance] in spite of the modern forces that undermine, distort and divert creative authority" (Nzewi 2007: 222). The three *mhande* dance phenomena: voice, gestures and objects are a creative authority in the sense that they are an ethnographic text of Karanga culture.

Mhande dance features: voice, gestures and objects are a creative means of translating Karanga culture. For example, the Karanga belief in the existence of ancestral spirits is turned into reality by way of performance of *mhande* dance which results in embodiment. However, *mhande* dance can only occasion spirit possession if its music and dance satisfy the cultural standards that were set by the spirits. This means that *mhande* song melodies and texts, drum rhythms and choreography should be recognised and approved by the ancestors. Approved songs (*inzwi*), drum rhythms (*ngoma*) and choreography (*gagada*) symbolise Karanga cultural knowledge. These phenomena in themselves are symbolic codes with engendered meanings. When *inzwi*, *ngoma* and *gagada* are merged into *mhande* dance performance the cultural precepts that they frame are translated into a dynamic force that converts the cultural knowledge into experienced reality (*chikaranga*). Ethnography of *mhande* dance is therefore a unique frame of knowledge construction.

5.7 Conclusion

In this Chapter, it has been established that not all *mhande* attributes are analysable since the dance embodies the tangible and the intangible dimensions. Analysis of the observable features of *mhande* dance was approached from two perspectives: structural and emic. Structural analysis of songs, drum rhythms and bodily gestures emphasised three elements: lead (*shauro*); response (*bvumiro*), and interlocking (*magure* or *tsviviro*) while emic analysis of the same dance phenomena focused on voice (*inzwi*), drum rhythms (*ngoma*), and bodily gestures (*gagada*). The kinds of information obtained through the two forms of analyses differed in the sense that structural analysis drew out detail on the characteristics of the dance phenomena whereas emic analysis revealed the cultural knowledge embedded in the features. The analysis of *mhande* dance presented in this chapter clearly confirms that there is Karanga discourse for talking and writing about the dance.

CHAPTER 6

6.0 MHANDE DANCE: MEANING

6.1 Introduction

The descriptive and analytic exposition of *mhande* dance features presented in the two chapters preceding this one has basically exposed the nature and character of this Karanga indigenous musical art. The object of this chapter is to define the significance of *mhande* dance in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ritual contexts through an interpretation of the efficacy and symbolism of its phenomena. This enterprise is aptly affirmed by Nzewi who postulates:

> To cognitively interpret the theoretical framework that informs the obvious visual and/or sonic artistry entails much more than isolated discussion of artistic evidence. The deep extra-artistic narratives – the cultural intention and other human – communal – spiritual – health issues that are evoked, generated and negotiated in a performance context – must be explicated (2007: 227).

Among the Karanga, performance of *mhande* dance is intended to bring to bear their cosmology by bridging the natural and supernatural worlds. *Mhande* dance features incorporating singing, drumming, dancing and use of objects – referred to by Nzewi as the obvious visual and/or sonic artistry – have implied meaning in the sense that they represent the physical audiovisual and tangible sphere of life that is informed or explained by the supernatural (spiritual) sphere of life. It is the culturally negotiated meanings attached to *mhande* dance features that are herein explicated in order to develop a clear understanding of Karanga view of reality. With particular reference to *mhande* dance, its somatic features are intertwined in accordance with the artistry of Karanga ancestors and in this way the spirits that are expected to inhabit the ceremony are evoked. The involvement of the spirits at a psychosomatic level results in emotional experiences that have a healing effect on human participants.

Mhande dance is features are symbolic. Symbols have been defined differently but the following definitions have been found to be more relevant to this research. Aschwanden defines a symbol as "something to which effects and attributes that have their reality in the human psyche have been transferred" (1982: 14). As if to expound on Aschwanden's definition, Underhill says symbols are "the clothing which the spiritual borrows from the material plane" (Underhill 1923 cited in Smith 1952: 14).

Smith went on to explain that the visible stands for the invisible, the material for the immaterial, for what cannot be seized by the sensory organs. Conceptualising symbols as drama, Victor Turner states that "The drama of ritual action – the singing, dancing, feasting, use of alcohol and so on, causes an exchange between the poles" (1974: 55).

What Turner refers to as the poles may be what the Karanga conceive to be the physical and spiritual realms of life and the exchange that occurs between the two connotes the reciprocity of the intangible with the tangible attributes. This process of exchange is embedded in *mhande* dance stimulating actions such as the dignified foot movements, the interlocking sonorous sound of the gourd rattles (*magagada*) tied on the dancers' feet, the repetitive drum pattern and the use of invocative words and objects which effect communication between the humans and the spirits resulting in embodiment.

6.2 Dance features: Contextualised explanation

Mhande dance phenomena carry meanings tha are ascribed by the context in which the dance is performed. The *kurova guva* and the *mutoro* ceremonies are closely related in that both rituals focus on spirit beings, but their point of departure is the status of the spirit appealed to. In *kurova guva* ceremony, the settlement of the spirit is for the least ranked to be introduced to the greater spirits whereas in the *mutoro*, the rain spirits to be appeased are closest to God (*Mwari*) the Supreme Being. In as far as *mhande* dance features per se are concerned, there is much that seems to be same and yet there are some salient differences which have been revealed through this study.

6.2.1 *Mutoro mhande* dance features

The phenomena that constitute *mhande* dance for the *mutoro* are: songs; drum rhythms; choreography including foot movements and other bodily gestures, and the use of objects such as rods (*tsvimbo*) and/or half/new moon shaped axe. These phenomena are articulated by master musicians who attain their statuses as explained by Marecha that:

Mhande yemutoro haidzidzirwi, idzinza   Mhande dance for the *mutoro* is not
ragara riri mutambi rinotumbuka pasvikiro. formally learnt, an ancestor who was a
                                              musician embodies a designated sibling.

Nziyo nemaimbirwe adzo, maridziro
engoma nemadzaniro zvose
ndezvemadzinza.
(Marecha 2010)

Songs and the manner of singing,
drumming dance style are from
the ancestors.

It can be inferred from Marecha's contribution that *mutoro mhande* master musicians belong to and are embodied by the lineage of ancestors who are connected with rain making. Thus the *mutoro* ceremony becomes an occasion when the ancestral spirits clothe themselves in their siblings' bodies so that they (spirits) can perform the dance.

Mhande songs for the *mutoro* reflect on Karanga cultural conventions in relation to creation of melodies as well as their (Karanga) values enshrined in the words of songs. To the best of their knowledge, Marecha and Munamba confessed that, up till then, there were no new song creations for *mhande* dance that they were aware of. This confirms the fact that the music belongs to the ancestors. Both song melodies and drum rhythms speak to the psyche of the participants at the ceremonies and it is, among other things, the efficacy of this music that leads to altered state of consciousness. The ethos comprises the values embraced in the words of the song which are meant to align the behaviour of the participants with the standards set by the ancestors.

Foot movements and other bodily gestures are symbolic of the behaviours of the ancestors and how the humans ought to venerate them. Munamba describes *mhande* dancing as follows:

Kudzana kwatinoita netsoka, mavoko
nedzimwe nhengo dzemiviri
micherechedzo yezviito zvevadzimu
vedu zvinova zviotipa gwara ramararamire
edu.
(Munamba 2009)

The movements of our feet,
hands and other bodily gestures
signify the behaviours of our that
ancestral spirits direct our way
of life.

According to Munamba, *mhande* gestures are not only a communication code between the spirits and their siblings, but they are also a Karanga statement of life or indigenous knowledge system. By extension, Karanga knowledge system is further symbolised through the objects that are employed in executing *mhande* dance musical instruments and handheld objects. In *mutoro* ceremonies, only the spiritually initiated

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people – who in this case are rain spirit mediums – are the ones who can use handheld objects which in most instances are rods (*tsvimbo*). These rods are consecrated by the great spirits (*madzitateguru*) and so they are signifiers of the signified (*madzitateguru*).

6.2.2 Kurova guva mhande dance features

The *mhande* dance features in *kurova guva* ceremonies are principally the same as in *mutoro* ceremonies except that they are explained differently due to the fact that the goals of the rituals in which they are performed differ. While master musicians for the *mutoro* rituals ought to be spirit mediums those for *kurova guva* are not necessarily supposed to be mediums since most of them are musicians by training. A typical example of how the training of musicians occurs is an experience which I documented at the *kurova guva* ceremony held at Munamba's home on 11 August 2009 when Munamba stopped the lead singing of the song "Haiwa yowerere" and moved on to take over the lead drum after realising that there was lack of coordination between the singing and the drumming.

It is important to note that there are no rehearsals that are conducted prior to participation in performance of *mhande* dance in both *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies. However, for *mutoro* musicians as explained earlier, the ancestral musicians who embody their mediums have always and still continue to competently execute their music whereas with most *kurova guva* musicians, the tendency is to institute training in the context of a ceremony in which elements of the form structure of the music such as coordination and alternation can be apprehended in a natural way. Among the reasons that may cause trained musicians to fail to aptly perform their musical tasks in articulating *mhande* dance are two: forgetfulness and influences from other musical idioms. The repertoire of *kurova guva mhande* songs are restricted to a handful of songs that are predominantly sung in majority Karanga communities. This may be as a result of forgetfulness that the musicians tend to memorise songs with catchy tunes such that when Munamba, the rain spirit medium, leads a song that is not familiar to most participants he is either forced to instantly teach the music or else abandon it altogether for that particular event.

The aspects that impact on performance of *mhande* dance music which are presented in the foregoing paragraphs may also have an effect on the execution of the dance gestures resulting in most dancers confining themselves to basic movements, which pay particular attention to foot movements only. In *kurova guva* ceremonies, *mhande* dancers who are entitled to use handheld objects are rain spirits – if there happen to be any – and diviners (*n'anga*) who normally include traditional healers.

On the whole, the general trend in current *mhande* musicianship in *kurova guva* ceremonies is often less dynamic in occasioning spirit possession mainly because of limitations in its musical repertoire and extemporisation. This position is well substantiated by Munamba who says:

Mazuva ano tinorwisana nokuti nyanzwi dzemhande tava vashoma nokuti vamwe vedu vave vamakereke vasingachadyidzani nesu.	Currently we are battling with the inadequacy of *mhande* master musicians because some of them have been converted to churches and hence they do not take part in what we do.
Izvi zvinotunza kuti mhande yedu isadziya nokudaro matare edu nevadzimu haapfumbiri.	This results in *mhande* performances that do not adequately heighten ceremonies to ensnare the spirits.

(Munamba 12.08.09)

In both *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies spirits are not only an essential audience, but they should also be active participants. Performance of *mhande* dance enables spirits to actively participate in ceremonies that are meant for them (spirits) only if the musical art is of a standard that they identify with.

6.3 Symbolic elements

This section presents a contextualised explication of *mhande* dance phenomena that incorporate the artistic and extra-artistic narratives embodying Karanga cultural intentions. The dance phenomena comprise: songs; drumming; bodily movements and objects as gleaned from the *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ritual contexts.

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6.3.1 Songs

The form structure of 12 songs that were transcribed and presented in Chapter 5 embraces three vocal parts: lead (*shauro*); response (*bvumiro*), and interlocking (*magure* or *tsiviro*), particularly the *mutoro mhande* songs. The three vocal parts signify a united community (*umwe*) as affirmed by Marecha who contends:

Shauro, bvumiro nemagure zvinoumba zvine   The lead, response and
umwe zvandigafananidza nemutatu   interlocking melodies
wamapfihwa anoshandisa kutega hari   constitutes which
yokubikisa.   is analogous to the
                                     'threeness' in pieces of rock
                                     that are used to support
                                     clay pot used in cooking
                                     food by the fire

Madzitateguru edu anoshanda pamwe   Our great ancestors work as a
chete saka vanotarisira kuti nesuwo tifambe   they expect us to.
mugwara ravo.   follow suit
(Marecha 30.10.10)

The 'threeness' that Marecha referenced has since been extended to the construction of three-legged pots made out of cast iron which are also used for cooking purposes. The idea of a pot that requires a support system in form of legs for it to stand connotes the anchoring that the guardian spirit (*zitateguru*) needs from great spirits (*madzitateguru*) in order to discharge its heavy responsibility competently. In relation to *mhande* songs, this means that *magure* are the signifier for the guardian spirit in the sense that they (*magure*) can only be sung after the lead and the response voices have sung their lines. The significance of the words of the *mutoro mhande* songs is that they denote a voice which is a signifier of the immaterial divine intervention and security. The spirits mediate in the provision of rain which is a source of life. Interlocking vocal melodies (*magure*) are basically not sung in *kurova guva mhande* songs. This is so perhaps for the reason that the songs for this ritual are not sung to appeal to great spirits.

6.3.2 Karanga values in mhande dance

Mhande dancers and indeed all participants perform *mhande* dance bare footed. Bare feet are a sign of humility (*kuzvininipisa*); another Karanga core value. To the Karanga, when the sole of the foot touches the ground then the individual would have

humbled oneself to ground level – the least possible level one could reduce oneslf to by human standards. As stated in chapter 5, foot movements in performance of *mhande* dance are articulated in such a way that the feet barely leave the ground. My illumination of the significance of this gesture is three pronged: it denotes reinforcement of humility; replication, and rhythm of life – the **'3 Rs'**. *Mhande* dancers affirm Karanga virtue of sustaining humility whenever they are in dialogue (*vane matare*) with their ancestors by ensuring that as performance of *mhande* dance unfolds their (dancers) feet constantly touch the ground. Thus *mhande* dance foot movements reinforce (**'1 R'**) humility. By relentlessly keeping their feet to the ground, *mhande* dancers articulate repeat patterns that replicate (**'2 R'**) the drum rhythms. In this sense, constancy of foot movements is analogous to the heart beat that suggests the rhythm of life. Karanga rhythm of life (**'3 R'**) entails the fusion of the spiritual with physical worlds which is enacted through the human feet that exhibit their ancestors' wisdom and artistry.

Granted that foot movements are the lead (*shauro*) in *mhande* dance movements, gourd rattles (*magagada*, popularly known as *gagada*) underscore(s) the role of this bodily gesture in Karanga culture. Munamba describes the role of *magagada* as:

Gagada itsika yedu yechikaranga chedu.	Gourd rattle is the practice of traditional our indigenous knowledge.
(Munamba 12.08.10)	

The Karanga perception of *gagada*, as echoed by Munamba, is that of a concept and not a musical instrument. However, instead of expounding this concept from a theoretical perspective, he views it from a practical dimension by considering *gagada* as a practice that is rooted in Karanga culture (*chikaranga*). Thus *gagada* concretizes and dramatises *chikaranga*.

6.3.3 Objects and substances

Two objects that the consultants to this research have often referred to in relation to their use in *mhande* dance performance are the handheld rod (*tsvimbo*) and the half moon-shaped axe (*humbwa* or *gano*). Marecha provides clear explanations of these objects by saying:

Tsvimbo mudonzvo womudzani unova mucherechedzo wedzinza rigere paari.	Handheld rod (*tsvimbo*) is the the dancers support representing the spirit that embodies the dancer.
Zvinoreva kuti kudzana kwaanoita chimuko chewaanodzanira.	This means that the spirit will be the dancer's body.
Humbwa isanhu raishandiswa kuuraya zhou. Chinhu chakanga chakamirira tsvimbo yokurwisa zvikara.	Half moon-shaped axe (*humbwa*) was used to kill elephants. It was used in place of handheld rod for fighting animals.
Kana dzinza ratumbuka mudzani waichivirika nehumbwa asi isingakuvadzi vamwe nokuti inenge ichirwisa. mhepo dzakaipa.	Upon manifestation of spirit (*mudzimu*) the dancer would wave the axe without injuring anyone because it would be disarming bad spirits.

(Marecha 30.10.10)

Drawing from Marecha's explanations of the two *mhande* dance objects, the half moon-shaped axe (*humbwa* or *gano*) is referred to in the past tense because it is no longer used in current *mhande* dance performances. Its significance, however, is embedded in the rod (*tsvimbo*). *Tsvimbo* is a symbol of power or authority (*simba*) which is bestowed on the signifier, the medium (*svikiro*) through his/her embodiment by the signified, the ancestral spirit (*dzinza* or *mudzimu*). By extension, there are two substances: ceremonial beer and snuff that are taken by participants in the course of the *mhande* event. These substances signify spirits grouped into two spheres of their habitats: underground (*muvhu*) and atmosphere (*mumhepo*). Because it seeps when poured to the ground, beer represents spirits who live underground. Conversely, snuff denotes spirits who live in the atmosphere since it gets blown off by the wind. Thus beer and snuff constitute another Karanga core value; sharing (*kupanana*) in the sense that participants share the beer and snuff with their ancestors and also among themselves.

6.4 Efficacious attributes

The effectiveness of *mhande* dance in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* rituals is determined by the realistic product of the intention of the ceremonies. This point of view is affirmed by Nzewi who proposes that "The African aesthetic is primarily concerned with the effectiveness of an experience, and aesthetic behaviour manifests more as

performance of effect or affect" (Nzewi 2007: 35). In *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies, the effectiveness of sharing beer and snuff, ceremony venues and dance formation, singing and dancing as well as use of objects and invocative actions is dramatised in acquiescence or defiance; vigorous singing and dancing, and altered states of being.

Mhande dance performance in the two contexts commences with the dedication of the ceremonial beer to the spirits by invoking them and then sharing the beer and snuff with them before the participants consume it. This ritual act is performed in order to invite the spirits to inhabit the ceremonies so that the intended goals are achieved. Chivenge gives an account of this act as follows:

Risati ramwiwa doro tinorikumikidza kuvadzimu tichiridira pasi uyezve tinokanda fodya pasi tichikumbira matare navo.	Before its consumption, the beer is dedicated to the spirits by pouring it to the ground and we also throw snuff on the ground while inviting them to team up with us.
Tapedza kukumikidza doro iroro rinozomwiwa navavose vanenge vari pamutambo kusvika chikari ichocho chapera vatambi vozosunguka kuti Vatambe mhande (Chivenge 11.04.09)	After dedication the rest of the beer in the pot is then consumed by all participants present at the ceremony The musicians will. free to perform *mhande* dance.

The major reason the Karanga conduct the ritual that Chivenge accounted for as quoted above is to ensure that ancestors get rid of bad spirits (*madzikirira*)[65] who may stand in the way of the dynamism of music and thus interfering with the object of the ceremony. Participants who welcome the ancestors through their commitment to further the objectives of ceremonies by performing *mhande* dance are noticeable through their joy and resilience. Any participants who defy the presence of ancestors are bound to experience discomfort resulting in self-imposed abandonment of the ceremony.

Performance of *mhande* dance in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies is carried out at designated venues that influence the impact of the dance on participants. The *mutoro*

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[65] *Madzikirira* is a Karanga term for an obstruction or interference.

mhande dance event is normally conducted at shrines (*mapa*) which are conceived to be sacred habitats for rain spirits. The sacredness of *mapa* revolves around the understanding that one is bound to experience some mysteries if one lives in contravention of Karanga ethos (*unhu*). This means that *mapa* is associated with purity and as such, those who participate in *mhande* dance at *mapa* are expected to be pure. Purity is a virtue that does not only guarantee the success of *mutoro* ceremonies, but it is also effective in providing physical and emotional healing which is the reason the indigenously rooted Karanga have tended to live longer and in good health even in the absence of modern health services.

With regards *mhande* dance held at shrines performers who happen to be all participants arrange themselves in form of a circle creating a centre stage for dancers who dance facing drummers. This dance formation is similar to *mhande* performance at *kurova guva* ceremonies. The venue for performance of *mhande* dance in *kurova guva* ceremonies is a kitchen hut which is designed in form of a circle that matches the circular formation of the dance. The effect of the *mhande* dance formation on participants is that they stimulate one another since different performers' experience change in state of being at different points in the course of performing the dance. By change of state of being I refer to the dancers' emotional feelings that are expressed through behaviours such as shaking the body, freezing and making any other gestures which indicate that the dancers are invigorated by the spirits to enter new state of being such as trance (*kunyaunywa*). In other words vigorous singing and dancing is indicative of *kunyaunywa*. It is therefore imperative at this juncture to clearly outline the *mhande* dance process that leads to trance and ultimately total possession or embodiment (*kusvikirwa*).

Performance of *mhande* dance in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies embraces both symbolic and efficacious phenomena. *Mhande* phenomena that constitute the efficacy of the dance are the features that ensnare the spirits to unite with their mediums, the participants. In this sense the union of the spirits and humans is noticeable through the dancers' display of dynamic experiences. Efficacious features of *mhande* dance incorporate: calm but forceful singing; singing spirits favourite songs; intense and intricate drumming; dignified foot movements reinforced with gourd rattle sound, and

timely utilisation of invocative actions such as cues, handheld objects, other gestures, ululation and whistling.

Singing of *mhande* songs is supposed to be done in a calm manner because the songs are a voice (*inzwi*) that the singers use to summon the respected spirits that are familiar with the voice. This means that singing of *mhande* songs is affected through observance of relevant ethos when carrying out the activity. In addition, efficacy in singing *mhande* songs can be facilitated not only by singing songs that are relevant to the ceremonies, but also by singing songs that the targeted spirits liked. To this end, the singers, who ought to be spirit mediums and master musicians, are expected to know their audience in order to satisfy its needs. Thus singing *mhande* songs can convene spirits only when it resonates with cultural conventions of the artistry and knowledge of the spirits to be summoned.

Mhande dance embraces forceful and complex drumming that tightens the performance. Drumming is the hub of performance of *mhande* dance hence it has to be powerful enough to sustain the performance. The complexity of *mhande* drumming lies in the repetition juxtaposed with the extemporisation of the dance beat. *Mhande* drummers' ability to maintain accuracy in respect of the intensity and the intricacy of the melorhythm of the dance urges the spirits that reside in the atmosphere to take part in drumming.

The aesthetics that ascribe efficacy to foot movements in *mhande* dance are accuracy and gravity. The movement accents are essentially supposed to contrast with the drum accents. The majestic manner in which the feet tap the ground is efficacious in that it draws from Karanga ethos related to honouring authorities. Majestic foot movements attract spirits who live underground. The gourd rattle sound (*gagada*), just like drumming, lures the spirits in the atmosphere. Thus foot movements with gourd rattles are doubly effective in that it draws together spirits from the two spheres: atmosphere and underground.

Articulations of *mhande* dance features: singing; drumming, and dancing are normally augmented with other phenomena that are meant to heighten performances. Such phenomena comprise cues, ululation, whistling, other gestures and objects. In order that these phenomena serve the purpose for which they are employed, which is to add

value to the effects of the core features of *mhande* dance, they should be objectively exploited.

Performance of *mhande* dance features that are symbolic and efficacious enough to invoke the spirits to join their siblings and participate in ritual ceremonies is the means by which the Karanga willingly humble themselves in seeking spiritual intervention to enable change to occur in their lives. In essence the Karanga exploit *mhande* dance in oreder to thrive for spiritual identity since they are spiritual at core. This truth is well substantiated by the spiritual intervention approach – outlined in chapter 2 - adopted by Matigimu Chivenge to change his misfortune ridden life. Drawing from Chivenge's experience, it may be argued that as long as the spirit is not settled or nourished, the body tends to suffer the consequences. As such, any problems that the Karanga cannot deal with constitute burdens that keep their bodies tense. When *mhande* dance, through the efficacy of its features, nourishes the spirits; the spirits, in turn, heal the humans. Unforeseen things that happen as a result of possession of the humans bodies by the spirits signal emotional healing. In this sense embodiment of the mediums by their ancestors therefore becomes a cleansing process.

Two states of possession: trance (*kunyaunywa*) and total possession (*kusvikirwa*) are prevalent in *mhande* dance performances in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies. As long as performance of *mhande* dance features elicits the required efficacy, all participants get into some kind of trance though they do so at different points in time. It is through the trance state that *mhande* performers receive healing. Total possession happens with designated mediums and it marks the closure of the *mhande* dance event. Not only does *mhande* dance connect Karanga humans with their ancestral spirits, but it also merges Karanga thought or cultural knowledge with spirituality which is their reality. Thus *mhande* dance is an enactment of Karanga epistemology (*chikaranga*).

6.5 Mhande musical meaning: Karanga epistemology

The efficacious and symbolic features of *mhande* dance that have been explicated in the foregoing sections of this Chapter is hereunder crystallised into and interpreted as Karamga musical meaning. This purview of the meaning of *mhande* dance draws

from Nzewi's proposition that "Making musical meaning mandates creative logic and grammar to accomplish philosophical and psychological intentions as well as strategize human-making structures and presentational dynamics" (Nzewi 2007:115). The three perspectives to making musical meaning: creative logic and grammar; philosophical and psychological intentions, and human-making structures and presentational dynamics which Nzewi offers have been adopted to formulate a model for illustrating the meaning of *mhande* dance [cf. Fig. 6.1].
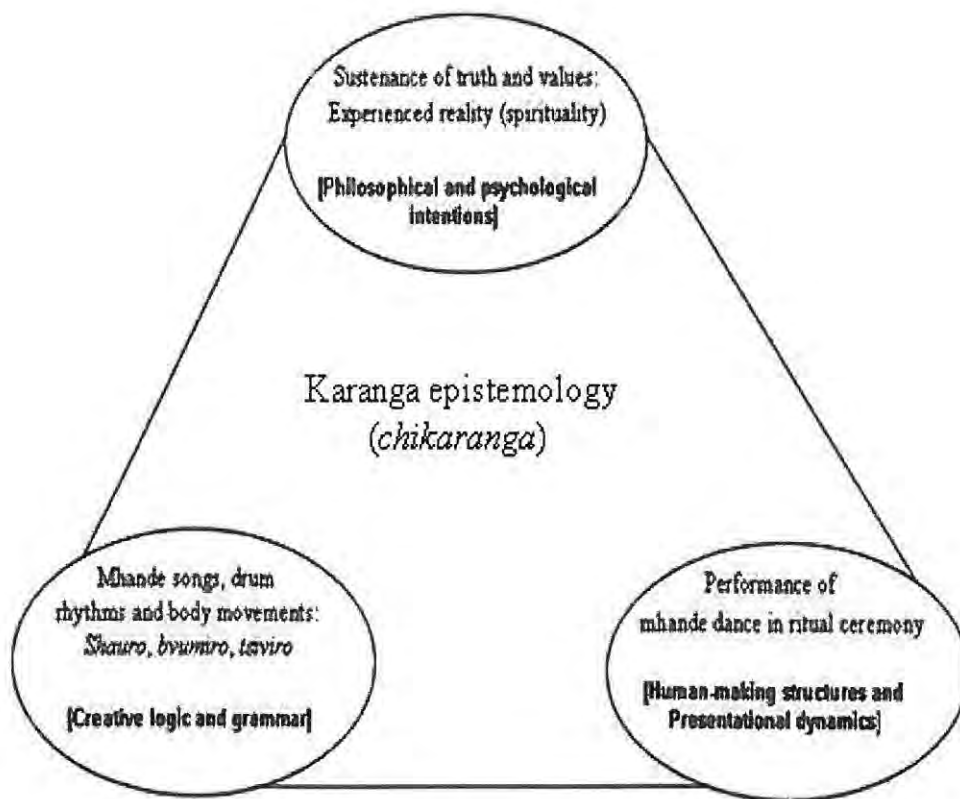

Fig. 6.1 Mhande meaning: Karanga epistemology

Each circle in the illustration of *mhande* meaning represents a component of Karanga epistemology. The lines connecting these circles connote the fusion of the tenets of the components to constitute the whole, an epistemology. When viewed from a Karanga standpoint, the three circles represent the three stones (*mapfihwa*) which support the round bottom pots that are often used by most rural Karanga when cooking. This support system (*mapfihwa*) makes it possible for the pot to cook the food that nourishes the body and hence sustains life. The implication of this imagery is that the Karanga hold a holistic view of life - the round pot - which conceives body

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and mind as one. In order to help the reader to develop a clear understanding of what the illustration (Fig. 6.1) conveys, the components therein call for an explication which is outlined hereunder.

Karanga highest truth or reality is their belief in God (*Mwari*) who they venerate by way of their ancestral spirits. Their way of life is therefore founded on this reality. As such, this ontology informs Karanga values and the belief and values constitute their thought of life.

Given that, to the Karanga, mind and body are one; they created *mhande* dance in order to fuse their philosophy of life with their everyday life. *Mhande* dance incorporates songs, drum rhythms and body movements and these features are used as a vehicle of communication between the humans and the spirits. Out of the *mhande* songs that were transcribed and presented in Chapter 5, two: Nzira dzomusango and Hurombo are relevant examples of Karanga philosophical intention to sustain their way of life.

Nzira dzomusango

Lead (Sh)	*Ndorumwa neshuma*	I am being attacked by lion (s)
Response (Bv)	*Nzira dzomusango*	Paths in the bush
(Sh)	*Dzine minzwa / ndiri ndoga*	Have thorns / being alone

The words of this song are so few that they do not tell a full story, but they also are few enough to portray the gist of the matter. The term *nzira* (sin. and pl.) implies way of life. In this sense, there is the way of life (Karanga) and other ways of life referred to as nzira *dzomusango*. Any Karanga who does not follow the Karanga way of life is said to be walking on dangerous paths where s/he encounters life threatening problems that are likened to being attacked by lion(s). In addition, s/he is also considered to be alone in the sense that s/he is not connected with ancestral spirits.

Hurombo

Hurombo hoi hoye	Poverty oh hey
Haiwa vakomana woye	Ah no men hey
Huromboyi vakomana mudzimu nditarire	What a poverty ancestors protect me

Huromboyi vakomana ndakanga ndaroyiwa   Men poverty of bewitchment
Hoi hoi ha hai ha here   (Vocables)

This song is an expression of a misfortune (*chiga*) which is in the form of dire poverty (*hurombo*). Corresponding to their reality, the Karanga hold the view that whatever happens in the natural has a spiritual explanation which can only be revealed by the spiritually initiated, the diviners (*n'anga*). According to the Karanga, misfortunes signify one's failure to abide by the ethos that governs their way of life. An appeal for spiritual intervention (*mudzimu nditarire*) is an acknowledgement that one would have been distanced from one's ancestors and bad spirits, for example, witches (*varoyi*) that yearn for such opportunities would have the chance to cause harm (*ndakanga ndaroyiwa*).

Both songs: "Nzira dzomusango" and "Hurombo" highlight the consequences faced by the Karanga who do not live as they ought to. It is a norm among the Karanga that they address a positive attribute from a negative viewpoint as is the case with these songs. In essence, the songs focus on Karanga philosophy of life that should be lived. It is clear from the messages in both songs that while the Karanga are aware of their cultural way of life that is meant to help them lead comfortably, they find themselves adopting other ways of living which plunge them into problems. The question that may be asked as to why such a situation obtains can be addressed by considering not only the other features of *mhande* dance, but also the tenets of the other components of the Karanga epistemology model.

Mhande dance can be said to be Karanga creative logic and grammar that is meant to enhance the philosophical as well as the psychological intentions of its exponents. *Mhande* dance songs, drum rhythms and body movements enact Karanga reality and facilitates the union of humans and spirits. Essentially therefore the dance converts Karanga philosophy of life into experienced reality. This means that *mhande* dance features constitute the grammar which nourishes the psyches of its adherents that crave for spiritual intervention in dealing with problems that challenge their lives. In order to achieve this objective, the Karanga designed different rituals into which different problems or anticipated problems are packed. Rituals are human-made structures that employ the natural phenomena as spiritual symbols. For example,

musical instruments such as gourd rattles (*magagada*) that are consecrated to the spirits become spiritual symbols. The dynamism of spiritual symbols lies in performance of *mhande* dance that occurs in spiritual rituals, among them: the *kurova guva* and the *mutoro* ceremonies which are meant to achieve different goals. Thus *mhande* dance features comprising singing, drumming and dancing are utilised to invite different spirits to inhabit different ceremonies which are organised for them (spirits).

To say *mhande* dance is the musical meaning of Karanga epistemology (*chikaranga*) is to substantiate Munamba's definition of *mhande* presented in Chapter 4 as:

Mhande ingoma yechikaranga   *Mhande* is the enacted voice of Karanga
                                      epistemology

Karanga ancestors have power over bad spirits that tend to interfere with the lives of their siblings, and hence spiritual rituals serve as the means of enabling them (siblings) to overpower their enemies by embracing *mhande* dance which spiritualises the ceremonies by drawing the spirits to participate in the ceremonies. The phusical encounter with the ancestors that *mhande* dance facilitates is a means by which the Karanga humans satisfy their psychological intentions. Thus this creative logic, *mhande* dance may be taken to be the grammar that the Karanga use to feed their psyches that crave for it in order to have an intimate relationship with the spirits This means that *mhande* does not only sustain Karanga reality and cultural values, but the dance also enhances the spiritual dimension of the lives of its exponents. In fact, Karanga life can be said to be spiritual life because everything in physical or natural form has a spiritual meaning.

6.0 Conclusion

The significance of *mhande* dance is embedded in its adherents' philosophical and psychological intentions that entail the transcendent and experiential dimensions of the dance, respectively. The Karanga conception of life from a spiritual perspective ascribes to it the transcendent meaning that is translated to everyday life through ritual and experienced through performance of *mhande* dance. *Mhande* dance features therefore do not only symbolize Karanga thought about life, but they are also efficacious enough to entice ancestral spirits to inhabit the ritual ceremonies and embody their mediums. Thus *mhande* dance is the enacted voice of Karanga epistemology.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This study has established that *mhande* dance is a defining element Karanga epistemology in that its adherents employ it in rituals that are meant to foster communication between the human and the spiritual beings. Essentially, it is the dynamism of *mhande* dance which is so efficacious that it entices the spirits to inhabit the ritual ceremonies and also possess their mediums (*masvikiro*).

Given that *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ritual ceremonies are organized and executed by people, the human bodies become the starting point of Karanga spirituality (*chikaranga*). Among the various bodily actions embedded in the two ceremonies, *mhande* dance features are not only dominant, but they are also manifold in expression. *Mhande* presents the body as a symbol in the sense that the dance features incorporating songs, drum rhythms, foot movements and other bodily gestures point to the spiritual realm. On the other hand, the same features coerce the spirits to inhabit the ceremonies. In this way, the dance fosters embodiment and as such the spirits manifest themselves through the bodies that enact the behaviours of their guests. By and large, *mhande* dance is the bodily experience of Karanga spirituality (*chikaranga*). In light of this *mhande* dance purview, my investigation of its efficacy and *symbolism* has driven me into an exploration of its exponents' culture that is embedded in the dance phenomena.

Karanga belief in life in the spirit after death whereby the deceased or spiritual beings continue to have influence on their siblings is a spiritual consciousness that manifests itself in action which is referred to as ritual (*bira*). The intellectual model of the Karanga world incorporating people (*vanhu*), things (*zvinhu*), ethos (*unhu*), ancestral spirits (*vadzimu*) and God (*Mwari*) as constituent parts of the spiritual and physical spheres of life respectively representing ontology and cosmology finds expression in, among other spiritual rituals, the *kurova guva* and the *mutoro* ceremonies. These rituals are tributaries of the Karanga past in that they were invented by ancestors with the intention of conveying clearly defined meaning of life and the humans place in it. Rituals are therefore the means of revealing sufficient knowledge on how to address complex issues of life such as misfortunes and droughts which acumen is seldom

available through ordinary ways of inquest. In this sense, the truth-constructing process, divination together with divine intervention from the spirits is sought through rituals that are structured in such a way that they invoke and entice the spirits to participate in the ceremonies.

By encompassing music, dance, embodiment and symbolism of Karanga view of reality, *mhande* dance is intersubjective. To this end, the interpretation of the dance embraces wide ranging structural elements that constitute its theory. For example, music and dance structure and/or pattern concepts are: lead (*shauro*); response (*bvumiro*); interlocking (*kutsivira/magure*); *kunzwanana* (coordination), and alternation (*kukayana*) – for embodiment: trance (*kunyaunywa*) and possession (*kusvikirwa*) – for symbolism: drum rhythm (*maridziro engoma*); dance style (*madzaniro*); gourds rattle sound (*magagada*); rod (*tsvimbo*), and spiritual attire (*fuko*). Two consultants: Munamba and Marecha offered most of the core Karanga *mhande* concepts contained in this thesis. It may be concluded that these spirit mediums provided the necessarily cultural discourse for their indigenous practices as it were revealed to them by their spiritual guests whenever required. This claim is based on the observations I made that before the commencement of any interview with either of the two, they would visit their consultation huts perhaps for the purpose of connecting with their ancestors. Thus the mhande dance discourse has been used to present an emic interpretation of this Karanga indigenous musical art.

My explication of *mhande* dance from an emic perspective has been enhanced by the availability of terminologies that constitute the tangible and intangible coordinates of the dance as well as my proficiency in both Karanga and English. The description and analysis of *mhande* presented in chapter 4 and 5 respectively, brought to bear the immediate or observable features of the dance which symbolize what the Karanga believe to be real; the existence and power of the spirits as discussed in chapter 2. By contextualising *mhande* in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies the symbolic dance phenomena are ritualised and hence empowered to influence the symbolized. Thus the Karanga view of reality or knowledge system (epistemology) is not only concretised through *mhande* dance symbolic acts and objects, but it should also be experienced in order for it to be understandable. The experience is basically an emotional one which signals the involvement of the spirits in the performance of the dance. This normally

occurs way after the commencement of the singing and dancing implying that the first three types of ritual music: *nyere* (whistle); *mbavarira* (dialogue), and *kuvhima* (hunt) would have lapsed and ushered in the *mhande* type that is preferred by greater spirits that are always accompanied by younger spirits that protect the interests of their superiors.

Marecha's explanation of the four categories of performance of *mhande* dance has helped me to understand why in some instances *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies are spiritually less charged than others because for some ceremonies the performance never rises to the level of *mhande* and as such the designated spirits attracted to the ritual. This means that *mhande* dance can only be said to be the musical meaning of Karanga epistemology only when the musical event of the ceremony is pitched to *mhande* level of performance that facilitates embodiment which manifests itself through two states of consciousness: trance (*kunyaunywa*) and possession (*kusvikirwa*) which account for the realization of the object of the ritual ceremonies. Gourds rattle sound (*magagada*) which are said to be key to the symbolic and efficacious features of mhande dance are seldom heard in performances that are meant to be *mhande* dance. As such, what the Karanga conceive to be *mhande* dance as alluded to by Munamba – the enacted voice of Karanga epistemology (*ngoma yechikaranga*); and Marecha – the voice that lures the spirits (*inzwi rinokwezva vadzimu*) confirms with the hypothesis of this research: *mhande* dance performance is an efficacious and symbolic enactment of Karanga epistemology.

The research for this study has taught me that no amount of exposure to, observation of, participation in, familiarity with and conversation about *mhande* dance without revelations on what it is and what it is meant to achieve as conceived by its creators, the ancestors (*vadzimu*) and imparted through their hosts, the spirit mediums (*masvikiro*) can assist anyone interested in and/or attracted to this dance to be able to explicate it. This is so because *mhande* music and dance phenomena encompassing: songs; drum rhythms; handclap patterns; foot movements; gestures and other bodily movements that incorporate the use of handheld objects do not constitute *mhande* dance except they enact Karanga culture by enabling the dance performers and ritual participants to experience the reality of Karanga view of life. This view of life is a statement that originated from its creators, the ancestors (*vadzimu*) who readily

recognize its vocabulary; *mhande* dance features and respond appropriately to this mode of communication for as long as it promotes the cultural conventions that they (ancestral spirits) instituted. The revelators of the dance features are the spirits' hosts, the mediums (*masvikiro*) who ought to perpetuate Karanga cultural conventions.

Spirit possession, which is a constituent part of the ratification of Karanga cultural knowledge, is esteemed so highly among the Karanga that access to information about it is restricted. This explains why there is very little data substantiating my reference to it in this thesis. This area is therefore recommended for further research. Another area requiring further investigation is the pervasiveness of *mhande* dance in modern culture.

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Appendix I – DVD

Mhande dance: An enactment of Karanga epistemology

Clip 1: *Kurova guva* ceremony plus paper edit (Running time – 22:20)

Clip 2: Revitalization of *mutoro* ceremony plus paper edit (15:10)

Title: Mhande dance in kurova guva and mutoro rituals: An efficacious and symbolic
enactment of Karanga epistemology

Paper Edit Video 1 Clip 1: Kurova guva ceremony Running time 22:20	
At Cuthbert Munamba's home waiting for the commencement of bringing back home the deceased spirit event (*kudzora mudzimu mumusha*)	00
Matigimu Pepukaimose Chivenge invited by researcher for interview	01:30
Chivenge outlines misfortunes that normally occur before *kurova guva*	01:35
Misfortunes demand divination	02:15
Diviner Munamba's picture in picture	02:17
Chivenge describes the process of dedicating ceremonial beer to spirits	05:08
Settling of Mrs Sesedzai Munamba's sister's event	06:17
Preparation for a march to grave site and tuning of *mhande* drums	06:25
Mrs Munamba leads procession carrying a pot of beer	06:45
Participants march single file with one carrying gourd rattles (*magagda*)	06:57
Participants take their shoes off	07:22
Participant carrying a drum to grave site	07:45
Mr Munamba walks round his deceased sister-in-law's grave	07:50
Mrs Munamba kneels in front of her deceased sister's grave	08:30
Mrs Munamba invokes her clan's spirits	08:50
Handclapping, ululation and whistling marking end of invocation	09:55
Performance *mhande* song: **Haiwa yowerere** in Mrs Munamba's kitchen hut	10:06
Drummers failing to coordinate with singers	10:58
Munamba takes over lead drum	11:05
Restarting the performance of the song	11:10
Dancers enter the arena to dance	10:19

PhD THESIS VIDEO ACCOMPANIMENT   Jerry Rutsate   208524290

Title: Mhande dance in kurova guva and mutoro rituals: An efficacious and symbolic
enactment of Karanga epistemology

Paper Edit Video 1 Clip 2: Revitalisation of mutoro ceremony Running time 15:10	

At the late Chief Nhema's home in Shurugwi District: introductory song	00
Vandudzo yomutoro (revitalisation of *mutoro* ceremony)	00:20
Mrs Sarudzai Nhema (wife to late chief) initiates dialogue on revitalisation of *mutoro* ritual ceremony	00:38
Etwell Marecha provides a response to Mbuya Nhema's concern for community members who are ill-informed about *mutoro*	00:52
Marecha explains purpose of *mhande* dance	02:06
Marecha points out reason for identification by totems	02:40
Christopher Pasvani on state of Karanga indigenous knowledge	03:08
Embodied Munamba (in his consultation hut) explains rain making process	04:20
Munamba the medium takes some snuff	05:19
Points at black cloth (spirit's attire) representing pool of water/ rain clouds	05:52
Points at blue cloth (spirit's attire) representing the sky	06:25
Marecha in Mbuya Nhema's kitchen hut discusses crest of *mutoro* ceremony (*huze yomutoro*) with Samson Manokore of Magumise clan	06:34
Mbuya Nhema explains nature and behaviour of a girl's qualification to carry *mutoro* beer to mountain shrine	06:49
Marecha helps Mbuya Nhema to describe girls who qualify to carry *mutoro* beer (*zvipotera*)	08:04
Marecha outlines ethos that bind those who lead *mutoro* events	08:07
Performance at night of *mutoro* song: **Dziva remvura** in Magumise's house	09:00
Ululation (*mhururu*) and whistling (*mheterwa*) heightening performance	11:08
Mhande dancers surround embodied medium just fallen onto the floor	11:30
Rain spirit medium's possession event (*kusvikirwa kwesvikiro remvura*)	12:20

Appendix II – DVD

Karanga *mhande* dance plus paper edit (Running time – 24:32)

PhD THESIS VIDEO ACCOMPANIMENT   Jerry Rutsate 208524290

Title: Mhande dance in kurova guva and mutoro rituals: An efficacious and symbolic
          enactment of Karanga epistemology

Paper Edit Video 2: Karanga mhande dance	Running time	24:32
Title of video, Etwell Marecha performing a *mhande* song		00
Marecha, at his home in Shurugwi explains *mhande* song categories for ritual		00:05
First category: *nziyo dzenyere* (whistle songs) explained		01:36
Second category: *nziyo dzembavarira* (dialogic songs) explained		02:20
Third category: *nziyo dzokuvhima* (songs for hunting) explained		03:45
Fourth and last category: *mhande* songs explained		04:06
An example of *nyere* songs: **Woiye iye** sung and explained		06:00
An example of *mbavarira* songs: **Mabavarira inoda vane dare** sung and explained		07:15
Singing and drumming **Mbavarirra inoda vane dare**		08:44
An example of *dzavavhimi* songs: **Tevera Gweru** performed and explained		10:07
An example of *mhande* main song: **Haiye woyere** performed and explained		11:52
An example of *mhande* minor song: **Ndaniwa nemvura** sung performed		14:41
Drum patterns described as *kukaya* (alternating)		17:05
Description of rod (*tsvimbo*), half moon-shaped axe (*humbwa/gano*), gourd rattles (*magagada*) and leopard skin (*fuko*)		17:20
Significance of snuff explained		22:55

Appendix III – VCD

Mhande dance songs