

Daniel Nii Tettei TETTEH

ZAOULI DE TIBÉITA: Exploring the Dynamics of Commercialisation and Cultural Transmission in the Zaouli Dance Heritage

An Ethnographic Study in La Côte D'Ivoire

Master's thesis in Choreomundus – International Master in Dance Knowledge, Practice, and Heritage.

Supervisor: Dr Chifang Chao

Co-supervisor: Ronald Kibirige

June 2023



Daniel Nii Tettei TETTEH

ZAOULI DE TIBÉITA: Exploring the Dynamics of Commercialisation and Cultural Transmission in the Zaouli Dance Heritage

An Ethnographic Study in La Côte D'Ivoire

Master's thesis in Choreomundus – International Master in Dance Knowledge, Practice, and Heritage.

Supervisor: Dr Chifang Chao

Co-supervisor: Ronald Kibirige

June 2023

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Music





ZAOULI DE TIBÉITA: EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS OF
COMMERCIALISATION AND CULTURAL TRANSMISSION IN
THE ZAOULI DANCE HERITAGE

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY IN LA CÔTÉ D'IVOIRE

Zaouli De Tibéita: Exploring the Dynamics of Commercialisation and Cultural Transmission
in the Zaouli Dance Heritage- An Ethnographic Study In La Côte D'Ivoire

A dissertation by

DANIEL NII TETTEI TETTEH

submitted to the Choreomundus Consortium in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the

Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree Choreomundus: International Master in Dance
Knowledge, Practice and Heritage.

Supervisor: Dr Chifang Chao

Tutor: Ronald Kibirige

© JUNE 2023 Daniel Nii Tettei Tetteh

ABSTRACT

Zaouli dance and music are integral parts of the life and practices of Gouro communities in the Bouaflé department of la Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in the areas of Manfla, Tibéita, Sinfra, Zenouaflé and Zrabisehifla. Believed to have been inspired by a young Gouro lady named Djéla Lou Zaouli, the dance celebrates feminine beauty through a combination of sculpture, craftsmanship, music, musicianship, and dancing to convey the cultural identity of its practitioners and custodians. This ethnographic inquiry focuses on the practice of Zaouli dance in the indigenous Gouro community of Tibéita, exploring their methods, techniques, and approaches to the transmission of culturally specific knowledge. Through the observation of performances, analysis of the contexts of performance an examination of transmission and safeguarding models, this study explores the evolution of the Zaouli dance tradition in Tibéita and the impact of a commercial apparatus applied to their safeguarding practices and that of a larger Gouro cultural heritage in La Côte d'Ivoire.

Keyword: *Zaouli dance, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Transmission, Commercialisation, Embodiment.*

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God Almighty for giving me the grace and strength to pursue this program and to my loving family. To my amazing partner, Aseye for her unwavering support, sacrifice, and belief in my abilities. This accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine. To Benedicta Naa Adjeley Sowah, Selorm Awo Tamakloe and Dr Beatrice Ayi, thank you for always encouraging me to pursue my dreams and for instilling in me a lifelong love of learning.

This work is dedicated to all the individuals who have touched my life, both personally and academically.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation! All ye who hear, Now to His temple draw near; Sing now in glad adoration!

To my family, thank you for being my rock and source of endless encouragement throughout this challenging journey. Your patience, understanding, and belief in me have sustained me during the toughest of times. This dissertation is a testament to our shared commitment to growth and achievement.

I extend my deepest gratitude to my esteemed academic advisor, Dr Chifang Chao and to my tutor Mr Ronald Kibirige. Your mentorship, guidance, and expertise have been instrumental in shaping this research and enhancing my scholarly skills. I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn from you.

To Mr Tidou Edgard and the Tidou family, Mr Bamba, Mr and Mrs Douayere, I say a big thank you. You opened up your hearts and homes to me and supported my research work in immeasurable ways. I am profoundly grateful to have met you all.

I would also like to express my appreciation to my Choreomundus friends and colleagues who have been a truly dynamic source of inspiration and support. A special thank you to Soumya S. Sharma, Temi Ami-Williams, Joan Mbabazi, Mr Chamboko and Lularz. Your intellectual discussions, encouragement, and camaraderie have made this academic journey more fulfilling and enjoyable. I carry your influence with me as I embark on this lifelong pursuit of knowledge.

Last but definitely not the least, I would like to acknowledge the Choreomundus Consortium, the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and the faculty and staff of the four partner universities for providing a conducive environment and invaluable academic resources that facilitated the completion of this dissertation. The scholarly community and the vibrant academic atmosphere have contributed immensely to my growth and learning.

CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING

This work was supervised closely by Dr Chifang Chao and supported by the conveners of the Choreomundus programme: Professor Emerita Georgiana Gore, Dr Gediminas Karoblis, Dr Sandor Varga, and Dr Raphaël Blanchier. Vivien Apjok (PhD) was instrumental in my preparation for field research.

I would like to express profound gratitude to Mr Tidou, Mr Douayere, Mr Bamba and their families for their guidance and support during my fieldwork.

Funding Sources:

My studies and the fieldwork for this project was funded by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) under the Erasmus+ Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree (EMJMD) Scholarship scheme.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| ABSTRACT..... | II |
| DEDICATION | III |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | IV |
| CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING..... | V |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | VI |
| LIST OF FIGURES | IX |
| LIST OF APPENDICES | XI |
| CHAPTER I: UNVEILING THE TAPESTRY OF DJÉLA LOU ZAOULI..... | 1 |
| 1.0. INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| 1.1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY..... | 2 |
| 1.2. MOTIVATION..... | 7 |
| 1.3. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES..... | 9 |
| 1.4. RESEARCH SCOPE..... | 10 |
| 1.4.1. <i>Pre-Field Enquiry</i> | 10 |
| 1.4.2. <i>Evolution of Research Question</i> | 11 |
| 1.4.3. <i>New Query</i> | 12 |
| 1.5. LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY: | 12 |
| 1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY..... | 14 |
| 1.7. OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS..... | 15 |
| CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW | 17 |
| 2.1. ON RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY..... | 17 |
| 2.2. ON TRANSMISSION..... | 19 |
| 2.3. THE UNESCO EFFECT..... | 21 |
| CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY | 23 |
| 3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH..... | 23 |
| 3.2. THE FIELD AND THE PEOPLE: AN OVERVIEW..... | 24 |
| 3.3. LOCATION OF THE FIELD..... | 26 |
| 3.4. ENTERING TIBÉITA..... | 28 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 3.5. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS. | 29 |
| 3.5.1. Analysis of Video_1. | 32 |
| 3.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITATIONS. | 36 |
| 3.7. ROLES, POSITIONS AND POSITIONALITY IN THE FIELD. | 37 |
| 3.8. CONCLUSION. | 39 |
| CHAPTER IV: ZAOULI DE TIBÉITA | 41 |
| 4.1. THE DANCE, THE PEOPLE, THEIR TRADITION. | 41 |
| 4.2. DJÉLA- THE MASKS. | 42 |
| 4.3. TIBÉITA . | 44 |
| 4.4. ZAOULI: THE PERFORMANCE. | 46 |
| 4.5. THE AFTERMATH: A FINANCIAL CONUNDRUM. | 50 |
| 4.6. A NEW DIMENSION. | 52 |
| 4.7. PIVOTAL MOMENT. | 54 |
| 4.8. EDEC. | 55 |
| 4.9. CONCLUSION. | 59 |
| CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION | 61 |
| A COMMERCIAL DIMENSION TO SAFEGUARDING A DANCE HERITAGE. | 61 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY: | 64 |
| APPENDICES: | 72 |
| APPENDIX 1: DATABASE | 72 |
| APPENDIX 2: | 73 |
| APPENDIX 3: ILLUSTRATION OF THE POSITIONING OF THE MUSIC ENSEMBLE DURING THE ZAOULI PERFORMANCE IN TIBÉITA. CAPTURED IN MY FIELDNOTES. | 75 |
| APPENDIX 4: ILLUSTRATION OF THE PERFORMANCE ARENA AND THE SURROUNDING STRUCTURES AS SHOWING THE DESIGNATED PERFORMANCE AREA. | 76 |
| APPENDIX 5: LABANOTATION OF THE VARIOUS PHRASES OF THE ZAOULI DANCE PERFORMANCE IN VIDEO_1. | 77 |

**APPENDIX 6: SIGNED CONSENT FROM LAI BI VRO BAYARD AFTER OUR
INTERVIEW SESSION. EXTRACTED FROM THE PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....78**

APPENDIX 7: SIGNED CONSENT FROM THE ADMINISTRATION OF EDEC.....79

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1.1: Image of Zaouli dancer in Tibéita performing for a group of tourists. Source: France Leclerc (vimeo.com) | 7 |
| Figure 1.2: Image of the Zahoulin Mask, captured after the performance of Zaouli de Tibéita, 13 June 2022_14:07. Shot on Apple iPhone 13 Pro at f2.8_1/15s_77mm. | 8 |
| Fig. 3.1: Photo of researcher, gatekeeper and his friends after initial meeting in Bouaflé. From L to R: Mr Bamba, Nii Tettei, JCI Président, Mr Tidou (gatekeeper), La Kpétal and Mr Douayere. 11 June 2022_13:26. Shot on Apple iPhone 13 Pro_f1.5_1/1698_26mm.m. | 25 |
| Figure 3.2: Map of Sassandra-Marahoue administrative region of La Côte d’Ivoire showing Tibeita in the Bouaflé department. Source: This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND | 27 |
| Fig. A | 34 |
| Fig. B | 34 |
| Figure 4.1: The mask of Gan, 'the best runner', signifies speed. It is a carving of antelope atop the Zaouli mask..... | 42 |
| Figure 4.2: Zaouloukou represents the struggles of the Gouro people..... | 42 |
| Figure 4.3: Photo of signpost with the inscription TIBÉITA (the name of the township), 13 June 2022_12:36. Shot on Apple iPhone 13 Pro at f2.8_1/1206s_77mm. | 44 |
| Figure 4.4: The guardian of Zaouli de Tibéita unveiling the Zaouli mask, 13 June 2022_13:41. Shot on Apple iPhone 6s at f2.2_1/1054s_29mm..... | 46 |

Figure 4.5: The Ensemble playing a prelude as the audience walk in and the Zaouli dons his costume.46

Figure 4.6: Photo of the guardian of Zaouli de Tibéita leading the dancer into the performance space, 13 June 2022_13:40. Shot on Apple iPhone 6s at f2.2_1/2331s_29mm.47

Figure 4.7: A photo with the facilitators of the workshop at EDEC.....57

LIST OF APPENDICES

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| APPENDIX 1 | -72 |
| APPENDIX 2 | -73 |
| APPENDIX 3 | -75 |
| APPENDIX 4 | -76 |
| APPENDIX 5 | -77 |
| APPENDIX 6 | -78 |
| APPENDIX 7 | -79 |

CHAPTER I: Unveiling the Tapestry of Djéla lou Zaouli

This opening chapter sets the stage for an in-depth exploration of cultural transmission and the role of commercialisation in the practice of the Zaouli dance tradition as pertains the Gouro community in Tibéita. It provides an overview of the research problem and objectives, highlighting the significance of investigating the process of commodifying this treasured tradition and its related practices. The chapter also outlines the questions that will guide the study and provides an overview of the dissertation's structure, offering a roadmap for the subsequent chapters.

1.0. Introduction.

The Zaouli dance tradition and the socio-cultural heritage it embodies comprises both tangible and intangible artefacts that play a crucial role in the preservation and transmission of a ‘Gouro identity’. This heritage encompasses a culturally appropriate assortment of tools and ideas for safeguarding the community's customs and traditions, and for passing them down to succeeding generations. American contemporary dance choreographer and scholar, Kariamou Welsh-Asante (2004: 23) observes that a community’s legacy, its beliefs, value systems and knowledge bodies; their ‘beauty and power’, are expressed in many ways. In the context of African societies, it could be made manifest in an ostentatious display of wealth and social status through stately motions to a well-orchestrated musical ensemble, or in the meticulous weaving of strands of textiles in the construction of relics. Dancing, songs, poetry, musicking and storytelling through dramatic enactments and re-enactments of history are among the conduits through which society may express its political, social, and economic realities. (Kuwor, 2021)

Among the Gouros, dance is an integral element that has profound influence on their way of life and on the processes for transmission of knowledge and the preservation of traditional values. Welsh-Asante (1998; 2004; 2010), Nii-Yartey (2016), Kuwor (2010), and Nketia (1970) have discussed extensively in their works, the notion of dance as a medium for transmission of cultural capital. The idea that through dance -the act of dancing- and other creative avenues and performances, younger generations are taught the customs and traditions of their ancestors, fostering a sense of continuity and belonging within their communities. Tiérou (2009:34) remarks that ‘because [dance] has more power than gesture, more eloquence

than words, more richness than writing and because it expresses the most profound experiences of human beings', it becomes a 'complete and self-sufficient language'. The act of dancing thus operates as a medium for the expression of emotions, capturing the mood of the people and evoking feelings of joy, happiness, sadness, and nostalgia. It is a means of communication that enables individuals and their communities to convey their thoughts and opinions on political and social issues through symbolic gestures and movements that have counterparts in everyday life.

Opoku (1968) describes a sense of African traditional dance that articulates a common cultural value observed across numerous African societies. One that captures and addresses the intrinsic role of dance as a fundamental component of society through which the evocation and invocation of cosmic entities translate into a spontaneous expression of a communal identity and shared experiences. Proponents of African scholarship such as Agawu (1995), Badu-Young (2002) and Nketia (1974) support the view that in African Societies, the dancer is the

centre of [the people's] lives – in his subtle flexion of hands and fingers, [their] prayers; in his thrusting arms – [their] thanksgiving; in his stamp and pause – [their] indignation; in his leap and turns – [their] frivolity – [their] defiance; in his bow- [their] allegiance; his halting steps – [their] reverence.

(A.M. Opoku 1968).

Opoku highlights the vital role that dancing, and dancers play in African societies; that the dancer is not merely a performer, but rather the centre of the community's life, embodying and expressing their collective emotions and beliefs. Through the dance, the community become 'co-creators and participants in the dramas of the African way of life', as they work together to explore and express their collective identity and heritage.

The Zaouli dance tradition and the Zaouli dancer, believed to be the incarnation of the spirit of Zaouli, represents the people's beliefs, their hopes and aspirations. It so aptly captures their way of life and becomes a representation of their collective experiences.

1.1. Background and Context of the Study.

The Gouro people, nestled in the picturesque region that surrounds the town of Tibéita in La Côte d'Ivoire, possess a rich and vibrant cultural heritage deeply rooted in artistic expressions

that shape their collective identity. Among the multifaceted forms of artistic expressions, including music, dance, and visual arts, Djéla lou Zaouli, popularly known as Zaouli (pronounced 'ZA-HOU-LI'), emerges as a prominent and cherished practice that embodies the spirit and essence of the people (Haxaire, 2022; Bouttiaux and Roberts, 2009).

Zaouli, like most dance traditions from the West African sub-region, is a holistic 'repository' of 'indigenous knowledge' and value systems encompassing all aspects of daily life (Kuwor 2017: 62). It is an all-inclusive activity, a 'mode of expression springing from the heart that uses movements and gestures which have their counterparts in our everyday activities to express both special and ordinary experiences' (Opoku 1965: 19). The manifestation and execution of Zaouli embody an amalgamation of various artistic expressions, including sculpture, craftsmanship, music, musicianship, and dance, in commemorative events that appositely capture and convey the cultural identity of its practitioners and guardians.

Characterized by its mesmerizing masks -well known to art lovers the world over, intricate footwork and captivating movements, the Zaouli dance, has since its inception, been an integral part of the Gouro people's socio-economic and cultural fabric. It serves as a cultural touchstone and a means of preserving their collective memory. The dance is seen as a bridge connecting the past, present, and future, as it conveys historical narratives, social values, and their spiritual beliefs (Haxaire 2009; Bouttiaux and Roberts, 2009). It is a show of splendour, of nobility, and a reflection of the Gouro's conception of beauty: a 'tour de force of rhythmic virtuosity' as observed by Welsh-Asante (2010: 46). The Zaouli dance transcends artful expression into a more functional role within Gouro communities where a shared identity, a sense of community and the collective heritage of its custodians are demonstrated (Haxaire, 2009; 2022). It is not a detached entity but rather an integral component that beautifully chronicles the community's heritage and traditions (Kuwor, 2013; Nii-Yartey, 2016; Tiérou, 2009).

The Zaouli dance, like many African dance forms and dances of African origins, has a mythical genesis that holds significant cultural and spiritual meaning within Gouro society. The myth surrounding Zaouli emphasizes the importance Gouros place on beauty, poise, and spiritual connection with the cosmos. It unravels the dance's origin, purpose, and foundation as a realm for the manifestation of cosmic entities, socio-cultural agenda, and philosophical orientations. Furthermore, it underscores the role of dance as a medium for connecting with the divine and expressing the communal values and beliefs (Holas, 1976).

One narrative concerning the origins of Zaouli, as recounted by Sahou Bi Botty, a Gouro descendant and resident of Tibéita in Bouaflé, tells the tale of a young girl named Zah, who was the daughter of Djéla (Tidou bi, no date).

According to the myth, Zah, a remarkably beautiful and graceful girl, resided in a Gouro village. During a stroll in the forest, she fortuitously encountered the spirit of the Zaouli, an immensely powerful and mystical entity. Enraptured by Zah's exceptional beauty and grace, the spirit took possession of her body and commenced dancing through her.

The individuals who bore witness to this extraordinary dance were left astonished and inspired. They perceived the performance as a tangible manifestation of the spirit world, attributing to it the ability to bring forth blessings and good fortune to the entire community. Over time, the dance became an intrinsic part of Gouro culture and was named Zaouli in honour of the spirit that had inspired it.

The elaborate costumes, which incorporate vibrant fabrics, intricate beadwork, and ornate masks coupled with the virtuosity of the dancers, demonstrated in their rhythmic and fluid movements, employing their entire bodies as instruments, all convey emotions and narrate stories of their most profound experiences as a people. (Tiérou, 2009)

Historically, the practice of the Zaouli dance has involved rigorous training, passing down the practice from generation to generation with every Zaouli-performing community having a representative troupe, commissioned as practitioners and bearers of the dance tradition¹. The training to be a Zaouli emphasises the mastery of specific movements, gestures, and somatic expressions. The performers in the various communities of practice undergo an apprenticeship under the seasoned dancer(s) in their family lineage as per tradition. They train, understudy, practice and perform under the tutelage and supervision of their accomplished relatives. The Office Ivoirien du Patrimoine Culturel (OIPC)² in its documentation of the practice for the nomination of Zaouli dance onto the UNESCO ICH Representative List stated that ‘the viability of Zaouli is ensured through popular performances organized two or three times a

¹ The representative troupe is comprised of members of a single family lineage. Since the inception of the practice, every community has had one family representing them at larger social functions and gatherings.

² The Office Ivoirien du Patrimoine Culturel (OIPC) is an institution in La Côte d’Ivoire responsible for preserving and promoting the country's cultural heritage. It protects and conserves tangible and intangible cultural assets, organizes events to showcase the heritage, and collaborates nationally and internationally. The OIPC plays a crucial role in preserving cultural identity and contributing to tourism development.

week by the communities'. These apprentices (the dancers in training), embark on a journey of learning, to imbibe the subtle nuances and techniques that bring life to the dance. They undergo a deep exploration of both the physical and sensory aspects of movement cultivating body awareness, a heightened sensitivity to their posture, alignment, and how their bodies inhabit space. This foundation allows for the graceful execution of complex choreography and facilitates the seamless interconnectedness and demonstration of choreomusicality through movement. Custodians play a vital role in the transmission process and maintain strict adherence to tradition, ensuring that the essence of the Zaouli dance remains intact, even as it evolves and adapts to contemporary contexts.

Traditionally, the dancer, principally a man who is believed to embody the essence of Zaouli is accompanied on stage by a guardian during performances. The commencement of the performance is signified by his guardian's gradual unveiling of the mask, thus revealing the dancer and the mask underneath the covering. As he dances, the regalia, an alluring trichromatic effigy, sways in rhythmic response to the dancing Zaouli. The copious ornaments that hang from the guise seem to tilt and move in response to the gesticulations of the dancer, the decorative raffia attached to the ankles, waist and wrists judder in the motion. The anklets, strung with small bells jazz up the accompanying stentorian musical ensemble of membranophones, idiophones and aerophones thereby establishing a sonorous and harmonious ambiance.

In recent times, the traditional practice of Zaouli dance has undergone significant transformations due to the influences of modernization and visibility on several media platforms, with its inscription on UNESCO's ICH Representative list being a major contributor. In 2017, at the twelfth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Republic of Korea, Zaouli was inscribed onto the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The inscription catapulted the dance practice into global recognition and thus contributed to its popularity among tourists who frequent the Ivory Coast, as well as first-time visitors. The allure and enchantment of the dance have reached far beyond the confines of community celebrations, extending into contemporary performance spaces such as theatres, festivals, and other public events. In an interview with Lai bi Vro Bayard (2022), he recounts multiple instances where his troupe had performed at functions outside their hometown (Nice in 1974, Paris, New York, Boston, Memphis, Washington in 2004 and Baltimore in 1994). They performed at festivals

(Réo Festival in Burkina Faso), conferences (Nice in 1974), inauguration ceremonies and other social events.

Inscription onto the Representative list has brought this intangible cultural heritage of the Gouro people into the global spotlight. As a result, there has been increased interest from scholars, tourists, and cultural enthusiasts, which has led to a surge in research, documentation, and dissemination of the Zaouli dance. While this expanded visibility has garnered greater recognition and appreciation for Zaouli dance, it also poses critical challenges to the practice and preservation of the tradition within the Gouro community.

While the UNESCO ICH listing aims to safeguard the Zaouli dance tradition, the visibility and fame it occasioned has inadvertently contributed to the commodification and commercialisation of the practice. The heightened global attention has created opportunities for commercial exploitation, where the dance is increasingly packaged and marketed for tourism, entertainment, and cultural industries. Performances that were once deeply rooted in community celebrations have now become staged spectacles primarily catering to external audiences. One may find that that a contemporary performance of Zaouli is altered to cater to tourist expectations. Movements are exaggerated and the intricate cultural symbolisms inherent are simplified in these contemporary renditions of Zaouli.

In 1967, at the ceremony for the opening of the ‘Pont Houphouët-Boigny’ in Abidjan, a group of musicians and dancers from Tibéita performed a rendition of the Zaouli dance at the request of the then Ivorian President Felix Houphouët-Boigny, heralding the dance’s rise to fame and a new commercial dynamic (Lai bi Vro Bayard, 2022). This is one such instance of performance outside the indigenous environment where movements and their inherent cultural symbolism may not be at the forefront of the context. The dance and its related artforms have now moved beyond their traditional contexts of performance and this project investigates the commercial aspect of this transcendence from the perspective of transmission and safeguarding practices.

The interplay between tradition and commercialisation raises complex questions about the transmission of cultural knowledge and the safeguarding of intangible heritage. At the heart of this study lies a profound curiosity to investigate the continuity and resilience of Gouro cultural practices in the face of shifting dynamics. To unravel the complexities of how the Gouro people negotiate the tensions between tradition and commercialisation, exploring the innovative

strategies employed to safeguard their cultural heritage while adapting to the changing times. Through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and the analysis of dance performance(s), we will uncover the nuanced narratives, experiences, and perspectives of the Gouro community regarding the introduction of commercialisation as a new dynamic in the Zaouli dance practice.

1.2. Motivation.

The stimulus for undertaking this research project stemmed from an engaging encounter with an online video of a Zaouli dance performance. (see video_1 in database) The captivating display of technical virtuosity exhibited by the dancer, in his leg movements, coupled with the intricate musical accompaniment, left a lasting impression. The seamless synchronization between the dancer's precise footwork and the rhythmic sophistications of the music created a spectacle that exemplified the artistry and skill involved in the practice of Zaouli dance. Welsh-Asante's (2010:46) observation of the dance as a 'tour de force of rhythmic virtuosity' encapsulated the complexity and mastery evident in the performance. It underscored the unique fusion of movement and sound that constitutes the essence of Zaouli dance, highlighting its artistic and cultural significance.



Figure 1.1: Image of Zaouli dancer in Tibéita performing for a group of tourists. Source: France Leclerc (vimeo.com)

This encounter served as a catalyst for a broader exploration into the Zaouli dance, its exposure on digital platforms and presence in commercial spaces, to examine how that may impact its transmission within the indigenous communities of practice. The desire to delve deeper into these issues, to unravel the intricate dynamics between cultural preservation and transmission, ultimately gave rise to the research project at hand. My interest was further piqued by questions regarding the training and development of both dancers and musicians and how they achieved such impressive levels of coordination and synchronization in their performances. Beyond the choreomusical distinctiveness, how they develop such near-telepathic communication skills during performances? How it is that they are able to perform with such poise and coordination in a complex polyrhythmic music and dance relationship? To investigate the coming together of the various practices into one dance tradition and what the significance of the various elements are?



Figure 1.2: Image of the Zaouloukou Mask, captured after the performance of Zaouli de Tibéita, 13 June 2022_14:07. Shot on Apple iPhone 13 Pro at f2.8_1/15s_77mm

My motivation for conducting this research was to explore the various approaches, systems, methods, and techniques utilized in the transmission of the Zaouli dance and its related practices. The investigation thus aims to provide insight into the transmission of the Zaouli dance and its related practices (such as weaving, sculpting, music, and dramatic enactments) within Gouro communities, as well as the cultural significance of the dance's elaborate costuming, masks, and personification of the character being performed.

Furthermore, the study sought to explore the implications of the apparent contradictions between the dance's ascribed femininity and the acrobatic movements executed by the performer. Ultimately, the investigation and analysis of information obtained intends to contribute to a better understanding of the existence and performance of the Zaouli dance.

1.3. Research problem and objectives.

The research problem for this study is the role of commercialisation -as a new dynamic- in the cultural transmission and safeguarding of Zaouli dance within the Gouro community in Tibéita. As the traditional practice of Zaouli dance has expanded into contemporary performance spaces and encountered influences of commercialisation, there is a growing concern about the potential erosion of its cultural authenticity and the challenges it poses to the long-term sustainability of the tradition. This study seeks to understand the complex dynamics between tradition and commercialisation and their implications for the transmission and preservation of Zaouli dance within this Gouro community.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine the historical and cultural significance of Zaouli dance in the Gouro community, exploring its traditional contexts of performance, cultural symbolism, and community engagement processes.
2. To investigate the methods and strategies employed by the Gouro community to safeguard the cultural transmission of Zaouli dance, exploring the role of custodians, practitioners, and community members in preserving and perpetuating the tradition.
3. To analyse the impact of commercialisation on Zaouli dance, including its transformation from a community practice to a widely recognized cultural art

form performed in spaces outside its indigenous confines, such as theatres, festivals, and public events.

4. To understand the perceptions, experiences, and perspectives of Gouro community members, dancers, and cultural practitioners regarding the effects of commercialisation on Zaouli dance and its implications for cultural identity and heritage.
5. To propose recommendations and strategies for further research into enhancing the sustainable transmission and preservation of Zaouli dance within the Gouro community, taking into account the challenges and opportunities presented by commercialisation and contemporary influences.

By addressing these research objectives, I aim to contribute to the existing knowledge on the impact of commercialisation on traditional cultural practices, providing insights into the complexities of cultural transmission and safeguarding the Zaouli heritage.

1.4. Research Scope.

The study sought to engage a Gouro community in order to investigate key indigenous methodologies, systems, models, strategies, tools, and techniques that are used in the indigenous existence of the Zaouli dance and its related practices. To explore approaches to transmission of cultural knowledge and the sustenance of the Zaouli dance tradition and its related practices in engendering a collective, communal heritage.

1.4.1. Pre-Field Enquiry.

My initial query focused on investigating the methods, tools, models, strategies, and techniques that are prevalent in the indigenous existence of the Zaouli dance, to study how the Gouro community approaches transmission of cultural knowledge through Djéla lou Zaouli in the sustenance of the Zaouli dance tradition and its related practices?

I sought to delve into the interactions and relationship between music, dance, musicianship, choreography, costume, and dramatic enactments; the “Choreomusicality” of the Zaouli dance. How the performers develop such coordination and the seamless collaborative

transitions between rhythmic and movement phrases during performances? Aesthetic senses within the dance and the semiotic significance of a performance.

I was also interested in what techniques were used in communicating between dancer and musician as I observed that the dancer and lead musician were on a level of ‘near-telepathic’ communication on stage during performance?

Another area of interest was the aesthetic senses (conceptualizations of beauty) present in the performance and existence of the dance alongside any semiotic significance they may hold. How do the Zaouli-performing communities perceive beauty of the dance and the dancer? What qualities do they look out for in a performance? And what is that quality that would grab the attention of an onlooker and in turn arouse a deeper sense of appreciation for the dancing and the dancer?

I also pursued insights into any religious, philosophical, and ideological connotations that were manifested through the dance. To find out how the Zaouli dance and the dancer purvey the religious orientation of the people? Is this common knowledge in the community or is access to such comprehension and familiarity with the religious aspects of the dancing restricted to a certain class of citizens?

Finally, I sought to investigate the impact of the inscription of the Zaouli dance on UNESCO’s ICH representative list on the community and how it may or may not have affected the existence and performance of the dance.

1.4.2. Evolution of Research Question.

During my time in the field, I came to the realization that financial considerations played a pivotal role in determining access to the information about the dancing and its related practices. This discovery prompted me to re-evaluate my research direction and delve into a study focused on understanding the intricate relationship between commodification, commercialisation, dance practice, and community development. I became intrigued by the implications of commercialisation on the authenticity, preservation, and transmission of the Zaouli dance tradition, as well as its effects on the social and economic dynamics within the community and therefore modified my research query.

1.4.3. New Query.

The new direction of the research and the object of this dissertation is how the processes of commodification and commercialisation of Zaouli impact the cultural transmission and safeguarding of the dance tradition within the Gouro community in Tibéita, and what strategies have been devised to ensure the preservation of this traditional practice amidst contemporary influences?

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the research question, this study will delve into the historical and cultural import of Zaouli dance, elucidating its traditional contexts of performance, intricate cultural symbolism, and deep-rooted community engagement. Furthermore, the study examines the ways in which commodification of the dance tradition has influenced its practice and the development of the community. Through participant observation, interviews, and archival research, this study explores the efficacy of commercialisation as tool for safeguarding the Zaouli dance tradition, while also contributing to community development. However, careful consideration must be given to balancing the preservation of tradition with the potential risks of commodification and cultural appropriation.

Additionally, the study will endeavour to explore the diverse perceptions, experiences, and perspectives of Gouro community members, dancers, and cultural practitioners concerning the ramifications of commercialisation on Zaouli dance, thereby discerning its impact on cultural identity, heritage, and community building.

1.5. Limitations and Challenges of the Study:

- Language:

The chosen field site, Tibéita, is situated in an area characterized by linguistic diversity, with a variety of indigenous languages spoken alongside the prevalence of French in the communities. The language barrier posed a significant challenge as the primary languages spoken in the field site are Gouró and French, neither of which I am proficient in. In order to address this obstacle, I made arrangements with my contact in the field to engage the services of a translator who could assist in facilitating communication during my study. Additionally,

I had taken the initiative to learn basic French expressions on Duolingo³, including salutations and introductory remarks, to establish a basic level of rapport. Despite these provisions and contingencies, there remains a concern that nuances and subtleties of information may be lost in translation, potentially impacting the depth and accuracy of my understanding of the Zaouli dance tradition and its cultural significance within the Gouro community.

- **Mobility and Accommodation:**

The geographical distance between my contact's home in Abidjan (located in the southern part of the country) and the field site in Bouaflé (situated in the central region) presented significant logistical challenges. With approximately 290 kilometres separating these two locations, it was impractical to conduct the entirety of my study from my contact's residence in Abidjan. To overcome this hurdle, I actively sought suitable accommodation in and around Bouaflé before entering the field. This was so I could immerse myself within the community and engage directly with the practice and custodians of the Zaouli dance tradition.

Fortunately, my contact generously offered assistance in finding suitable accommodation and facilitated my transportation to and from Bouaflé and Tibéita throughout the duration of my fieldwork (further details provided in the ensuing chapters). This collaborative effort aimed to minimize disruptions to the research process and maximize the opportunities for meaningful engagement with the Gouro community and I am grateful to Mr Tidou and his family for their kindness.

- **Finance and Budgeting:**

While the cost of living in Côte d'Ivoire is comparatively affordable, a major challenge I encountered arose from the potential expectation of financial compensation from community leaders, dancers, and troupe members for their active participation in the study. Although I made thorough preparations by devising a budget to accommodate honorariums and compensations for these individuals, the specific financial demands of the community leaders and at the time, yet-to-be-identified dance troupe remained uncertain. Despite the frequency of communication with my contact, comprehensive information regarding the extent of financial expectations had not been forthcoming. Consequently, there was a degree of

³ Duolingo is a language learning platform that provides language certification for different levels of proficiency in multiple languages. It has 40+ languages to choose from and offers quick and easy, on-the-go lessons models. You can learn with Duolingo on the web or on the app.

Source: Conversation with Bing, 22/06/2023

uncertainty regarding the financial implications of the study. I therefore had to remain adaptable to potential requests for compensation that would arise during my fieldwork.

By acknowledging and addressing these limitations and challenges, I was committed to navigating them with sensitivity, flexibility, and by employing an adaptive approach. These considerations allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the Zaouli dance tradition, its cultural significance, and the dynamics of commercialisation and transmission within the Gouro community of Tibeita.

1.6. Significance of the study.

This study holds significant implications for both academic and practical domains. Firstly, it contributes to the existing literature on the Zaouli dance tradition and to discussions about the impact of commercialisation on traditional cultural practices through an in-depth exploration of the specific case of Zaouli dance within the Gouro community in Tibéita. By examining the complexities and dynamics arising from commercialisation, the study sheds light on the intricate relationship between tradition and contemporary influences, thereby enriching our understanding of cultural transmission and safeguarding in a globalized world.

The Gouro people, the Zaouli dance tradition and its related practices and artforms, despite its recent rise to fame and increased visibility on a global scale, has had very little scholarly attention. Although scholars like Haxaire (2009, 2022), Meillasoux (1966) and Bouttiaux (2009) have done extensive work on Gouro culture and Gouro lifestyle, there has been very few ethnomusical, ethnochoreological and anthropological exploration of the Zaouli dance practice. Through this study I aim to contribute to scholarly work on the Zaouli dance heritage and by extension, the Gouro people.

Moreover, the study's significance extends to the Gouro community itself, as it provides a platform for their voices and perspectives to be heard and acknowledged. By actively involving community members in the research process, their insights and experiences can be incorporated into the formulation of recommendations and interventions, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment within the community.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on cultural heritage management and preservation, providing valuable insights into the interplay between tradition, commercialisation, and community engagement. By recognizing and addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by commercialisation, the study aims to facilitate the sustainable safeguarding and transmission of Zaouli dance, ensuring its continued vitality and cultural significance for future generations within the Gouro community and beyond.

In essence, this research project intends to furnish a comprehensive and scholarly examination of the role of commercialisation in the transmission of Zaouli dance within the Gouro community in Tibéita, thereby contributing to the scholarly discourse on cultural transmission, preservation, and sustainability. The insights gained from the study can inform the development of strategies to navigate the challenges posed by commercialisation while upholding Zaouli dance as an integral and cherished facet of Gouro cultural heritage.

1.7. Overview of Chapters.

In this chapter, I have set the stage for the exploration of the historical and cultural background of Zaouli dance, examining its significance as a traditional practice and its evolution into a widely recognized cultural art form performed in contemporary spaces. I have presented the scope of my research outlining the research problem, my research objectives and how they evolved over time. I have also highlighted some of the challenges encountered in preparation for the fieldwork and those that arose in the time I was in the field. This chapter also gives an overview of the research project including the stimulus that initiated the study and a general context to situate the project.

The second chapter delves into the existing body of literature relevant to the study by critically engaging previous studies on the commodification of traditional practices, specifically dance, and examines the literature on Zaouli dance, exploring its cultural significance and historical context. It also presents the theoretical and conceptual framework that guides the study, providing definitions and insights into the keywords used.

The third chapter discusses the methodology employed introducing ethnography as the main approach through which I engaged with the Gouro community members, dancers, and cultural practitioners to understand their perceptions, experiences, and perspectives regarding

the effects of commercialisation on Zaouli dance. The chapter also highlights some of the key informing moments from the fieldwork.

Through discussions and analysis of the documented narratives and experiences of custodians of the Zaouli heritage, Chapter IV reveals the intricate relationship between tradition, commercialisation, and cultural identity, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges arising from this transformation.

Cumulatively, the chapters set the foundation for understanding the complexities and dynamics arising from commercialisation traditional cultural practices by examining the specific case of the Zaouli dance heritage.

CHAPTER II: Literature Review

The literature review that follows examines the literary texts relevant to the foci of my ethnographic inquiry. It chapter delves into the existing body of literature on Zaouli dance exploring its cultural significance and historical context. It also presents the theoretical and conceptual framework that guides the study, providing definitions and insights into the keywords used. It explores commercialisation as an aspect of contemporary dance performances, transmission, and choreomusicality in the dance heritage and its contexts of performance.

2.1. On Researcher positionality.

Fenton (1997) argues that movement – dance, or the act of dancing - is not a universal means of communication and emphasizes the importance of examining movement traditions in their indigenous contexts. Thus, advancing and supporting an emic positionality in dance research. “The meanings of specific movements are culturally determined, and persons from two different cultures can misunderstand each other’s movement and body language as easily as they can misunderstand each other’s spoken language”. The relevance of any movement practice is engendered in its indigenous context of performance and in the perception of its community of practice. As Kuwor (2017: 48) notes, ‘to understand and appreciate the uniqueness and holistic nature of dance in Africa, one needs to do an in-depth study of this art form in its native soil in order to capture it from the emic perspective’.

Fenton (1997) emphasizes the importance of examining movement traditions of a culture in its own ethos. It is important to also note that the classifications, interpretations and actual meanings of movements and gestures (semiotics) may vary across cultures-what may be categorized as dance within one culture will not necessarily be recognized as dance in another and in some cases, even when there are similarities in the execution of movements, the meaning and value imposed on the movements will be different. The ways in which dance fits into one culture, its accompanying artefacts, as well as the criteria for determining what is or is not dance, are unique to that society alone (Kwakye-Oppong and Salifu, 2015). Thus, the understanding of a movement practice can vary depending on the social, aesthetic, and cultural dimensions of said practice and how it is perceived, understood, and integrated

within the community or society that is creating, performing, witnessing, and living the dance.

To better understand any society, “we must examine it through the lens, not of our own, but its own culture” (Fenton, 1997:118). This brings to the forefront, the emic positionality that several anthropologists and researchers in the humanities and social sciences have advocated for. (Kaepler, 1999; Koutsouba, 1999; Gore 2009) The importance of studying movement practices and dance traditions impartially, bearing no bias or prejudices, and “not attempting to judge it by the same criteria” used for movements from our own cultures. (Fenton, 1997: 123)

Kuwor (2015) and other scholars including Nii-Yartey (2016), Nketia (1974), Opoku (1965) and Welsh-Asante (1998) have extensively elucidated the place of dance in African societies and multitude of indigenous functionalities that are inherently attributed to the artform.

According to Kuwor (2015: 80),

dance as a holistic art form, has over many decades served as a repository of information, a record of history, a vehicle for expressing feelings and thoughts or public opinion and criticism as well as an avenue of social action. Hence dance may be used for boasting, for inciting people, for expressing public opinion or for making social commentary.

Symbolism and semiotics are a primary aspect of African dance traditions. In their study of costumes in the Bamaaya dance suite among the Dagbamba of Northern Ghana, Kwakye-Oppong and Salifu (2015: 138) argue that ‘the costumes are not only aesthetically applied, but they are also embedded with philosophies, symbolisms, signs, texture and elements that are impetus to the general framework of the dance’.

Dance, and dance traditions, as well as its associated forms of expression and activities, are, without a doubt, a holistic activity in the African environment that integrates the very soul of its guardians and community of practice. Any researcher of a dance of African origin or dances in their indigenous context(s) of performance must therefore approach their work from an emic perspective.

2.2. On transmission.

Using these notions and the concept of embodiment, as well as scholarly expositions on choreomusicality and aesthetic senses in African dance forms as a guiding backdrop, the goal of this study is to examine and explore how the Gouro people enact and structure their collective identity, and the methodological processes guiding the transmission of their formed identity through their inherent dance tradition. Nilsson (1991) cites transmission as passing on, or handing on, or transferring from one person to another. He draws a transliteral similitude of transmission to tradition based on a linguistic synonymy of the interpretation of the Swedish word, “över-föra”. (Nilsson, 1991: 279)

Transmission is conveying ideas, a transfer of information. To protect and preserve the way of life of communities, especially in African societies, where ‘cultures differ in many ways and at the same time produce commonalities that provide some sense of belongingness and identity that could be shared by the generality of the continent’, the creation of new patterns of social interactions and artistic expression, and the congregation of all communal values, philosophies and knowledge bodies is stored in dances and artefacts that come to bear transgenerational significance. (Kuwor, 2017: 48; Kwakye-Oppong and Salifu, 2015)

Nii-Yartey (2016: 3) posits, ‘dance and other artistic forms can bring about meaningful relationships, mutual respect, and a sense of belonging among members of the community. They also serve as indexes to the values and structures that enable the community to express and interpret the various events of life.’ This conception of community and the role of dance in it promotes unity and social cohesion. Thus, bringing to light the efficacy of dance as a proponent of solidarity. A typical performance, in the appropriate context reflects on the relation of the intra and intertextual relationships that exists within the cultural contexts it refers to. A non-verbal form of communication that capitalizes semiotics to reveal the intrinsic social values therein.

Nilsson (1991: 280), discusses what is really transmitted in learning a dance, or when a dance is taught, which ‘parts of dance’ are transmitted? The role and position of both teacher and learner in the process of transmission. He identifies forms, patterns on the floor, Rhythm (steps), Music (Rhythm and meter), and style or manner as the most crucial elements of dance. Is it possible to learn dance from books? Does one get the same information from textbooks and is the experience from self-study the same as one would from learning under a

tutor? Are all the elements of dance ‘transmitted the same way, at the same time and in the same context?’ Consider this submission from Nilsson (1991: 283):

Is it really possible to talk about dance transmission? Do we mean the whole dance, the total context? Or just a part of dance the part 'we' find the most interesting? Is it just some of the 'parts' like dances, dancing, event or even smaller parts like style, steps or rhythm that we talk of as transfer- red? But it is true-in a given situation you always transmit the whole dance . . .

Gore (2009) during her speech at the 9th International NOFOD Conference shared the experience of a research student who

was interested in the ways indigenous African dancer-choreographers and French ones respectively went about transmitting African dance in France. She had noted from her own learning experiences that French teachers made much use of discursive techniques, while their African counterparts said little and expected pupils to learn by following practical demonstrations.

Dance is an extension of its indigenous community that helps to explain what social practices they utilize and how to live them. It is an experience that combines the social structures of a given community and uses this creative form to develop or restore an understanding of how these structures come together to make the community. Dance impacts its community of performers intrinsically by translating into expressions and gestures, the performance that audience can relate to. The dancer applies his knowledge of life and of social structures to transform the dance from an artful expression into an activity whose functions transcend the aesthetic, into a trans textual, transgenerational activity. The dancer carries himself, his context, and society within the dance he performs. The approach and techniques adopted in the teaching and learning processes differ across communities, because every community has a peculiar, designated role for its own dance tradition. Depending on the contexts, the methodology for teaching and learning will be tailor-made to suit the uniqueness of the community in case.

African societies teach through observation and demonstrations which learners follow. One popular technique is embodiment of rhythms and musical components. Musicianship and choreography coexist and form the basis of any dance tradition. A dancer first develops and hones their musicianship and then proceeds to learn the movements. In my own experience, being accustomed to the rhythmic and melodic accompaniment of a dance form improves one’s performance skills due to a heightened familiarity with the musical ensemble.

2.3. The UNESCO effect.

Article 1 of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO), Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage defines Intangible Cultural Heritage as:

the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

It explicitly sets out conditions for which, by its definition, the intangible cultural heritage of communities may be included in the convention with the following as domains in which intangible cultural heritage may be manifested: (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship. (see Article 2 of ICH convention)

Smith and Kagawa (2008:2), posit that the convention beckons a need for re-evaluation of the notion of heritage, not only as a category, 'but as a concept and set of practices' that need to be 'broadened' and 'redefined' in order to reinforce its relevance to progeny.

Despite the assertion that the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention is an acknowledgement of non-western manifestations and practices of cultural heritage, Smith and Akagawa (2008:4) contend that the resulting lists from the 2003 convention might 'privilege colourful and exotic examples of intangible heritage, that represent nationally valued cultural events or performances, and which coincide with romanticised Western perceptions, while indigenous works remain under-represented'. Keitsumetse (2006:169), on the other hand, argues that inventorying on any list will have a detrimental impact on 'cultural capital' at the local level since making a practice 'ubiquitous' will potentially devalue it. This raises questions about the viability and feasibility of the convention in its implementation and the fulfilment of its fundamental aspirations. The premise that heritage develops and reinforces a sense of inclusion and exclusion; the potential to alter not just definitions of heritage but also local and global senses of place ultimately reside in the accomplishments of the convention. (Smith and Kagawa, 2008; Keitsumetse, 2006).

Keitsumetse (2006: 166) case study on the Tlokweng village in Botswana in view of the 2003 convention brings to light, the ‘implications’ of the convention on ‘the sustainable existence and utilisation of intangible cultural heritage in the context of an African community’ and prompts reflections on the impact of external forces on the existence of cultural activities within their indigenous spaces. Keitsumetse shows how the most subtle acts of everyday living are intertwined in a nuanced relationship that inform actuality of socio-cultural practices that bear historical and economic import. The case study captures the potential devaluation of the community’s ‘cultural capital to an extent where it destabilizes the socio-cultural foundations upon which the heritage existed before, together with the foundations upon which it depends for future existence’ (2006:167) were its inherent exclusivity be distorted.

Heritage is conceptualised and manifested differently across cultures. It is therefore imperative that management frameworks be dynamic and constantly re-evaluated especially in how they are applied to African contexts. While the implementation of the 2003 UNESCO convention is venerable, it is crucial to recognize the potential for unexpected repercussions. How can these elements be effectively conserved without diminishing or trivializing their social significance? Keitsumetse (2006) and Smith and Akagawa (2008) emphasize the intricacies of cultural policy and the complexities of the concept of heritage, and how the 2003 UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention applies these.

This project thus takes a critical look at the impact of the enlistment of the Zaouli dance on the ICH representative list, its recent ubiquitousness and how this affects the indigenous practice of the dance tradition.

CHAPTER III: Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology employed in the research process. The primary research approach utilized for this study is ethnography, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the cultural context and practices surrounding the dance tradition. The ensuing text outlines the research design, methodologies for gathering information, ethical considerations, and the fieldwork process, including a detailed account of the five-week fieldwork period during the summer of 2022, between June and July.

3.1. Research Design and Approach.

The study employs a synthesis of qualitative and quantitative research principles drawing on primary and secondary data sources to reflect both emic and etic perspectives and strive to present the findings of the project in a multivocal construal that aptly captures a nuanced Zaouli dance tradition. The principal approach in the design would primarily be ethnographic observation and participation, with a heavy reliance on interviews and tactile experience of the Gouro lifestyle, carefully noting the interactions between members of the Zaouli-performing community and the lived experience of a Zaouli dancer. Guest (2016) supports the notion held by scholars like Buckland (1999), Chernoff (1979), Welsh-Asante (2010) and Fenton (1997) that ethnography allows for an immersive and holistic understanding of the cultural dynamics and social interactions related to culture it is studying; the Zaouli dance heritage in this case. Guest (2016:66) asserts that fieldwork provides an avenue for understanding a people's experiences and motivations through their own eyes, stating that through fieldwork, researchers are able to 'look beyond the taken-for-granted, everyday experience of life to discover the complex systems of power and meaning that people construct to shape their existence'.

During my time in the field, I interacted with members of dance companies and training institutions including Ecoles de Danses et d'Echanges Culturels (EDEC)⁴ in Abidjan and

⁴ The Écoles de Danses et d'Échanges Culturels (EDEC) is a dance institution in Abidjan that serves as a home for professionals and enthusiasts of African culture and the performing arts. Its main objective is to preserve African culture while providing professional training and enrichment to students from around the world. EDEC offers a comprehensive program that includes traditional African dance, anthropology, singing, storytelling, theatre, and more. The school also supports the "Les Guirivoires" dance troupe, showcasing the talents of its students and collaborating with renowned artists internationally.

members of community dance troupes. I also had the opportunity to interview some members of cultural institutions and government agencies to gain insights into their role in the dance tradition and its related practices. Members of my gatekeeper's social circle also provided some valuable insights into the dance tradition which immensely informed the direction of my investigations.

The choice of ethnography as the primary methodology is to facilitate the pursuit of an understanding of the everyday life of a Zaouli dancer, how their craft is learned, what informs their choices, and to see the world through their eyes, and by extension, that of their community (Guest, 2016; Kuwor, 2017). Through fieldwork, I aimed to interact with members of the community in an attempt to understand their culture, their way. Paulson (2011:48) articulates that 'ethnography provides greater ecological validity because the researcher has the opportunity to participate' in day-to-day activities of the culture that is being studied alongside, their collaborators and the participants of their inquiry. He also writes that the 'processes of social transformation can be observed and documented, and how the culture becomes embodied in individual participants in material terms[captured], alongside the recording of their narratives'.

By employing such methods as document analysis and literature review, participant observation, structured and unstructured interviews conducted in both formal and informal settings, ethnographic fieldwork facilitates the exploration of the lived experiences and perspectives of the community members involved in the practice and transmission of the dance thereby enhancing our understanding of the people and their culture.

3.2. The Field and the People: An Overview.

Hammersly and Atkinson (2007) commission ethnographers to secure access to the field. In the third edition of "Ethnography: Principles in Practice", they propose the task of securing access to the field through gatekeepers as an important first step in the ethnographic process. I needed an entry point into the community, someone in a position to provide access to potential collaborators and knowledge bearers as well as help me navigate the complexities of the cultural landscape. I sought assistance from friends and acquaintances hoping for a polyglot who was aware of the practices of the community and would be available to assist me over the five-week period I was going to be in the field. The enormity of my network

became apparent to me during this search process, and it made me reflect on the notion of holism in African communities, particularly the notion of ubuntu, which emphasizes the importance of interconnectedness and communal relationships as observed by Welsh-Asante (2010) and Louw (2019).

After a considerable amount of time searching, I was introduced to an indigene of Bouaflé residing in Abidjan (Mr Tidou), who would become my gatekeeper and primary interlocutor, and also my support system during my stay in the field. My being Ghanaian came at a great advantage and in some senses helped with my assimilation into the social group. Despite my inability to speak any of the languages of the community I sought to study (French and Gouro), I felt right at home with the Mr Tidou and his family and their circle of friends. I was welcomed open-heartedly into their community and endearingly given the moniker, "Mr Zaouli boy" an idea we would converse about over dinner on most nights as I described my research objectives and motivations with my newfound ménage. We navigated the complex dynamics of my multiple roles as a researcher, son, brother, friend, country man and while my assertiveness occasionally evoked discomfort, we established a relationship that closely



Figure 3.1: Photo of researcher, gatekeeper and his friends after initial meeting in Bouaflé. From L to R: Mr Bamba, Nii Tettei, JCI Président, Mr Tidou (gatekeeper), La Kpétal and Mr Douayere. 11 June 2022_13:26. Shot on Apple iPhone 13 Pro_f1.5_1/1698_26

resembled that of family. This experience made me feel both at home and like a complete outsider simultaneously.

I was introduced to more acquaintances of my host during a weekend-long trip to Sinfra and Bouaflé, and I was fortunate to have received assistance from some of them. Mr Douayere (first on the right in Fig. 3.1) expressed his interest and willingness to support me on my research project and offered me accommodation in his home. Mr Bamba (first on the left) volunteered to assist with translation so I could better interact with members of the community and also to transport me to and from Tibéita. Mr Douayere and Mr Bamba taught Mathematics and English Language respectively at Collège Moderne Charles Koffi DIBY de Bouaflé, a community secondary school in the heart of the Bouaflé township. It was a humbling experience to have been welcomed with such warmth and altruism.

The generosity and kindness of my hosts was overwhelming, and I felt grateful for the opportunity to engage with them on such a personal level. I was privileged to receive accommodation based first on my affinity to the Tidou family and on my profile as a researcher. Mr Tidou agreed with Mr Douayere's assertion that it would be wasteful on my part to rent out accommodation while I was in town when his home was available. By the end of the weekend, on Sunday, I relocated into the home of Mr Douayere. Mr Douayere and Mr Bamba lived in Dehita - about 25 kilometres from Tibéita (much closer to the research site than Abidjan) so their offers gave me a tremendous feeling of relief as it would have been impractical and near impossible to travel from Abidjan to Tibéita (about 4 hours' drive) so many times within the five-week timeline. The Douayere family and Mr Bamba welcomed me with open arms and hearts and ensured that in the time I stayed with them, I lacked nothing.

3.3. Location of the Field.

The research location, as shown on the map in Fig. 3.2 is the expanse of the Sassandra-Marahoué administrative region of which Tibéita is a component part. Tibéita is renowned for its rich and dynamic Gouro culture, intricately intertwined with the profound legacy of the Zaouli dance tradition. The town is held in high repute and was continually recommended by the people I encountered as an ideal location for investigating the Zaouli dance tradition and the corresponding strategies employed for cultural transmission and preservation. As many believed that they possessed the 'most original form' of the practice (Tidou family, 2022).

The selection of Tibéita as the primary research site for this study was predicated on a meticulous evaluation of various factors and on the recommendation of multiple members of the Tidou family.

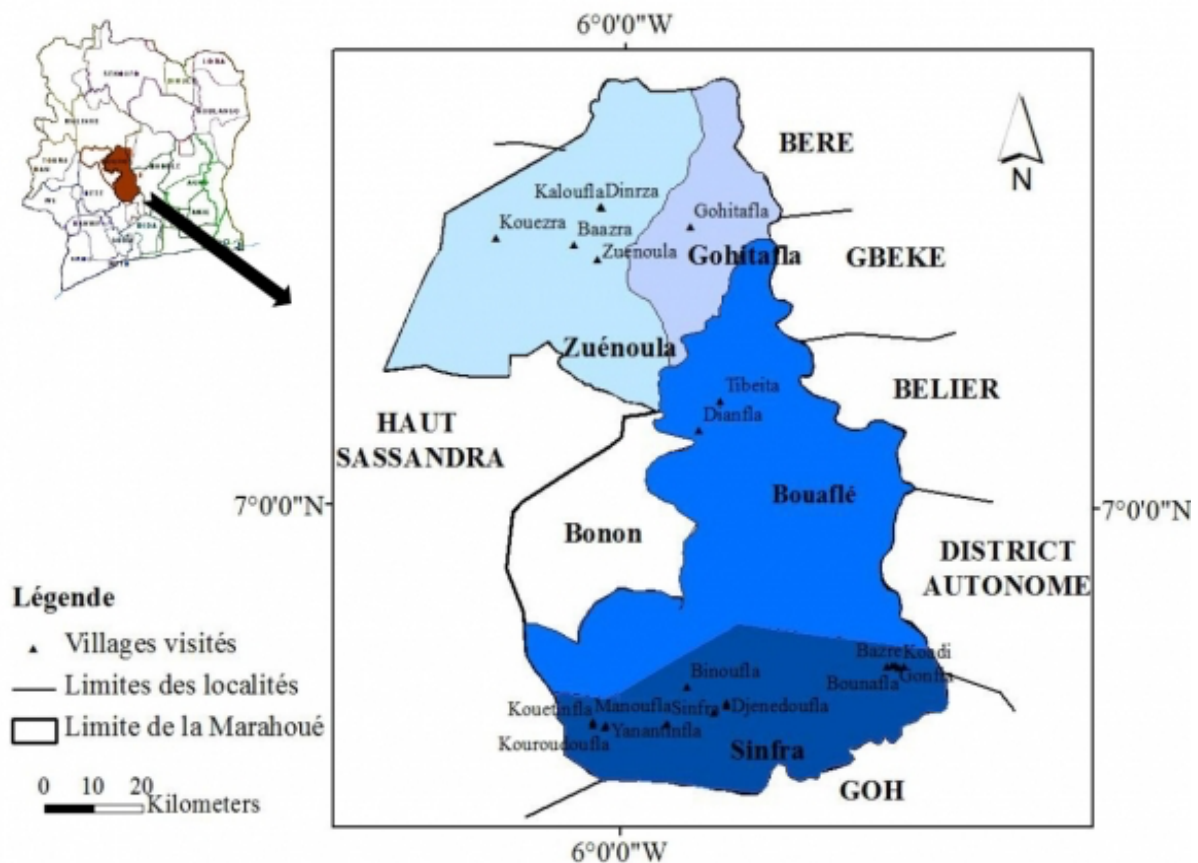


Figure 3.2: Map of Sassandra-Marahoué administrative region of La Côte d'Ivoire showing Tibéita in the Bouaflé department. Source: [This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

During my preliminary research before entering into the field, I had chosen the Bouaflé region as my primary site with no specific township in mind. Upon arrival, I quickly discovered that the township of Bouaflé was in the heart of the administrative region and did not have a Zaouli troupe.

In search for alternatives, the township of Tibéita came highly recommended by my host's social circle and by his family. Tibéitais home to a skilled Zaouli dancer, talented musicians and numerous indigenous cultural experts, as well as community members deeply engaged in the practice and preservation of Zaouli dance. Their first-hand insights, experiences, and perspectives would be invaluable to my quest for an understanding of the socio-cultural and economic significance of the dance tradition.

Engaging with this community and tapping into their expertise has provided a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding the dance tradition and its evolution into a more commercial role in contemporary contexts of performances in Tibéita. The participants and collaborators on the project also included Gouro indigenes in multiple communities in Abidjan, Sinfra, Dehïta, and Bouaflé and as such afforded me multiple perspectives and viewpoints in the research process. These interlocutors are in positions that afford them the experience of working directly or indirectly in the performance, transmission, and overall existence of the Zaouli dance tradition.

On my visits to Tibéita, I engaged community leaders, the representative dancer of the Tibéita community, members of the musical ensemble and other non-performing members, in addition to administrative team members. I conducted interviews with members of the community troupe focusing on the contexts of performance of the dance and the historical background. While observing performances of the Zaouli dance, I took note of the rites, rituals and traditions that frame the practice (the music, costumes, props, et cetera) all the while documenting the dancer's movements. Documentation processes involved the use of audio and video recording devices, as well as taking field notes and photographs. Audio and video recordings were used to capture the dance performances and the music, and other relevant events, while field notes, diaries and photographs were an avenue to document my observations and interactions with the community.

3.4. Entering Tibéita.

I moved in with Mr Douayere and his family in Dehïta as our weekend trip drew to a close. The Tidou family had to return to Abidjan for work and other engagements. Mr Douayere showed me to my room and helped me with my luggage. After we had dinner, Mr Bamba, Mr Douayere and I put together a schedule for the coming week and as part of the itinerary, he would arrange for us to attend a performance of the Zaouli dance in Tibéita sometime in the ensuing week, providing an opportunity to observe the dance in its natural environment and to establish a foundation for further inquiry. This was an exciting prospect, as I had been eager to witness a live performance of the dance ever since encountering the online video that had piqued my interest. Also, it was an important step in establishing the grounds for my research project.

I considered the possibility of learning the dance to gain first-hand information on the protocols infused into the transmission and the methodology for teaching and learning the dance. I enquired this of Mr Douayere, and he informed me that he was going to have to arrange that with the troupe in Tibéita upon our visit. Learning the dance would be an agency through which I could examine the nitty-gritty of the teaching and learning processes, the nuances in the interactions between dancer and musician, the choreographic procedure, as well as the creative process of the dancer, the musicians, the craftsmen, the weavers, the sculptors, and all persons involved in the dance tradition.

The performance would provide an opportunity to observe the dance in its indigenous setting and in so doing offer insights into the cultural and social contexts of performance. Additionally, attending a performance would allow me to gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of the dance's transmission and its relationship to the broader cultural context of the Gouro communities.

3.5. Data Collection and Analysis.

1. Participant Observation

During the fieldwork period, I actively engaged in participant observation of multiple aspects of the Gouro way of life. I had an immersive experience of the daily life of a typical Gouro family through interactions with my hosts in Dehīta. I also observed critically and took comprehensive notes of the interactions between community members on the occasions of our visits to Tibéita. During my stay with Mr Tidou (my gatekeeper) in Abidjan, I was invited and taken along to community gatherings and had the opportunity of interacting with an extended lineage of knowledge bearers from his ancestry. Detailed field notes were recorded, and my daily activity log captured my observations, interactions, predilections and contextual information from these knowledge bearers and stakeholders on our trips to the various locales.

2. In-depth Interviews

I conducted structured and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including members of the Zaouli dance troupe in Tibéita, community leaders of the Gouro heritage,

political leaders, cultural practitioners, and individuals involved in the performance and transmission of the dance. I also interacted with people of Gouro heritage where we conversed about the dance and its rise to global popularity. These interviews were conducted in both formal and informal setups. To get a better understanding and grounded grasp of the role of Zaouli in the propagation of an Ivorian dance heritage on the ticket of its inscription on the UNESCO ICH list, I interviewed government officials in Bouaflé. I also reached out the team at OIPC in hopes that I would get an opportunity to interview them about the Zaouli dance tradition and their ongoing works to safeguard the practice. Efforts towards this agenda proved futile. The interviews I was able to conduct aimed to explore the interviewee's perspectives, experiences, and opinions on the dynamics of transmission and safeguarding in light of modern touristic influences on the performance of the dance. The interviews were recorded on both audio and video devices with consent and transcribed verbatim for detailed analysis.

3. Document Analysis

A comprehensive review of existing literature, documents, and archival materials related to the Zaouli dance tradition, and community efforts for safeguarding the heritage was undertaken prior to entry into the field. Haxaire (2022) discusses the history of the Zaouli dance and the transformative elevation of the dance form to a national symbol under the regime of Ivorian President Felix Houphouët-Boigny. She examines the implications and influence of Zaouli in the politics of La Côte d'Ivoire, arguing extensively the ramifications of the nomination and enlistment of Zaouli on UNESCO's ICH list on the indigenous existence of the dance tradition; the long-term implications of the newfound 'fame' of Zaouli. Haxaire goes on to examine the 'heritage-making process' of this dance tradition and the role of politicians and their administrations in what she refers to as the "festivalisation" of the dance traditions and the ensuing concerns. These sources provided valuable insights into historical contexts, policy frameworks, and cultural discourses surrounding the dance.

In addition to using more traditional ethnographic methods like participant observation, audio recording, interviews, and note-taking, I also had conversations with my collaborators. I discovered that these casual, unplanned contacts also provided a wealth of knowledge.

I captured two performances of the Zaouli dance on video, each one about 20 minutes long (see database in Appendix 1). I also recorded the accompanying music using the audio recording tool on my secondary phone. These recordings were aimed at facilitating the analysis of the dance. The recordings provided a tangible recollection of the events of the performance and informed the discussions further.

Interviews were captured both on audio and visual platforms. The audio-visual resources generated from the field amounts to about 75% of all the accumulated field materials. This includes audio and video recordings of interviews, recordings of performances and dance sessions, recordings of conversations (with informed consent from the people involved), photos and videos of the scenery and soundscape as we travelled. 25% of the material was field notes, field journal and diary, consent forms and project descriptions handed to the interlocutors and tickets from museum visits and other purchases relevant to the study.

In some cases, the participants were uncomfortable in front of the camera but preferred audio recordings. In these instances, we discussed, and they agreed to being recorded on audio.

The process of examining the materials in this ethnographic project employs a thematic analytical approach, which involves a rigorous and systematic identification of key themes and patterns in the field material. Through a process of immersion and constant comparison, I engage the data to identify patterns and themes and to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the information. This method was selected due to its ability to provide a nuanced understanding of the facts, as well as to capture the complex and multifaceted nature of the performance of Zaouli in Tibéita and the touristic phenomenon under investigation (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007; Guest, 2016). The post-fieldwork efforts have been stratified into multiple phases. First, I am organisation the material into a single comprehensive database. Through a thorough and detailed examination of the field notes, an in-depth review and transcription of interviews and all other relevant resources gathered during the fieldwork period, I am producing an ample report and discussion of my experience in the field and the findings from my investigations.

The next stage of the analysis involves the interpretation and synthesis of the findings, whereby the themes and arguments identified will be examined in relation to the broader context of the study (the role of commercialisation in processes of transmission and safeguarding of the Zaouli dance heritage). This includes an exploration of the cultural and

social factors that shape the transmission of the Zaouli dance, as well as an examination of the extent to which the various actors and stakeholders are involved in the fairly recent process of commodification and commercialisation.

3.5.1. Analysis of Video_1.

In the following excerpt I will present a preliminary analysis and description of the Zaouli dance (see Video_1 in database) as performed by Loh bi Gouré Roling in Tibéita.

The dancer comes on stage alongside his guardian. The guardian will gradually unveil the mask and the dancer. This act signifies the start of the performance. The regalia, an alluring trichromatic effigy, sways in rhythmic response to the dancing of Zaouli, the copious ornaments that hang from the guise seem to tilt and move in response to the gesticulations of the dancer, the decorative raffia placed at the ankle, on the waist and on the wrist judder in the motion, and the anklet, strung with small bells jazz up the accompanying stentorian musical ensemble of drums and flutes.

According to the method for dance analysis developed by the IFMC Study Group on Dance Terminology, the component units of any dance are structured in tiers, with the hierarchical levels listed below:

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>T = Dance</i> | <i>(Latin totus)</i> | <i>Dance name</i> |
| <i>P = Part</i> | <i>(Latin pars)</i> | <i>(I) []</i> |
| <i>St = Strophe</i> | <i>(Greek strophe)</i> | <i>I [[]]</i> |
| <i>S = Section</i> | <i>(Latin sectio)</i> | <i>I []</i> |
| <i>Ph = Phrase</i> | <i>(Latin phrasis)</i> | <i>A ()</i> |
| <i>M = Motif</i> | <i>(Latin motivus)</i> | <i>a</i> |
| ----- | | |
| <i>Mc = Motif-cell</i> | <i>(Latin cella)</i> | <i>a'</i> |
| <i>Me = Motif-element</i> | <i>(Latin elementum)</i> | <i>α β</i> |

(Damsholt, 2008: 45; Giurchescu and Köschlová, 2007: 46)

Based on the aforementioned terminological perspective, I'll be analysing Video_1 from the database as follows:

1. starting from the basic level of the Motif, up towards the dance as a whole, and then
2. from the larger unit (the dance as a whole) towards the minimal and conjoined motif-element.

A motif is 'the smallest significant form-unit having meaning for both the dancers and their society and for the dance genre/type within a given dance system'. (Giurchescu and Kröschlová, 2007:28)

For the purpose of this description, the form-units identified and applied will be the section, phrase, and motif.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------------|---|
| T | Zaouli | | | | | | | | | | | | | Congruence with music | |
| S | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | ≠ | |
| Ph | A | | B | | C | | D | | E | | F | | G | | ≠ |
| M | a | b | c | d | e | ≠e | g | h | c | d | k | l | m | n | ≠ |
| 4/4 | 6 ^½ | 1 | 9 | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 9 | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | |

The choreographic form of the performance of Zaouli in this video has three levels of structural organization: one section, seven phrases with thirteen different motifs repeated identically or symmetrically within the duration of the performance. The highest level is a single section which decomposes into phrases. There are seven different phrases spanning between six (6) and nine (9) measures on average.

The first phrase, "Phrase A", consists of two motifs (a and b), a repetition of slow-paced short steps to the back alternating on the right and left feet. The starting position for this phrase is, right leg to the back in a diagonal direction to the left and the left leg in front, facing the left

in a diagonal bearing with the feet about one foot apart. (see Fig. 1.0 in Appendix 5) Motifs 'a' and 'b' are grouped with 'b' functioning as a closing motif. The phrase lasts six-and-a-half measures total with the second measure being repeated three (3) times symmetrically. The duration on the timestamp is from 00:00:00 to 00:00:08. The first phrase is relatively less vigorous.

In Phrase B, there are three (3) measures, identically repeated twice. The first and second measures are identical with five springs across the first two beats (motif c) of both measures. Motif c is repeated identically in the first and second beats of measure 2 and introduces motif d in the last beat of the measure which is continued in the next bar. (see Fig. 2.0 in Appendix 5) The complete phrase, repeated twice, has a duration of about 10 seconds—from 00:00:08 to 00:00:18.

Phrase C has an opening motif I and a closing or finishing one (f). the first measure of the phrase as shown in Fig. 3.0 (see Appendix 5) has four beats with nine actions alternating between the second position and the first position (according to the naming convention of classical ballet) for three beats and the to a swift transition from second position to left leg support in place and right foot at a right forward diagonal position in triple time. All the while maintaining a low centre of gravity. 'Motif f', the closing motif of the phrase, begins in the second measure until one beat into the third measure featuring a set of swift alternating springs and a jump. The phrase is repeated once identically with a modified version of the opening motif; motif e. (see Fig. A and Fig. B below). The duration is from 00:00:18 to 00:00:24.

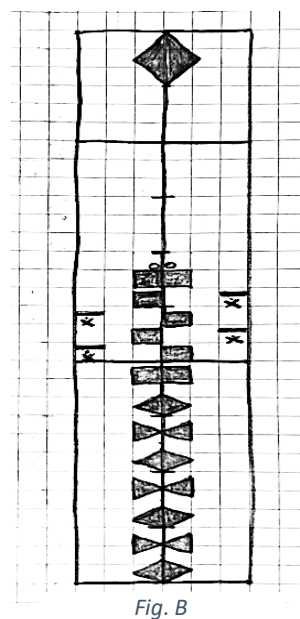
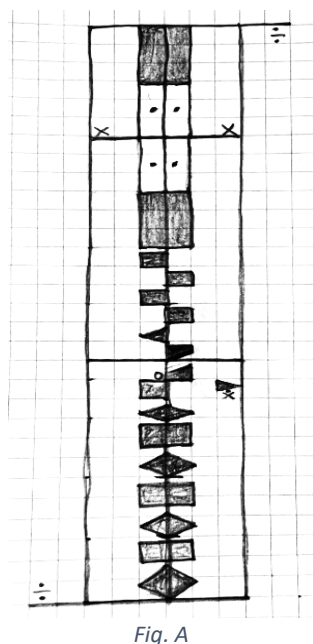


Fig. A shows motif e as performed at the beginning of the phrase (00:00:18 – 00:00:20) and Fig. B is an illustration of a modified motif e. (00:00:20 – 00:00:24).

The totality of this dance is an intricate interweaving of movements with its accompanying music on all structural levels. The accompanying music plays a prescriptive role as it informs the movements of the various phrases and the manner in which they are executed. Improvised rhythms from the lead drummer layered on top of the rest of the ensemble apprises the movement of the dancer. At the lowest levels of the categorization (i.e., Motif), the relationship between music and dance is congruent. The rhythmic accompaniment for the various phrases is differentiated except in Phrases B and D, plus C and E where the music is repeated in correspondence.

Phrase D (00:00:24 to 00:00:30) has two distinct motifs, six forward steps and a closing movement (a halting spring from a second position stance to the right leg and then adding the left foot in place middle) before the whole motif is repeated in the reverse. (see Fig. 5.0 in Appendix 5)

Phrase E is a repetition of Phrase B with the same rhythmic accompaniment but a variation in space. It lasts nine seconds, from 00:00:31 to 00:00:40.

In Phrase F, the opening motif (motif k) is sudden and rapid. This characterization is matched by the drum rhythm and the sounds of the ankle bells. The ‘motif k’ is in triple time and covers one and a half measures. It is then resolved in the rest of the second measure through the third measure with restful steps (motif l). The phrase is then repeated identically. (see Fig. 6.0 in Appendix 5) The motifs inherent in phrase F have a contradictory rhythmic relationship when one is juxtaposed to the other. The complete phrase spans 00:00:40 to 00:00:46. Thus six measures in the kinetogram.

Phrase G comprises of motifs ‘m’ and ‘n’. The complete Phrase G has a total of five and a half measures, a total of 23 beats with 4 beats in each measure an upbeat at the start of motif ‘n’. The closing motif is accented by the accompanying music. The phrase is performed with a continually lowered centre of gravity from 00:00:47. The phrase is completed at 00:00:54.

The structural analysis, in addition to the notations segment the dance into smaller units that make it easier to teach as component parts can be imbibed easier than the large units.

This instance of Zaouli (see Video_1) serves both an artistic and aesthetic function. That notwithstanding, the dance cannot be viewed apart from its socio-cultural framework, its context of performance and the intrinsic subject matter as is the case with many dances of African heritage. Meaning therefore cannot be fully derived from an etic perspective that focuses on choreographic analysis of the dance. However, one might want to look at movement variations that don't appear to have any emic significance, or to look at only those movement patterns that drive meaning and interpretation while disregarding others, depending of course, on the purpose of the exploration. (Bakka, 2007; Torp, 2007; Kappler, 1972) An adequate description of artistic elements, aesthetic senses and spatial peculiarity can, nonetheless, be observed through some of the earlier mentioned analytical systems and scientific methods.

Bakka (2007) argues that, in order to analyse dance, we must typically focus on a limited number of factors, the number of which will vary depending on the purpose of the study. This is applicable to dance pedagogy. An analytical probe into a dance form focused on inherent methodologies and techniques of movement execution will reveal the skill, the various motifs and movement descriptors that make up the whole dance form. Structural analysis and labanotation have been widely used by many choreographers and dance teachers to archive, describe, and teach movements.

3.6. Ethical Considerations and Limitations.

Throughout the analytical process, I strive to maintain a reflexive stance, considering my positionality, biases, and assumptions, and actively engaging in a critical reflection on the research process and its outcomes. I believe this approach will help to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings and mitigate against potential sources of error or distortion in the information derived from my analysis. As such, I acknowledge the inherent subjectivity and the importance of reflexivity in addressing and accounting for this subjectivity. Olmos-Vega, Stalmeijer, Varpio and Kahlke (2023) articulate the importance of the researcher's reflexivity. They write, 'and while the researcher's perspective has many positive impacts, failure to attend to reflexivity can negatively impact the knowledge built via qualitative research and those connected to it' (2023:241). By continually interrogating and examining

my role in the research process, I can more effectively identify and address any potential biases or assumptions that may impact the study's outcomes.

This study adhered to ethical considerations, including obtaining informed consent from all participants, I ensured confidentiality and anonymity while maintaining respect for the cultural practices and beliefs of the community. I also worked closely with my primary contact in Ivory Coast, my host family, and my translator to ensure that the research respected the cultural practices and beliefs of the community and did not cause any form of harm.

Ethical approval for the study was granted by Sikt – Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research. Information sheets and consent forms for the observations of community interactions, dance performances and the recording of interviews were designed and distributed and needed. Informed consent was obtained from the participants of interviews and other collaborators whose personal information, or any identifiable data points were recorded.

3.7. Roles, Positions and Positionality in the Field.

Fenton (1997) asserts that dance, cannot be assumed as universally comprehensible. Instead, it is crucial to examine movement traditions within their indigenous contexts, thereby advocating for an emic positionality in dance research. She underscores the importance of examining movement traditions within their own cultural ethos arguing that the meanings attributed to specific movements are culturally determined. It is essential to acknowledge that the classification, interpretation, and actual meanings of movements and gestures (semiotics) may vary across cultures and thus individuals from different cultures can misinterpret one another's movement and body language as easily as spoken language. To better understand any society, “we must examine it through the lens, not of our own, but its own culture” (Fenton, 1997:118). This brings to the forefront, the emic positionality that anthropologists like Kaepler (1999), Koutsouba (1999), Gore (2009) and researchers in the humanities and social sciences have advocated for. Fenton (1997: 123) emphasizes the importance of studying movement practices and dance traditions impartially, bearing no bias or prejudices, and “not attempting to judge it by the same criteria” used for movements from our own cultures. Kuwor (2017: 48) also highlights that in order to ‘understand and appreciate the uniqueness and holistic nature of dance in Africa, one needs to do an in-depth study of this art

form in its native soil in order to capture it from the emic perspective'. In order to ensure a balanced and insightful investigation, I assume a number of roles in the field. The following excerpt discusses my positionality and some of the roles I assumed, highlighting their influence on my investigative process.

First, I assume the role of a participant and observer, attentively observing and documenting the various aspects of the Zaouli dance tradition. This participatory approach involved keenly observing the movements, gestures, and expressions of the dancer, as well as the interactions, reactions, and emotions of the audience during performances. My participation involved attending a series of dance classes where I learnt some movements to a choreography of Zaouli. As a participant observer, I immersed myself in the routine activities of my host families, I was able to establish rapport, build trust, and as a result, I now have a thriving relationship with my collaborators and hosts.

Symbolism and semiotics play a central role in African dance traditions. As such, in my role of an observer, I diligently recorded detailed observations of performances, rituals, and interactions related to the Zaouli dance. I paid careful attention to various aspects, including choreography, musical accompaniment, costume details, and the reactions of participants and spectators. Kwakye-Oppong and Salifu (2015: 138), in their study of costumes in the Bamaaya dance suite among the Dagbamba of Northern Ghana, argue that 'costumes are not only aesthetically applied, but they are also embedded with philosophies, symbolisms, signs, texture and elements that are [important] to the general framework of the dance'. My presence and participation in the field helped me capture the multifaceted dimensions of the dance tradition and its significance within the Gouro community. By adopting a keen observational stance, I aimed to capture the essence and intricacies of the dance tradition and its broader socio-cultural context. I have thus become attuned to the cultural context and the lived experiences of the individuals involved therein.

Furthermore, I assumed the role of a listener and facilitator during interviews, interactions and discussions with community members and other participants. I actively sought out multiple perspectives and narratives, encouraging the people I interacted with to share their personal experiences, knowledge, and insights. By employing open-ended questioning and active listening techniques, I was able to elicit rich and nuanced responses which enabled me to further explore the subject matter.

I also took on the roles of a trainee and a student while appreciating the talent of skilled musicians and dancers. I actively looked for learning opportunities, attended training sessions, and workshops, and presented myself as a motivated learner. By assuming these positions, I demonstrated humility, a willingness to learn, and a deep respect for the mastery and dedication required to excel in the performance of the Zaouli dance.

I actively sought to develop genuine relationships with community members. I keenly participated in social activities I was fortunate to attend, and in informal conversations with my host families. By being approachable, empathetic, and supportive, I aimed to create a comfortable space where participants felt confident in sharing their experiences and insights with me.

Kuwor (2015), Nii-Yartey (2016), Nketia (1974), Opoku (1965) and Welsh-Asante (1998) have extensively elucidated the place of dance in African societies and the multitude of indigenous functionalities that are inherently attributed to the artform. Kuwor (2015: 80) posits that,

dance as a holistic art form, has over many decades served as a repository of information, a record of history, a vehicle for expressing feelings and thoughts or public opinion and criticism as well as an avenue of social action. Hence dance may be used for boasting, for inciting people, for expressing public opinion or for making social commentary.

To capture this essence, I embrace reflexivity throughout the research process. Recognizing their own biases, assumptions, and subjectivities. I critically and continually reflect on their positionality and its potential influence on the research. By acknowledging and addressing my own predispositions, I aim to minimize the imposition of external biases and interpretations on the cultural practices and beliefs of the Gouro community manifested in the Zaouli dance tradition.

3.8. Conclusion.

This chapter has outlined the research design, the methods and processes of obtaining information, ethical considerations, and the various positions and roles I assumed during the fieldwork period of this study. The application of ethnographic principles like participant

observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, has facilitated an immersive exploration of the community's experiences and perspectives surrounding the dance tradition.

CHAPTER IV: Zaouli de Tibéita

This chapter presents and analyses the findings from the fieldwork conducted in Tibéita. It brings to light the rich and nuanced practices of cultural transmission within this Gouro community, specifically focusing on the context(s) of performance of the Zaouli dance. The chapter explores the evolution and transmutation of the dance practice in different contexts of performance as well as the evolution of my own research object. It then presents the challenges and opportunities that arise from this evolving cultural landscape, unravelling the process of commodification and the impact of commercialisation on the dance tradition. Through the elucidation of material obtained, this chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics at play and unveils insights into the preservation of cultural heritage among members of the Tibéita community.

4.1. The Dance, the People, their Tradition.

According to Lai bi Vro Bayard (2022), leader of the Zaouli group of Tibéita, the dance's origin can be traced to the township of Zrabisehifla. It was created in the mid to latter part of the 20th century (c 1950) by a group of performers from Zrabisehifla and Koi bi Vohisie was the first Zaouli dancer and the primogenitor of the dance tradition. Over the years, the dance gained popularity among Gouro communities in the area and the process of expansion was institutioned. Different communities learnt the style and form from Zrabisehifla and then adapted it to make it their own. Presently, there are a myriad of styles present in the dance tradition with each performing community having unique identifiers. A member of Mr Tidou's social circle remarked that the Ivorian favourite style of the Zaouli dance is the signature steps of Zaouli de Tibéita.

Lai bi Vro Bayard has a unique family background rooted in the dance culture of Tibéita. His parents were appointed by the leaders Tibéita to go on a journey to Zrabisehifla to train as Zaouli performers. His father, Irie bi Lou, also known as "Bravo", achieved great distinction as the first Zaouli dancer in Tibéita, a highly esteemed position. He was a master performer who showed great skill and dexterity. His skill and showmanship put Zaouli de Tibéita on a pedestal at competitions. They quickly rose to international fame and performed at regional festivals and contests in the West Africa Region (Réo festival in Burkina Faso in 1994), at conferences in Europe and multiple events in America.

In accordance with tradition, the role of the dancer is passed down through generations of male offspring within the family. After Bravo's passing, his nephew, Zamblé loh Samuel, assumed the mantle and became the successor to Bravo. However, it is important to note that Zamblé loh Samuel initially served as the dancer and conduit for a different mask called Kaboua Kalah. He had to assume the role of Zaouli dancer when Bravo's son, for undisclosed reasons, was unable to inherit the prestigious position.

Currently, the responsibility of being the Zaouli dancer for Zaouli de Tibéita lies with Loh bi Gouré Roling, the son of Zamblé loh Samuel. This lineage demonstrates the significance of family heritage and the passing down of cultural traditions inherent in the practice of the Zaouli dance in Tibéita.

4.2. Djéla- The Masks.

Traditionally, there are seven Zaouli masks, each one strikingly unique from the other. They connote and represent various aspects and elements of the Gouro lifestyle. During my fieldwork period, I watched the performances of two of the masks and my interviews revealed that in the past, the township of Tibéita had seven masks: Gan, Sortanvani, Zaoulokou, Mawounlin, Môlin, Drowlintra and Didiolè. Currently only four of these masks are available.

Traditionally, the Zaouli dance tradition in Tibéita encompasses a collection of seven distinct masks, each possessing its own unique characteristics and representing various aspects of the Gouro lifestyle. During my fieldwork period, I had the privilege of observing performances featuring two of these masks, the Zaoulokou and the Gan. Through interviews conducted with the leaders and members of the troupe, I discovered that in the past, the township of Tibéita had a rich ensemble of seven masks: Gan, Sortanvani, Zaoulokou, Mawounlin, Môlin, Drowlintra, and Didiolè. However, Lai bi Vro Bayard acknowledged that presently, only four of these masks remain accessible for performances.



Figure 4.1: The mask of Gan, 'the best runner', signifies speed. It is a carving of antelope atop the Zaouli mask.



Figure 4.2: Zaouloukou represents the struggles of the Gouro people.

| Name of Mask | Description |
|--------------|--|
| Zaouloukou | The Zaouloukou mask is a representation of the struggles of the people and the conflicts that seldom arise from their interactions with other ethnic groups. |
| Gan | Gan symbolises speed. Inspired by the antelope, it is characterised by long horns adorned with bright colours and intricate designs. |
| Sortanvani | The sortanvani mask is the mask associated with weavers of the Gouro ethnic group. It sculpts the image of a n indigenous weaving loom. |
| Mahounlin | Manhoulin signifies renewal. It is the image of the sunrise. |

| | |
|------------|---|
| Môlin | The Moulîn mask illustrates the hope that the night brings. It says, “by the grace of the moon, we have light”. |
| Drowlintra | Drownlintra is a connotation of drunkenness. It signifies permission to share secrets with community members. |
| Didiolé | Didiolé is the mask associated with gifting and sharing among communities. |

The Zaouli masks of Tibéita hold profound cultural significance, reflecting the essence of the Gouro community's traditions and way of life. While it is regrettable that several masks have been lost over time, the preservation and celebration of the remaining masks continue to serve as a testament to the enduring cultural heritage of Tibéita. The performances I witnessed during my fieldwork offered valuable insights into the artistic expressions and distinctive characteristics of the two masks that were presented.

4.3. Tibéita.

It was a bright and sunny Thursday morning, we sat in the vestibule, in the cool breeze of a bright and early morning. The Douayere family, Mr Bamba and I had just finished a savoury breakfast of acheké with peanut sauce and some juicy smoked salmon (a traditional Ivorian delicacy). Mr Douayere walked up to where I sat, addressing me as "Mr Zaouli boy", he whispered, “I have a surprise for you today”. My curiosity was instantly aroused! I pondered on the myriad of possibilities, on what the surprise could be but could not come to any immediate conclusion as the prospects were many. I was also excited about the day’s schedule of activities and looked forward to a thrilling day. In the night prior, we planned out the whole week. We scheduled meetings with community leaders, introduction to knowledge bearers, a visit to the Tibéita township and a guided tour of the region; it was an intriguing itinerary. The hint of a surprise showed further promise and aroused even more excitement. As I wondered what the nature of the surprise could be, I was enthused and could not wait for the revelation.

Following a brief period of preparation and after putting my gear together, we met in the front yard (myself, Mr Bamba, Mr Douayere and his wife - Mme Claire). I collected and packed my notebook, tripods and power bank as well as my recording devices – microphones and mobile phones. Mr Bamba and Mr Douayere prepped their motorbikes, as we all readied ourselves to move out. Securing my helmet in place, I joined Mr. Bamba on his bike, while Mr. Douayere and Mme Claire mounted the other. Our journey towards the surprise commenced.

The trip was as exhilarating as it was informative. It was a fun-filled guided tour wherein Mr Douayere gave references to our location and a brief description and history of the communities that lived there as we went along. Despite the amount of information, I received on this guided tour, the final destination remained shrouded in mystery.

Two and a half hours later, we arrived at a signpost that boldly proclaimed "TIBEITA". We halted by the highway's edge and got off the motorbikes to stretch our limbs and quench our thirst as it had been a long ride. Mr Douayere walked up to me, placing his hand on my shoulder and with a smile that spread ear to ear, he said to me, “Welcome to Tibéita”. “This is the surprise”, he said, still smiling. As we had planned to meet the family troupe in Tibéita as part of our scheduled activities for the ensuing week, I was thrilled and excited that I was going to make first contact. The prospects that connecting with the group that would become my team of collaborators bestowed were purposive. We seized the opportunity and captured



Figure 4.3: Photo of signpost with the inscription TIBÉITA (the name of the township), 13 June 2022_12:36. Shot on Apple iPhone 13 Pro at f2.8_1/1206s_77mm.

the moment with a series of photographs. He then informed me that the surprise will be a performance of the Zaouli dance in the home of the leader of the community troupe.

Before long, we resumed our motorcycle journey, venturing deeper into the township until we reached the residence of Lai bi Vro Bayard, the esteemed head and leader of “Zaouli de Tibéita”.

Upon disembarking, Mr Douayere reiterated that we were about to witness a performance of Zaouli. He then walked toward an elderly man who was coming to our position as well. He greeted him and handed him an envelope. After a while, they both walked to us and the elder man introduced himself as Lai bi Vro Bayard, the leader of Zaouli de Tibéita.

Moments passed and a crowd started forming in the area around the big tree we were standing under. A young man walked to the drum that hung on the tree, brought out a pair of drumsticks from the arch between the cylindrical drum and the tree, and struck a three-beat pattern on the drum. He repeated this pattern twice more, placed the sticks on the drum and walked off. Soon after, a team of musicians came out and placed their instruments in front of the chairs that stood in the front of the roofed structure Lai bi Vro Bayard had come out from.

He introduced us to the team, and then they all took their positions ready to play their respective instruments. After exchanging pleasantries with the team, I setup my video and audio recording gear with the assistance of Mr Bamba. The musicians had already setup their ensemble of instruments on one side of the space so I put my rig directly opposite their setup so I could have a full well-framed shot of everyone.

4.4. Zaouli: the Performance.

In the performance of Zaouli, the masked dancer assumes a central role. The dancer, typically male, is believed to embody the spirit of Zaouli and is kept in seclusion with his guide until the appropriate moment when the audience is deemed ready for the performance. Once the audience is prepared, the Zaouli is led by his guardian into the performance space. Positioned in front of the musicians, the Zaouli sits for a brief moment before the gradual unveiling of the mask by his guardian, which marks the official start of the performance (see Figure 4.4).



Figure 4.4: The guardian of Zaouli de Tibéita unveiling the Zaouli mask, 13 June 2022_ 13:41. Shot on Apple iPhone 6s at f2.2_1/1054s_29mm.

The performance commences with a musical prelude, where a nine-member ensemble takes the stage. The ensemble comprises three flutists and six drummers, utilizing a diverse range of instruments, including three flutes, a talking drum, two djembe drums, a slit drum, and two unnamed membranophones. The musicians skilfully perform an inviting rendition, setting the ambience as the audience gathers in the designated seating area.



Figure 4.5: The Ensemble playing a prelude as the audience walk in and the Zaouli dons his costume.

After approximately two minutes of the musical interlude, the guardian, assuming a prominent role in the performance, leads the dancer onto the stage. From behind the ensemble, the guardian retrieves a green plastic chair and sits the dancer in front of the musicians. At this point the music begins to intensify, the tempo rising steadily. The showground resonates with heightened energy as the dancer finds their place upon the seat.



Figure 4.6: Photo of the guardian of Zaouli de Tibéïta leading the dancer into the performance space, 13 June 2022_13:40. Shot on Apple iPhone 6s at f2.2_1/2331s_29mm

At the climactic moment, the dancer leaps off his seat into the stage area (see Appendix 4). The tempo now firmly established, provides an avenue for the dancer to engage in an intricate rhythmic interplay with the lead drummer. His intricate footwork mirrors the rhythms and tones emanating from the djembe drums and flutes, effectively translating their sounds into somatic expressions. Each movement phrase executed by the dancer attains a resounding climax, marking distinct transitions and signalling an imminent conclusion to the near telepathic exchange between the ensemble and the dancer.

In intervals between the dancer's phrases, the guardian assumes a dancing role on the stage. During these interludes, the guardian intermittently performs brief sequences of movement, exhibiting his own expressive artistry. These moments provide the dancer with an opportunity for rest, allowing him to make adjustments to the mask, or to communicate with the musicians, without disrupting the flow of the performance. These interventions by the guardian add an additional layer of artistry and continuity to the overall performance.

In a noteworthy twist, the performance takes a participatory turn as members of the audience, primarily tourists, are invited to join the dancer on stage. The dancer welcomes them to engage in their own interpretation of the movements displayed. Striving to mimic the dancer's choreography, the tourists eagerly join in and do their best. The dancer graciously acknowledges their efforts, pausing to shake hands, offer embraces, and strike poses, fostering a sense of connection and solidarity. Photographs are taken, memorializing this unique and interactive encounter.

The Zaouli's regalia is an integral component of the performance. A carefully sculpted trichromatic effigy composed of a colourful mask, raffia on the waist and ankles, and bells atop the raffia on the ankles. The costume of the Zaouli sways and moves in response to the dancer's movements and the numerous ornaments dangle from the guise in what seems to be a response to the dancer's gesticulations. The decorative raffia that adorns the dancer's ankles, waist, and wrists judder in motion as he approaches the musicians and takes his seat. The anklet, strung with small bells, provides a lively accompaniment to the djembe drumming, flutes, and hollow slit drum, which make up the musical ensemble. The interplay between the dancer's movements and the regalia is a key addition to the dancer's skill and dexterity and contributes to the captivating and immersive experience for the audience.

The significance of the Zaouli's mask cannot be overstated. Among the Guros and in most traditional African societies, masks play a pivotal role in communicating with spirits and ancestors and were perceived as conduits that embodied the supernatural. The Zaouli's mask, therefore, represents an embodiment of the spirit Zaouli. The gradual unveiling of the mask during the performance is a pivotal moment that signals the release of the spirit from its seclusion, its cosmic existence, into the realm of the physical. This moment is an expression of the Zaouli's identity, and its display affirms the performer's connection with the supernatural world and the collective spirit of the community.

Overall, the performance unfolds as a captivating dance performance, harmoniously accompanied by live music. The ensemble, comprising flutists and drummers, creates an inviting atmosphere through their melodic and rhythmic expertise. The level at which the dancer's movements synchronized with the musical innuendos rendered an intricately woven tapestry of expression. The guardian's intermittent performances further enriched the narrative, providing interludes for both the dancer and the musicians. The audience's inclusion added an

immersive dimension to the performance, as their participation and attempts to emulate the dancer's movements created a sense of shared experience.

It was a fascinating experience, the chance to witness the dancing and the music that accompanied it in addition to the participatory aspect of the performance. I thought to myself, the intricate footwork and fast-paced rhythms must require considerable skill, coordination and communication between all the members involved in the performance. The audience was thoroughly engaged, and the energy in the air was palpable throughout. This experience cemented my interest in the dance, and I was eager to delve deeper into the practice and its cultural significance.

The ethnographic process was guided by the principle of cultural immersion, where I strived to 'do an in-depth study' of the dance form 'in its native soil in order to capture it from the emic perspective.' (Kuwor, 2017:48) This approach allowed for a more nuanced understanding of the dance form and its place within the larger cultural context. (Kwakye Oppong and Salifu, 2015) I recognized auto-ethnography as a useful methodological tool to explore my own experiences and encounters in the field as it allows for the integration of self-reflection and self-awareness into the research process, providing a deeper understanding of the research topic and my role in it. In this particular case, my experience as a dancer presented an advantage in grasping the nuances of the Zaouli dance and its related practices. (Fenton, 1997; Martin, 2019)

4.5. The Aftermath: a financial conundrum.

In the night before, as we put together the schedule of activities, I had presented to Mr Douayere, an amount of money to be used as honorarium. To compensate him for his time, guidance, and support for the period I was going to be with him and as appreciation for his support throughout this aspect of the research journey. Also, a portion of the amount was allocated to incentivising the interlocutors in Tibéita.

As the first performance drew to a conclusion, a ceremonial exchange took place between Mr. Douayere and Lai bi Vro Bayard, wherein a white envelope was presented, and greetings exchanged., I approached Mr. Douayere, seeking to obtain information regarding my inquiry about the prospect of learning the dance from the troupe in Tibéita. Mr. Douayere, however,

regretfully informed me that he could not stay any longer as he was obliged to attend to various personal matters. In his stead, Mr. Bamba graciously assumed the responsibility of assisting me in making any necessary arrangements with the troupe after the performances. As Mr. Douayere bid his farewell and departed, the role of guiding and advising me was now entrusted to the capable hands of Mr. Bamba.

The amount used for the payment went over my budget as it was 90% of the honorarium I had handed to Mr Douayere. It was a broader expression of gratitude and acknowledgement for the comprehensive assistance and hospitality extended to me and the collaborative relationship we had fostered. As the sum of the honorarium was to cater for more than paying for a single performance, the development was a bit unsettling.

Mr Bamba and I met with Lai bi Vro Bayard at the end of the performance, after the troupe had wound down to discuss arrangement for interviews and the possibility of learning the dance. He was a bit hesitant at first, stating that “his people” had to work and taking time off to participate in interviews would be costly. So, unless I offered financial compensation for their time lost, they may not be able to participate. After careful deliberation, he agreed to bring the team together for two days to participate in the interviews. According to Mr Bamba’s translation, he said he was granting the interviews on the basis of Mr Douayere’s generosity. I understood this and knew then that the initial hesitation was to create an avenue to put in a request for further financial compensation as I would later come to discover that a bargain had been struck between the troupe and Mr Douayere to organise the performance.

I was in a state of shock, confused, and to an extent, frustrated. This is because in addition to the exorbitant amount paid, I did not realize that there was a price tag on the performance. It was a fixed amount that was non-negotiable, and I was completely unprepared for the financial extremities I was now faced with. However, it is worth noting that this was only a minor inconvenience and misunderstanding that would later prove to be a critical turning point in the project.

While the financial arrangement for viewing the performance was not unexpected, it is crucial to recognize that within the cultural context of the community, such transactions are not uncommon (Wijngaarden, 2010). I was only taken aback by the magnitude of the sum agreed upon and paid. It is worth noting that in many traditional African societies, including the Gouro community in Tibéita, there exists a practice where knowledge bearers and

performers of cultural traditions are compensated for sharing their knowledge and expertise especially to ‘outsiders’ and their role in preserving their cultural heritage. This practice acknowledges the value and significance of their contributions and ensures the continuity and vitality of these cultural practices. (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009)

As an ethnographic researcher, it was imperative that I respected the local customs and norms constituent of the tradition. As I would come to understand later, the payment required for witnessing the Zaouli dance was not just a commercial transaction but rather a way of supporting the community and the artists who dedicate their time and efforts to preserve and perform the component traditional art forms. It is through these contributions that the cultural practices and expressions continue to thrive across generations. (Lai bi Vro Bayard, 2022)

This unexpected development provided an opportunity for reflection and a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics at play within the community. It highlighted the interplay between cultural preservation, economic sustainability, and the transmission of traditional practices. It reinforced the notion that ethnographic research involves embracing and adapting to the realities and nuances of the field, including financial challenges that may arise unexpectedly. By navigating this new development with respect, sensitivity, and an open mind, I gained deeper insights into the practices of the community and was able to forge meaningful connections with the research participants.

That notwithstanding, as my inquiry mainly focused on investigating indigenous knowledge systems and values, the imposition of restrictions on access to information and the financial limitations now apparent posed a significant challenge. The commodification of knowledge by the custodians now meant that access to information would be based on financial merit, as knowledge bearers have placed “price tags” on the information they possess. My fieldwork had become a very expensive endeavour at risk of coming to pieces. This new development required careful navigation, and a conscientious development of mutually beneficial relationships within the community.

4.6. A New Dimension.

To overcome this setback, I had to become resourceful in seeking alternative ways to learn about the dance. I turned to literature and other secondary sources, which provided some

information but were limited in their ability to capture the nuances of the dance and its transmission. Moreover, I realized that the use of literature alone to gain an understanding of the Zaouli dance would not suffice for a comprehensive understanding of the dance as an embodied practice. As such, I turned to local experts and practitioners for assistance in my research, who were more amenable to sharing information and knowledge. I leveraged my existing relationships with other interlocutors and sought out members of other communities of performers who were willing to share their knowledge and experiences.

While the setback of limited funds and the strict timeline initially posed a challenge to the research, it ultimately led to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the Zaouli dance through a combination of interviews, observation, literature review, and personal practice. Through my interactions with the various stakeholders of the Zaouli dance tradition and my interlocutors, I was able to learn about the various inherent traditions and processes of transmission as regards the dance practice. I gained insight into the various rituals and practices that are fundamental to the performance of the dance, including the use of specific regalia, musical accompaniment, as well as various choreographic elements.

This incident was a transformative experience and significantly influenced the trajectory of my research. The revelation of having to pay a substantial amount of money to view the Zaouli dance performance not only caught me off guard but also sparked a deeper curiosity about the impact of commercialisation on the dance practice and the overall development of the community.

This new insight, that financial considerations played a vital role in determining who gets access to the dance performance, and information about the dancing and its related practices prompted me to re-evaluate my research direction and delve into a study focused on understanding the intricate relationship between commodification, dance practice, and community development. I became intrigued by the implications of commercialisation on the authenticity, preservation, and transmission of the Zaouli dance tradition, as well as its effects on the social and economic dynamics within the community.

By exploring the commercial aspects of the dance, such as charging fees for performances, I sought to shed light on the complexities and tensions that arise at the intersection of traditions and market forces and how that impacts the sustainability of the practice. This new research direction aimed to contribute to a broader understanding of the interplay between cultural

heritage, economic considerations, and community dynamics, ultimately offering insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by the community as they engage in the commercialisation of the dance tradition.

This commercial dimension presents significant challenges in the practice of the dance tradition. As the dance becomes more and more popular and further commodified, there is the risk of exploitation of the dance and its performers. A possibility that elements of the Zaouli dance tradition will be taken out of their original cultural contexts and used by individuals or groups who may not fully understand or respect their significance. This can lead to misrepresentations of the Gouro community and erase their ownership and agency over the dance tradition. In my interview with Lai bi Vro Bayard and other members of the troupe, they describe instances where they have taught the dance to foreigners who then profited from the knowledge they have gained without any form of acknowledgement for the troupe, financial or otherwise.

Amidst these challenges however, there are also opportunities for cultural preservation through commodification and commercialisation. The growing recognition and appreciation of Zaouli dance at national and international levels provide a platform for increased visibility and support. Collaborations with cultural institutions, educational programs, and tourism initiatives present viable avenues for promoting and safeguarding the practice. These opportunities can foster a sense of pride and ownership among practitioners and community members, strengthening their commitment to preserving their own traditions in the face of risks of appropriation, homogenisation and dilution.

4.7. Pivotal Moment.

A particularly noteworthy moment during my research journey was the interview with Lai bi Vro Bayard, the head of the Zaouli troupe. As we sat down for the discussion, I anticipated gaining valuable insights into the transmission and practice of the Zaouli dance. However, the conversation took an unexpected turn when the topic of private lessons arose.

To my surprise, Lai bi Vro Bayard mentioned that if I desired to learn the Zaouli dance, I would need to pay an additional exorbitant amount for three sessions of private instruction. The magnitude of the requested payment struck me as both unreasonable and beyond my

financial means. It left me with a sense of frustration and disillusionment, questioning the integrity and inclusivity of the dance practice.

The exorbitant cost associated with private lessons presented a significant hurdle in my quest to deepen my understanding of the Zaouli dance tradition. It seemed that access to knowledge and skills in the domain of Zaouli was being restricted to those with substantial financial resources, potentially limiting the democratization of this cultural heritage.

Given the exorbitant fee demanded for private lessons, I found myself at a crossroads. Unable to afford such expenses but driven by a desire to continue my exploration of Zaouli, I decided to seek alternative options. It was at the recommendation of my trusted gatekeeper that I turned my attention to Abidjan, where I would have the opportunity to take lessons from other reputable instructors.

4.8. EDEC

This salient moment not only highlighted the financial barriers embedded within the traditional practice of Zaouli but also catalysed my seeking alternative avenues to pursue my research objectives. I decided, in consultation with my gatekeeper, Mr Tidou, to take lessons at one of the indigenous dance schools when I returned to Abidjan. Upon my arrival in Abidjan, I signed up for 3 days of private Zaouli dance lessons at EDEC.

It was one of the most memorable dance lessons I ever had. It was a private session at one of the EDEC dance studios and I was the only student in attendance. As I stepped into the studio, I was immediately enveloped by the elaborate set-up; one djembe drum placed across the room from the single mirrored wall. The room had Persian red coloured walls with white highlights and a high ceiling. It was well-ventilated and had a lot of reverberation and echo. The vibrant energy of anticipation, and exhilaration that filled the air made it more difficult to conceal my eagerness; I could not wait to start the lesson. I felt the thrill rush through my veins in a new wave of excitement as the instructor walked in.

He was a proficient young man who had had years of training and some more years of performance experience under his belt. He greeted me with a warm smile and a firm handshake, and immediately arranged the floor seating to prepare us for the lesson. After a

brief introductory moment, we would go right into the lesson. We started with a detailed warm-up session; it consisted of a series of dynamic stretching exercises and gentle rhythmic movements, followed by a few basic steps that I needed to practice for the duration of the workshop series.

Over the course of three days and 3 workshop sessions, I observed my tutor continually emphasize the role of the body in the dancer's perception of space, in shaping and being shaped by the environment. Through verbal and non-verbal coaching, he highlights the importance of considering the body as a multi-dimensional and dynamic construct; a social, cultural, and historical entity that embodies the people's beliefs and being. The French social theorist, Pierre Bourdieu, proposed the concept of "habitus," which suggests that individuals are socially situated and develop certain physical practices, attitudes, and ideas due to the collective culture of their given environment. Therefore, individuals who have been exposed to the same culture often share a series of similar behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, and physicality.

From my interaction with my tutor during the workshop, I deduced, on the foundations of Bourdieu's theory of habitus, that due to the influence of corporeal transmission, similarities in posture, expression, and overall demeanour may become apparent within a community/community of performance (Bourdieu, 2001). In hindsight, I realise that at some point, my posture, the energy and my demeanour during the workshop had begun bearing a striking semblance to that of my teacher. His instructional technique was mostly imitation and mirroring. He would demonstrate a sequence and guide me through the intricate technicalities that they bear. In this essay, I examine a moment of teacher-student interaction. Spotlighting the use of imitation as a teaching approach while investigating corporeality and its link to transmission.

With each move I performed, he offered easy-to-follow instructions and helpful advice, guiding me through the fundamentals of the movements and helping me develop the proper use of my body and limbs per the prescriptions for the execution of Zaouli movements. Although he only spoke French and I could barely understand the language at the time, we found a midpoint; a non-verbal means of communicating that was both thrilling and reminiscent of my years in dance school. A nod, a smile, a pat on the back. He gave verbal cues in some cases, but it was in most cases, bodily feedback, facilitating my understanding and execution of the various movements he was teaching.

He was quite emphatic on posture, encouraging me to loosen my neck and shoulders, allowing my head and neck to move more freely with the music. My heels were off the ground at about a 15° angle. My whole weight was balanced on the balls of my feet. The earth-bound posture called for bent knees and a slight forward tilt of my upper torso. My arms were stretched with the elbows slightly bent outward and my hands clenched in a fist as though I were holding fly whisks in both hands.

We explored several exercises which focused on different ways to use my body to follow the rhythm and melody of the music, and how to expressively interpret the music with my movements. We especially focused on exercises to strengthen my thigh and calf muscles during the first session. However, I still felt a little overwhelmed by the intensity of the pressure that my legs would come to bear.

Throughout all three sessions, my instructor kept encouraging me. He recommended that I focus on connecting with the music, teaching me how to move more slowly, feeling the music rather than attempting to keep up with it ensuring I kept up with the technical skills. After gracefully displaying a series of simple but complex movements, he demonstrated a few variations on the classic steps, presenting each one slowly, before gradually raising the tempo. Each movement was broken down, to help me understand how each part of the body should move; in unison with the hip shifts, the lifts, and twists, all the while maintaining an earth-bound posture: knees bent, and arms stretched out.

The lesson progressed and soon, we were hard at work practising combinations of steps and even a few exciting, choreographed routines. Each challenging move was followed by a demonstration of the exact technique I needed to perform and then repeated until it was perfected. The instructor would stand beside me, sometimes in front of me in a specific posture and talk me through the technique of performing the movement. Other times, he would adjust the positions of my arms and feet. In one instance, he tapped my right shoulder as he sang the rhythm for a section of the choreography, he was teaching me. This process of corporeal transference caused me to embody the music, it improved my musicality and thus helped me execute a complex sequence of movement through an understanding of the music that accompanied it.

Finally, when the lesson was coming to an end, my instructor invited me to perform a few relaxed, yet lively moves that were taught during the lesson, and before I knew it, he was clapping and cheering me on. After our final session on the third day, he and I ran through the choreographic sequence he had taught me over the course of the three days. The dynamic interaction between tutor and student emphasises the importance of a supportive and nurturing learning environment which in my case, was provided through somatic and imitative transmission that engaged our tactile senses.



Figure 4.7: A photo with the facilitators of the workshop at EDEC

Overall, I had an incredible time taking private dance lessons at EDEC. My instructor was incredibly attentive and made sure to provide me with the necessary tools and support that I needed to progress as a novice. I left with a renewed enthusiasm for the dancing, a more in-depth understanding of the techniques, as well as an everlasting appreciation for having had such an intimate recollection of a dance lesson.

By the end of the lesson, I felt an immense sense of accomplishment. Under the guidance of the teacher's instruction, I managed to learn a basic dance routine slowly but surely. Although the lesson was challenging, the experience was infinitely enriching, both academically and emotionally, and an invaluable insight into the importance of a choreomusical aptitude in the performance of Zaouli.

4.9. Conclusion.

This exploration of the Zaouli dance through EDEC revealed significant insights into the teaching and learning methods adopted and a unique view of the effects of commercialisation on the transmission and preservation of the dance tradition. The institutionalisation of the teaching and learning process I observed (i.e structured lessons, standardized techniques, and a codified curriculum), in addition to the activities of EDEC is aimed at meeting the demands of commercialisation by providing a marketable product to a wider audience. However, this process raised questions regarding the potential impact on the originality of the practice and the cultural significance of the dance, as traditional nuances and improvisational elements had either been standardized or omitted completely.

The influence of market demands on the dance practice was evident first in Tibéita and then in Abidjan. As I searched for alternatives after my inability to learn the dance in Tibéita, I got in touch with another troupe that was based in Abidjan who also demanded a hefty after to participate in the project. The troupes and the training centre focused on catering to market preferences, adapting the repertoire, choreography, and performance techniques accordingly. This trend highlighted a delicate balance between preserving the essence of the tradition and accommodating contemporary tastes. The pressure to appeal to commercial interests has led to a reinterpretation of the dance form in some cases and raises concerns about the evolution of the dance heritage.

Additionally, the dynamics of power and representation within the performance fraternity was a significant discovery. Choreographers and performers in the various contexts I observed have an immense stake in shaping the direction and narrative of the dance practice in contemporary spheres of discourse. This hierarchical structure in Tibéita as well as the contributions from my no-performing collaborators raised questions about authority, ownership, and the representation of the tradition. It was evident that the troupe in Tibéita

had an innovative approach to these dynamics, balancing the need to adapt to commercial demands while safeguarding the integrity of the dance tradition.

CHAPTER V: Conclusion

A Commercial Dimension to Safeguarding a Dance Heritage.

'Some art forms (are) associated with the community as a whole, certain expressions (are) linked with social groups within it - social groups distinguished on the basis of sex or age, or on the basis (of) kinship affiliations, or on the basis of association - as warriors, devotees of cults or members of occupational groups such as fishermen or elephant hunters. There are also forms that (are) linked to the royal court. ... The process of socialisation or enculturation (enables) the individual to acquire his (or her) knowledge of (dance) and skills needed to fulfil his (or her) role as a member of his (or her) society or to fulfil his (or her) obligation as a custodian or carrier of a particular tradition...'

(Nketia, 1970: 71)

The scope of the study, going in, was to explore the approaches that were used in the transmission of Gouro heritage to progeny through the Zaouli dance tradition. The principal enquiry was driven by an inclination to look into the methods, models, strategies, and techniques that were prevalent in the indigenous existence of the Zaouli dance, and how the Gouro community approached the transmission of cultural knowledge through the Zaouli dance and its related practices? Some specific areas of interest were:

- The Choreomusicality of the Zaouli dance tradition. A descriptive enquiry into the relationship and interactions between music and dance.
- Aesthetic senses within the dance and the semiotic significance of a performance; and
- To examine the effect of the inscription of the Zaouli dance on UNESCO's ICH representative list on the community and how it may or may not have affected the existence and performance of the dance.

What began as an attempt to examine the transmission of representational elements of Zaouli, the aesthetic characteristics of the dance as tied to many dimensions of a people's existence, and the concepts of nationhood, identity construction, and cultural power through dance from many ideological vantage points quickly evolved into an exploration of the commercialisation of the Zaouli dance practice, highlighting the emergence of monetary transactions as access points for performances and dance lessons. The implications of these commercial endeavours on cultural authenticity, the transmission of knowledge, and the socio-economic fabric of the community are examined.

In this ethnographic report, I have given an overview of my fieldwork conducted in the Ivory Coast over the summer of 2022 to study the transmission of the Zaouli dance and related practices. I have presented and discussed instances of embodied examination of the investigations into the processes of transmission of the dance and cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. The role of the community in its practice and preservation, and the impact of the inscription of the Zaouli dance on UNESCO's ICH representative list on the community is also highlighted and a reflexive interpretation of how it may or may not have affected the existence and performance of the dance is presented.

My methodological orientation brought into effective action the tenets of ethnographic research as propounded by scholars like Guest (2018), Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), Fenton (1997), Gore (2009), Giurchescu and Kröschlová (2007), and Berger (2015). It involved participant observation, formal, semi-formal interviews with key informants and members of the community conducted in formal and informal settings, and data analysis using a thematic analytical approach. The study reinforced the reality that the Zaouli dance is an integral part of the culture and beliefs of the community and is closely tied to their heritage and identity (Fischer, 2008; Haxaire, 2009, Bouttiex, 2009). The transmission of the dance involves a range of processes, including observation, imitation, and verbal instructional guidance, with an emphasis on the importance of community participation, collaboration and musicality, as observed in a non-traditional teaching and learning environment.

I have also highlighted the impact of commercialisation on the practice of the dance and community development. In that the increasing demand for the dance has led to the commodification of the practice, resulting in the commercialisation of the practice and in some cases, the exploitation of its practitioners and stakeholders by outsiders (Lai bi Vro Bayard, 2022). The community (i.e Tibéita) has experienced both positive and negative impacts of commercialisation. They continually experience the benefits of increased exposure and global recognition, which has invited a significant number of tourists and visitors to the region. This influx of patrons, enthusiasts and art lovers the world over is a financial blessing as it provides alternative avenues for income. Tourists and other patrons pay a good amount of money to view performances, and this contributes to the preservation of the dance tradition. Amidst all the benefits that commodification and commercialisation has bestowed on the Tibéita community, there is a very real risk of appropriation, loss of cultural authenticity and control.

One salient moment during the fieldwork was an interview with the family head of the troupe, who demanded an exorbitant amount for dance lessons. As scholars like Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) and Wijngaarden (2010) have extensively discussed, the idea of receiving compensation for sharing indigenous knowledge is not foreign to traditional dance practitioners. It is an avenue for one to show appreciation for the openness to sharing information. This incident greatly influenced the current direction of the research project: An exploration of the impact of commercialisation on the dance practice and community development.

In conclusion, a reflexive look at the events from the fieldwork period has revealed a complex interplay between tradition and modernity, community and commercialisation, and the challenges faced by communities such as Tibéita in preserving their cultural heritage in the face of economic pressures. The findings suggest that commercialisation can be an effective means of safeguarding the dance tradition, while also contributing to community development. However, careful consideration must be given to balancing the preservation of tradition with the potential risks of commodification and cultural appropriation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Adshead-Lansdale, J. (1994) Dance analysis in performance, *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, 12(2), 15–20. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2307/1290988>

Anku, W. (2009) Drumming among the Akan and Anlo Ewe of Ghana: an introduction, *African Music: Journal of the International Library of African Music*, 8(3), pp. 38–64. doi: 10.21504/amj.v8i3.1827

Asante, M. K., & Welsh-Asante, K. (1990) *African culture: the rhythms of unity*. Trenton, N.J., Africa World Press.

Ayi, B.T. (2022) Teaching Traditional Ghanaian Dance Forms in Higher Education in the Diaspora. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 93(2), pp.51–53. doi:10.1080/07303084.2022.2020056.

Bakka, E. (2007) Analysis of traditional dance in Norway and the Nordic countries, *Dance Structures: Perspectives on The Analysis of Human Movement*, 3, pp. 21-52.

Bakka, E. and Karoblis, G. (2010) Writing ‘a dance’: epistemology for dance research. *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, [online] 42, pp.167–193. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41201384> [Accessed 16 Jun. 2022].

Berger, R. (2015) Now I see it, now I don't: researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112468475>.

Block, B. and Kissel, J. L. (2001) The dance: essence of embodiment. *Theoretical Medicine*, 22, pp.5–15. Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Bouloré, V. (1996) *Les masques baoulé dans la Côte-d'Ivoire centrale : (approches historique et stylistique comparées)*.

Bourdieu, P. (2001) *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bouttiaux, A.-M. and Roberts, A. F. (2009) Guro Masked Performers: Sculpted Bodies Serving Spirits and People. *African Arts*, 42(2), 56–67. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20626991>

Bouttiaux, A.-M. (2009) Persona: Masks of Africa—Identities hidden and revealed. *African Arts*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1162/AFAR.2009.42.3.62>.

Bouttiaux, A.-M. (2012) Challenging the dead hand of the museum display: the case of contemporary guro (côte d'Ivoire) masquerades. *Museum Anthropology*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1548-1379.2012.01120.X>.

Carleton.ca. (n.d.) *Cultural Transmission through Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) Social Song & Dance*. [online] Available at: <https://carleton.ca/anako/2019/social-songs/> [Accessed 15 Jun. 2022].

Cole, H.M. (1985) I am not myself: the art of African masquerade. *African Arts*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2307/3336392>.

Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J. (2009) *Ethnicity, Inc Bibliovault OAI Repository*. University of Chicago Press. 10.7208/chicago/9780226114736.001.0001.

Csordas, T. J. (1990) Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology. *Ethos*, 18(1), pp. 5–47. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/640395>

Csordas, T.J. (1999) Ritual Healing and the Politics of Identity in Contemporary Navajo Society. *American Ethnologist*, 26(1), pp.3–23. doi:10.1525/ae.1999.26.1.3.

Dodgson, J. (2019) Reflexivity in qualitative research. *Journal of Human Lactation*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/0890334419830990>.

EDEC Administration (2022) Interviewed by Nii Tettei, 6 July.

Emigh, J. (1997) Masked performance: the play of self and other in ritual and theatre. *Choice Reviews Online*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.5860/CHOICE.34-5003>.

Fenton, R. (1997) A dancer thinks about dance cross-culturally. *Journal for the Anthropological Study of Human Movement*, 9(3), pp.115–124.

Finlay, L. (2002) 'Outing' the researcher: The provenance, process, and practice of reflexivity. *Qualitative health research*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/104973202129120052>.

Finlay, L. (2002) Negotiating the swamp: the opportunity and challenge of reflexivity in research practice. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/146879410200200205>.

Fischer, E., Himmelheber, H. and Himmelheber, U. (2008) Guro: Masks, performances, and master carvers in ivory coast. *African Arts*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1162/AFAR.2009.42.2.91>.

Fügedi, J. (2016) *Basics of Laban Kinetography for Traditional Dancers*. Budapest, HU: Institute for Musicology, Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Gallay, A. (2016) 'A Plea for General Anthropology', *Intangible Elements of Culture in Ethnoarchaeological Research*, pp. 3–35. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-23153-2_1.

Gagliardi, S. (2018) Art and the individual in African masquerades Introduction. *Africa*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972018000438>.

Giurchescu, A. (2001) *The Power of Dance and Its Social and Political Uses*. Yearbook for Traditional Music, Volume 33, pp. 109-121.

Giurchescu, A. and Kröschlová, E. (2007) Theory and method of dance form analysis revised version of the ictm study group on ethnochoreology collective work: "foundation for folk dance structure and form analysis" (1962-1976), *Dance Structures: Perspectives on The Analysis of Human Movement*, 3, pp. 21-52.

Gore, G. (2009) Lost in translation? Cultural shifts, dance experience and meaning, in Rouhiainen, L (ed.) *Dance, Movement, Mobility: Proceedings, 9th International NOFOD Conference, October 23-16, 2008*. Tampere: University of Tampere, Department of Music 9. pp. 17-26.

Green D. (2013) The making of an African dance teacher. *Modern Ghana*, 28 September. Available at: <https://www.modernghana.com/news/493071/the-making-of-an-african-dance-teacher.html> (Accessed: 7 June 2022).

Guest, K.J. (2018) *Essentials of cultural anthropology a toolkit for a global age*. New York, N.Y. London W.W. Norton & Company.

Guillemin, M. and Gillam, L. (2004) Ethics, reflexivity, and 'Ethically important moments' in research. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800403262360>.

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (2007) *Ethnography : principles in practice*. London ; New York: Routledge.

Hanna, J. L. (1973) African Dance: The Continuity of Change. *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council*, 5, 165–174. <https://doi.org/10.2307/767501>

Haxaire, C. (2004) Toupaille, kits MST et remèdes du mal d'enfants chez les gouro de zuénoula (côte-d'ivoire) : Cultures et médicaments. doi:<https://doi.org/10.7202/007447AR>.

Haxaire, C. (2009) The power of ambiguity: The nature and efficacy of the zamble masks revealed by 'Disease masks' among the gouro people (côte d'Ivoire). *Africa*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3366/E0001972009001065>.

Haxaire, C. (2022) D'une compétition l'autre: le Zaouli gouro, le patrimoine immatériel et le politique. *Politique africaine*, 165, 49-71. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uca.fr/10.3917/polaf.165.0049>

Holas, B. (1976) *Civilisations et arts de l'Ouest africain*. Bibliothèque nationale de France [online] Available at: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/view3if/ga/ark:/12148/bpt6k3351624g/f1> [Accessed 10 May 2023].

ich.unesco.org. (n.d.). *UNESCO - Zaouli, popular music and dance of the Guro communities in Côte d'Ivoire*. [online] Available at: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/zaouli-popular-music-and-dance-of-the-guro-communities-in-cte-divoire-01255>

Jackson, N. (1994) Dance analysis in the publications of Janet Adshead and Susan Foster, *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, 12(1), 3–11. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2307/1290706>

Kacou, V. (1978) Les masques et leur fonction sociale chez les Gouro.

Kawano, T. (2018) Transmission of the professional identity through an embodied artistic ritual: An investigation of a dance/movement therapy welcoming ceremony. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 57, pp.1–10. doi: 10.1016/j.aip.2017.09.001.

Kuwor, S.K. (2017) Understanding African Dance in Context: Perspectives from Ghana. *Africology: the journal of pan-African studies*, 10(4), pp.47–64.

Lai bi Vro Bayard (2022) Interviewed by Nii Tettei, 17 June.

Leclerc, F. (2022) *ZaouliDance*. Available at: <https://vimeo.com/655884421> (Accessed on: 27 April 2022).

Loiacono, V. (2019) *Transmission of Dance and Heritage and body & objectified capital*. [online] World Dance Heritage Research Centre. Available at: <https://worlddanceheritage.org/transmission>

Lunenburg, F.C. and Irby, B.J. (2008) *Writing a successful thesis or dissertation: tips and strategies for students in the social and behavioral sciences*. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Corwin Press.

Magnat, V. (2011) Conducting Embodied Research at the Intersection of Performance Studies, Experimental Ethnography and Indigenous Methodologies. *Anthropologica*, [online] 53(2), pp.213–227. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41473875> [Accessed 16 Jun. 2022].

Martin, R. (2019) Feeling the field: Reflections on embodiment within improvised dance ethnography. *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*, 11(2), pp.197–207. doi:10.1386/jdsp_00005_1.

McNaughton, P. (2008) *A Bird Dance near Saturday City: Sidi Ballo and the Art of West African Masquerade*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Meillassoux, C. (2013) *Anthropologie économique des gouros de côte d'Ivoire*.

Nilsson, M. (1991) Dance Transmission, a Question of Learning or Teaching? *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, [online] 33(1/4), pp.279–284. doi:10.2307/902449.

Nilsson, M. (1991) Dance Transmission, a Question of Learning or Teaching? *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, [online] 33(1/4), pp.279–284. doi:10.2307/902449.

Nketia, J.H.K. (1965) The Interrelations of African Music and Dance. *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 7(1/4), pp. 91–101. doi: [10.2307/901416](https://doi.org/10.2307/901416)

Nketia, J. H. K. and Ghana. University, Legon (1970) *Ethnomusicology in Ghana*: by J.H Nketia. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.

Nketia, J. H. K. (1970) 'Music Education in Africa and the West: We Can Learn from Each other', *Music Educators Journal*, 57(3), pp. 48–55. doi: 10.1177/002743217005700313.

Norris, R. S. (2001) Embodiment and Community. *Western Folklore*, 60(2/3), 111–124. doi: 10.2307/1500372

Olmos-Vega, F.M., Stalmeijer, R., Varpio, L. and Kahlke, R. (2022) A practical guide to reflexivity in qualitative research: AMEE Guide No. 149. *Medical Teacher*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2022.2057287>.

Opoku, A. M., and Bell, W. E. (1965) *African dances: a Ghanaian profile; pictorial excerpts from concerts of Ghanaian dances*. Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.

Orlandi, A., Cross, E.S. and Orgs, G. (2020) Timing is everything: Dance aesthetics depend on the complexity of movement kinematics. *Cognition*, 205, p.104446. doi: 10.1016/j.cognition.2020.104446.

Paulson, S., Flanagan, O., Bloom, P. and Baumeister, R. (2011) Quid pro quo: the ecology of the self. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1234: 29-43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.2011.06182.x>

Persuad, D. (2011) *Traditional Ghanaian Dance and Its Role In Transcending Western Notions of Community*.

Read, J. (2017) *Cadences of Choreomusicality: Investigating the Relationship Between Sound and Movement in Staged Performances of Popping and Animation in the United Kingdom*. [online] Available at: <https://dora.dmu.ac.uk> [Accessed 14 Jun. 2022].

Reed, D.B. (2016) Drums, dance, dreams, and remittance: Transnational interconnections in ivoirian immigrant mask performance in the USA. *African Arts*. doi:https://doi.org/10.1162/AFAR_A_00312.

Reynolds, W. C. (1974) Foundations for the analysis of the structure and form of folk dance: a syllabus, *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council*, 6, pp.115–135. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2307/767728>

Romaguera, L. D. (2018) Identification through movement: dance as the embodied archive of memory, history, and cultural identity, *FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations*, 3666. <https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/3666>

ScienceDaily. (n.d.) *Cultural transmission: The most powerful learning 'tool'*. [online] Available at: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/04/150409081824.htm>.

Shilling, C. (2016) Body Pedagogics: Embodiment, Cognition and Cultural Transmission, *Sociology*, 51(6), pp. 1205–1221. doi: 10.1177/0038038516641868

Stepputat, K and Seye, E. (2020) Introduction: Choreomusical Perspectives. *World of Music*, 9(1), pp. 7 – 24.

Taylor, D. (2007) *The archive and the repertoire: performing cultural memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press.

Tidou bi (no date) *Le Zahouli: un element transtextuel et transcultural*. Abidjan: Universite Felix Houphouet-Boigny.

Tierou, A. (2016) *Dooplé: the eternal law of african dance*. Taylor & Francis.

Thomson, P. (2020) Dance. *Encyclopedia of Creativity*, pp.306–309. doi:10.1016/b978-0-12-809324-5.23661-4.

Throsby, D. (1999) Cultural Capital, *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 23(1/2), pp. 3–12. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41810682>

Torp, L. (2007) Principles and theoretical foundation of a structural analysis and classification of European chain and round dance patterns, *Dance Structures: Perspectives on The Analysis of Human Movement*, 3, pp. 113-154.

Welsh-Asante, K. (2010) *African dance*. New York: Chelsea House.

Wijngaarden, V. (2010) Cosmopolitan Savages: The Challenging Art of Selling African Culture to Tourists. *Etnofoor*, 22(2), 98–125. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25758189>

www.youtube.com. (n.d.) *Masque Gouro, Zaouli, Côte d'Ivoire*. [online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syKJfhQU5hQ> [Accessed 11 Jun. 2022].

www.youtube.com. (n.d.) *Zahouli, folklore gouro, Côte d'Ivoire*. [online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCEZ-vVa3U4> [Accessed 11 Jun. 2022].

www.youtube.com. (n.d.) *Zaouli, popular music and dance of the Guro communities in Côte d'Ivoire*. [online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b48CRIII54c&t=1s> [Accessed 11 June 2022].

Yeo, L. (2016) *Salsa Blog: The Senses of African Dance*. [online] Salsa Blog. Available at: <https://salsadiary.blogspot.com/2016/07/the-senses-of-african-dance.html> [Accessed 16 Jun. 2022].

APPENDICES:

APPENDIX 1: DATABASE:

| Item | Description | Location | File Format | Quantity | Category |
|------------|---|----------|-----------------|----------|---|
| Photograph | Photos of interlocutors, aides and host families/ Pictures from Zaouli performance- before, during, and after. | Abidjan | HEIF, JPEG, PNG | 849 | Interviews/ Performances/ Scenery/ Backstage Shots/ Pictures from my lessons/ Miscellaneous |
| | | Sinfra | | 202 | |
| | | Bouaflé | | | |
| | | Tibéita | | | |
| Video | Recordings of dance lessons and random moments with my host family/ Recordings of Zaouli performance, interviews, discussions and signing of consent forms/ Random shots of the vicinity. | Abidjan | HEVC | 262 | Interviews/ Performances/ Scenery/ Backstage Shots/ Recordings from dance classes/ Soundscape |
| | | Bouaflé | | | |
| | | Tibéita | | | |
| | | Sinfra | | | |
| Document | Consent forms signed by interlocutors on the project/ Interview guide/ Project description and information/Field notes, journal and log. | Tibéita | Print | 11 | Interview guide/ Consent forms/ Project Description. |
| | | | Word (docx) | 6 | |
| | | | PDF | 2 | |
| | | | Handwritten | | |
| Audio | Voice memos of field log and journal, audio recordings of interviews and soundscape. | Abidjan | m4a | 13 | Interview/ Journal |
| | | Tibéita | | | |

APPENDIX 2:

The story of the origins of Zaouli dance as narrated by Sahou bi-Boty in French before translation.

Translated with DeepL (https://www.deepl.com/app/?utm_medium=ios-share)

Zah était l'unique fille d'un homme. Sa beauté féérique impressionnait toute la communauté au point que sa renommée dépassa les frontières de sa région d'origine (Zara bi Sehifla/Gohitafla). Toute la région ainsi séduite par cette admirable beauté parlait de Zah élogieusement et permanemment. Cependant, un jour, à la suite d'une courte maladie, Zah décède subitement. Cette situation dramatique qui rend son père (Djèla) malheureux et inconsolable au point que partout il passait, il pleurait sa fille défunte. Elle fut enterrée dans la douleur car personne ne voulait se séparer d'elle. Mais le plus affligé, c'était naturellement son père qui ne pouvait s'empêcher de pleurer à chaque occasion de rencontres des jeunes filles du village.

La vue de ces filles lui rappelait toujours le souvenir de Zah. Il la pleurait partout : au village, au campement, au marigot, à la chasse, etc.... Bref, cette mort tragique de sa fille le hantait. Un jour, au cours d'une partie de chasé, il se mit à pleurer abondamment et était inconsolable. Il pleurait tellement que l'esprit (revenant) de sa fille lui apparut sous la forme d'un serpent. Celui-ci le consola.

Cependant, pour qu'il cesse définitivement de pleurer, le serpent vomit sept masques à l'effigie du visage de Zah, sa fille défunte. Le serpent lui révéla par la suite que ces masques devraient faire l'objet d'une danse, la future Djèla Lou Zahouli. C'est pourquoi, il en montra aussi les pas de danse.

Mais en réalité, l'objet de cette danse masquée consistait à pérenniser le souvenir de la beauté légendaire de la fille défunte. Cet home, Djela, révéla toutes ces informations par la suite à ses co-villageois. Ainsi naquit la danse Djèla Lou Zahouli qui est couramment appelé Zahouli.

Zah was the only daughter of a man. Her enchanting beauty impressed the whole community to such an extent that her fame spread beyond the borders of her native region (Zara bi Sehifla/Gohitafla). The whole region was captivated by this admirable beauty and spoke of Zah with constant praise. However, one day, after a short illness, Zah suddenly died. This dramatic situation made her father (Djèla) so unhappy and inconsolable that everywhere he went, he wept for his dead daughter. She was buried in grief because no one wanted to part with her. But the most distressed was of course her father, who couldn't stop crying every time he met the young girls from the village.

The sight of these girls always brought back memories of Zah. He mourned her everywhere: in the village, at the camp, at the marigot, on the hunt, etc....Bref, the tragic death of his daughter haunted him. One day, during a hunting party, he began to cry profusely and was inconsolable. He wept so much that his daughter's spirit (revenant) appeared to him in the form of a snake. This spirit consoled him.

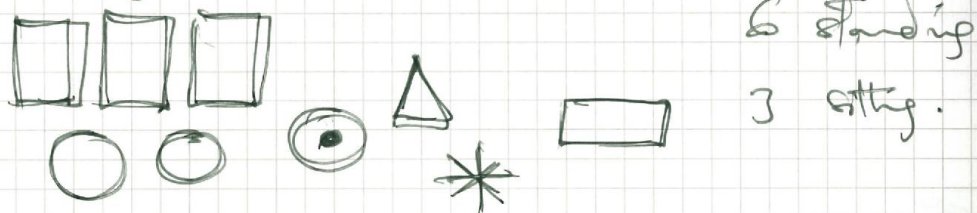
However, to stop him crying for good, the snake vomited up seven masks in the shape of the face of Zah, his dead daughter. The snake then told him that these masks were to be the subject of a dance, the future Djèla Lou Zahouli. That's why he also showed her the dance steps.

But in reality, the purpose of this masked dance was to perpetuate the memory of the legendary beauty of the deceased daughter. This man, Djéla, later revealed all this information to his fellow villagers. Thus, was born the Djèla Lou Zahouli dance, commonly known as Zahouli.

APPENDIX 3: Illustration of the positioning of the music ensemble during the Zaouli performance in Tibéita. Captured in my fieldnotes.

- one gentleman walks to the tree in the yard, picks up a pair of sticks and plays a rhythmic pattern on the drum that's hanging there.

- a group of musicians walk in and setup in front of the building.



□ - 3 flutist standing behind the jembe drummers.

○ - jembe drummers

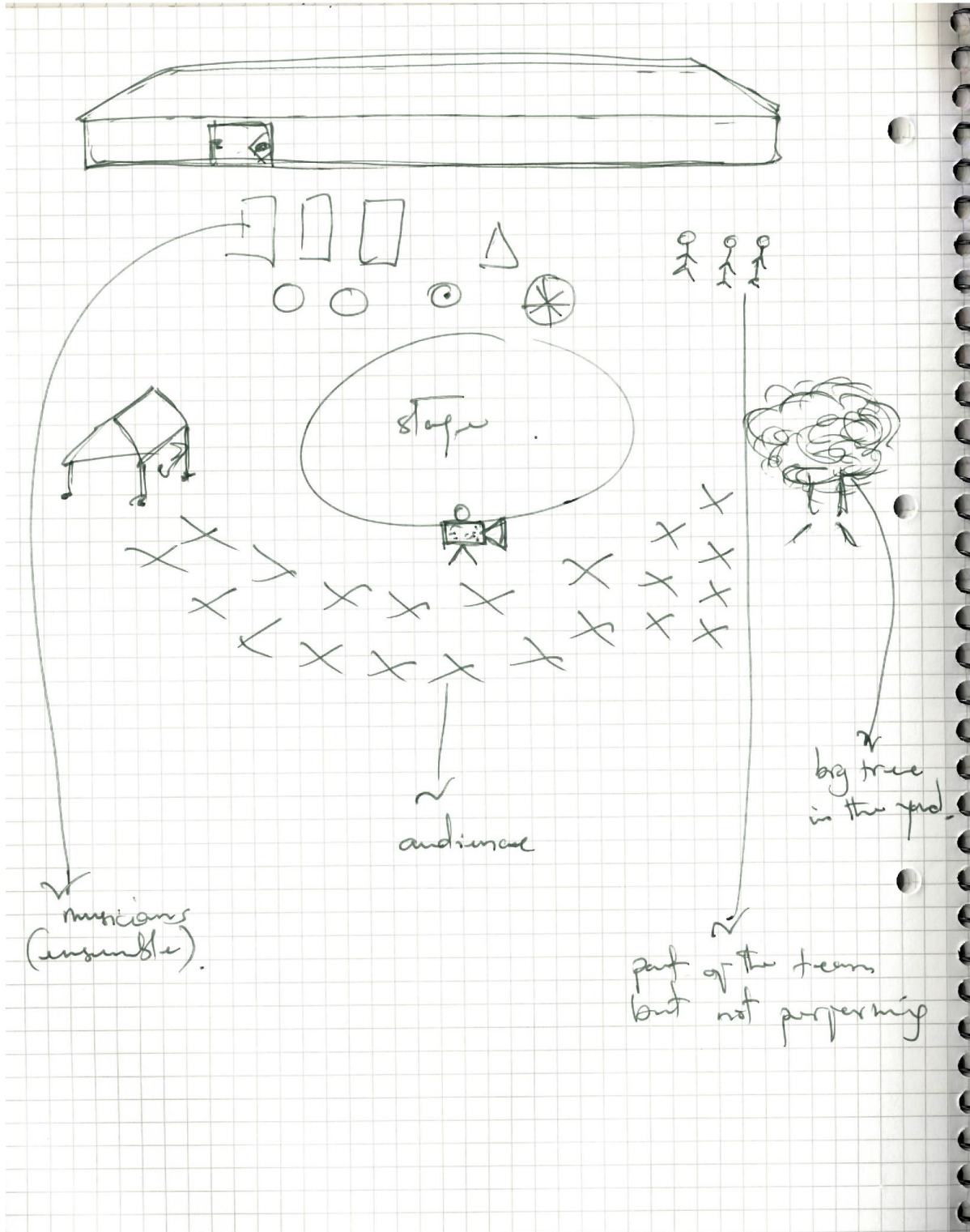
⊙ - standing behind a larger drum that has a lower tone registry.

△ - playing the talking drum in the back.

* - playing the unmaned drum that was hanging on the tree. same drum he sounded the call from.

▭ - a relatively older man that played the slit drum on the floor beside *.

APPENDIX 4: Illustration of the performance arena and the surrounding structures as showing the designated performance area.



**APPENDIX 6: Signed consent from Lai bi Vro Bayard after our interview session.
Extracted from the project description.**

Consent Form:

I have received and understood information about the project *“The Zaouli Incarnate: A Study of Indigenous Transmission Models and Tools in Djéla lou Zaouli”* and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in an interview
- to give information about myself to this project (personal experiences, ethnicity, religious and philosophical orientation)
- for my teacher to give information about me to this project (information on ethnicity, religious and philosophical orientation)
- for my child's teacher to give information about me/my child to this project (information on ethnicity, religious orientation, and philosophy)
- for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognised (Photographs, video recordings, audio recordings, etc.)
- for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project for follow-up studies and archiving for future research.

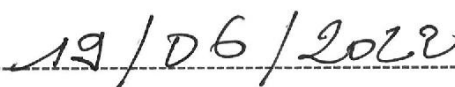
I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. June 1, 2022, to December 31, 2023.



(Signed by participant)



(Full Name)



(Date)

APPENDIX 7: Signed consent from the administration of EDEC.

Consent Form:

I have received and understood information about the project *“The Zaouli Incarnate: A Study of Indigenous Transmission Models and Tools in Djéla lou Zaouli”* and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in an interview*
- to give information about myself to this project (personal experiences, ethnicity, religious and philosophical orientation)*
- for my teacher to give information about me to this project (information on ethnicity, religious and philosophical orientation)*
- for my child’s teacher to give information about me/my child to this project (information on ethnicity, religious orientation, and philosophy)*
- for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognised (Photographs, video recordings, audio recordings, etc.)*
- for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project for follow-up studies and archiving for future research.*

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. June 1, 2022, to December 31, 2023.

FONDATION GUIRAUDMR/EDEC

(Signed by participant)

Laya (225) 0708614603

(Full Name)

06/07/2022

(Date)