

**A social and cultural theoretical appraisal and
contextualisation of the visual and symbolic language of
beadwork and dress from southern KwaZulu-Natal, held
in the Campbell Collections, UKZN**

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DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (History of Art), in the Graduate Programme in the College of Humanities, School of Arts, Media, Visual Arts and Drama, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

I, Yvonne Elizabeth Winters, declare that:

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Yvonne Elizabeth Winters

4 November 2015

Supervisor: Professor Juliette Leeb-du-Toit

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ABSTRACT

This Doctoral dissertation, *A social and cultural theoretical appraisal and contextualisation of the visual and symbolic language of beadwork and dress from southern KwaZulu-Natal, held in the Campbell Collections, University of KwaZulu-Natal* seeks to act as a review and contextualisation of existing holdings of beadwork and dress to be found in the Campbell Collections of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Most of the material referenced in this thesis was collected by the author in the post of Senior Museologist for these museum collections, but remain true to the eclectic, Africana and Oral History orientated collecting-policies of the founder, the late Dr Killie Campbell who's ideas were no doubt equally informed by the Modernist, Colonialist notions of her times. Her collections were also heavily influenced by her friend and protégé, the artist Barbara Tyrrell, who recorded indigenous African dress according to the categories of gender age-grade/status and profession, noting within each category the correct posture, gesture and name of sitter/poser in some 1200 in-situ field-sketches of indigenous peoples of southern Africa.

However, museum collecting is neither static nor neutral and as Campbell's museum and library holdings had been bequeathed to the University of Natal (later KwaZulu-Natal), further collecting-policies were to be influenced by prevailing theories and schools of thought within the university disciplines most affecting the Collections at that time, namely Social Anthropology and History. The first of these schools excluded 'material culture' as being an art form (and at the time designated as a 'craft'), as it concentrated instead on social and kinship organization(as did the British and French Schools versions of this school adopted by the English speaking University of Natal). 'Material culture' was the domain of Cultural Anthropology of the American and German Schools, which had been adopted by the Afrikaans speaking universities in South Africa. This fact side-lined the museum holdings of the Campbell Collections as a relevant source of study material for the University's students as it not only delegated the material cultural artefacts to the status of 'popular' and 'tourist-art', but they were also an echo of the ruling apartheid Nationalist Government's attempts to subvert the topic of indigenous culture to its own ends of divide and rule. Only the library division of the Campbell Collections assumed a more academic profile as it fell under the auspices of the discipline of History.

The introduction of Orality-Literacy under the Faculty of European Languages and the introduction of a component of African art into the History of Art course at UKZN during the 1980s could be said to have redeemed material culture by contributing a new perspective upon it. The acquisition and sale of 'authentic' items of African art via western 'Tribal-Arts' sales-houses tends to de-emphasise the cultural function of these items for aesthetic considerations, a disingenuous mode of forcing up investment values. Only the academic writings of such art-historians as Anitra Nettleton, Sandra Klopper, Juliette Leeb-du-Toit, Thenjiwe Magwaza and Frank Jolles among others can counter this trend. This because they so often reference the Orality-Literacy theory of Walter Ong and the Symbolic Interactionist, Interpretivist and hermeneutical orientations in anthropological thought pioneered by people such as Clifford Geertz, famous for his introduction of the term 'thick description'.

These above mentioned schools of thought are the ones privileged in this thesis. From Geertz's viewpoint I argue that instead of presupposing, as is the usual 1980-90s stance on beadwork that any suggestion of meaning, communication or message stems merely from the wish of African sellers of these crafts to appeal to European tourists/buyers with romantic notions of the 'mythic African other', rather these items may well still contain messages and communications that can only be understood by reference to the culture that produced them.

Traditionalist women beadworkers, following ‘*ukuhlonipha kolwimi*’ (respect of language) encode messages into the non-verbal art of beadworking. In this they express themselves via regional colour and motif conventions that reference the formerly oral isiZulu language of the praise-poets, with its metaphor, alliteration and innuendo. In these items design and meaning unite to reflect the beadworkers/wearers’ concerns and act to not only circumscribe their identities according to gender/status/age-group that accompany important rites-of-passage like engagement, marriage, birth(ing) and death (and mourning), but also allow for the woman to express her expectations and disappointments, thus giving her a ‘voice’ albeit a non-verbal one.

The regional location concentrated upon in this study is that of both the Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours’ resident in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands and the Bhaca and related Nhlanguwini peoples of southern KwaZulu-Natal and East-Griqualand. The period covered is the 1950s to the 1990s, a time which largely parallels that when the administration of the Collections both passed to the University and continued to be administered by it. The majority of the items of beadwork and dress analysed in this study had actually been worn by their makers. They were obtained on field-collecting trips by museum staff during the 1980s–1990s, initially mainly by the author. Later on items were obtained increasingly more from African isiZulu speaking field collectors. Where possible in this thesis the original language of the maker-wearers, along with their explanations as to the meaning attributed to these items, has been retained and English translations provided accordingly, thereby allowing for a much clearer understanding of the connection between the rich idiomatic phraseology, often regional in its variations, and the symbolic choice of colour, motif and pattern and their intended communication. Not all beadwork and dress necessarily carries messages, but nearly all allow for ornamentation in its role of respecting and honouring (*ukuhlonipha*) both the ritual participants and wearers themselves as well as their viewers/witnesses (both those living and those deceased as in the case of the all-important *amadlozi* or ancestral-spirits).

Concerns of African Feminism, modernisation and change are addressed throughout the study which has been divided into six chapters: Chapter 1 is an Introduction which gives a background to the topic, issues involved, literature and methodology. Chapter 2 is an intensive discussion of pertinent views and schools of thought (both Modernist and Postmodernist) that pertain especially to art and aesthetics, orality-literacy, anthropology (especially Interpretivism and Symbolic Interactionism) and museology, all of which are apposite to the selection of the beadwork and dress holdings under consideration. In Chapter 3 there is a discussion of the phenomenon of Nguni age-grades for both male and female and the ritual dimensions of courting which relate to the cultural significance of beadwork and dress in their function as external markers of such status and self-image. I also discuss manifestations of modernisation in relation thereto. Chapter 4 is an intensive overview of female engagement and marriage beadwork and dress and how these relate to concepts of the role of women in Nguni culture and integral to the many and various rituals of engagement and marriage that indicate these culturally important rites-of-passage. Examples of the ever-present modernisation and adaptation are also discussed. Chapter 5 examines the museum held documented beadwork communications of the women makers (in isiZulu, if available, with English translations) in the light of the cultural overview of the previous chapter. These communications involve the makers’ concepts of self, expectations, disappointments, conformity and attitudes to polygamy and awareness of modernisation and culture change. Chapter 6 is the Conclusion which summarises the thesis as a whole and suggests possible areas needing further research, particularly in field recordings of life-histories and the collecting of supporting documentation where available. The Bibliographic References

follow and the thesis is supported by images placed in Appendices and marked by Chapter numbers and then Figure numbers, referenced accordingly within the chapters' text.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to honour the late Dr Killie Campbell, founder of the Campbell Collections, UKZN, for amassing such a unique, eclectic and multi-disciplinary collection of material she termed Africana within her Mashu Museum of Ethnology (named for her father, Sir Marshall Campbell) and her library, the Killie Campbell Africana Library. She bequeathed these collections to the University of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal) intending them as a national heritage. I thank the fates for placing me in this museum some three decades ago as a young curator specialising in what only later came to be termed Visual Anthropology. Here I was introduced not only to collecting and documenting heritage holdings, but observed the increasing insight into these holdings offered by newer multi-disciplinary approaches to study in their move from Modernism to Postmodernism. I also witnessed the museum, previously mostly the domain of tourist visitors, becoming increasingly used by academic researchers. The eclectic and multi-disciplinary collecting policies initiated by Dr Killie Campbell continue to be relevant in post-apartheid South Africa.

Apart from the talented rural beadworkers and dress-makers, I thank many persons (some of whom I may have failed to name hereunder, for which I hasten to apologise) whom the fates placed in my path and who conspired to make of the seemingly most esoteric of subjects, namely beadwork (and dress), the main focus of this dissertation. It was Ms Lelong Immelman, my Museology Lecturer at Pretoria University, who introduced me to the then expert on beadwork, Professor Hilgard Schoeman. He arranged for me the contact with the couple Neil Alcock and Creina Bond, living at Keate's Drift running their humanitarian Mdukushani Church Project aimed at sustainable development for rural women utilising their beading skills to make fashion jewellery and other artefacts.

But it was to be the then 101 year old Barbara Tyrrell¹, artist-recorder of indigenous African costume and Dr Killie Campbell's protégé, the fearless traveller and passionate lover of the peoples of this continent, who was my true mentor. Barbara Tyrrell put it best when visiting her in frail-care in Fish Hoek on 23 July 2013, "God gives us one another so that we can complete our necessary tasks" in reference to my and colleague Vusi Buthelezi's promotion of her life-work held in the Campbell Collections, UKZN.

I cannot argue with Barbara Tyrrell's wisdom in this and own that the fates or God (as Barbara holds) brought me the most extraordinary go-between, a field-collector of dogged determination and interest in her fellow African women's creativity and lives. I know her as Nomusa and affectionately as Noma, but her full name is Thembisile Innocentia Dube, and since marriage MaDube Sibisi. She is from a family of collectors originating with her grandmother, hailing from Umvoti but now mostly resident in Botha's Hill (Embo). Thank you Noma for the 'world of beadwork communications' that we shared, despite the times of real hardship you endured at various events in your life. I will always be amazed at your love of your fellow women, and the stamina and humour you applied in acquiring the data now in this thesis. You have done your informants proud and I trust that I have rendered these well and know that your collecting is now a national heritage.

I also thank my many superiors, Ms Jenni Duggan, Professor Edgard Sienaert, Dr Iain Edwards and Dr Yonah Seleti in particular, all of whom either saw potential in what I was

¹ Barbara Eleanor Harcourt Tyrrell died on the 23 September 2015 at Peers Village Fish Hoek. Her memorial was held at Campbell Collections, UKZN on 27 October 2015.

collecting or more probably felt uneasy at my persistence in what often must have seemed an eccentric and lone endeavour at a time when few museums were collecting such items, and acquiesced to my acquisitions no matter the budget.

Professor Sienaert I must thank for introducing Orality-Literacy Studies to the University for this orientation inspired the research into beadwork and dress undertaken by both Frank Jolles and Thengiwe Magwaza in particular. So too am I grateful to Dr Seleti for promoting the internship program at Campbell Collections. This brought to the institution the many unstinting translators and research-assistants - Dingani Mthethwa, Ndaba Dube, Mxolisi Mchunu, Paseka Nkhoesa, Mthunzi Zungu, Musi Hadebe, Siyabonga Mkhize and Senzo Mkhize. You have all gone on to other and better things, but I will forever be grateful to you for giving me another perspective on all things African, South African and Zulu (as well as Embo-Mkhize, Sotho and Hlubi of course!). So too did much similar insight and valuable information come from my colleagues Vusi Buthelezi, Thabile Xulu, Bongi Mdlalose, retired and ex-colleagues, Rebecca Msomi, Thoko Xala, Mwelela Cele, Hlengi Mavuyana, Mandlankosi Vuma (now late), Patrick Ngubane and Ephraim Ngcobo and the his sculptor neighbour Henry Mshololo. I thank also my age and 'time-twin' Sandile MaMbanjwa Mkhize for her help and invaluable information. All of you have been consistently generous in regard to my interest in the topic of beadwork and dress as representative of African artistic expression, perception and thinking. So saying a very special thank you to the already mentioned Mxolisi Mchunu, you are as you say a 'faithful friend' and I appreciate your taking time-out of your KZN Legislature work just to check my isiZulu translations, of which there are indeed numerous.

In addition I must thank certain 'sets of persons', namely: Vusi Buthelezi, now Head of Campbell Collections, who first translated a beadwork euphemism for me and explained the word to be an example of *ukhlonipha kolwimi* (respect of tongue or speech). Mchunu yet again, for explaining the parameters of the above concept, this he did by referencing his isiZulu Translations Certificate lecturer (and beadwork/dress expert) Dr Thenjiwe Magwaza's inspired teaching. The Sithole family, particularly Denis Sithole, nephew of the late sculptor John Sithole, and the esteemed midland's *isangoma* iNkosi Elliot Ndlovu, all from the Kamberg area: my thanks to you all for discussions on various concepts of correct custom, oral praises, *ukhlonipha kolwimi* (respect of tongue) and how these impact females in their non-verbal beadwork communications *vis-à-vis* their husbands' male-ancestral lines.

Thanks also to my sister Diane for sitting long hours editing my thesis, consulting a rather formidable stack of grammar-books, dictionaries and thesaurus to aid in the task. Your teenage and young adulthood years spent editing our father's writings on the Griqua peoples, the London Missionary Society in the 19th century and other historical topics have been called to good account. Also I can rely on your years as librarian/archivist and your penchant for research theories and methodologies acquired for a Masters degree in the social sciences.

Last but certainly not least I thank my academic supervisor Professor Juliette Leeb-du-Toit who endured the onerous task of keeping my erratic 'stream-of-consciousness' writings and musings on a more scholarly track and who has identified my potential in post-retirement contributions to research in the field of African art and creative expression. This thanks also for 'staying' with me in the arduous corrections phase of a lengthy thesis. Here I should also thank my examiners even if the process was painful. Thus thank you Juliette, without your encouragement (and insistence) I doubt I would have attempted the task of a PhD in the first place, certainly not so late in my career. I would have simply accepted that such was not

scripted by the fates and appreciated the riches already given me in my former post of Senior Museologist at Campbell Collections, UKZN.

I acknowledge the NRF Competitive Research Award which enabled some of this PhD work and trust it will find its way back in some way to the benefit of the Collections themselves.

Dedication

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my late mother Janet Valerie Winters (née Gould) and my 'classificatory' Ndebele granny Martha MaKhosana Vilakazi. It was your mutual support for and friendship with each other as well as your respect for African art and culture that inspired me and for which I am forever indebted. This impacted greatly on the direction my life has taken, and was responsible for my determination to study Anthropology and seek to devote a large portion of my life to working at Dr Killie Campbell's Museum and Library.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Background to beadwork (and dress): considerations

1.1. An overview of the complexities of the topic

In southern African² indigenous cultures, the primary aim of beadwork, always in context of dress (Tyrrell 1968, 1972, 1983), is to regulate courting and sexual behaviour between male and female and declare socio-cultural and spiritual roles. Nowadays this applies especially to women, hence beadwork/dress's centrality in such customary rites-of-passage as coming-of-age, betrothal, and marriage ceremonies that mark the formalization of these relationships, roles and status/age positions (Kohler 1933, Vilakazi 1965, Raum 1973, Ngubane 1977, Magwaza 1993, 1999). South African cultural groups include not only the Ntungwa³ Zulu (or north-Nguni) but those that this study concentrates upon, namely the related southern-Nguni peoples comprising the Bhaca/Nhlangwini (Khuze) and Embo-Mkhize (AbaMbo), all of southern KwaZulu-Natal. These peoples have been historically subsumed under the classification of 'Zulu' as in the Zulu of the royal house of Shaka and subsequent monarchs (Bryant 1929, Mkhize 2006), and moreover comprise a section of persons who still classify themselves as traditionalist⁴ in cultural world-view.⁵

² Throughout the thesis the designations African and black are used interchangeably. The same is applicable to European and white. However these words are not placed in parenthesis as they are common to customary South African English usage. Nevertheless it can be noted that there is no certainty as to the descriptors as there are many persons classified according to race/colour who are genetically from more than one racial group. The interchangeable use of the words depends most often upon the point in time within South African history when the references to them were made, as the nomenclature altered and thus in some contexts the use of the alternative word would be out of its historical context. Such terms as 'Bantu' and 'Native' are duly explained in footnotes.

³ One could also classify these Zulu as "north-Nguni" and of the royal house of Shaka and subsequent monarchs who sought to subjugate other clans. "Ntungwa(ili)...Member of the Khumalo clans...Ntungwa (isi)...Collective term for the Ntungwa clans" (Doke, et al.,2008:609).

⁴ Contemporary historians are against the use of the word 'traditional' and 'traditionalist', arguing that it indicates a lack of culture-change or modernisation which however is (and was) a constant and a given in the field (see references to this throughout the thesis). As there is no available alternative word that one can use which will not result in obtuse wording, I have consistently used the word, this also because the persons themselves classify themselves thus in translation from isiZulu to English (personal communications with Mwelela Cele, Durban, June 2011). I shall therefore for expediency's sake use the word 'traditional' and 'traditionalist' for those persons who identify themselves as what would perhaps be termed 'conservative' in contemporary western societies, as in that they reference their culture of origin's norms and values (i.e. world-view). I take my classification from Andrew Webster, *Introduction to the Sociology of Development* (1990), even although I disapprove of some of the value-judgments made in order to contrast 'traditionalism' with 'modernity' and/or modernisation (note that in the terminology of Sociology 'modernity' is often used as synonymous with 'modernisation', but in the field of Art History the first term refers to a particular art movement, hence in this thesis it will only be used in parenthesis, if at all). I quote: "In a 'traditional' society, three crucial features are noted;...(a) The value of traditionalism itself is dominant: that is, people are orientated to the past ...; (b) The kinship system is the decisive reference point for all social practices, being the primary means through which economic, political and legal relationships are controlled. One's position in the kinship system and hence in the society is ascribed, not achieved - that is, is a reflection of the status or standing of the family, clan or tribe into which one is born; one's position only changes as one moves up the family hierarchy.; (c) Members of the traditional society have a ...fatalistic approach to the world: 'what will be, will be'; 'things have always been this way'..." (Webster 1990: 49-50).

⁵ Firstly, I use the word 'cultural' in one of the most commonly used of definitions given by Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn in *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* ([1952] 2003) viz that it refers to an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning, while culture as a world-view was first developed in the thinking of the German philosophers Wilhelm von Humboldt and Adolf Bastian in the early to mid-19th century and taken-up by the founding father of American Cultural Anthropology, Franz Boas who took the ideas from his native Germany to the United States. Boas believed that the shared language of a community is the carrier of such cultural world-view (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture>[accessed 16 June 2008]). As such the term 'world-view' (or 'worldview') derives from the German word *Weltanschauung* ... *Welt* translating as 'world', and *Anschaung* as 'view' or 'outlook'. It is a concept that refers to a wide world perception and the framework of ideas and beliefs through which an individual growing-up in a particular culture interprets the world and interacts with it. As a concept 'world-view' was taken up by Structural, Cognitive and Symbolic Anthropology and used to refer to a specific culture's thought and belief processes (Forde 1970).

While discussed in more detail later in the thesis, the following simplified commentary on the orientations to the study of Zulu (Bhaca/Nhlangwini and Embo-Mkhize) beadwork and dress (over the period of the 20th century until the present) is needed in order to contextualise this introductory overview in the light of the complexities of the topic. Generally the orientation to the subject has undergone changes that often paralleled those of modernisation of African societies. Earlier writers, like Mayr (1907), Twala (1951,1954) and Schoeman (1968) amongst others, emphasised beadwork as a form of symbolic communication between females and their lovers/spouses. Few considered beadwork in context of age/status dress other than Tyrrell (1968, 1972, 1984) and Kohler (1933). Unfortunately these writings often became prescriptive texts referenced in the deciphering of the meanings of colours and designs while ignoring their regional, historical and individually specific dimensions. The writings of the 1980-90s, like those of Preston-Whyte and Thorpe (1989), Preston-Whyte and Morris (1994) and Levinsohn (1984) amongst others, emphasised beadwork in terms of sustainable development and the tourist trade and often the combinations of colours, motifs and lettering were assessed primarily for their design value as innovation under the auspices of NGOs (non-government organizations) was encouraged, leaving the topic of culturally ascribed meanings of colour and motifs and their regional specificity largely unquestioned and thus easily dismissed as a myth. More recent orientations, such as those of Jolles (1993, 1994, 2004), Magwaza (1999) and Biyela (2013) amongst others, tended to return to the beadworkers/wearers rural traditionalist homes and give ear to their life-histories and ‘voice’ as to any meanings carried in their beadwork colours and designs. Those persons studied are less likely to be the young lovers with their courting concerns discussed in the earlier texts, but rather women who experience delayed marriages due to changing socio-economic (and/or other) circumstances. This present thesis is an attempt to emulate the latter orientation and not only concentrates on southern KwaZulu-Natal focus pieces (being those of the 1950s-2000s), but places the study in context of historically changing and/or modernising culture as well as the museological collecting policies pertaining especially to the Campbell Collections, UKZN.

Marie-Louise Labelle in *Beads of Life: Eastern and Southern African Beadwork from Canadian Collections* (2005) gives a considered overview of the complexities involved in some of the issues raised by these orientations to the study of east African beadwork, particularly in relation to the viewing of an item of beadwork as a ‘text’ that can be interpreted via a colour code (invariably extrapolated from the earlier writings). Rather she concurs with Tornay (1978) in saying:

(T)he various human cultures, as a function of their natural environment, their way of life and their history, give to colour a variable importance. Few of them, like western culture, consider colour as a thing in itself, or as a perception removed from other sensorial impressions... (Tornay (1978) cited by Labelle 2005:52).

Labelle further says that Tornay emphasises the “subjective nature of perception. Our senses give us an image of the world which conforms, not to nature, but to our biological make-up and ...to our cultural heritage” (Italics mine) (Tornay (1978) cited by Labelle 2005:52). Thus Labelle argues much as the more recent writers do, that beadwork in its patterning and colours can only be interpreted by taking into account the beadworker/wearer in context of his/her culture and life-history, otherwise it is also open to appreciation via a set of aesthetic principles which she analyses in Chapter 4 of her book (Labelle 2005: 63-105).

The quintessential beadwork item with an associated message is the ‘Zulu love letter’ or ‘*incwadi yothando*’, a necklace or pin with geometric motifs worked in many colours serving

to encode the ‘promises of marriage’⁶ in the Nguni cultures when still oral or preliterate (Ford n.d., Winters 1995b, 2008a). However, later writers in search for proof of communication in traditional beadwork have relied upon input from modern curio beadworkers⁷ who have merely repeated the traditional patterns of their grandmothers’ ‘*izincwadi yothando*’, while losing their original meaning and specific context in the process. This has sometimes led to the conclusion that claims made of beadwork having meaning or that a ‘bead language’ exists (a term used particularly by the earlier generation of writers⁸), is largely a myth⁹ perpetrated by Zulu beadworkers themselves to play to tourists’ need of the African ‘other’¹⁰ (Preston-Whyte and Thorpe 1989). I quote from Eleanor Preston-Whyte and Jo Thorpe in an essay, ‘Zulu beadwork: A romantic past-a vibrant future’ in *The Condenser*, June 1989:

The authors of this article have discovered in conversation with bead-makers that there is no overall agreement about the meaning of the different colours. *This has not prevented producers and middle-people trading on the romance of the love letter, to great effect...* They combine the appeal of the ‘ethnic’ and ‘different’ with the romance of courtship and love - an unbeatable combination - in terms of money making potential they prove themselves time and again... (Italics mine) (Preston-Whyte and Thorpe 1989).

While being a perceptive commentary on an astute and flourishing tourist trade, this statement does not succeed in totally nullifying the myth¹¹, nor perhaps do the authors intend to do so, for it must be accepted that there is indeed an element of truth to it, certainly as it pertains to earlier generations of Zulu (as well as among many contemporary traditionalists as will be shown in this thesis). In the 19th and early 20th centuries most Zulu were traditionalists whose culture remained relatively intact. Illiteracy remained the norm as the newly written

⁶ This phrase is so often used by traditionist beadworkers/wearers that it is referred to throughout the thesis. Chapter 5 gives a more detailed example of an Embo-Mkhize beadwork design that is described as the “promises of marriage”(wathembisa ukugana); basically these are a man’s assurances to a woman aimed at pressuring her to accept him as suitor and husband(over those of a rival). Assurances such as that he will support her (as breadwinner), give her a house, children, a legitimate (in the traditional sense of labola payment) wedding ceremony and be faithful, etc.(these are often rendered in ‘reading’ the beadwork communication as ‘Njalo, njalo (‘And, and...’).

⁷ I use the term ‘curio’ in reference to beadwork made for sale to tourists. This was made by a number of generations of women who came from Botha’s Hill (Embo) as well as some from Umgababa on the south coast. They passed the trade to their daughters and grand-daughters, who continued to make the earlier styles (using glass beads, and in certain colours and patterns) used by those grandmothers, rather than introduce that actually currently worn by traditionalists from their areas who were now using plastic beads and often changing the earlier colours and patterns. These women sell to curio wholesalers, the African Art Centre and on the beach-front or road-side of Durban and surrounds (personal communication, Celani Nojiyeza, Durban, July 1999).

⁸ I refer to phrases like ‘Zulu love letter’ and ‘Zulu bead language’ from earlier popular writings on the subject. For example Regina Twala wrote, ‘Beads, Fascinating secrets of Zulu letters. Stories behind patterns and colours of the Language of Beads’ in the *Sunday Times*, 14th February 1954. I deal with the complexity of this metaphorical use of the words ‘bead language’ later in this Introduction in more detail, as it can lead to a wrong perception of the presence of a universalised bead language with ascribed meanings for bead colours and/or motifs among the Zulu and related groups. This is not the case.

⁹ The word ‘myth’ carries two interpretations. The first being, “(a traditional narrative)... embodying popular ideas on natural or social phenomena” and the other, “(a fictitious person or thing or idea.” *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989 edn.). I use the word in both forms simultaneously on the supposition that the two interpretations are related, the power upholding the “fictitious...idea” being the “popular ideas on...social phenomena” that reflect values and archetypes meaningful to people. While somewhat obtuse at this point, hopefully this reasoning will become apparent in the reading of the thesis.

¹⁰ See the background in Chapter 2 : Issues and Theoretical background, which gives an understanding of this concept of the ‘other’ that has become so frequently discussed in Postmodernist works. There is the inherent danger of it being misinterpreted.

¹¹ The fact is that these authors have shown up important elements of the historical processes of modernisation in terms of beadwork design. The reason for retention of the earlier motifs and colours used by the beadworkers’ grandmothers speaks more to the demand for such design and items by tourists who have their own perception of what Zulu beadwork is about, and it is this expectation of what conforms to what could be termed the ‘African other’ that has resulted in the continued demand for such beadwork. I mention the fact elsewhere in the thesis where appropriate. During the 1980s to the 1990s a number of beadworkers as well as field-collectors spoke of these matters (Winters 1996a).

form of this ancient African language was available only to those educated in the mission schools which were established for Christian converts (Vilakazi 1965, Bryant 1949). Hence other modes of non-verbal communication were still necessary, so encoded bead colours and geometric designs were substitutes. It is possible to see the historical antecedents of the ‘myth’ in the work of James Stuart, an early 20th century Natal colonial administrator, ethnographer and recorder of Zulu oral testimonies.¹² He captured the significance of a 1908 beaded necklace in the following way in *Manuscript Beadwork* (MS J. Stuart, Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban):

(It is) a common ornament, *well known to various Zulu tribes and full of significance*, (arising) . . . out of the colours of the beads used and the way they are arranged. (Girls) . . . are always making bead-work...and forwarding the same by some trusted messenger to the lover . . . *for purposes of correspondence* . . . Hence the reason why a romantic and poetic charm attaches itself to these seemingly meaningless trivialities... (Italics mine) (KCM30929).

Stuart’s last sentence is interesting in that he, being an Edwardian civil servant, was impatient with the poetics/vagaries of love compared to more weighty matters of Zulu politics and history, yet he highlights the underpinnings to the ‘myth’; the fact is that the Zulu traditionally have a highly ritualised mode of courting that would put the western ‘troubadour tradition’¹³ to shame. Integral to this is the use of bantering, florid language and gesture on the part of the male, accompanied by mock rejection or ‘standing firm’ on the part of the girl. She accepts the attentions of her suitor only with the permission of her senior girls’ age-group and she communicates this decision via beadwork as ‘modesty’ and ‘etiquette’¹⁴ prevents her from doing so verbally.¹⁵ This custom most likely accords with respect and avoidance (*ukuhlonipha/ukuzila*) prescriptions, particularly *ukuhlonipha kolwimi* (respect of tongue)¹⁶, imposed upon Nguni females in particular.¹⁷ What it means in practice is that females

¹² See Carolyn Hamilton ‘Backstory, biography and life of James Stuart archive’ in *History in Africa* 38: 319-341.(2011).

¹³ This medieval and possibly Celtic tradition involved a knight promising ever-lasting love to a lady of his fancy, in an interaction that was supposed to be chaste. It is especially associated with love-poetry/songs. The interesting point of comparison is that this tradition could be informing the western notions of an African romantic poetry and be one reason for the abiding appeal noted by Preston-Whyte and Thorpe for a ‘bead language’. In this tradition flowers and colours have encoded symbolic meanings to these European communications. The Zulu poet and writer H.I.E. Dhloomo wrote “The Zulu and his Beads” especially for Dr Killie Campbell’s library (KCM 8280) wherein he claims that the Voortrekkers (Dutch/French settlers and forefathers of the Nationalists of the infamous Apartheid Policy) usually considered to be uninterested in any but their own people’s customs, were fascinated with the similarities (to their minds) between Zulu bead colour language and that of the old European flower symbolism.

¹⁴ I have not figured out if these words from the literature (Ford n.d.) are western interpretations of the African custom of *ukuhlonipha kolwimi* or respect of tongue, but suspect that the one is an outer behavioural manifestation of the other, couched in western terminology. I say this because respect applies to all relationships, including that of ‘lovers’, in many African cultures and particularly that of the Zulu and Nguni and this is discussed in the text that follows (Raum 1973).

¹⁵ This courting ritual will be discussed in depth in Chapter 3 on age-grades. Here I wish to indicate my thanks to my colleague Siyabonga Mkhize for this reminder of the links between courting ritual and beadwork. He himself found this context when interviewing traditional Zulu women during the 1990s in Kranskop/Msinga, KwaZulu-Natal when he worked for the private community radio station, *Ikhwezi*, attached to the KwaSizabantu Church.

¹⁶ *Ukuhlonipha kolwimi* translates to the ‘respect by language or tongue’, the word for language and tongue being the same in isiZulu – ‘ulimi’, sometimes qualified as ‘ulimi lwebele - mother tongue’ (Oxford 2010:226). The individual words are; “-hloni (*izinhloni*) n. shyness, modesty, respect.’ **Hlonipha**’ v. 1.tr. (i) respect, reverence, regard with awe (ii) avoid use in conversation (of certain radicals). 2. intr. act modestly; cover the breasts. -hlonipho (*isihlonipho,izi-*).n. hlonipha term substituted for another.” (Doke, et al.,1977:110); “-limi (-lu) limi, izilimi & izindimi) n. 1. tongue. 2. language, speech (pl. *isilimi*). 3. (sg.) kindness of nature, sociability”. (Doke, et al., 1977:157). The word ‘(ko)lwimi’ derives from the indefinite referent ‘(lo)ko’ and ‘(lu)limi’- tongue, the ‘w’ is a contraction of the vowel ‘u’ over the consonants ‘l’ within the noun for tongue (personal communication Vusi Buthelezi, Durban, August 2012). Some Zulu translate the phrase as simply ‘*ukuhlonipha kolimi*’ (personal communication Mxolisi Mchunu, Pietermaritzburg, March 2015).

¹⁷ An essential concept and practice amongst the Nguni peoples like the Zulu, Bhaca/Nhlangwini and Embo-Mkhize (AbaMbo) and one that particularly applies to women who must respect especially their in-laws. Most commonly understood as pertaining to the root of any word used in a personal name, particularly if this is of a dignitary or a husband’s father. This word will be substituted with an alternative

communicate non-verbally via their beadwork symbolism. Otto Raum in his doctoral study *The social function of avoidances and taboos among the Zulu* (1973), discusses speech avoidances and the accompanying sanctions for any breach that pertain to females (although it is encumbering upon all Nguni persons to respect, particularly those older than themselves), starting in childhood but increasing in severity when the female is in relationship to lover/husband and during states considered ritually dangerous¹⁸ (particularly those that involve the need for the husband's ancestors protection) such as marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and mourning. The female often signals her position via an item of dress or beadwork¹⁹ (Raum 1973:13, 25). Because these prescriptions are seldom mentioned in discussion of beadwork as a form of non-verbal female communication, I record Raum on the prescription for a bride as to speech:

Do Not: 1. Speak during first visit to your lover's kraal nor during wedding. 2. Talk to/Look at men (incl. groom) during wedding...3. Ask for anything/make fun/take part in conversation at wedding. 4. Mention in-laws' clan name. 5. Use certain words, e.g. root of H(band)'s name after betrothal.6. (Groom): Move about/Mix with people at Wedding...(Raum 1973: Table VIII, 25).

These prescriptions are particularly onerous on pregnant women²⁰; Raum gives the following ones as regards speech:

Do Not: 7. Be talkative or noisy/Use bad language/Talk to strangers. 8. Laugh at idiot, albino, deformed (persons) 9. Say what sort of child you will get/Make clothes for the child. 10. Stand when eating..." (Raum 1973: Table VIII, 25).

The sanctions for breach of the above given prescriptions pertaining to a pregnant woman are : No 6²¹ is given as "Lest strangers convey a disease to the expected child", No 8 is given as "Lest the Ch(ild) be a fool, a cripple, an albino" and No 10 is given as "Lest Child in the womb stands up and is born feet first..." (Raum 1973:24).

Carl Faye in his rare to obtain booklet *Zulu References for interpreters and students* (1923) comments on "Suggested Rules for Recording Genealogies" :

word with a similar meaning (in the people's minds/experience that is, for in many cases the associations are particularly obtuse to outsiders). The most famous example was when the Zulu King Shaka passed the river at the present town of Amanzimtoti on the south coast of KZN. His mother being Queen Nandi (and royal women were respected much like men are in the culture), and her name meaning 'sweet', meant that Shaka found another word, namely 'Toti' to describe the taste of the waters(amanzi) of this river (Raum 1973:485). Note that this example is given because it shows that such 'respect of tongue' does not necessarily mean silence on the part of the one respecting but rather the substitution of associated terms, an euphemistic style characteristic of isiZulu oral poetry.

¹⁸ The term 'dangerous' is placed in perspective especially in Chapter 4. However, here a brief explanation is needed. Women especially find themselves situated between kinship groups (of husbands' families and their own, which include the ancestors (*amadlozi*) who have certain spiritual powers for creating luck or misfortune) in ritually precarious states like birthing, mourning, etc. They need the protection afforded by the correct approach to the ancestors and these are ensured by prescribed behaviors of respect and avoidance (*ukuhlonipha* and *ukuzila*) regimens so characteristic of Nguni societies.

¹⁹ Raum gives details of an African customary court hearing in which the husband took it as a serious breach when his brother's wife removed his bride's beaded face-veil (*imvakazi*), said to symbolize the bride's virginity and worn to respect the in-law family. "The court found that it was an offence for anyone, not entitled to do so, to lift the bride's veil..." Only her mother-in-law may do this at the correct time for the lifting of strict respecting restrictions, usually being the second day of the wedding. The plaintiff was awarded 10 shillings damages by the court. The husband's father gives a beast (*isibuzi* or *imbuzi yokwembula*) on the occasion of lifting the veil. (Raum 1973: 294, 50,511).

²⁰ Chapter 4 and 5 indicate the importance, especially in regard to pregnancy aprons (*imbeleko/isiswayo*) within the maternity dress (and beadwork) of women.

²¹ Somewhat confusing as indicated to be a prescription on the groom and thus presupposing then that the bride is either pregnant or perhaps the sanction will apply to her latter hoped for pregnancy.

...(4) That a Zulu woman will not mention her husband's name, but will refer to him by his regimental name, or sometimes, if she is a mother, will speak of him as the father of her child So-and-So.

(5) That a Zulu woman will not mention the name of her husband's father. She will speak of him as uMamezala. Lit. Mother²² who bore (my husband).

(6) That of her husband's mother a Zulu woman will speak as Oka 'So-and-So, affixing the name of the father of the husband's mother to the Oka.

(7) That a Zulu husband refers to his wife as Oka 'So-and-So (the Daughter of So-and-So), immediately affixing the name or isibongo (surname) of her father. This is the universal Zulu usage, but in Natal uMa 'So-and-So (mother of So-and-So) is used, the uMa being prefixed to the father's name or isibongo (surname). Both usages are occasionally heard in Natal and Zululand. (Faye 1923:105).

By repeating Raum's list of taboos and Faye's addresses here, I do not wish to create the impression that the life of a Zulu (Bhaca/Nhlangwini and/or Embo-Mkhize) is unbendingly rigid²³, and certainly Faye's lists appear old-fashioned, even for a traditionalist African, although I have male friends who refer to their wife as "uMa So-and-So (mother of So-and-So (giving the name of the couple's child))".²⁴ In addition it must be said that rules of respect and avoidance (*ukuhlonipha/ukuzila*) are inculcated in the person from earliest childhood and the more severe rules apply only under specific states, as when the female is undergoing a transition or ritual.

The linking of beadwork to respect/avoidance regimens as a form of non-verbal female 'respect of tongue/language/speech' (*ukuhlonipha kolwimi*), so confounded me (in the absence of any specific texts on Nguni beadwork to this effect), that I discussed the concept with Zulu friends and acquaintances. What fascinated me was, not only were their reactions invariably couched in the form of an injunction, seemingly obvious to their own way of thinking but not readily so to a non-Zulu, as in, "but naturally... a woman must respect...especially her husband and his ancestors (how can it be otherwise)!"²⁵ but also proffered a comment that a gift of beadwork in itself was a form of praise, hence an honouring and respecting of the husband and ultimately the ancestors (*amadlozi*) who begat him (personal communication Mxolisi Mchunu, Denis Sithole, and iNkosi Elliot Ndlovu,

²² This is indeed the word used by Faye, although it is somewhat confounding to a non-Zulu reader. One assumes the emphasis is upon 'bore' and only females give birth physically in Zulu thinking; males give the spirit. These concepts are discussed in the appropriate places within the thesis.

²³ Raum notes "The observance of avoidances is never absolute. It is within the family-head's authority to cancel the avoidances for an individual wife or child, to order her to go into the locality reserved for him (as head), and to handle an object normally used by him alone..." In addition, a man's wives observe avoidance regimens, "(but) decreasingly (so) as they grow older...(a man's children) approach the avoided object with a certain latitude, while the agnates of the family head's own generation need not avoid them..." While among Zulu commoners "...the eldest son, the presumptive heir, has it enjoined upon him, to avoid his father's possessions, and in particular such as have strong magical associations....*The strictness of the avoidance in ... (a) relationship corresponds to the potentiality of tension between referrant and agent....*For younger sons and especially daughters the avoidances exist, but they are less strictly observed." (Italics mine) (Raum 1973:507).

²⁴ Discussing this with my sister, she exclaimed that now she knew why a 63 year old groom (long retired after being kicked by a horse) and originally from a Drakensberg homeland of Imphende, would when requesting medical and other help for his spouse refer to her not by name but as 'the mother of So-and-So (appending the couple's daughter's name)' confounding my sister and evoking the query "you mean your wife? Why don't you say so!"

²⁵ One man even said that a husband was "like a sort of god" to his wife, this admittedly to help me understand, seeing my involuntary shock at his choice of words, he then reasoned "it is so as to create distance, a certain awe in the woman for her husband (and his family which include the ancestors)...you must not forget that Zulu are patriarchal and male power lies in exercising authority and you cannot do this in an atmosphere of familiarity."

Pietermaritzburg and Kamberg, January, April and May 2015). These are notions discussed in more detail in subsection 1.3., when linking beadwork aesthetics to oral praise poetry. Perhaps because one source is an esteemed KZN midland's diviner (*isangoma*)²⁶, I recalled the sacred presence of the ancestral-spirits (*amadlozi*) that suffuse the lives of all Nguni (and other) African peoples and moreover that beads (particularly white ones) are associated with them, and indeed that these departed progenitors are the ultimate power²⁷ in the lives of traditionalist Nguni.²⁸ The noumenal²⁹ aspect of beads carries a mythic dimension, as for instance in the early Zulu belief that beads were harvested from the sea by the first whites to arrive in south east Africa, considered *isolwane* or sea-monsters (no doubt from those ship-wrecked mariners hoping to exchange beads and brass for food) (Bird 1885).³⁰ This concerns beads in and of themselves, quite apart from their use by African females in beadworking³¹ in which their choice of colours and motifs can be any of the following; merely decorative and intended to confer dignity and respect upon the status of the wearer, to identify the regional home of the wearer (and if male of either his own or his betrothed's home and thus respect those homes), to indicate the age-grade/status of the wearer. And finally, the colours and motifs can have connotative meanings that communicate messages, not only between lovers concerning their courting relationship, but increasingly over the late 20th century communicate the female beadworker/wearer's own expectations as to home and children, identity (invariably culturally prescribed) as well as her individual disappointments and any admonishment of a negligent spouse. This range of expression contained within beadwork and dress are the topics of Chapters 3-5 of this thesis. The statement as regards admonishments may sound a contradiction as to the usual avoidance language complying with *ukuhlonipha kolwimi*, however (as will be discussed in Chapters 3-4), certain situations allow for things to be said that otherwise would be inappropriate, and the woman's beadwork communications often repeat these statements. Thus the oral genre of isiZulu praise-poetry allows for praises to be both uplifting as well as ruthlessly honest, while often admonishments are repetitions of standard such warning speeches of elders at weddings and/or wedding songs of the bride and groom's respective parties. Furthermore, it is not the

²⁶ iNkosi Ndlovu is an *isanusi* or whistling diviner. This whistling in the hut eves is believed to be the ancestors (*amadlozi*) themselves talking. He can only consult this way at home in the Kamberg, but elsewhere he throws the bones (*ukubhula*) so as to access his ancestral-spirits' input concerning the problem being divined.

²⁷ This Raum terms authority or *amandla* and "A person who has *amandla* is honoured and respectfully avoided." (Raum 1973:509).

²⁸ One also forgets the centrality of beads in the early trade with Africa, in regards to this trade along the east coast Wright and Hamilton (1989) comment "From the mid-eighteenth century...the ivory trade expanded over a period of perhaps thirty years to attain an unprecedented volume. English merchants, in particular, were active in exchanging cloth, beads and metal for ivory..." (Wright and Hamilton 1989: 61). If the European placed value on ivory, the African surely placed equal value on beads, cloth and metal. Elsewhere in the same volume Etherington mentions the high tax levied on bead imports into Natal and Zululand (1989:174) which did little to stop the 19th century African demand for them.

²⁹ Even the name for a bead in isiZulu contains numerous connotations, surely indicative of the importance of this little glass object of European trade. While in Europe there is a certain awe for beads and bead-making, for instance one also hears of the jealously guarded secrets of Venetian (Murano) glass-making (in writings as well as tours of the city). Thus the word bead translates as; "Bead- n. (i) *ubuhlalu*; (various kinds) *i(li)pholo, isitimane, ingwele, i(li)bhuma, incombo, i(li)phuzi, umgazi* (2) *inhlaka, umhluzi* (2) *i(li)juba, umlilwane* (2) *i(li)qanda, umgulugulu* (2) *isiphofu* (ii) (pl.rosary)* *i(li)rosani, ubulalu bokuthandaza*, (iii) (small globular body) *inhlamvana*; beads of perspiration; *amathonsi omjuluko*" (Doke et.al., 1977 :34). Some of these are colour names, others are associations to particular colours, like red-*umgazi* –blood, blue-*i(li)juba* –dove, transparent red-*umlilwane* –little fire, while others indicate imported names for foreign ideas, like *i(li)rosani* –rosary.

³⁰ While this early myth carries certain 'non-U' connotations for contemporary westerners, I have been told it with great delight by many Africans and can only assume it is considered an honour to myself as descendant of those same 'sea-monsters'. Reading the footnotes to Bourquin's (see latter in text) book on the 19th century female servant to the Zulu King Cetshwayo, namely Paulina Dlamini, I was struck by how dominant myth was in earlier times, and the present era differs profoundly in this regard owing no doubt to Christianity and western education.

³¹ Beadwork is translated as "(i) *i(li)ukuthungwa kobuhlalu*. (ii) *isithwalo; umgingqo*" (Doke et al., 1977:34).

female beadworker/wearer who verbalises these sentiments but rather her age-mates (who invariably helped her craft the beadwork items and know the intended sentiments they carry) who mediate her non-verbal metaphorical ‘bead language’ verbally, and this usually within the context of customary ritualised-gatherings (discussed in Chapter 3-4).

Sisana Dlamini (1994: 88-97) analyses the content of Swazi female folk-songs in which “The performer’s voice, gestures, body movements and facial expression” help convey the message. Dlamini says of these songs as expressive outlet:

(They are) capable of revealing the composer’s thoughts and feelings...(this because) in traditional Swati (better known as the Swazi, northern Nguni neighbours and relations of the Zulu) society *a woman never reaches a stage at which she gains freedom of speech*. Even in her married life she has to respect her husband and her in-laws. *The folk-song therefore remains her only channel for expressing her feelings, views, attitudes and wishes...*(Italics mine)(Dlamini 1994:88).

Dlamini goes on to say that more modernised female folk-songs are often sung in all female work-groups ³²(which no doubt consist of age-mates, co-wives and neighbourhood females) and as such these “changes affect the culture of her (their) society. This development is confirmed by Ntshinga in Sienaert et al. (1991:110) in the words: ‘...people have attained a certain degree of development, and their oral literature has developed to depict and portray their philosophy and way of life’.” (Dlamini 1994:88). Her overall argument is that the patrilineal Nguni cultures are ‘hard’ on women, not only must they respect, but their husbands tend to isolate them after marriage in favour of younger wives. This because, for men, polygamy is encouraged (so as to beget large families) and any appeal by a wife to her in-laws as to ‘un-just’ treatment is ignored. The woman’s contentment and fulfilment must be in having a child (children) and in being a dutiful wife, home-maker and mother. Moreover Dlamini indicates that the interpretation of beadwork symbolism not only parallels but can go hand-in-hand with female folk-songs, and thereby supply females with yet another “channel for expressing (their) feelings...” She gives an example:

Sengilephotsese

Chorus: *Lelijuba lami*

Sengilephotsese

Chorus: *Lelijuba lami lalendvodza lelengabuy’ ekhaya*

I have made it

The light-blue bead necklace

I have made it

The light-blue bead necklace for the man who does not return home (Dlamini 1994:91).

³² Beadwork messages would have been verbally mediated by the woman’s age-mates especially in earlier times, but nowadays it is often women communicating not only with spouses but also with other women, either in work-groups (which can comprise co-wives and neighbours) that can be agricultural, Stokvel (community ‘banks’) or sustainable-developments of crafters (run by NGOs) wherein they share their life-stories (and beadwork messages), coming to terms with their problems with delayed marriages, poverty, dissapointments, etc. Moreover such women’s groups often sing and pray together. Even for traditionalists, the wider neighbourhood and extended families will have Zionist and/or Christian members who, often being better educated, are voted as supervisors within these women’s groups.

Dlamini explains that the light blue is termed *ijuba* (dove) and symbolises for the Swazi, pure love; so the woman has continued to love the man but he has placed his attentions elsewhere. That there is a chorus and audience indicates the support traditionalist females find from each other, rather than from the male dominated society of husbands or in-laws. What is noteworthy is that Dlamini's findings echo those concerning beadwork, in regard to both the nature of the beadwork communications as well as stating that the audience comprises other women in addition to lover/husband. This also characterises the beadwork expression of southern KwaZulu-Natal's Bhaca/Nhlangwini (Khuze) and Embo-Mkhize groups (which incidentally have Swazi rather than Zulu (Ntungwa) Nguni origins) studied in this thesis and discussed in Chapter 5. This chapter mentions a case of a woman, who when asked by the field-collector if the husband understood some disparaging communication in her beadwork, answered to the effect of "I don't care if he did or did not!" Strictly speaking this woman is violating *ukuhlonipha kolwimi* (respect of tongue) but as Dlamini pointed out, this can be attributed to changed socio-economic circumstances. Thus many of these women were married by *ukuthwala* or abduction, meaning that they had not had full bride-price (lobola) paid for them and thus their position regarding their husbands' ancestors was ambiguous, a situation thought to result in misfortunes. All such issues will be discussed in their place in this dissertation; here I wish only to point out the obvious complexities of beadwork communication and its relationship to the life circumstances of the individual beadworker/wearer.

I also wish to comment on the Swazi use of a light blue bead to indicate an *ijuba* or dove, this is because such birds are found pecking grain around the homestead (of the husband), never flying far, moreover this associative context is to be found in the recording of Princess Magogo ka Dinizulu Buthelezi when growing up at the Zulu royal homestead. Princess Magogo's contribution to the understanding of bead colour associations will be discussed more fully later in this introduction, but here I note the commentary of Frank Jolles when he says of bead colour meanings found in the Erlandson Collection of the (KwaZulu-)Natal Museum :

(I)ndividual colours (of beads) consistently do translate into identical phrases...*By and large* they tally with those quoted by Princess Magogo (ka Dinizulu) Buthelezi in her classical exposition on the language of beads ... *and (these have) since been quoted in various tourist pamphlets...*(Italics mine) (Jolles 1994: 59).

His further essay 'Messages in fixed colour sequences ? Another look at Msinga beadwork' in Sienaert, et al., (1994) speaks of the beadwork of Msinga district of which certain conventions of colour sequences are named after the subdistricts or clans of the main area (see Map 1994:49) : for instance *isishunka* originated in Mashunka, while *isithembu* is from Bathenjini, the home of the Thembu clan. Jolles also speaks of design changes termed *isimodeni* or 'modern' in which colour sequences were simplified and separated by motifs or patterns. In Msinga this new patterning dating from the 1960s was named *umzansi*³³ and he attributes these changes to socio-political influences. I quote Jolles because his study and commentary traces a shift from bead colours as denoting meaning to the newer motifs which increasingly are linked to more modern concepts.³⁴ Nowadays, some decades later, it is hard to

³³ The name means "down by the sea" or "down south". In the field I was told this came from the people moving to relations nearer the coast so as to escape faction fighting (personal communication Maphostoli Mzila, Msinga June 1988).

³⁴ As for instance, where women incorporated significant 'sign-posting' into their beadwork motifs. An example is the motif on much 1980s beadwork coming from Msinga district. This took the form of what looked to my own mind like an old-fashioned telephone (with speaker in a cradle on top of the dial and telephone's body). However this was evidently the sign-board logo of (Kwa) Theba, the mine-

think of these 1960s motif-connotations as ‘modern’ because of the continuous modernisation process, the most obvious being the introduction of writing and alphabetical shapes into beadwork patterning which was meant to show that a girl had some schooling, education being valued in many areas.³⁵ To get back to Jolles’s commentary on colours, would these ‘newer’ motifs, colours and lettering of *‘isimodeni’* still be in agreement with early Zulu concepts that stand behind the beadwork symbolism? What does seem certain is that all areas were subject to modernisation and the newer *isimodeni* was to be found in many areas which otherwise still retained their regional specific of beadwork patterning (as to colour sequence choices and motifs), this including those areas studied in this thesis, namely those of southern KwaZulu-Natal. Moreover *isimodeni* included cloth dress as well as beads, and in southern KwaZulu-Natal the latter increasingly became locally manufactured plastic beads. These areas also had colour combinational choices that could well be considered ‘codified’ and these along with certain motifs and items often are named for the clan (and/or clan area) itself, as will be seen in the relevant chapters in which they are discussed. Here one needs only comment that the *Umkhuzeni* (Khuze) and *Udlamini* (Nhlangwini/Khuze) patterns from Richmond and Himeville are recognised over a wide area of KwaZulu-Natal, while the multiplicity of beadwork items worn plus the many colours used in them dotted with black that characterizes the beadwork of the Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours within the Ndwedwe and surrounding areas is known as *Umkhambathi* after Camperdown, the main town in the area. (Jean Anderssen, museum notes, Himeville 1984, and MaMchunu Sibisi 1998). The problem with the word *isimodeni* is that when translated as simply “in the modern style” and unaccompanied by an explanation, it only confounds as each era and innovation can be similarly thus designated, hence the word used by the Khuze (Nhlangwini) is perhaps more explicit. They refer to *imfashini* or ‘in fashion’ which invariably indicates an alteration over time³⁶ (personal communication Mbanjwa cousins, Ixopo, June 1984).

One should note Labelle’s query if these repetitive patterns can in fact carry individual messages. She says:

These decorative elements are strongly codified and are found in an identical fashion on each ornament. In addition, these decorative codes are combined differently from one ornament to another. Under such conditions, to attribute meaning to these motifs seems risky. (Italics mine) (Labelle 2005:92).

Here Labelle speaks of older 19th and early 20th century Zulu beadwork and one may suggest that these strongly codified decorative elements are area colour sequences or conventions as

recruitment offices at Tugela Ferry, significant for women as it was here that they would collect their absent migrant-working husbands’ pay.

³⁵ It needs to be pointed out that reading and writing were also valued by females because it was associated with the registration of marriages at the district magistrate’s-court. These courts were established under what was termed “The Shepstone System” which included codifying African Customary Law in the form of the ‘Natal Native Code’ which set the number of cattle paid for bride-price or labola (amongst other matters affecting the lives of traditionalists). In certain ways this protected women in rural societies. (See Duminy and Guest (Eds.) *Natal and Zululand from earliest times to 1910: A new history* (1989). In much southern KwaZulu-Natal beadwork there are oblique references to this still operative African Customary Law, but here I will mention the beadwork of MaLembethe Mkhize (1995) in which she ‘writes’ the isiZulu words “*thenga*” and “*loba*” meaning for her husband to “tell the people you have paid (unfortunately she uses the word for “bought”) labola for me, (and you have) written it thus in court! (here she uses an ancient form of ‘to write’ that evokes chiseling or ‘inscribing’ as in wood or stone)” (Winters 1996b).

³⁶ This can be qualified as ‘new’ or ‘old’ fashion implying a time-line. Fashions do change to such a degree that they go largely unrecorded other than by the beadworkers/wearers themselves which remains local oral memory. During the 1980s I used to visit a Richmond photographer whose son had studied fashion design at the M.L. Sultan Technical College in Durban. We were both taken by the then ‘new fashion’ amongst young Bhaca/Nhlangwini traditionalists (which the young man photographed at the magistrate’s court in Richmond so as to document the writing-up of marriages (*ukubhala*). This ‘new fashion’ exhibited two-toned cloth wraps skirts, shirts and capes made by local seamstresses. However I found that later reference to this ‘fashion’ is hardly remembered by any but the area’s traditionalists.

discussed above. Jolles when speaking of the Msinga area subdistricts' colour sequences says:

Many pieces that are said to “speak” are no different from those that do not. *So, as already suggested when discussing directionality* (the order in which the colour code sequence is to be ‘read’, and/or the introduction of a single ‘rogue’ band to upset the normal convention’s sequence), *a context external to the beadwork, i.e. the individual circumstances of the wearer, would be the determining factor.* (Italics mine) (Jolles 1994:60).

In collecting items in the colour conventions native to the Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours of Umkomaas and KwaNtaba (Valley of 1000 Hills) for the Campbell Collections, UKZN, one woman, MaMajola Dungwa (Winters 1996a:17-26) insisted on ‘reading’ all her engagement/marriage’s ten *amavovo* necklaces (open-weave beading named after grass beer-strainers) and three *imiqunqulo* (coiled) necklaces. All are somewhat repetitive refrains dependent on commonly held area colour conventions’ meanings, the colours placed either in bands or zig-zag lines³⁷ separated by multicoloured beads dotted with black beads termed “*isijolovane* (mixing)” [MM4654-4666]. Only the ‘directionality’ (here the colour band or zig-zag line starting the sequence) within each necklace allows for emphasis on different aspects of the courting/betrothal/marriage scenario of the maker MaMajola and her lover/husband Mr Dungwa. Because of these repetitive, yet slightly different refrains needing to be ‘read’ so as to distinguish one from another, I have written the communications out in full (see footnote ³⁸).

³⁷ It is important to recognize that MaMajola’s patterning has wider symbolic connotations than is readily apparent from reading the communications given in the next footnote. The basis is the reference to the ‘way of courting or *ukutshela*’ being that the male goes “up and down mountainous paths and over rivers” to find the girl best suited to be his wife. Meanwhile she, as in MaMajola’s implied self characterization, is the one who is ‘worth’ this effort as she will be that ideal wife and mother sought by the husband (for her compliant duties to himself, his family and their ancestral-line). These motifs of zig-zag lines or ‘routes’ taken by the lover are found especially in the beadwork of the Embo-Mkhize of southern KwaZulu-Natal and discussed in section 1.3 and in Chapter 5.

³⁸ MM4654: In this piece the bands of colour that ‘talk’ are separated by bands of “*isijolovane*” (probably from *yolanisa* v.tr. –cause to mix thoroughly, as in mix food or *muthi* for a spell (Doke, et al., 1977:333), comprising many colours dotted with black). Start with -Royal blue (*Inkankane* or Hadedda-Ibis) used to communicate with her husband “*Asihambe* –[Let us fly away together]”; White “*Siyokwenza umshado umhlophe* –[Let us have a white wedding]”; Orange (the colour is termed Portuguese or “*iPutukezi*” referring to persons from far off which she likens to herself coming from far) “*Kungcono siyekude ezintabeni eziphuze* –[It is best (for me) to go to the far dry mountains (of Umkomaas) (so as to marry you)]”; Mid green “*Izintaba zoMkomazi ziyophenduka zibeluhlaza umasekufike mina* – [When I come to the mountains of Umkomaas it will change to green (as I will be with you)]”; Yellow “*Ngikugcobeke ngamafutha esithole* – [I am cutting the fat of the young cow (I am beautiful on the day of my wedding (she is probably referring to the stomach lining of the cow slaughtered in her honour at the wedding ceremony)].”

MM4655: In this piece the bands of colour that ‘talk’ are also separated by bands of “*isijolovane*” (many colours dotted with black that she says are “crossing over” the various mountains (colours) listed hereafter). Start with -Red- “*Wanqamula izintaba zakwaZwelibomvu*” –[You (husband) are crossing the red mountains of KwaZwelibomvu (Shongweni/Mapumalanga) (to court me)]”; Yellow – “*Wanqamula izintaba Mtamtengayo*” –[You are crossing over Mtamtengayo Mountain (said to be near Mariannhill Mission near Pinetown)]”; Green – “*Wapikalela kweziluhlaza zamaQadi* [You must still go over the green mountains of Nyuswa (chief of the AmaQadi, the Ngcobo’s homeland and also MaMajola’s home) to reach me].”

MM4656: In this piece the “*isijolovane*” takes the form of clusters of beads separating the colours. Start with -Red- “*Ngithukethele ngibomvu ngibhejele izintaba Umkomazi, thukethele bhejile* –I am angry, I bet on the mountains of Umkomaas and I am telling the other ladies it is I who won (him as husband)]”; Yellow – “*Ngizongena ngicwebezela kuhle gamafutha wenkomazi* - [I am coming and I am shining with the fat (oil) of a cow]”; Green – “*Ngizongene ngibukeka ngengotshani entabeni ende* - [I am coming and look like the grass on a high mountain (like that found on the Drakensberg)].”

MM4657: In this piece two zig-zag lines carry the meaning while the base is in “*isijolovane*”. Start with Red – “*Inhliziyo yami ibomvu ngoba ngishiya abazali bami* [My heart is red because I am leaving my relations (to go to my husband’s home)]”; Sky Blue –termed “*Ukhazimula*” (possibly from Khazi –shinning object (Doke 1977:130) and ‘reads’ “*Ngiyohluba udubu eskhazini* - [I am coming to clean everything and fix everything that is broken (as duties of wife)].”

MM4658: In this piece bands of colour are separated by “*isijolovane*”. Start with Orange – “*Ngiyofika njengentombi yePutukezi* [I am coming like the lady of the Portuguese from afar]”; Pink – “*Ungahambi ukhuluma izindaba zethu ematshwaleni* [You may not go and tell my news at the place where you drink Zulu beer]”; Orange – “*Izintombi zamaPutukezi* - [I am like the girls of Portuguese as I am coming from

Basically, what is being said is that MaMajola, as beadworker/wearer, has chosen her mate (symbolised by the *inkankane* or Hadede-Ibis³⁹ by a royal blue bead) and that, depending on ‘directionality’ or sequence of the colours’ placements, both she and her husband have individually, as well as together as a couple, flown far (symbolised by the orange colour also referred to as “*iPutukezi*” or Portuguese implying ‘coming from afar’⁴⁰) between the mountains of their respective families’ clan-lands; Embo/Umkomaas being the husband’s home, while hers is Qadi/Nuyswa/KwaNtaba (Valley of 1000 Hills). She gives the names of some places and mountains between the areas and one assumes that the route taken physically (rather than in the symbolic flight of the Hadede-Ibis) must have been the old and then largely rural, gavel road (not the former main road or new freeway passing through Botha’s Hill/Pinetown/Durban), via Mapumalanga, KwaZwelibomvu (Shongweni), Mariannhill (which she terms Mtamtengayo⁴¹) to Embo near Umkomaas (named after the Umkomazi river).⁴² Yet there is one decidedly individualistic note, for MaMajola declares that she “Miss

far]”; Royal blue – “*Asihambe siyondizela ezintabeni zoMkomazi* -[Let us go and fly to the mountains of Umkomaas]”; Orange – “*iPutukezi*” [repeats claim of being a girl of the Portuguese from afar].”

MM4659: In this piece three zig-zaging lines in colour are set against the base of “*isiyolovane*”. Start with Pink – “*Pho-ke umpofu awunalutho lokungilobola sizongangane* -[You are poor, you have nothing to pay lobola for me, how can I fly away (with you)]”; Orange – “*Ngivela emaPutukezini kwelakude izwe* -[I am coming from the place of the Portuguese, from afar]”; Sky Blue – termed “*Ukhazimbi*” and ‘reads’ “*Azihlehle zonke izintombi zoMkomasi sekufike Umahlehlisa* -[All the ladies from Umkomaas must go away because I ‘Umahlehlisa’ (Ms Pushy) am coming!].”

MM4660: In this piece two zig-zaging lines in colour carry the meaning while the base is in “*isiyolovane*”. Start with Pink – “*Angazi kuthi ngikuhluphekele lani siyokwembathani ngoba mpofu* -[I do not know why I bother with you. With what will you cover my body because you are too poor (to clothe me)!]”; Yellow – “*Ngikugcobele amafutha nangenhliziyo* -[I am rubbing the oil(fat) even on my heart making myself beautiful even although you have no money!].”

MM4661: In this piece four zig-zaging lines in colour carry the meaning while the base is in “*isiyolovane*”. Start with Dark Green – “*Ngiluhlazana kuhle wendonyamanzi* -[I look like a dark-skinned beauty(like the fruit of the Umdoni tree)]; Red and blue (‘read’ together) – “*Ngifika ezintabeni ezibomvu ngandiza njengenkankane* [I am coming to the red mountains (of Umkomaas?) and flying like a Hadede-Ibis bird]”; Yellow – “*Noma ngimafutha, kodwa ngidizili* -[Even if I am fat, I am flying!].”

MM4662: Necklace in which the colours used are set in diagonal bands with black surrounds. All are ‘read’ together as a statement: “*Uzizikezili zonke izintaba nezindela nemifula wazwafika kwelamaQadi* -[He (husband) is crossing all the mountains and rivers to end up at the Qadi home area (where she is)].”

MM4663: Necklace in which the colours used are set in diagonal bands with black surrounds. All are ‘read’ together as a statement: “*Uhlobo wasEmbo nohlobo lasemaQadini luhlangane njenga MaPutukezi* - [The people of Embo (Mkhize of Umkomaas) and the people of Nuyswa (of the Qadi) are coming together like the Portuguese from afar].”

MM4664-6. Three coil necklaces or “*imiqunqulo*” are in the pattern “*Ubuhlohla*” known at her home at Nuyswa and were made when she was a senior girl. The first necklace ‘reads’ -Mid blue and Orange beads to ‘say’: – “*Ungadlali ngmakhhasi kamaHlehlisa* - [You must not play with me like a mealie cob’s leaf that is blowing around here and there! Do not play with me *Umahlehlisa* (Ms Pushy)!]; Orange – “*Ngoba ngivela kwelakude* [because I am coming from far away!].” The last two coiled necklaces in Royal blue and orange and Royal blue and red respectively refer to the *inkankane* or Hadede-Ibis flying to the far place of Umkomaas. (MaMajola Dungwa 1995).

³⁹ The understanding of this imagery is necessary in that it is universally used among the Nguni peoples of KwaZulu-Natal. As such it is discussed later in the introduction when interpreting the more symbolic and metaphorical beadwork communications and how they are linked to the earlier oral isiZulu language.

⁴⁰ This colour also appears with this reference in Chapter 5. There I also query the imagery but suspect it refers to the Portuguese traders of quite some earlier times, who traded beads, cloth and metal for ivory (and maybe slaves) from out of Delagoa Bay, down through KwaZulu-Natal to the Eastern Province or old Transkei. Many Portuguese ships like the *Sao Bento* were wrecked in the 1500s off the south coast, and survivors lived among the locals, often terming them ‘Embo’ all the while trying to find their way in stages to Delagoa Bay to get a ship’s passage back to Europe (Maggs 1989: 37-39). Maggs in studying historical sites in the area claims “After about AD1500 the evidence clearly indicates the Iron Age people of Natal region were directly ancestral, culturally, linguistically, and physically, to today’s black population...” (Maggs 1989:37). I make this supposition because no informant asked as to why the colour was thus termed could give any clear answer as to the reason. Thus I take Maggs’s understanding that oral histories often break up into myth beyond a certain date and hence such data must be validated by written sources (and here archeologists rely on the journals and reports of ship wrecked mariners of earlier times).

⁴¹ MaMajola says this is a mountain near the mission. I do not find it on the map, but suspect that part of the name, the word “*uTenge*” (Faye 1923:73) for krans or escarpment may indicate it as one of the distinctive such mountains like “*Mariannridge*” near the mission.

⁴² If one knows what one is looking for and makes allowances for the many crossing roads and freeways of the huge metropolis of Botha’s Hill /Pinetown/Durban, etc., one can trace the route on a Google Satellite Map. In the course of a number of museum field-trips I have gone

Pushy (*Umahlehlisa*)” (sky blue) is not only beautiful from being rubbed with fat in readiness for the wedding (yellow), but has ‘won’ (red) her man and therefore the women of Umkomaas must stand aside (and not take away her husband’s attentions). Being the one who had to record the pedantic MaMajola’s eight colour messages repeated over thirteen necklaces in my phonetic isiZulu with their English translations, I admit to an exhaustion and I kept wondering why she did not do as is common in the area, and that is simply to say after the main communication “*Njalo, njalo...* (“And, and ...” or “Also, also...”) implying all the conventions and ‘promises of courting’. This common practice⁴³ probably indicates the accuracy of the comment by Jolles: “Many pieces that are said to ‘speak’ are no different from those that do not” (Jolles 1994:60) and concurs with Labelle’s commentaries on “decorative elements...(being) strongly codified” (Labelle 2005:92). Nevertheless MaMajola’s beadwork while ‘speaking’ in regional colour conventions still does indicate “...the individual circumstances of the wearer” (Jolles 1994:60), as certainly her distinctive character comes through in her nickname “*Umahlehlisa*”, this being effectively her personal praises. Examples of such individualism and female praises are discussed in Chapter 5.

It could be pointed out that none of the above commentaries taken from Labelle, Dlamini and Jolles makes sense without reference to the culture of the clan of origin, and indeed the geography, fauna and flora, etc. of their home region, and thus the topic of beadwork and dress requires a revisiting of anthropological texts, those close in time and locality to the beadwork and dress under consideration, as is done in Chapters 3 - 4 of this thesis. While the ideal situation for the researcher would be the collection of the beadworker/wearer’s meaning at source, much can still be gained by referencing the oral and pre-literate isiZulu idiom. It must be remembered that illiteracy remains the norm for the beadworker/wearer and even the presence of modern alphabetical lettering in beadwork most often does not indicate more than minimal schooling of a Standard 1 or 2 that teaches the three ‘Rs’, namely (R)eadng, (W)riting and (A)rithmetic, insisted upon by most rural fathers so that daughters can read migrant-husbands’ letters and keep house in a cash economy.⁴⁴ Such euphemistic and poetic oral isiZulu communications as indicated in the beadwork of MaMajola Dungwa are replete with obtuse metaphors, and beadwork (and dress) items contain these aplenty in their role as symbolic communicators.

Embo-Mkhize traditionalists talk of a metaphorical ‘bead language’ where the colours are said to be “talking” or *ukuqamunda* (MaMjola Dungwa 1995), a word deriving from the verb “*qamunda* - talk volubly, maintain a constant flow of language...” (Doke and Vilakazi 1948:687). As with MaMajola’s beadwork discussed above, within the context of any one

on this road and when enquiring after its name, have been told it is the ‘old Richmond Road’. This same road snakes down toward the inland of Umkomaas/Embo and was known as the ‘old Voortrekker Road’, and as old roads they must have linked ultimately with Pietermaritzburg, a city originally laid out by the Voortrekker parties in the late 1830s. The World’s View site above this city gives a diorama of these old roads, and includes those of Teteleku Zondi who was chief of Zwartkops (later spelt Swartkops) one of the first proclaimed ‘Locations’ in 1847. (See also -*AA Southern African Book of the Road* (2001 edition), Map 226 Pinetown and Map 223 Pietermaritzburg).

⁴³ See examples in Chapter 5 of its use by women of Emkhambathini. It is possible that being still engaged and in love, MaMajola’s beadwork contains those endless renditions of feeling that gave Stuart cause to dismiss them as “seeming trivialities” mentioned earlier in the text, while women who have waited a long time to marry fully in the traditional mode of labola payment and informing of the ancestors, feel somewhat bored by it all from long acquaintance with their husbands, who may have taken other wives in the meantime, as is suggested by Dlamini’s study also mentioned in the text.

⁴⁴ This data derives from the Msinga district and is applicable for the latter half of the 20th century (personal communication Mpostoli Mzila, KwaLatha, February, 1987). Traditionalist persons from southern KwaZulu-Natal for the periods studied tend to have a marginally higher level for both female and male education, thus Sandile MaMbanjwa Mkhize from Ixopo/St Faith’s has a Std., 5 and Ephraim Ngcobo from Umzimyathi, Inanda also has a Std., 5. Both persons are what are classified as ‘first generation’ to have moved from rural to urban environments, including their change to western dress, but for ceremonies (yet who grew up as traditionally dressed until moving to town in order to work or to marry).

traditionalist woman's ascribing of meanings to colours and motifs, there is usually a certain consistency not only within her single item of beading but also over any related items of an outfit (inclusive of beading on dress) and this is moreover often a set of colours, motifs and interpretations shared with women from her specific homestead and locality. Indeed, in the light of the fact that females are not to declare their love (or frustrations therein) verbally, then this visual 'talking' of beads surely indicates that a metaphorical 'bead language' does indeed exist and moreover derives its impetus from the mores of indigenous culture itself. Thus alternatively beads and beadwork could be described as a female language of respect or '*ukuhlonipha kolwimi*' in visual format.

Before going any further I need to explain that when speaking of a 'bead language' as many writers on the subject of Zulu beadwork do, this term should preferably be qualified by indicating this to be a metaphorical⁴⁵ 'bead language' only. This is because, as indicated in Labelle's quote of Tornay (2005) mentioned earlier in the introduction, it is not a language in the exact sense of the word where there exists a shared and universally agreed upon set of meanings, syntax and rules. This is because beadwork colour and pictographic motif meanings are purely idiomatic or associative and pertain to a specific beadworker/wearer living in a particular homestead community or location at a particular time and thus the symbolic or poetic associations are largely idiosyncratic, even while shared within a community.⁴⁶ As such it would have to be 'read' (or rather 'interpreted', usually by the female beadworker's age-mate within a ritual context, the latter discussed in Chapters 3-5) in order to be sure of its exact meaning, this even for area codified colour sequences and conventions, as shown in MaMajola's necklaces discussed above. Nevertheless, largely because of the isiZulu language interpretations for beadwork colours and motifs are based in orality (particularly for traditionalists who make and wear beadwork as a culturally expressive art-form), such associative meanings do exist, and are invariably intuited by those from the culture itself.⁴⁷ There actually exists a mythology of such a metaphorical 'bead language' in the minds of the Zulu (Bhaca/Nhlangwini and Embo-Mkhize) themselves, implied by terms as mentioned, such as 'beaded love-letters (*incwadi yothando*)', 'beads talking (*ukuqamunda*)' and 'bead writing (*loba*)' (for the meaning of the latter term refer to footnote on the value of writing above). To further complicate the issue the European has an

⁴⁵ "Metaphorical; - instance of the application of a name or descriptive term or phrase to an object or action to which it is imaginatively but not literally applicable ... as in symbol, simile, figure of speech." And language as in "style or faculty of expression," like for example the "language of flowers- a set of symbolic meanings attached to different flowers" thus not totally the strict meaning of language as a "method of human communication, spoken or written (usually) consisting of use of words in agreed way" (Oxford complete wordfinder, 1993: 958,856).

⁴⁶ It needs to be pointed out that the existing isiZulu-English dictionaries invariably do not list all Zulu words, either because the words are localized (particularly in the case of beadwork items' colour names and any meanings ascribed to them) while the official orthography is that taken from the midlands dialect (personal communication of Mxolisi Mchunu, Durban, June 2013). One needs to add Zulu-speaking traditionalist women's '*ukuhlonipha kolwimi*' (language of respect) to the complexity of this issue (as mentioned in text). Also spelling does not always accord with the orthography as set by the early African (Bantu) Education Department (Doke 1986: note on 6th edition). Moreover 'Zuluised' borrowed words and/or compound words have been many since the primary isiZulu dictionaries were published, the most updated 2010 *Oxford IsiZulu-English Dictionary* is meant for school usage, and thus does not carry all words.

⁴⁷ To give an example of this intuitive understanding, a Zulu friend argued that the French language was too obtuse for him and that to him isiZulu was easily accessible as it carried imagery, particularly of fruits being named after female body parts, as for instance "... thighs (and in Zulu thinking only females are referred to as having thighs, men are not (their 'thighs' are referred to as legs) this because of this body-parts' association to female fertility) were the same word as for pumpkins (*amathanga*)..." (personal communication Mxolisi Mchunu, Pietermaritzburg, December 2014). This recalled a colleague who translated Zulu male tree-fellers isiZulu praises of a beautiful Zulu cleaning lady, to the effect of her "... thighs being like ripe pumpkins" (personal communication Dingani Mthethwa, Durban 2000). Both communications recalled the use of yellow beads in Zululand to indicate "ripe pumpkins" for wealth (Twala 1954, Schoeman 1968). I was left wondering if then wealth was as much a fertile female as money or more likely cattle in rural Zululand (which when forming part of bride-price (*lobola*) are especially so equated). More telling is that the naming is not to be found in easily accessible scholars Zulu-English dictionaries, like the Oxford one published 2010.

equally strong notion as to the presence of this mythology, even if it is skewered to a possibly false '*participation mystique*'⁴⁸ in his/her search for a projected African 'other', an assumption that has perhaps informed those astute dealers in tourist sale-beadwork mentioned by Preston-Whyte and Thorpe (1989). Perhaps Linguistic Anthropology allows one a more informed and nuanced understanding of this debate as to a metaphorical 'bead language'. Symbolic and Interpretative anthropologist Roland Barthes in his essay 'Myth today' (1957) reprinted in *The Routledge Language and Cultural Theory Reader* (2000) sees "myth as a form of speech" within the "vast science of signs(given) the name of *semiology*" (2000:411). Barthes uses the word 'mythical' rather than the 'metaphorical' used in this thesis introduction. Thus he declares:

We shall therefore take *language, discourse, speech*, etc., to mean any significant unit or synthesis, whether verbal or visual... (and) even objects will become speech, if they mean something. This generic way of conceiving language is in fact justified by the very history of writing; long before the invention of our alphabet, objects like ... pictographs, have been accepted as speech. *This does not mean that one must treat mythical speech like language*; myth in fact belongs to the province of a general science, coextensive with linguistics, which is semiology. (Italics mine) (Barthes 2000:411).

Barthes then says that while semiology postulates a relation between two terms, a signifier and a signified, there is in fact a third term, namely the 'sign' that synthesises them, thus he argues:

This relation concerns objects which belong to different categories, and in this way it is not one of equality but one of equivalence....*what we grasp is not...one term after the other, but the correlation which unites them*: there are, therefore, the signifier, the signified and the sign, which is the associative total of the first two terms. (Italics mine) (Barthes 2000:412).

Barthes gives an example of this process of synthesis that could be paralleled with that at play in any metaphorical 'bead language':

Take a bunch of roses: I use it to *signify* my passion. Do we have here, then, only a signifier and a signified, the roses and my passion? Not even that: to put it accurately, there are here only 'passionified' roses. But on the plane of analysis, we do have three terms; for these roses weighted with passion *perfectly and correctly allow themselves to be decomposed into roses and passion*. (Italics mine) (Barthes 2000:412-413).

Retaining the concept of a metaphorical 'bead language' is especially useful as it encompasses the referencing to the oral nature of the pre-written isiZulu language itself, one suffused with poetic metaphor, associations, alliterations, double-speak (innuendo) and a general play on words and meanings themselves. This is the language of oral poets (*izinbongi*) of the Zulu oral tradition, one that Orality-Literacy Studies (Ong [1982] 2002) brings to the fore. This school of thought forms one of the two central theoretical modalities that I have utilised in this study and discuss in depth in Chapter 2 along with the second theoretical modality, that being Symbolic and Interpretative Anthropology and its derivative Symbolic Interactionism exemplified by Clifford Geertz (1973, 1979, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c), known for fore-fronting 'thick description' as a methodology.

⁴⁸ '*Participation mystique*' is a term derived from Anthropology. It denotes the mystical connection or identity between subject and object., an identification with a thing or the idea of a thing. (pimoebius.com/participation_mystique.htm [accessed 13 February 2015].

Accessing the oral isiZulu idiom that pertains to beadwork items may hopefully be achieved through applying ‘thick description’ and it is arguably the best mode of finding the full implications of any meaning that may be expressed in such allusion and metaphor. One notes S.G.Bourquin’s comments on the lack of ready isiZulu references to such metaphorical language which he realised when translating the life-story of Paulina Dlamini (resident at the Zulu King Cetshwayo’s royal homestead before the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879) as recorded by the Reverend Filter. Bourquin says:

The existing... recorded traditional Zulu poetry is relatively small, mainly due perhaps to the fact that it employs *such metaphorical language and obscure allusions which are intelligible only if read in context with the description of some event or happening*. (Italics mine) (Bourquin 986: Preface).

Extrapolation of beadwork colour and motif meanings using ‘thick description’ may appear to be going counter to the Anthropological concept of ‘Cultural Relativism’ (also discussed in more detail in the section on theory)⁴⁹ that insists on confining references to strictly localised and particular source objects, customs and language. This perhaps best indicates the problems of a multi-disciplinary approach, as for instance in such a dissertation as this, which relies on Anthropology while yet studying the aesthetics of design used in Nguni arts. In this regard one has Geertz’s warning as to not eclipsing one discipline at the expense of what the other can offer to the understanding of the topic:

A good interpretation of anything (a piece of beadwork or ceremonial regalia in this case) ...takes us into the heart of that (of) which it is the interpretation. When it does not do that, but leads us instead somewhere else - *into an admiration of its own elegance (for example) ... (it) is something else than what the task at hand calls for*... (Italics mine) (Geertz 1973:18).

Further, I believe that Geertzian ‘thick description’ should only be attempted where there is source documentation in support of such extrapolated meanings attached to the item itself.⁵⁰ And nor should it be applied indiscriminately to any undocumented item that exhibits similar elements of motif/design to the source reference, unless the purpose of the elucidation be clearly indicated. It is worth mentioning that despite Geertz’s commentary mentioned above, such reservations must apply equally to the complications of approaching the topic of beadwork meanings from an aesthetic or creative perspective as from an anthropological one, and again this issue will be explored in terms of multi-disciplinary approaches to subjects that straddle a number of disciplines and are discussed in the Chapter 2 on theory.

To reiterate, in regard to the use of such extrapolation, one cannot presuppose or insist upon a meaning if none is given by the maker or seller, for there is much beadwork that does not carry more import than the identifying of the wearer’s status within a customary ceremony, as for instance that of a bride (*makoti*). Moreover such classification can only be applied for definite where the items have been fully documented to that effect. And as Princess Magogo warns in her treatise on beadwork, the application of meanings can also be capricious. (Magogo ka Dinizulu [1952 [date uncertain] Museum notes with MM2445). These facts show not only the importance of date and location (and possibly name of beadworker

⁴⁹ Cultural Relativism is one concept that incidentally held me bound from venturing into any multi-disciplinary explorations for some decades, having myself been trained in the Structural-Functionalist School of Anthropology for my basic degrees.

⁵⁰ I must stress this point once more as despite such extrapolations I have taken the line in Chapter 5 which analyses specific items of beadwork as women’s communication and reference the original interviewee’s words, preferably in isiZulu. I have sought to contextualise these in terms of traditional and ever modernising practices of Nguni marriage in Chapter 4.

/wearer⁵¹) but that for the maker/wearer to either claim a message or likewise declare there to be none, is of equal import to comprehending the piece's use/purpose. The latter claim can be expanded to indicate that beadwork/dress items have more than one functional purpose; thus not only communication and ritual context but others that are related; this may include retaining custom (*isiko*)⁵², which is linked to *ukuhlonipha* (respecting/honouring) of culture and includes compliance with indigenous aesthetic conventions, like balancing of colour or motif or repetitive accents to emphasise the message/purpose (Winters 1996b, 2000a, 2000b). Such design dimensions and how they intersect with those of the 'oral genre' will be discussed in detail under the subsection 1.3 of this introduction. All that has been said here shows how vital the data collection by the museum is to the full documentation of any piece if it is to have any significance for research purposes.

It must also be noted that the majority of Zulu today are comparatively well educated and many are Christian or Zionist or adhere to other Independent Churches, and their family members have often been members of these same sects for more than a generation. Such people, particularly those of the Orthodox Christian Churches, neither wear beadwork nor follow tradition in its strictest sense (Vilakazi 1965, Tyrrell 1972). Yet some Independent-sects, like the Nazareth Baptist Church (*Ibandla lama Nazaretha* or Shembe) will combine church dress with their own distinctive beadwork and dress for rituals (Mthethwa 1988). Therefore, strictly speaking, beadwork/dress that is still worn today invariably identifies the wearer as a traditionalist (as in people who are following their indigenous Nguni customary life-style or cultural and religious belief practices). Hence it is integral to certain traditionalist ceremonies, most notably age-grade rites-of-passage, engagements and weddings, as is indicated by most, if not all such material coming into museum holdings (see Chapters 4 and 5).⁵³ This does not preclude the fact of contemporary persons of African descent resuming the wearing of ethnically identifiable beadwork and dress to rituals and ceremonies of family and/or national importance, but this is not the focus of this thesis.⁵⁴ Moreover, the contemporary production of beadwork is still the domain of traditionalist females who, when making it for themselves or their lovers/husbands, still frequently communicate feelings in symbolic rather than written form.⁵⁵ The same women may well make beadwork for either

⁵¹ This is because the clan name or surname invariably indicates the historical allegiances of the wearer and beadwork can also indicate clan homeland or polity.

⁵² Interestingly while (*i-ama*) *Siko* is a noun for custom, (*um-imi*) *Siko* is a fashionable dress, while (*u-*)*Siko* is a custom or manner of doing any customary action (Dent and Nyembezi 1984:484).

⁵³ I myself think of and am studying traditionalists in the narrow sense of which I speak here, but it is important to know the assessment of African lay-persons, inclusive of the urban population. In my strict classification of only those who wear traditional dress and follow the original culture's world-view and are not Christian or Zionist or agnostic, the percentage of the overall black population of KwaZulu-Natal must be small, perhaps 5%. However, my classification is skewed in terms of the experience of my black fellow countrymen, for in general conversation most ordinary 'Zulu' (including AbaMbo, Nhlanguwini/Bhaca), despite being any of Christian, Zionist or agnostic, the overall black population of the province are seen as from 60-70% traditionalist in their retention of African world-view, this in spite of change or modernisation. Such persons may not wear traditional dress, or may wear a token thereof at a ceremony or national occasion, or indeed wear modernised 'semi-traditionalist' dress (*isiphinifa/voorskoot/isijolimane/isishweshwe/isiplacelo*) but will nevertheless retain some form of their customary belief and ritual, be it in ancestral-spirits or family ritual/ceremony. Such persons see themselves and their fellows as traditionalists, so that those who wear original attire are still classified as of old, as skin-wearers (*uQaba*) or Heathens (*amaHedini*). So saying, as will be indicated in actual communications from some informants in Chapter 5, the latter terminology is variously accepted or rejected as prejudicial by the wearers themselves.

⁵⁴ Such beadwork and dress is invariably sourced from makers who are themselves close to their traditional roots, but the communications and meaning of such items must be seen as either cultural or personal identifiers of belonging to a specific ethnic group. As reference to such an assertion I must say that most of my African colleagues and friends do hold traditional ceremonies and this has increased among the younger generation, often at variance with their parents and grandparents strongly imbibed orthodox Christian beliefs (personal communication Mwelela Cele, Durban, August 2007).

⁵⁵ My reference is to the vast amount of beadwork acquired by the Campbell Collections, UKZN, from the field during the 1980-2000's. A section of this from southern KwaZulu-Natal is referenced in this thesis in Chapter 5.

the curio trade or for contemporary cultural ceremony and thereby attain a marketable business of items produced with little more than ethnically identifiable denotation.⁵⁶ While the beauty of beadwork can be appreciated by all, its messages are known only to those participating in its 'reading', usually the groom and the couple's age-mates, peers and family members involved in ceremonies, and as mentioned, increasingly a woman's fellow wives and/or other women of her community. Some of this communicative beadwork is therefore more than the 'whisperings of sweet nothings' between lovers, as much of it acts as documentation of these relationships once formalised, either through engagement or marriage, and hence stands as public witness. This union is a serious matter in a society that regards marriage as the coming together of two families/clans rather than a private matter between lovers, as is the convention in the contemporary western world (Vilakazi 1965, Winters 1998).⁵⁷ Further to the topic of regionally specific beadwork and dress, it must be pointed out that as such ceremonies take place in the context of rural homes, beadwork being area-bound in pattern, colour and design, is also aimed at identifying a traditionalist's home (Winters 1998). This is so much so that local women have strict conventions or rules on how to design a piece (Winters and Mthethwa 1999). Once recognised, such conventions can help the outsider to assess those items of ornamentation that are likely to carry connotative meanings, versus those as asserted above, carrying no more meaning than as mere decoration (*umhlobiso*) to balance the design or for retention of custom (*isiko*). The presence of meaning has been discussed in some detail above, but one can add that often it is also the position it is worn on the body that alerts to meaning, thus 'love letters' are invariably worn in choker form 'hugging' the lover's neck (Tyrrell 1972, 1983), while other items are positioned centrally on a cape or other highly visible item of dress, thereby acting as a declaration of the relationship as well as conforming to indigenous notions of '*muthi*' ('magical' or ritualised medicines)(Winters 1998).

While one should be able to validate the 'myth' of the existence of localized Zulu communications (metaphorical 'bead language') through more contemporary beadwork of males and females in the more remote parts of KwaZulu-Natal, where such items are still worn, this is not an easy task as it is unlikely that such persons will share intimate relationship details with complete outsiders from beyond the immediate community.⁵⁸ It must also be taken into account as will be indicated in the examples given in 1.2 of this introduction, that the nature of the beadwork communications have changed over the course of the 20th century. This last fact speaks to the realities of modernisation where earlier beadwork communications most often centred upon matters of unmarried persons' courtship, while more contemporary communications are to be found particularly in the dress and beadwork of women, both married and common-law wives betrothed by *ukuthwala* or abduction. As such the communications are as much for public witness of a woman's circumstance and as indicated by Dlamini (1994), other women become the audience and hence the communication is not just for/with the husband or lover. These remain the concerns

⁵⁶ It is the Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours' resident in the areas like Ndwedwe and Umbumbulu, abutting onto the tourist mecca of Durban and the south and north coasts of KwaZulu-Natal who are the curio beadworkers who sell either on the beachfront or through the African Art Centre or SA Shewell's Curio wholesalers. These people dress traditionally very differently for customary rituals to the beadwork made for the curio-trade and they are also among the peoples whose beadwork and dress is discussed in this thesis.

⁵⁷ Collectors have often reported cases in which they cannot persuade a person to part with an item of beadwork. This is because the piece acts as such documentation. It can even serve in a court case as evidence of a declaration of intent and as such is admissible in African customary law (personal communication Barbara Tyrrell, Scottburgh, November, 2004).

⁵⁸ This may sound a 'cop-out' on the part of museums, but it remains the reason that collections contain enormous quantities of beadwork catalogued as "just decoration" and very little that validates the 'myth' that beadwork is used in communication. As stated in the text this does not mean that a lot of ornamentation proves to be exactly that, part of overall regalia qualifying as "*amasiko esiZulu*" or "Zulu custom" worn to show respect for the old ways of doing things.

of women who are the beadworkers/wearers, hence an understanding of African Feminism is necessary to elucidate the issues involved and again mention is made of this in more detail, as also the mention of self-identities in Chapter 2: Issues and Theoretical background. These changes are so because even those living in the remotest of homesteads participate in the wider economy and a globalising world, with all that this entails, be it only impoverishment from poorly paid unskilled labour. Their lives are also influenced by social and political changes, the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic at this end of Africa and changes resultant upon schooling and conversion from traditional religion to Christianity or Zionism (CVA Zulu Bead Conference 2009). If nothing else, one can but agree with Geertz when he holds:

Understanding a people's culture exposes their normalness (that which is like ourselves) without reducing their particularity ... (most importantly) it renders them accessible (as people) ... (Geertz 1973:15).

Culture change is blamed on general moral socio-cultural breakdowns that impact peoples' lives. More pertinent is that in the peoples' minds these breakdowns are thought to be the consequence of not just modernisation or the introduction of 'white-man's culture', but a moral degeneration resulting from a failure to maintain the culturally prescribed laws of respect and avoidance (*ukuhlonipha/ukuzila*) and thereby courting misfortune resulting from taboo breaches. Thus Raum mentions informants' opinions:

It is said that women no longer observe food taboos during pregnancy; "they eat what they like provided their H(usbands) don't notice."... "Christians give up these rules; heathens (traditionalists) still observe them."... "It is only the inquisitive modern woman who breaks the old taboos." Modern influences are also blamed for the disregard of the prohibition on begetting Chn(children) before the marriage ceremony, of the rule against the quick succession of pregnancies, and against children born out of wedlock. Many girls 'run' to their lovers in an irregular manner; Chn(children) are conceived before their predecessors are weaned; women form loose unions with men...(Raum 1973:489).

Such changes are not only likely to encourage the giving up of traditionalist beadwork (and dress) but lead to alterations in the items' signification and communication intended. In the field one does find that girls who have had a child before marriage (when still required to wear traditional dress and beadwork as at their *umemulo* (coming-of-age) or eventual wedding ceremony for instance), will signal their changed circumstances in some dress or bead colour/motif. Chapters 4-5 give examples of this, like a star motif rendered in pink rather than 'virginal' white or a bra worn by a female at her *umemulo*. In these examples the original cultural mores have still given rise to the now changed indicator. One can well wonder why certain sentiments are communicated rather than others and surmise that what is being communicated must be of cultural import and/or personal significance. Social anthropologist John Beattie in *Other cultures: Aims, methods and achievements in Social Anthropology* (1970), when talking of different societies' beliefs and values, says of symbols:

Sociologically... they (symbols) provide people with a means of representing abstract ideas of great practical importance to themselves indirectly, ideas which it would be difficult or even impossible for them to represent to themselves directly.....symbolism is essentially expressive; *it is a way of saying something important... What is said symbolically must be thought to be worth saying.* This is a(n) ... important characteristic of symbols; what is symbolised is always an object of value. This means that people's attitudes to their symbols are rarely neutral; they are almost always more or less affectively charged...(Italics mine) (Beattie 1970: 70-71).

This function of symbols ensures that with modernisation, there will be comparative shifts in meanings ascribed to beadwork/dress pieces, because in the anthropological understanding of change there is invariably either a rejection, a synthesis or a reinterpretation so that the new element still aligns to familiar, significant cultural value-systems (Hammond-Tooke 1974). This applies to those African peoples who have retained a traditional world-view as well as to those who have changed their values to Christian ones (Vilakazi 1965) and thus may reference both in a synergy.⁵⁹ The more contemporary theories of socio-cultural change will be discussed in greater detail in a section devoted to theory. But one can note that modernisation is a continuous process as is borne out in the examples of extrapolation that will be given in section 1.2 of this introduction. Art historian Jewsiewicki (1992) in discussing the contemporary arts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo/Zaire, which exhibits many features similar to that of KwaZulu-Natal's artists using the 'oral genre', talks of "cannibalization" of western forms, a word that conjures the ingesting and digestion of the foreign. In an essay on the same country's contemporary dress, likewise an idiosyncratic amassing of western designer labels (put together to conform to the wearer's unique taste) is said to give the wearer "power" (Draper 2013:100-123). I have been told by isiZulu-speakers that their return to the wearing of traditional regalia gives them "*amandla* (power)" as it is a form of honouring the ancestors who dressed similarly in their time, but I have only heard this couched thus by males (personal communication Henry Mshololo, Inanda, 2001). In the case of traditionalist women the reference is to the cultural respect and avoidance (*ukuhlonipha/ukuzila*) regimen incumbent upon them which are discussed more fully in Chapter 4. Here one is speaking of traditionalists conforming to a cultural world-view. Despite these old values, as indicated in the text on modernisation of beadwork patterning, on a more personal level, the patterns, motifs and colours can and do reflect an individual woman's life-history/narrative and self-identity, this both as a member of a particular cultural group, homestead and her status therein as well as an individual possessed of her own personhood (Winters 2000a, 2000b).

The museum holdings of beadwork and dress studied in this thesis are held in the Mashu Museum of Ethnology (documented as a number assigned to the shortened 'MM') falling under the Campbell Collections of UKZN. Without this attempt to see these holdings (of over ten thousand items of ethnographic and art interest) in the true light of their cultural and social context, they will merely become delegated to 'popularist' culture for the intrigue of tourists and a few select enquiring scholars. With Postmodernism, a number of newer approaches have been used by anthropologists and social scientists, all of which build on that of Symbolic and Interpretative Anthropology. Geertz fits this mould. Later studies include the work of researchers such as Victor Turner on metaphor and symbol (1974), that on indigenous cosmology and its ritual enactments in the studies of Mary Douglas (1978) focussing on the importance of symbols, and the 'close-reading' of texts and semiotics (Barthes 2000 and Drønen 2006). In the light of these newer approaches to the study of Anthropology, the indigenous pre-literate 'voice' of beadwork (and dress) can be reclaimed by elucidating that of the beadworkers/wearers themselves, linking their choice of symbolism, the aesthetic format of their motifs, colours and item-type with their cultural world-view/value system. As mentioned, change and modernisation are an integral part thereof. In this the fields of Symbolic and Interpretative Anthropology and Orality- Literacy Studies are joined by narrative life-histories, African Feminism, and modernisation theory. These are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2 : Issues and Theoretical background.

⁵⁹ The contemporary approach appears to lean toward how the persons themselves identify themselves. See article in the National Geographic of November 2013 on the issues of persons of mixed decent. This reflects back on the concerns of classifying persons as traditionalist as discussed in a former footnote.

1.2. Example of ‘thick description’ applied to beadwork communications

In this section I wish to give an example of Interpretative Anthropology’s ‘thick description’ as applied to beadwork meanings deriving from the field, one that allows for the understanding of the metaphorical ‘bead language’ with its poetic isiZulu references while also allowing for an insight into communications most often missing in straight translation from isiZulu to English. For example if one took just one bead colour reference used by MaMajola Dungwa (as recorded in a footnote to the subsection 1.1.above) which reads: ‘...royal blue (*Inkankane* or *Hadeda-Ibis*) used to communicate with her husband the idea of “*Asihambe ...*” – [‘Let us go...’ echoing the hadeda call interpreted as saying ‘Let us fly away together]’ [MM4654]. While evoking a poetic image in the mind of the listener/reader of a particular type of bird flying away while uttering its repetitive raucous cry that may be interpreted as calling “Let us fly away (together)”, one fails to give the non Zulu (Bhaca/Nhlangwini or Embo-Mkhize) reader any insight into why exactly this imagery is used. Only growing up in an Nguni homestead speaking the isiZulu language would offer this additional insight. The task is yet more complex than merely analysing the referenced simile, because the imagery has often undergone change or modernisation. Only by using Geertz’s concept of ‘thick-description’ in its many layered format can one extrapolate a fuller understanding of this communication as it pertains to the beadwork colour/motifs used by traditionalist women.

One of the earlier documented communications I found in 1979, came from the artist-recorder Barbara Tyrrell’s favourite Bhaca/Nhlangwini informant from Ndaleni-Richmond, Mrs Banukile MaMbanjwa Mbhele.⁶⁰ It is a design on a beaded pin (*isipeletu*) circa 1960s (meant to be pinned on the trouser-legs of a courting man or the wrap-skirts of a senior courting-girl) made/created by Mrs Mbhele’s sister-in-law MaMntungwa when betrothed.⁶¹ The message was said to be encoded in the motif of five repeated red-orange diamonds within white and mid-green surrounds, each with eight radiating triangles or ‘wings’ in black alternating with red-orange (in other women’s beadwork such motifs, -the ‘wings’ or triangles-can ‘radiate’ from an hourglass shape (as in the images of examples in the Appendices/Chapter 1: Figures 4-5). The whole is set in a white base as was popular in the 1950-60s.⁶² Here it is interesting that the colour sequences are those designating the item as

⁶⁰ Tyrrell’s book *Suspicion is my name* (1972) is a biography of Banukile MaMbanjwa Mbhele, the title being a play on the latter’s name (from ‘*nuka*’ to divine or ‘smell-out an evil action’), her mother having been accused of witchcraft by a co-wife so as to seduce their mutual husband. However the birth of a child (namely Banukile) indicated that her mother had indeed been courted and conceived a child by Mbhele, something that could only happen with the husband’s ancestral approval. This meant her mother was not seducing or using witchcraft on Mbhele (personal communication Tyrrell, Richmond, 1979). While this last comment seems anecdotal, I always give the explanation for the book’s title, after a liberal white reader misconstrued the meaning in 1980, thinking it was Tyrrell’s prejudice toward African custom thus highlighting the difficulties of translation of even a Zulu personal name into English.

⁶¹ When doing corrections for this chapter, I recalled that Mrs Mbhele had in fact been in the group of age-mates who made the beadwork and had interpreted the item’s encoded message when it was given (no doubt in context of a small ceremony/party) to MaMntungwa’s then betrothed suitor. This could have been as much the reason for Mrs Mbhele’s strong recall as the legendary memories of illiterate persons as indicated by orality theorists like Walter Ong ([1982]2002). Knowing Mrs Mbhele’s penchant for explaining her culture, I cannot but wonder if this capacity was equally honed in such groups of female beadworkers.

⁶² These colours do carry meanings and these were fairly commonly held in the area, as such they can be termed area colour conventions; like red and black signifying desire to be married (referencing the red head-dress and black skirt of a married woman), white denoting virginity of maker and green indicating her longing for marriage. Yellow in this area can designate an ‘addled egg’ and means the woman’s heart is ‘turning’ against the suitor as he never came through with his ‘promises of marriage’. However, I do not deal with these colours simply because the beadworker/wearer chose not to interpret them or emphasise them in her ‘reading’ (a fact born out by Mrs Mbhele’s later re-reading of the piece dealt with here, namely MM3780, where she again did not interpret the colour meanings but rather the motif). For this reason I did not consider these regional colours pertinent to what was being claimed as the message (namely that this motif referred to lovers flying in an aeroplane) either on the museum catalogue card or here in this thesis. In this I conform to Jolles’s and Labelle’s commentaries concerning codified colours mentioned in the text subsection 1.1., namely that some have meaning and some do not and it would be ‘risky’ to ascribe area meanings that beadworkers gave for another item, to one for which no such claim was made. Here, only the individual woman’s claims as to an intended message (even when rendered in regional colour sequences) are noted, whereas I record all

from the Nhlangwini clan area for it is that of *Umkhuzeni* or Khuze (Nhlangwini), while it is the motifs (in their repetitive rendition of ‘wings’, popular in the 1960s and then considered *isimodeni* or modern) that carry the meaning, literally of ‘flying’. Taking the pieces back into the field in 1989 for further clarification, Mrs Mbhele once again⁶³ gave her earlier meaning as follows:

No 11. – Isipeletu – pattern –ibhanoyi. “Incazelo – sigondiza ngebhanoyi thina sobabili” [No 11. *Isipelethu* (Pin). The pattern is “*ibhanoyi*” i.e., an aeroplane. The meaning of the pattern is that lovers will fly in an aeroplane”] (Banukile MaMbanjwa Mbhele, 1989 [MM3780]).

I collected a number of items of beadwork from this area with renditions of this design [see Appendices. Chapter 1: Figures 4-7. Bhaca/Nhlangwini necklace (*isiphaqa*) [MM3788] [Figure 4] and detail of Barbara Tyrrell watercolour of Bhaca diviner’s beadwork from Richmond c1950-60s [WCP476] [Figures 5-6] some of which are in the (KwaZulu-)Natal Museum while others are in Campbell Collections, UKZN.⁶⁴ I wondered if this connotation of aeroplanes and lovers was a Richmond area rendition (and a modernised one) that was here dependent upon a motif (a diamond and/or hourglass with ‘radiating’ triangular ‘wings’ that represented an aeroplane or bird⁶⁵) as against similar messages residing in a single bead of a specific colour that brings to mind an *inkankane* (Hadedda-Ibis) bird. The latter bird-pair being used as a common metaphor for lovers and a reference found across a very wide sweep of KwaZulu-Natal and mentioned by both Princess Magogo (old Zululand) and MaMajola Dungwa (KwaNtaba/Valley of 1000 Hills). As such, Poland’s findings when researching Nguni cattle, indicate that much Zulu colour imagery derives from the folk-lore of birds (Poland cited by Labelle (2005:54). The *inkankane*, a bird known for its loud call is described by the Zulu as saying “*Ngahamba! Ngahamba!* [Let us go! Let us go! (fly away together)]” (personal communication Vusi Buthelezi, Durban, August 2012). Princess Magogo ka Dinizulu Buthelezi⁶⁶ gives the following meaning for “*Inkankane* (Dark Lapis 123)”:

–Iyajabula inkankane lona elikhala lithi ngahamba. This is the message: I envy the Ibis which cries: *Ngahamba, Ngahamba, Ngahamba*, because when it cries like that, it does so moving to its destination. In other words if I had the ability of an Ibis, I would fly to where you are. (Magogo ka Dinizulu [1952 (date uncertain)]. Museum notes with MM2445).

those of MaMajola Dungwa in subsection’s 1.1., footnote, because she herself communicated them as important to her beadworks’ ‘reading’.

⁶³ This recall or memory is integral to the ‘oral genre’ that depends on idiomatic language where the person is illiterate. Thus Mrs Mbhele ‘read’ the same messages in the same words, cued by the motif shape in vogue when she was a young woman, this over a series of interviews over time. Barbara Tyrrell was also told the same meaning at the original date of the piece’s making, having shared in many Mbanjwa and Mbhele family rituals and rites- of- passage.

⁶⁴ At the time, in the late 1980s , I worked closely with the staff of the Natal Museum (now KwaZulu-Natal Museum), Pietermaritzburg, especially with Dr Tim Maggs and Ms Kathy Mack, and it was the era of ‘rationalization’ of museum collecting areas. A practice that may lead to gaps in holdings if any of the ‘partners’ in collection should break ties for whatever reason, like retirement, etc.

⁶⁵ When the soft-tableaux ‘doll’ makers first made animals for the African Art Centre, Durban in the early 1980s, aeroplanes were given birds’ legs by women from rural Ndwedwe (Kulamelaphi Malaba, circa 1980 from Inanda [JT295 -7]). These works are now in the Jo Thorpe Collection housed in the Campbell Collections, UKZN.

⁶⁶ Widow to iNkosi Mathole Buthelezi and mother of Mangusuthu Buthelezi, sister to the Zulu King Solomon and the Prince-regent Mshiyeni. (‘Zulu bead love letters’ Museum notes to MM2445 from J. Chatterton). The same document, being a recording of Princess Magogo’s recall of bead messages growing up in her grandfather, King Cetshwayo ka Mpande’s royal homestead, was recorded by her son iNkosi Mangosuthu Buthelezi at the behest of Dr Killie Campbell in the 1950s (MS KCAL Beadwork File). A copy was included in Jack Grossert’s thesis *Art and Craft in Bantu Education* (1968).

One may query what the connection is between the Hadeda-Ibis bird mentioned here and the aeroplane motif as interpreted by Mrs Mbhele in the beadwork of southern Natal. Once again the answer lies in the metaphors in use within traditional oral isiZulu; N. G. Biyela ‘Colour metaphor in Zulu culture: Courtship communication in Beads’ in *American International Journal of contemporary Research* (2013: Vol., 3.No. 10) explains that the Hadeda-Ibis is considered by the Zulu to mate for life, as they are always seen in pairs finding food and shelter and while sitting on the nest the male defends their territory. More especially, Biyela notes that the relationship of a courting-couple is considered to be a long journey, hence the reference to flight. This can be equally interpreted as the girl reminding her boyfriend of his many ‘promises of marriage’ and not to be diverted from this journey. Failure to live up to the symbolism of the ideal of spousal faithfulness can give rise to the same bird call being interpreted as saying, “*Mina nga hamba* (Me, I am left (behind))!” (Biyela 2013). The extrapolation of birds in flight to an aeroplane is a form of *isimodeni* (modernism) found across most of southern KwaZulu-Natal⁶⁷, and here the imagery can equally stand for migrant-labour and the lover forgetting the girl back home in the changing socio-economic world he finds himself subjected to (Jolles 1994: 59).⁶⁸

Two examples of Natal Bead Trade Cards [MM2153 and MM2445]⁶⁹ [see Appendices. Chapter 1: Figures 1-3. Example of wholesale bead trade catalogue for Natal from *J.W. Jagger & Co (Pty) Ltd, London*. [MM2445] [Figure1] have the words for the Hadeda-Ibis bird, namely “*Inkankane*”, pencilled/inked in by either a retail or wholesale trader above all of “Ryal (blue)”, “Dark Lapis” and “Turquoise” beads strung on the card-samples. Despite the names, some of these assigned colour descriptors have little reference to the original named for object (like a semi-precious lapis-lazuli or turquoise stone) and they could more accurately be described as varying depths of darker tones of blue.⁷⁰ The image [see Logo of Natal Witness for “True Stories of KZN 2012” [Figure 3] of an Ethiopian Hadeda shows the colouration of the wing tips in flight that explains the choice of bead colour.⁷¹

⁶⁷ These examples do indicate modernisation within a traditionalist setting, in that a bird arguably becomes an aeroplane or ‘fly-machine’, an aeroplane moreover that is convergent with the flight-path to the former Louis Botha (and now the newly constructed King Shaka International) Airport in the greater Durban, KZN, adjacent to the rural areas that exhibit the motif-pattern in art and beadwork.

⁶⁸ Interestingly Mrs Mbhele’s maiden family, the Mbanjwa had moved from the lower Umzimkhulu to the Hela-Hela Richmond area to work on Sappi forests sometime in the 1940s, hence their lives were subject to socio-economic changes or modernisation, despite the family remaining traditionalist (personal communication Barbara Tyrrell, Muizenberg, May 2003).

⁶⁹ Venetian glass beads, subsequently Bohemian ones (when the trade was taken from Venice to Czechoslovakia) had standardised colours and sizes – these features ensured the perfect symmetry and quality of African beadwork, which is woven by hand, not on a loom. MM 2153 is a card especially compiled by RBH (Randal’s Brothers and Hudson) early Durban wholesalers, who changed to quality jewellers around 1966. There are two “*Inkankane*” pencilled in over RBH’s “Turquoise” No 122 and 123 (the latter is slightly darker than the former). There is also a “Royal (blue)” No 119 thus termed. The colour-tones are so subtle in difference that I have never quite succeeded in capturing the difference in a photograph, although I have not tried a scan as yet. I note this because to traditionalist Zulu of a particular region (a different colour may well apply in a different location) the exact colour was required and a bead of the wrong colour would be rejected so that a retail-trader would sit with ‘dead’ unsold stock. The type -face of the “RBH” and “Natal” on the card possibly indicate a dating somewhere in the 1920-30s. The card was donated to Campbell Collections, UKZN by the African Studies Department, then under Professor John Argyle in 1982. The 2nd card MM 2445 [Figure 1] of J.W. Jagger & Co. (Pty) Ltd., London, a wholesale trader with outlets in the bigger cities of South Africa, has “Mid Turquoise” No 122 marked as “*Ibhusende*” in ink, but No 123 termed “Dark lapis” has “*Inkankane*” inked in and so too is “Royal (blue)” (with no number) recorded as “*Inkankane*”. This card was donated by then retired Zululand magistrate J. Chatterton. (MM Museum Research Notes, Traders and MM Catalogues [MM2153 and MM2445]).

⁷⁰ One can wonder at this bird’s connotation with this colour and I recall colleague Patrick Ngubane from Maphumulo bringing me a feather of a Hadeda-Ibis to show the deep blue-tinge of its wing-feathers, as I had been stubbornly insisting it had a pink metallic sheen (on its otherwise buff-brown wings, at least to my eye). Biyela (2013) describes the colour as a “purple-bluish colour.”

⁷¹ However the southern African bird, while yet having a white stripe under the eye, this appears hardly noticeable. Perhaps the photographer caught the light at the right angle or used filters, for both areas’ types are indeed classified as one species.

An aeroplane in isiZulu is an *ibhanoyi*, alternatively an (*um*)*flyimashini* (lit., *fly-machine*) (Italics mine). My colleague Vusi Buthelezi had his uncle, resident at Ceza/Mahlabatini, confirm that there were no words for such new inventions as aeroplanes in old isiZulu, and hence the word for sky “*isibhakabaka*” contributed the “(*i*)*bha-*“, which was then eclipsed⁷² with the word for bird, namely (*in*)*yoni* (personal communication Buthelezi, Durban, September 2012). Additionally the Zulu-English Dictionary gives an isiZulu saying under the entry for “*Inyoni; - Sobona nyoni; zowadla* [we shall see the birds which will eat it – kafir-corn, i.e. we shall see who will marry the girl]” (Doke and Vilakazi 1948:629). This last has a strong echo in Princess Magogo’s colour interpretations residing in the metaphors of nature and its creatures’ characteristic behaviours which have been extrapolated to human society and become proverbs and aphorisms, again a characteristic of oral cultures.

Yet another beaded necklace (*isiphaqa*), worn by an engaged girl, consists of three linked rectangular beadwork patches with motifs in regional colours that are identified as areoplanes, and is finished in two open-weave white v-shaped tabs at the tie ends. These last, carry the more subtle euphemistic isiZulu respect language (*ukuhlonipha kolwimi*) [see Appendices. Chapter 1: Figures 4-7. Bhaca/Nhlangwini necklace (*isiphaqa*) [MM3788] [Figure 4] [MM3788]]. The two additional v-shape tabs are classified as “*unozibu(m)njana*” or the female pubic area, a word not found in the Zulu-English Dictionary but nevertheless recognised by Zulu-speakers as a “respect (*ukuhlonipha*)” word deriving from the noun (*isi*)*bumbu* (female ‘*mons Veneris*’) ⁷³ (Doke and Vilakazi 1948:91) or “*isiBunu – Genitals of females*” (Döhne 1857:41). Such obscure communications led me to realise that much allusion is missed in poetic subtleties of language and metaphors, no matter the language used. Furthermore, some of these ‘thick descriptive’ interpretations were given more authority in a reference to aeroplanes in an indigenous wedding male dance-song in Nokuzola Cele’s *A tradition in transition: The consequences of the introduction of literacy among Zulu people in Umbumbulu* (1997). The isiZulu terminology remains oblique and derives from a male’s perspective (but probably implies some form of sexual activity⁷⁴) unlike the female perspective of committed home-making discussed above.

Cele indicates this to be contemporary *ingoma* dance music (performed by the groom’s party at his wedding):

Ibhanoyi lami elandizayo 2x Leader
Ibhanoyi lami elandizayo 2x Group and audience
Angisakhulumisani nomnakwethu 2x Leader
Angisakhulumisani nomnakwethu 2x Group and audience

 My aeroplane which flew away

⁷² Such eclipsing or elisions are described as *thefuka* or *thefula* speaking, hence “*Babethefula*” (see later in text concerning the Bhaca/Nhlangwini and earlier AmaLala ellipses) (personal communication (telephonic) Vusi Buthelezi with his uncle Amos, Durban, September 2012).

⁷³ The “Mons Veneris” (Mound of Venus) or Pubic Mound. (See <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/mons-veneris>). I was told by Barbara Tyrrell that this shape was that of a female but did not understand why until seeing tattooing of pubescent girls of the Nukuoro Islands (South Seas) on the “Mons Veneris”, and it is said no man would make a sexual advance on a girl if she does not have such a tattoo (presumably this would indicate she is pre-pubescent). This in a book lent me by Professor Juliette Leeb du Toit *A Private Anthropological Cabinet of 500 authentic racial-esoteric photographs and illustrations* (New York, Falstaff Press, n.d. (“For mature subscribers only”) Figure 138).

⁷⁴ Remembering that traditionalist Zulu persons not yet married were supposed to practice non penetrative sexual intercourse (discussed in more detail in the chapter on age-grades). M. Mchunu says “In the field, the Zulu euphemism used for talking about sexual contact is *ucansi* (sleeping mat), while the description for sexual intercourse is translated as *ukuya ocansini* (to go to the sleeping mat)” (personal communication Mxolisi Mchunu, when writing-up his History Masters’ *Discipline, Respect, and Ethnicity: the study of relationship between Zulu fathers and sons in KwaShange, Vulindlela, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal from 1930s-1990s*. (2008).

My aeroplane which flew away
I'm no longer speaking with my rival
I'm no longer speaking with my rival
.....

The word aeroplane is used as a metaphor meaning a lover (Cele 1997: 14-15).

I next came across this same reference to aeroplanes in Trevor Makhoba's painting depicting courting, titled "Valley of Love" [WCP 3267], then again in his student Sibusiso Duma's painting "*Uthole isoka elisha* [She has found herself a new boyfriend]." The work [see Appendices. Chapter 1: Figures 4-7. Sibusiso Duma *Uthole isoka Elisha* [She found herself a new boyfriend], 2012. Oil on Canvas, 76x101cm [Figure 7]] depicts a contemporary traditionally dressed female from Ndwedwe or Umkomaas looking up and waving to an aeroplane flying over the mountains of KZN. To the viewer it evokes the words of Princess Magogo in reference to an *inkankane* bird "...if I had the ability of an Ibis, I would fly to where you are" (Magogo ka Dinizulu [1952] [date uncertain]. Museum notes with MM2445). By then I knew the implications of the substituted imagery, having had it confirmed by colleague Vusi Buthelezi as a common male courting enticement and an attempt to win against a rival suitor, as in "Come and fly away with me, let *me be your pilot*" (Italics mine) (personal communication Buthelezi, Durban, March 2012).

The aim of the above extrapolated examples is to show that as such metaphoric and euphemistic language is characteristic of the isiZulu phraseology, it makes sense that it would be transcribed into beadwork/dress, for beadwork itself is the essence of female non-verbal 'courting-language', as opposed to male verbal such language practiced by *amasoka* or male lovers.⁷⁵ Another characteristic shared between beadwork and songs that derives from the oral nature of the older isiZulu tongue is the repetition of phrases, as visually in repeated beadwork/dress motifs. And it is probably significant that Princess Magogo, living at a time when the Nguni people were preliterate and more rurally based and closer to nature, repeated the Hadedda-Ibis call three times as against later isiZulu-speakers' twice.⁷⁶ Also noticeable in this case is that there are regional as well as time variations to any such concept's expression, as for instance Biyela's (2013) meaning of the Hadedda-Ibis's cry versus that stated by Princess Magogo and colleague Vusi Buthelezi, and no knowing the depth of any one such difference and/or application in the field.⁷⁷ In fact Princess Magogo ka Dinizulu's son iNkosi Mangusuthu Buthelezi clarifies better than anyone his late mother's warnings concerning beadwork's messages:

There is no accepted colour or design for the many and varied expressions and thoughts in Zululand and Natal and colours often permit of looseness of expression.(Princess) Magogo has explained that *to appreciate and understand* these letters (beaded love letters or '*incwadi yothando*') it is *necessary to have a sound knowledge* of the people's mode of living, their psychology, *traditions, folk lore, wild and*

⁷⁵ As discussed in the Chapter 3 on age-grades, the Zulu have a similar 'complex' to Latin men – the 'Latin Lover' and the '*Isoka*', both aim to seduce females verbally by courting gallantries and language.

⁷⁶ A characteristic mentioned in Noverino Canonici *The Zulu Folktale Tradition* (1993: 125-128).

⁷⁷ When discussing the Hadedda- Ibis associations, my colleague Thabile Xulu confirmed the Johannesburg African urban concept of 'misfortune' mentioned in a former footnote, while another colleague Vusi Buthelezi knows of the meaning of the call as saying "Let us go..." as indicated in the text. I do not know if this is because the former colleague comes from Melmoth and the latter Mhlabathini, or if differences derive from currently living in urban environments (Umlazi and Vryheid respectively) or, as I would surmise, that there are indeed variations in all of time, place and region. Further, not all of us (African or European) have the same experiences, be they in terms of enculturation or modernisation and nor are such associations of equal applicability to our different life-scenarios. Despite my seeming contradictions in opinion, I contend that this is a logical conclusion, meaning that one can then extrapolate only up to a certain point dependent upon context before the exercise becomes meaningless obtusefication.

domestic animals, veld and trees... (Italics mine) (Magogo ka Dinizulu [1952][date uncertain]. Museum notes with MM2445).

For me this statement echos that of Tornay as cited by Labelle (2005:52) and Jolles (1994:60) already quoted in 1.1 of this introduction and attests to the complexity of the topic, certainly as to interpretation of beadwork colours, motifs and lettering in context of culture, region and date of manufacture. It is for these reasons that I argue for the permissibility of extrapolation, or as Geertz would have it ‘thick description’, as evidence of ‘orality’ versus ‘literacy’ and hence an ‘oral genre’ in expression of cultural meaning presented in beadwork/dress, where these emanate from an ever modernising Nguni cultural world-view. I intend to use such oral extrapolation or ‘thick description’ throughout this thesis, but mainly in Chapters 3-5, in particular regarding a more full understanding of the beadwork and dress messages as given by the beadworkers/wearers.

1.3. Patterning and decorating and their cultural significance

Traditional Nguni artists must be seen as having status within their own milieu, this as they produce the images/objects encompassing the ‘mystical power’ (*amandla*) that comes from the ancestors (*amadlozi*) and their intercessors: diviners (*izangoma*), chieftains (*amaKhosi*) and the homestead heads (*unumzane*). The sacred domain has much power and its access is controlled by the respect (*ukuhlonipha*) and avoidance (*ukuzila*) prescriptions discussed in subsection 1.1. of this chapter. Ignoring these taboo regimens has attendant sanctions, either social, like exile and ridicule, or magical, like illness and bad luck (Raum 1972, Ngubane 1977). Conversely, to subscribe to such taboos means one will be socially accepted and spiritually blessed with fortune. As indicated in 1.1, respect/avoidance prescriptions are especially incumbent on women, who are rewarded with the bearing of children while disrespect can result in being made barren by the ancestors (Raum 1972, Ngubane 1977).⁷⁸ An understanding of these cultural prescriptions is important to African aesthetics.

According to Raum (1973) there is a link between *isithunzi* (moral-weight or dignity) and taboo/avoidance behaviours and those who undertake rituals as ‘go-between’ the living and the ancestors, like headmen and diviners. A man basically ‘rules’ by the authority invested in him by the building of such moral-weight (*isithunzi*). In this regard men who undertake such ritual mediation build or strengthen their *isithunzi* by not only abstention from ‘hot’ pursuits (like sexual congress, eating certain foods and war) but by ‘cooling’ silence and respect when dealing with the spiritually ‘pure’ and ‘powerful’ ancestral-realm (Berglund 1976:159).

These Nguni concepts are related to art and the excessive patterning found in regalia and ornamentation worn by the central officiators of rituals/ceremonies, for it adds not only to their dignity by honouring and respecting (*ukhhlonipha*), but to that of participants while aligning all to the sacred realm (of the ancestors). What this means is that traditional dress and paraphernalia of any officiator, like a diviner for instance, helps enable the process of mediumship and serves to increase the diviner’s *isithunzi* through the ‘brooding’ presence of the ancestral-spirits. Zionist diviner Makhomo Luthuli of Ndwedwe explained that her regalia of wig, cloth-wraps and beadwork were worn:

Because it is the style of the (my) grandparents (ancestors)... (Wearing) it is respecting...because they are with me...I must wear what they wore!...Yes you must

⁷⁸ The best works to read on the subject are Berglund, Ngubane and Raum, but the topic has also been taken up in the work of Brindley and of Wells. See Bibliographic References.

have *isithunzi* (as a diviner) ...*if I do not wear my regalia for even a week I become powerless...that is because I am failing to respect them (the amaDlozi or Ancestors)....(And the regalia is worn) so as to be always reminded that I am an isangoma (diviner)...working for them (the ancestors)....The isithunzi of a diviner and that of her ancestors is combined ...even if going somewhere my behaviour shows that of my amaDlozi (Italics mine) (MaKhomu Luthuli, 2000).*

In its modern visual format, heavy patterning/primal colouring and ‘busy’ content could even be described as a hybridized ‘preferred form’ (as in African aesthetic criteria). Fiona Rankin-Smith in ‘Beauty in the hard journey: Defining trends in twentieth-century Zulu art’ in *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, past and present* (2008) presents a historical insight into the “artistic continuities and transformations” (Rankin-Smith 2008: 409) of these styles within the visual arts of migrant-labourers, saying:

Since their (migrant-workers) industrial residences - the mining compounds that confined them to work sites - provided only a concrete bed and bare walls, they quickly developed a deep nostalgia for their domestic artefacts, garments, rituals and songs. Indeed, to this day, many traditional Zulu migrant workers either make or purchase pieces of clothing such as migrant waistcoats (*intolibhantshi*), reaffirming connections to their rural homes. However, over the past century and a half, their everyday art has incorporated techniques and materials that reflect the hybrid cultural influences of the metropolis and the mine (Rankin-Smith 2008: 409).

The only other art-form reflecting such synergy of concept to custom is that of the equally patterned colourful Zulu beadwork and dress and the painted mat-racks (*izibhaxa*) of the 1960s and present, as found in Nongoma, one that arguably is reflected in the drawings of KZN artist Tito Zungu [see Appendices. Chapter 1: Figures 8-10. Zulu painted mat-racks (*izibhaxa*) from Nongoma c1960 [author’s collection], and Tito Zungu’s ‘Cityscape’ Koki-pen on cardboard. c1965 [JT526]. [Figures 8-9].

It can be pointed out that the excessive patterning found in Nguni arts may not always have been present to the same degree in the Nguni cultures of pre-colonial times. However as Wright and Hamilton in their chapter appearing in Duminy and Guest (Eds.) *Natal and Zululand: From earliest times to 1910. A new history* (1989:49-82) indicate, the socio-economic and political factors at play in south east-Africa in the 18th-19th centuries was in a state of constant flux. Of these changes, the influence of the 19th century trade in the form of the exchange of ivory for brass, beads and cloth (under the control of the early Zulu monarchs) meant that these goods became esteemed and the king’s authority and prestige was linked to his being able to gift them to his allies and favourites. By the era of white control of colonial Natal and later Zululand (especially after the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879) there was a relative degree of free-trade of these valued goods (Wright and Hamilton 1989:61), while Ballard in his chapter appearing in the same volume as that of Wright and Hamilton, comments:

... (M)any of the colonists soon flourished. ...A wagon-load of goods could usually be obtained on credit from some established supplier in Pietermaritzburg or Durban and these could be exchanged at highly profitable rates for frontier commodities...The whole of the Natal-Zululand region thus became covered by a commercial network. (Ballard 1989:128).

Thus beadwork (and dress) was always associated with prestige and authority, and royal persons, including the the monarchy's ancestors, were always accorded respect and honour (*ukuhlonipha*) and ruled by exorcising their moral-weight (*isithunzi*). It is true that as commoners came to have access to free-trade goods, that beadwork (and dress) became steadily more heavily decorated. Certainly by the early 20th century patterning and colour had much to do with the already mentioned concepts of respecting (*ukuhlonipha*) and avoidance (*ukuzila*) and their part in approaching the sacred (be this of the living authorities or the revered ancestors who had passed on), where it adds honour and dignity (*isithunzi*) to the recipient. For these reasons within tradition it is beadwork and dress that are most often used to accord such regard. An aspect often missed concerning these items is that the very ceremony at which the regalia is worn, constitutes the ritual context of such honouring. In *Purity and danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo* (1978) Douglas regards the nature of ritual, some of which can be seen to apply to indigenous art in its sacred function:

For us, individually, every day symbolic enactment does several things. It provides a focusing mechanism, a method of mnemonics and a control for experience. ... (A) ritual provides a frame. The marked off time and place alerts a special kind of expectancy... for the least action is capable of carrying significance...(and) shut(s) in desired themes or shut(s) out intruding ones (Douglas 1978: 63).

She continues to quote Marion Milner on framing or the marking of boundaries:

'...the frame marks off the different kind of reality that is within it from that which is outside it; but a temporal-spatial frame marks off the special kind of reality of a psycho-analytic session...makes possible the creative illusion called transference...'
(Milner cited by Douglas 1978: 63).

Milner's "transference" I regard as but another word for the anthropological phrase '*participation mystique*' and closely describes the psychological effects of 'actors' and audience participation in a well-orchestrated 'production' in which the artistically worked costume worn by participants aids in the heightened psycho-social dynamics of the traditional ceremonies.

Doll-makers from Ndwedwe, who call upon their traditionalist sense of beauty and beading skills in their imagery, acknowledge that "What one is doing (in decorating) is beautifying but one is also respecting" (Celani Nojiyeza 1999). By default, this respecting both lifts the object itself to the status of an *object d' art* and extends respect to the buyer/viewer. Of great pertinence to this discussion is the following extract from Otto Raum:

During a sacrifice, and especially when the ancestral praises are recited the wives of the lineage members concerned have to gather in the Great Hut *dressed in their finery. They have to keep silent* (Italics mine) (Raum 1973:125).

This requirement of regalia to honour and respect is still important amongst contemporary Nguni traditionalists. In August 2008 the Campbell Collections acquired the gala dress of the Xaba-Khuzwayo section of wives from KwaZwelebomvu-Shongweni,⁷⁹ no more than a half

⁷⁹ This area falls into the area of the Embo-Mkhize (AbaMbo), under Chief (*iNkosi*) Thamsanqa Mkhize (personal communication Senzo Mkhize, Durban, April 2012).

hours drive from Durban. An ornate traditional (but modernised)⁸⁰ outfit incorporating the headdress (*isischolo*), leather-skirt (*isidwaba*), plastic beadwork pins, belts and anklets and appliqué aprons and capes of lace, cloth and safety-pins in colours echoing that of the beadwork, namely pinks, whites and blues, the overall style termed ‘*ubisi*’ (‘milk’)⁸¹ [see Appendices. Chapter 1: Figures 8-10 and Figures 11-12. MaNtini and MaMeyiwa Khuzwayo in their gala dress, KwaZwelebomvu, August 2008 [Figures 10-11]]. The outfit is worn to celebrations in honour of the homestead, the husband and more significantly, his clan ancestors. Leather-skirt, headdress and headband are however still symbols of the status of a wife and worn specifically in this area to respect (*ukuhlonipha*) the husband’s ancestors (MaMeyiwa and MaNtini 2008).

All beaded decoration is termed *ukuhloba*, and the verb *hloba* means ‘to adorn (oneself)’ (Dent and Nyembezi 1984: 374). In Emakhuzeni near Himeville in the Drakensberg foothills, traditionalists call a senior girl an *inhlobo* (Jean Anderssen museum notes 1983 [MM2504-2513]). It is a time when a girl celebrates having a boyfriend and being courted. More importantly, the noun for summer-time is *ihlobo*, indicating a time when nature is similarly adorned in beauty (Dent and Nyembezi 1984:374). In traditional Zulu communities the ceremony of engagement is termed *ukuqomisa* or ‘thanking’ and is characterised by:

The imposition of affine avoidances, accompanied by the release from sexual restrictions, is accentuated by the exchange of gifts. The girl hangs specimens of beadwork round her lover’s neck and arms (*umGexo*).... The new ranking of the girl is indicated in a change of dress: she exchanges the plain *inCibe* or *uBendle* for a bead-decorated one or for an *isiGege*⁸² and replaces her white shoulder cloth with a red one (Krige : 124)....And (the girl is told by the elder girls to) ‘*Express your love not by word of mouth but by symbolic action!*’ (Italics mine) (Raum 1973: 286).

I include one item of beadwork [see Appendices. Chapter 1: Figures 11-12. Beaded heart (*inhliziyi*) from Umbumbulu [MM4473] [Figure 12]] with its interpretation because it contributes to this discussion. It is a large wire-framed triangle termed an *inhliziyi* or heart. The inside is beaded with the motif of two *umhlonhlo* or Euphorbia Ingens (coastal euphorbia) trees in blue and yellow against a base of numerous zig-zag lines made up of multiple colours [MM4473]. The ornament was pinned on the cape (*izimbozo* or *ibhaye*) of MaNdimande Makhanya from Umbumbulu in 1975.

The reference to the heart is for the bride to declare “My heart is so happy [*Ngiyajabula*]” (MaNdimande Makhanya 1994). In Zulu thinking the heart is “the seat of the emotions...feelings, hope, courage, desire, appetite” (Doke and Vilakazi 1948: 330).

⁸⁰ This description refers to the fact that in all instances of required married-women’s attire (like headdress, leather skirt, cape etc.) the outfits conformed to tradition. However the beadworkers/ wearers designs were their own rendition of ‘*isimodeni*’ (or modern style), thus the bustles were of woven grass rather than the cloth coils worn by their mothers’ generation and their beadwork was in plastic beads (sourced at KwaDesai, a Muslim trader not too far from their homestead, who had been in business since at least the 1930s) and in design motif and colours of their choice. (MaMyewa taking particular delight in her co-wife MaNtini’s crediting of her as creator of these new designs).

⁸¹ Milk in itself, deriving from the ancestral herd cows is a positive life-giving food. And as sour milk (*amasi*) it is often a part of ritual avoidances by outsiders to the clan grouping, including brides and menstruating females (Berglund 1976: 110).

⁸² All are versions of girdles to cover the pubic area of a girl. I would suspect that even in the 1970s when Otto Raum was doing his research in the Maphumulo/Umvoti area, that the girl wore an underneath wrap-skirt of cloth. Early paintings in the Campbell Collections, UKZN show that a girl’s dress was originally only a simple beaded girdle. Later additions added cloth wrap skirts and Tee-shirts to cover the breasts and the wearing of capes of cloth or thin salampore (termed *ulwembe* or spiders-web). Earlier Maphumulo colours of blues, greens, whites and some mid reds refer to nature, as do many of the beading techniques employed.

According to MaNdimande the trees refer to the meeting place of courting couples, while the zig-zag lines or “*amazithizethi*” refer to the lover’s courting trips up mountains and across rivers (a reference also recorded in MaMjola Dungwa’s bead necklace communications discussed in subsection 1.1. of this introduction). All these lines lead to the “girl of his heart” and the fact of she being a virgin⁸³, while the multi-coloured beads refer to her potential fertility (MaNdimande Makhanya 1994). Fertility could then be ‘read’ as a sub-text; as that which is really being honoured by the Zulu traditionalist in the culture’s obsession with colour and pattern. Equally it places the female in relation to nature. In fact the beaded colours of Emkhambathini or Camperdown are said to refer to both women and their home area as beautiful and fertile (MaMchunu Sibisi 1998) and this beadwork is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. It may be necessary to state here that in Zulu cosmology children (fertility) derive from the ancestors, who bless respectful behaviour by granting them. Beadwork is thus a particularly good example of respecting, honouring and celebrating. It also ‘speaks’ to the realm of the sacred, as the intense colours, patterns and multiplicity of shapes often echo nature and this is part of the significance of its symbolism. One of the more obvious links between beading and respecting is in the terminology used by traditionalists for the respect capes to which such an *inhliziyo* is pinned, namely an *izimbozo* - a covering ‘to hide(oneself)’ (See Chapter 5, particularly [MM4490A-B]).

It needs to be noted that while all the Nguni peoples exhibit busy patterning in their art-works (and particularly in their beadwork/dress adornments) for the reasons discussed, namely the connection between decorating and the honouring of the sacred domain of the ancestors (*amadlozi*) in their role as the ultimate authorities in the lives of traditionalist Nguni (still adhering to their indigenous religion), in the minds of the different clans-peoples of KwaZulu-Natal however, these patterns are varied, identifying certain regions and polities as mentioned in this Introduction, subsection 1.1. To persons of the Ntungwa Zulu of the royal house, resident within Zululand, the clans of southern KwaZulu-Natal exhibit excessive decoration. This applies particularly to the Embo-Mkhize but also to the dress of the Bhaca/Nhlangwini (which is disparaged as ‘strange’ in comparison to that worn by the Zulu of the north) and the name for this area’s beadwork and dress colour conventions, like that used by MaMajola Dungwa of “*isijolavane*” (mixing), carry negative connotations. As seen in the dictionary this word also conjures mixing of *muthi* (for witchcraft).⁸⁴ In section 3 of this introduction which deals with the history of the peoples of southern KwaZulu-Natal I will reference historians John Wright and Carolyn Hamilton (1989:72-73) on this issue of historical prejudice against the clans of the south and give the causes as understood by these authors referencing the James Stuart Archives (see section 1.1. for details of this colonial administrator and his African oral history recordings).

The above commentary on beadwork patterning typifies the ‘thick description’ of the Interpretative Anthropology favoured by Clifford Geertz, for it reflects the thinking or world-view of the culture of origin and in this it also speaks to the purposes of an indigenous

⁸³ The girl being a virgin is still important to a suitor. I was surprised, in an era of prevalent illegitimate pregnancies among African youth, to see a photograph of the girlfriend of one young man, in which she is dressed in beadwork for the *Umhlanga*-Reed ceremony held yearly at the Zulu King’s homestead. Inscribed on the back of the photograph were the words “virgin for ‘So –and-So (giving his personal name).”

⁸⁴ Many persons, whatever their race, who have been resident in KwaZulu-Natal for some time, are aware of these prejudices of the northern Nguni clans for those of the south. In regard to the latter’s beadwork and dress being especially excessive in its patterning at issue here, I first came across this prejudice in 1982 in conversation with Mr Peter Mgbosi who handled all the packaging orders for bead sales at the wholesaler W.G. Brown, Durban. He was disparaging of both the bead colours (and designs) of the Embo-Mkhize, declaring them to be akin to those sent to the retailers among the Ndebele of Middleberg, (in the then Transvaal). The beads in demand there were categorised as ‘special colours’ meant for the tourist-trade. These were contrasted with the colours in demand by the traders of Nongoma, the residence of the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini, which were termed ‘the King’s beads’ (Winters 1996a:21, 23).

southern African aesthetic idiom in terms of their aid in respecting and honouring. This idiom conforms to the Gestalt theory of visual perception and one that indicates ‘other purposes’ than mere aesthetic pleasure, both theoretical orientations that will be discussed in Chapter 2 under aesthetics. Art Historian Anitra Nettleton made an interesting observation as to the early art museum/gallery collecting of beadwork, this in a paper she presented on collections of earlier repatriated beadwork acquired by the Standard Bank Galleries of the University of Witwatersrand, at the UKZN’s CVA, *Zulu Bead Conference*, 2-4th December 2009; namely that items collected had a “sculptural quality”, as for instance the beaded ‘rope-coil’ style girdle or *umutsha* of the 19th century, while generally beadwork acknowledged as made by women fell into the category of ‘handicrafts’ and was assimilated with embroidery in some European and British museum collections. She also observed that carving and sculpture were essentially masculine crafts, so that it seemed that of the female art-form of beadwork, those items valued by collectors still needed to conform to patriarchal ethnocentric older aesthetic preferences (i.e. a sculptural one) (Nettleton 2009). One could contrast the Nguni cultures’ own values as they impact the aesthetical considerations influencing their beadwork (and dress) design choices indicated in this subsection’s discussion.

2. Preliminary literature study, and reasons for choosing the topic

2. 1. Literature on the field

The bench-mark works dealing with the topic of Zulu beadwork in recent years have been those that emanate from academic research within the History of Art and Orality-Literacy disciplines, the first being Sandra Klopper’s doctoral dissertation, *The Art of Zulu Speakers in Northern Natal-Zululand. An investigation into the history of beadwork, carving and dress from Shaka to Inkatha* (University of the Witwatersrand, 1992). The introduction by Professor Edgard Sienaert of Orality-Literacy Studies at the University of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal) and his Directorship of the Campbell Collections and Centre for Oral Studies, in the period of the late 1980s to early 1990s, resulted in works by mainly African students, notably, Bongani Mthethwa ‘Decoding Zulu Beadwork’ in Sienaert, E., (Ed.) *Catching winged words, Oral Tradition and Education* (1988) and Thengiwe Magwaza’s Master’s thesis *Orality and its cultural expression in some Zulu traditional ceremonies* (1993) followed by her doctoral dissertation, *Function and meaning of female dress: a descriptive Study of Visual Communication* (1999). The writings of art collector and retired Professor of German at UKZN, Frank Jolles, resulted in a wealth of publications reflective of aesthetics, life-histories and an Orality-Literacy Studies perspective on the subject. Among others one can cite Jolles’s ‘Interfaces between oral and literate societies: contracts, runes and beadwork’ in Sienaert, E.,(Ed.) *Oral tradition and innovation* (1990); ‘Traditional Zulu beadwork from the Msinga Area’ in *African Arts Journal* (UCLA, 1993); ‘Contemporary Zulu Dolls from KwaLatha’ in *African Arts Journal* (UCLA, 1994); ‘Zulu beadwork as a record of historical events: some theoretical considerations’ in Sienaert, E., (Ed.) *Oral tradition and its transmission* (1994); ‘Messages in fixed colour-sequences? Another look at Msinga beadwork’ in Sienaert, E., et al., (Eds.) *Oral Tradition and its Transmission: The many forms of message* (1994) and ‘Continuity and change in Zulu beadwork conventions: The interaction of colour and pattern’ in Washman, D., and Crowe, D., (Eds.) *Symmetry comes of age, the role of pattern in culture* (2004). Also Kate Wells’s doctoral thesis, *Manipulating metaphors: An analysis of beadwork craft as a contemporary medium for communicating on AIDS and culture in KwaZulu-Natal* (2006) and Juliette Leeb-du Toit’s paper ‘Deciphering the Zulu Love Letter (‘Ucu’): Readings from the 1950s that challenge popular stereotypes in the present’ presented at the *Istanbul Beadwork Conference* in 2007.

Most recently the works of Marie-Louise Labelle *Beads of Life: Eastern and Southern African Beadwork from Canadian Collections* (2005), Sisana Dlamini ‘The messages conveyed through traditional Swati female folk-songs’ in Sienaert, E; Cowper-Lewis, M., and Bell, N., *Oral Tradition and its Transmission: The many forms of message* (1994), N. G. Biyela ‘Colour metaphor in Zulu culture: Courtship communication in Beads’ in *American International Journal of contemporary Research* (2013: Vol., 3.No. 10) and the reissue of Hilgard Schoeman’s 1968 work under the title, *The Eloquent Bead* (2015) have all helped in contextualising the topic of this thesis.

Until these recent works the previous texts for Zulu beadwork reflected perhaps a more popularist view and one that is more sweeping and encompassing of all the southern African indigenous peoples arts, this but for Hilgard Schoeman’s (1968) work which was possibly the first academic and intensive study of the meanings of beadwork colours and motif as pertained to the Eshowe/Mtunzini areas during the 1960s. These earlier works were:

- Battiss, W; Franz, G.H; Grossert, J.W., and Junod, H.P., 1958. *The Art of Africa*. Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter.
- Dlomo, H.I., 1960. *The Zulu and his beads*. Unpublished paper, KCAL MS.
- Ford, M., n.d. *Beads South Africa: with special reference to their use in Love Letters*. Johannesburg, H and H. Ltd.
- Grossert, J.W., 1967. ‘Zulu bead love letters; Princess Magogo talking of bead colours and meanings’ in *Art and Craft in Education*, Vol.2. Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter.
- Koningkrammer, A., 1989. *Know the past, wear the future*. Durban, Local History Museum Catalogue.
- Krige, E., 1936. *The Social System of the Zulus*. (Appendix). London, Longmans Green.
- Levinsohn, R., 1984. *Art and craft in South Africa: Treasures in transition*. Delta Books.
- Levy, D., 1991. ‘Southern African Beadwork’ in Klopper, S., (Ed.) *Art and Ambiguity*. Johannesburg Art Gallery.
- Mayr, F., 1906. ‘Language of colours amongst the Zulus expressed by their beadwork ornament; and some general notes on their personal adornments and clothing’ in *Annals of the Natal Government Museum*, Pietermaritzburg.
- Preston-Whyte, E., 1988. ‘Zulu bead sculptures’ in *African Arts Journal*, UCLA.
- Preston-Whyte, E., and Thorpe, J., 1989. ‘Zulu Beadwork: A Romantic past – a vibrant future’ in *The Condenser*, June.
- Preston-Whyte, E., and Morris, J., 1994. *Speaking with Beads/Zulu arts from southern Africa*. Johannesburg, Thames and Hudson.
- Schoeman, H., 1968. ‘A Preliminary report on traditional beadwork in the Makwanazi area of the Mtunzini district, Zululand’. In *African Studies*, University of Witwatersrand, pp.57-81.
- Twala, R., 1951. ‘Beads as regulating the social life of the Zulu and Swazi’ in *African Studies*, University of Witwatersrand, pp113-123.
- Twala, R., ‘Beads, Fascinating secrets of Zulu letters. Stories behind patterns and colours of the language of beads’ in *Sunday Times*, 14 February, 1954.
- Tyrrell, B., 1968. *Tribal Peoples of Southern Africa*. Johannesburg, Books of Africa.
- Tyrrell, B., 1971. *Suspicion is my name*. Cape Town, T.V. Bulpin.
- Tyrrell, B., 1983. *African Heritage*. Cape Town, Macmillan.

Of particular interest to this thesis are the works of Structural, Cognitive and Symbolic anthropologists, like Clifford Geertz, Mary Douglas, Victor Turner, Axel-Ivar Berglund, Harriet Ngubane and Otto Raum. All of these gave serious consideration to cultural world-view and indigenous knowledge-systems and symbol and metaphor and here I reference Clifford Geertz, 'Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture' in *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays by Clifford Geertz* (1973), 'Art as a Cultural System' and 'Common sense as a cultural system' in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretative Anthropology* (1983). Mary Douglas *Purity and danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo* (1978), Axel-Ivar Berglund *Zulu thought- patterns and symbolism* (1976), Harriet Ngubane *Body and mind in Zulu medicine* (1977) and Otto Raum *The social functions of avoidances and taboos amongst the Zulu* (1973). The latter three works especially proved valuable as they helped with understanding the cosmological thinking behind cultural behaviours that underpin the expression of beadwork and dress; concepts such as respect and avoidance (*ukuhlonipha/ukuzila*) of the tabooed sacred realm of the ancestral-spirits, the controllers of the ultimate purpose of all sexual union (of which beadwork 'speaks' poetically) in that a woman who conforms to custom within her patriarchal culture is 'blessed with children' and thereby ensures the continuance of her husband's clan/family. The reliance on Orality-Literacy Studies in order to understand the 'oral genre' native to Nguni metaphorical and artistic expression means that I draw on works like Walter Ong *Orality and Literacy: The technologizing of the word* ([1982] 2002), Duncan Brown *Oral literature and performance in southern Africa* (1999), Marcell Jousse *The anthropology of gest and rhythm; studies in the anthropological laws of human expression and their application in the Galilean oral style tradition* (1997), Bogamil Jewsiewicki, 'Painting in Zaire: from the invention of the west to representations of social self' in *Africa explores: 20th century African art* (1991) and Juliette Leeb-du-Toit 'Phila Trevor Makhoba's narratives and Mores: a Dialectics of Artistic and Intellectual Leadership' in Addleson, J. (Ed.) *Trevor Makhoba Memorial Exhibition* (2005).

Attempts to situate the study of beadwork (and dress) within a wider framework of the disciplines of Aesthetics, Anthropological and Sociological theory as well as understanding pertinent issues like modernisation and African Feminism, have lead to a wider reading and consultation of such sources as:

- Babbie, E., and Mouton, J., (Eds.) [2001] 2011. *The practice of social research*. Cape Town, Oxford Southern Africa.
- Barthes, R., [1957] 2000. 'Myth Today' in Burke, L; Crowley, T., and Girvin, A., (Eds.) *The Routledge Language and Cultural Theory Reader*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Denzin, N.K., 1992. *Symbolic Interactionism and Cultural Studies: The politics of interpretation*. Oxford, Blackwell.
- Crotty, M., 1998. *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London, Sage Publications.
- Crowther, P., 2003. *Philosophy after Postmodernism: Civilized values and scope of knowledge*. Routledge.

The museological perspectives that impact ethnographic and art collections are sourced in Ann Wanless's doctoral disertation, *The Silence of Colonial Melancholy: The Fourie Collection of Khoisan Ethnographia* (University of Witwatersrand, 2007) and Eileen Hooper-Greenhill's *Museums and the interpretation of visual culture* (2000). While in my own professional capacity within museums, I have been a curator of contemporary and

traditional African Art since 1978. Having studied a BA with History and Anthropology as majors, I did my Honours in the latter (specializing in Religious Anthropology) at the University of South Africa (UNISA) (1982) and did my Masters (History of Art) with UKZN (2009). I did a post-graduate Higher Diploma in Museum Science at the University of Pretoria (1978) and training in new trends in museums with Michigan State University in association with the Chicago Museum and the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, in the United States (2000). My contribution toward the topic of beadwork and dress comprises more than twenty-five papers, talks, presentations, exhibitions and publications for a variety of organizations or professional bodies. A list of these appears in the Bibliographic References, their value is in the quantity of material with validating documentation that has come from collecting for the MM holdings of the Campbell Collections, UKZN, and I will continue to quote from them in building my arguments in the body of my dissertation.⁸⁵

2. 2. Reasons for choosing the topic

The primary museum collection to be analysed is, as mentioned above, that of the late Dr Killie Campbell, founder of an 'Africana' library and museum known as, The Campbell Collections, UKZN. I focus on this collection as the founder is known for her collection of historical, cultural and artistic objects/documents/publications/images (photographic and graphic) and was one of the earliest collectors of beadwork and dress promoting the recording of its unwritten oral communications/meanings and purpose (Denis and Nsimane 2008). She was not only patron to the artist/recorder of African costume (recording beadwork in context of dress, gender and age/status) Barbara Tyrrell, but promoter of the writings on the subject by James Stuart, Herbert Dhlomo, Regina Twala and Princess Magogo MaZulu Buthelezi (Herd 1982, Berning 1996).

In 1979 I took up the post of Professional Museum Assistant, later Senior Museologist at Campbell Collections, UKZN, becoming Head of both the library and museum sections of the same institution in 2009 (retiring at the end of 2013 while this doctoral study was still in progress). In the 30 plus years of curating both contemporary and traditionalist African arts⁸⁶ at the Collections, I collected a large part of the holdings in these two categories of art. Most of these I had to personally document and catalogue (MM Collection).⁸⁷ In 2004 a vast

⁸⁵ This increasing emphasis on documentation emerged in particular from the Centre for Visual Art, UKZN (then Department of Fine Art, UN) and local and national galleries such as the Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg, Durban Art Gallery, Johannesburg Art Gallery and the University of the Witwatersrand University Galleries, all of which embarked upon research validation to produce catalogues of sufficient merit to warrant the latter's status as reference sources. These historic multi-disciplinary moves, which were also happening within other museum fields apart from the Arts, were to be codified into *The National Heritage Resources Act of South Africa, No 11 of 1999* wherein "living heritage" is included, being described as "intangible aspects of inherited culture, and may include a) cultural tradition b) oral history c) performance d) ritual e) popular memory f) skills and techniques g) indigenous knowledge systems and h) the holistic approach to nature, society and social relationships" (NHR Act 1999,55). This Act is reflected in the *South African Museums Association (SAMA) Professional Standards and Transformation Indicators* of 2006, wherein museums/galleries are encouraged to research and produce education programs that will enable interpretation and ownership of the intellectual resources (held in museums) by indigenous communities and artists represented in these collections.

⁸⁶ My work entailed curation of the museum holdings which comprised the Mashu Museum of Ethnology (MM), the William Campbell Picture Collection and the Jo Thorpe Collection of the African Art Centre, Durban, all falling under the Campbell Collections, UKZN. The terminology I use in the text of "contemporary and traditionalist art" is one borrowed from curator Nessa Liebhammer of the Johannesburg Art Gallery in the late 1980 - early 1990s. She, like many including myself within the museum/gallery world, sought a more inclusive job descriptive title at a time when institutions were becoming multi-disciplinary in terms of their collecting policies.

⁸⁷ In the 1980s, I interviewed a number of manufacturers, wholesale and retail traders and ex-traders (some introduced by Tyrrell and known from her field-trips) like W. G. Brown Wholesalers (1982), Hoosen and Patel (1999), Föche and Cooke Bead Manufacturers in Pinetown (1983), Tiny Christie of Tugela Ferry (1982), Ken Strachan of Umzimkhulu (1983), Alex Frangs of Donnybrook (1983), Jean Anderssen of Qudini and Himeville (1984), Mr Fröhling of Ntonjambili (1982) and Val Myburg of Inadi/Kranskop (1979) to get their input on the 'African Truck Trade' (Winters 1988b, 2008a) of which beads, cloth and other materials were an essential part. This gave an insight

number of Tyrrell's original field-sketches (WCP Collection) were added to the art holdings. Dr Killie Campbell requested in her *Last Will and Testament* (Campbell 1963) that the staff engaged with her Collections, continue to involve Barbara Tyrrell and thus I visited the artist-recorder regularly in Richmond (later in Muizenberg, Scottburgh and Fish Hoek). Tyrrell was a significant influence on the ethnographic collecting-policies at the Campbell Collections, when in 1979 suggesting the acquisition of the then modern plastic beadwork (rejected at the time by art and curio dealers but worn by persons who identified themselves as traditionalists) and this in context of age/status/ gender/profession specific costumes (Winters 1988a, 1988b, 1993). Recently along with colleague Vusi Buthelezi I curated the exhibition of Tyrrell's watercolours and field-sketches dating from the 1940-60s held within the Campbell Collections for an exhibition at the IZIKO – South African National Art Gallery, Cape Town, to coincide with the artist-recorder's 100th birthday on 15 March 2012. She turned 103 in 2015 and sadly died on the 23 September 2015 while in frail care at a Fish Hoek, Cape Town, and retirement complex. Her memorial service was held at the Campbell Collections, UKZN on 27 October 2015.

In these decades of collecting for the Campbell Collections, UKZN, I have seen new modes of collecting beadwork and dress by both museums and the international art market (Winters 2005a, 2007a). Once the province of ethnographic collections such collecting has tended to move into the domain of the art gallery. In the early 1980s, I did field-collecting along with a Zulu-speaking assistant, Mrs Rebecca Msomi and together we collected full outfits for the various age-grades and sexes for southern Natal (the then KwaZulu 'homeland's' Hlanganani district) (Winters 1988a). In 1989-1990 I registered for a Masters in Anthropology with UNISA, my topic being the *Marriage beadwork and dress of the Bhaca of Richmond, Hela-Hela and KwaGengeshe*. However the civil unrest known as the '7 Days' War' with its 'black on black violence' (the 'Udlame') between the United Democratic Movement (UDF) (later the African National Congress (ANC)) and the Inkatha Movement (later the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)) in the Natal midlands (and the Vulindlela district of KwaZulu), meant I had to forego my studies. Nevertheless what I collected at the time I deposited in the holdings of the Campbell Collections (MM Collection). From around the late 1980s a major shift took place in regard to museum collecting (Winters 2007a) with the advent of the black middlemen/women, informal sector go-betweens who initially exchanged used western items of clothing for traditional artefacts (including beadwork and dress) and resold the latter to museums and the art-markets (like the NGO, the African Art Centres in Durban and Pietermaritzburg). This saw collectors (like Paul Mikula with his private Phansi Museum in Durban) and art-galleries/museums (like the Durban Art Gallery as well as the Campbell Collections) either entering the field or concentrating their collecting via the African Art Centres and other local art-galleries (the budget seldom stretched to acquiring ethnographic items from international sales houses like Sotheby's, Bonhams, etc., although the Africana artworks continued to be obtained via these dealerships). The floor-manager of the African Art Centre, Durban, Hlengiwe Dube, started a series of "*Amagugu-Treasures*" yearly sales of used (termed 'authentic' in museological circles) traditionalist cultural items, like wooden

into historical changes due to modernisation and the regional nature of beadwork, for traders would order bead-stock specific to their clients' demands. I also collected photographs of traditionally dressed Africans and interviewed studio photographers like Mr Jithoo Maharaj of Raisethorpe (1984), Mr Sheik of Pietermaritzburg (1986), Mr Singh of Richmond (1982), Mr Bobby Manilla of Durban (1984) and freelance photographers like Mr Sokhela of Greytown (1990) and in more recent years have worked with photographers like Phulani Zuma of Imbali (2008) and researcher Professor Steven Dubin of Columbia University in the USA (2012). I have also been involved with the Roman Catholic Centocow Mission Museum near Creighton, southern KZN (2003-2012), which houses photographs of the early Trappist monks and paintings by Gerard Bhengu depicting local Kholwa (Christian), Bhaca and Khuze history and material culture. I also accessioned from 1978-82 the collection of beadwork and dress acquired by the Mariannahill monks at Pinetown from traditionalists converting to Christianity (dating from the 1890's to early 1900's).

milk-pails, headrests, pottery items, dress and beaded ornamentation (African Art Centre Documentation files held in Campbell Collections, UKZN).

Nevertheless, many museum ethnographers and private collectors remained suspicious of the documentation collected in the field or proffered by these go-betweens, perhaps rightly so, as there was always a temptation on the part of makers/sellers to play to the ‘myth of the African other’ desired by many western collectors/tourists. Only a strong rapport with a middleman/woman, accompanied field-trips and the validation of their taped-interviews with beadwork (and dress) beadworkers/wearers/sellers could mitigate to some extent against these dangers. Some European dealers employed what they termed ‘runners’ (who were at times these same African middlemen who sold to museums/galleries), resulting in collecting without regard to documentation and cultural context for quick resale and investment market-value. Certain field-collectors like Thembisile MaDube Sibisi (also known as Nomusa Dube) kept a journal of her collecting-trips and she owned that it was her interest in her own culture that motivated her to sit with the seller and with infinite patience to ask after the messages and meanings in the beadwork; however she did this only as go-between field-collector for selected clients (like museums and public galleries), the process being too arduous for sale to tourist outlets or commercial galleries (Winters 2000a, 2000b, 2005a). I not only collected from MaDube, but from Mpostoli Mzila (the son of Full Gospel prophet and traditional carver Asmon Mzila from Keate’s Drift), MaDube’s mother (the late Nesta Zondi) and an unrelated Dube, Gertude Busisiwe Dube from KwaDabeka (Stanger). I also continued to collect and curate exhibitions via the translation and interpretation auspices of African research-assistants, notably Dingani Mthethwa, Muzi Hadebe, Mxolisi Mchunu, Mthunzi Zungu, Ndaba Dube and Khaya Sithole among others.⁸⁸ I also worked with persons who acted as contacts in the field, considering themselves close to tradition like Sandile Mkhize from Umlazi (formerly St Faith’s) or Shembe Church (*Ibandla lama Nazaretha*) members, like Mandlenkosi Vuma, Henry Mshololo and Ephraim Ngcobo, all from Inanda and through the auspices of Siyabonga Mkhize of KwaZwelebomvu, a man who has been described by historian, the late Professor Jeff Guy as an ‘indigenous historian’ and who is also a writer and Zionist prophet. I have often been a guest at African friends and colleagues’ family rituals, sometimes acting as photographer on request, most notably to those of the Mbanjwa, Mkhize, Sithole, Mchunu and Zuma families of southern and KZN midlands.⁸⁹

In 1993 I attended Professor Edgard Sienaert’s Orality-Literacy Studies course, acquiring insights that were useful for my Master’s thesis *Indigenous aesthetics and narratives in the works of black South African artists in local art museums* (2009), (UKZN/ Centre for Visual Arts), enabling a greater understanding of African creativity expressing itself via the oral genre or style, which permeates all of the province’s indigenous arts, including beadwork and dress.

In what has been said above I have tried to place the collecting of the ethnographic material held in the ‘MM collection’ within a wider historical context of change within the country and KwaZulu-Natal in particular. However, the history of the institution itself, namely the

⁸⁸ Most of these interns were Library //Museum or Post-graduate Masters or PhD History or Media Studies candidates at the time of contact which proved beneficial in more ways than just translations, collecting and museum talks, for they were in touch with more contemporary theory and University departments, sharing these contacts in discussion.

⁸⁹ More recently I have relied upon colleagues, Vusi Buthelezi, Senzo Mkhize and Qabashe Xulu, all males who have provided surprising insights into beadwork as it reflects male self-image. Female African colleagues have also been generous with interpretation, translation and validated information on cultural ceremonies still practiced; persons like Thoko Xala, Lindiwe Mthembu, Hlengi MaMvuyane Mbhele, Thabile Xulu and Bongzi MaMdlalose Mbhele.

Campbell Collections, UKZN, is equally pertinent to the nature of the museum holdings. Briefly the founder, Dr Killie Campbell, had an all-encompassing acquisitions-policy and in regard to ethnographic material, the art works by the earlier generations of black artists and the costume studies of Tyrrell, she envisaged a 'Museum of African Studies'. Around 1955 her brother William Campbell (known as WAC), then Director of the sugar-company, The Natal Estates Ltd., offered a trust-fund for his sister's hoped for museum. However he withdrew the offer because of the then Durban City Council's apartheid stance toward persons of African descent visiting the museum (which was planned for a 'whites-only' area of the city) and thus the ethnographic holdings stayed with the Africana library holdings that his sister had bequeathed the University, this at the family home named 'Muckleneuk' at 220 Marriott Road (renamed Gladys Mazibuko) on the Durban Berea (Winters 2007b). The property was transferred in "Public Trust" to the Durban City but the vast eclectic Collections' holdings then came under the University of Natal's Library administration (Deeds of Transfer 1955 and Bequest Documents 1949, 1952). As such the Collections were staffed by a small team of librarians and remained off-campus. The first professional, and for a long time only museum post, was established in 1975 (an educational officer was appointed in 1993). This meant that for the ten years after Dr Killie Campbell's death in 1965, the administration of the museum fell to the library staff, most of whom had History and Anthropology majors for their basic degrees in addition to their library qualifications.

The University of Natal was renowned under Professor Eileen Jensen Krige for its Social Anthropology course termed 'African Studies' which privileged a British and French Functionalist approach to the study of societies and excluded material-culture which formed part of the German and American Cultural Anthropology Schools (Krige Papers, KCAL Manuscript collection). Ethnographic museums naturally centred upon this last orientation to Anthropology. The result was that for some years the Mashu Museum of Ethnology's holdings of ethnographic material found itself in the 'shadow' of the Killie Campbell Africana Library, despite their both falling under the umbrella of the Campbell Collections. In 1993 the Collections were placed under the Humanities Faculty of the University of Natal and an academic, Professor Edgard Sienaert, became Director and introduced a teaching course in Orality-Literacy at the University of Natal with lectures sited at 'Muckleneuk' which then became a campus. While the museum found a new direction, the library section was at odds with the series of academic Directors who came thereafter. Part of the problem was the logistics of the building 'Muckleneuk', it being essentially a house altered in its rear kitchen areas to contain galleries and the addition of a library in 1972. These necessitated strict standards for conservation and security of rare holdings of 'Africana' and this clashed with the needs of academic activities. The institution was then placed instead under the Research Office of the University of Natal and academic Directors, Professor Iain Edwards who was succeeded by Professor Yonah Seleti, introduced projects with funding from the Andrew Mellon Foundation among others. This allowed for the employment on contract of additional staff in the form of student 'interns' (as mentioned before), many of them African. This enabled the museum to expand on earlier oral history projects including the translations of these records from isiZulu into English, as well as 'drawing in' the African 'voice' through outreach projects. In more recent years the merge in 2004 of the former University of Durban-Westville with that of the University of Natal (to become the University of KwaZulu-Natal) meant that the institution was returned from Research Office with an academic in charge, back to the University Libraries division and now designated as part of 'Special Collections' (along with the Alan Paton Centre, The Ghandi-Luthuli Documentation Centre and the Centre for African Literary Studies). This meant a return to non-academic support staff management and a changed emphasis from a research orientation

to concerns with library issues like digitization for preservation and access and conservation needs, as well as a down-sizing of the support staff sector within the University itself.

Understandably this changing history of the Collections has a direct impact on a number of issues around the beadwork and dress holdings of the institution and these are dealt with in Chapter 2 on theory.

2.3. Research problems and objectives

The primary focus of the study is twofold; firstly it takes a representative selection of arguably better documented beadwork (and dress) items (for which it is claimed there exists messages encoded in colours, motifs and/or lettering, that dates from the 1950s-2000s and coming from the Bhaca/Nhlangwini and Embo-Mkhize (AbaMbo) Nguni (Zulu related) traditionalist peoples of southern KwaZulu-Natal and seeks to understand the conceptual source for these communications within the culture itself, both in world-view and in the isiZulu oral tradition. Secondly, it seeks to contextualize this material within the museum holdings of the Campbell Collections, UKZN, with its many changes as to ownership, disciplinary orientation and management (see no 2 below). These objectives raise the following questions for which possible answers will be sought in regard to the following:

1. The first question will be how best to conceptualise the purpose of beadwork (and dress) when set in codified and regionally specific colours, motifs, pictographs and lettering characteristic of the artistry of Nguni peoples? To do this, existing literature will be reviewed as to how the topic has variously been conceived over time; from communications between lovers/spouses that regulate sexual relations to their identification as aesthetic art-forms within the museum/galleries and tourist-market places. Moreover, questioned is why it should be that it is a female art-form and why females are required to communicate symbolically through the means of their dress and beadwork ornamentation rather than verbally? In this it is decided that the reason for this is the cultural prescriptions as to respect and avoidance (*ukuhlonipha/ukuzila*) regimens toward husbands and in-laws (inclusive of the all important ancestors) that applies to women in Nguni patriarchal cultures. Especially pertinent to women's beadwork expression is the prescription of 'respect of speech' (*ukuhlonipha kolwimi*), where women are enjoined to remain verbally silent, meaning that they must communicate via encoded messages in beadwork and dress. The reward for the female is good-fortune in her role as wife and mother. Honouring or respecting of the powerful male-line plus the fact of the isiZulu language being formerly oral (and many of the makers/wearers being illiterate) means that these communications are replete with euphemisms, metaphors, innuendos and other 'figures of speech' and it may be necessary to access such obtuse meanings via extrapolation or 'thick description' to more fully understand the symbolic significance of beadwork communications. Concepts of African Feminism and modernization will perforce form a part of the study and their impact upon the topic will be constantly assessed. This will be done in the introductory Chapter 1 and be revisited where appropriate throughout the thesis.
2. A review of the impact of historical collecting policies of the Campbell Collections, UKZN, will be undertaken, considering the impact of its moving from a private collector's holdings with an appeal to tourists and lay-persons (usually Europeans) in search of the myth of the African 'other' to that of a museum falling under a University warranting a more academic approach to Anthropology and Art History,

plus the later introduction of courses in Orality-Literacy and most recently IKS (Indigenous Knowledge Systems), will be assessed and more importantly the impact of these changes on museological approaches to collecting ethnographic material will be interrogated. The primary theoretical methodologies chosen will be Orality-Literacy Studies and Symbolic and Interpretative Anthropology and the latter theory's derived Symbolic Interactionism. The first theory enables access to poetic oral isiZulu language that stands behind metaphorical 'bead language' while the latter two schools analyse relationships meaningful to the persons studied and use 'thick description' to uncover the symbolism behind more obscure cultural behaviours related to beadwork communications. Also considered are the issues of modernisation as they impact traditionalist cultures and the centrality of understanding African Feminism, for it is Nguni females who are especially responsible for expressing themselves via beadwork (and dress). These issues and the theories they are based upon are broached throughout the thesis but their understanding is particularly considered in Chapter 2 on theory.

3. Queried is the extent to which the topic of beadwork and dress communications can only be fully explained via a return to the cultural concepts and world-view of the peoples themselves. Thus anthropological texts, particularly those written closer in time and source area to the collected beadwork and dress items will be accessed for detailed data on ceremonies marking age-grade/status rites-of-passage, like coming-of-age, engagement, courting and marriage (and failure to complete the latter processes in labola payment and informing the ancestors resulting for whatever reason but most often from economic hardship) and particularly the position and role of females as betrothed, brides, wives and mothers therein, will be revisited. Sex, age and status specific beadwork and dress will be considered in detail as well as the impact and nature of modernisation and change on these earlier cultural expressions. This will be the topics of Chapters 3 and 4.
4. Finally a selection of well-documented items of beadwork and dress will be interrogated; taking the beadworkers/wearers intended communications found associated with area specific aesthetical 'sign-conventions' of colour, motif, pictograph, lettering and item type into account. As far as possible the beadworker/wearer's own claims in isiZulu as to her intended communications connoted to these aesthetical conventions will be referenced. This will be done so as to answer the question of whether these communications do indeed 'speak' of those issues that are of cultural significance to females, namely; identities, conforming to cultural expectations of respectful behaviour, marriage, childbearing and homemaking. Also considered is any frustration in attaining such desired states and how such disappointments will be expressed. In terms of the latter the impact of modernisation and socio-economic change will be a constant factor for consideration. Also what these expressions say of African Feminism and the position of women. It will also be queried if there is a place for individualism within strongly conventionalised cultural and communal life. All these issues are considered and examples of the beadwork and dress from the field expressive of the mentioned concerns will be given in Chapter 5.
5. A final concluding chapter will summarise the findings emanating from the various chapter discussions and an appendix of images is supplied to help the reader conceptualise the data discussed, particularly for the items analysed in Chapter 5.

2.4. Research methodology

Most of what I debate in this section I have alluded to in other sections, particularly in the discussion of contemporary social research theories, as every theoretical approach has a preferred methodology. These will be the privileging of qualitative research modalities used by Orality-Literacy (Ong [1982]2002) and the ‘thick description’ of Symbolic Interpretative Anthropology (Geertz 1973, 1979, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c). Arising from the latter is Symbolic Interactionism, and these theories are discussed in detail in Chapter 2: Issues and Theoretical background.

The basic methodologies will be the review of archival and museum research data, backed up with museum object/data collecting forms, participation observation, dialogue, interviews and a reliance on translation from the native language. I also perforce have had to use the methodologies that have been a part of museum practice in the practical aspects of collecting, researching, cataloguing and display (Hooper-Greenhill, 2006). Moreover, as with many other matters, these are prescribed by museum policies, acquisition funds and space, all of which are inherited at the time of taking up the position of curator (Winters 1994, 2003). While one invariably tries to remain aware of developments in the field, there will still be the character of an institution, or provisos in bequests, mission statements and other injunctions that must be retained and obedience to hierarchies of line-management and/or Advisory/Trustee Boards that must be upheld.⁹⁰

Pre-existing literature from art historical and anthropological texts, as in the resources mentioned, will be consulted. Thus the main methodology comprises a long-standing familiarity with museum collecting, documenting, cataloguing and displaying beadwork and dress from various indigenous peoples of southern Africa with emphasis upon the Zulu and their related southern neighbours, the Bhaca/Nhlangwini and Embo-Mkhize (AbaMbo) peoples.

Throughout, I have needed to conduct validation return interview-visits to check on certain statements, interpretations, context and request permission to use women’s names and photographs of the artists/makers of their beadwork (and dress) items. I have also conceded to any of their preferences to remain anonymous, especially where their communications are less than reflective of the cultural ideal. However the names remain on the Collections’ catalogue records, as do the prices paid for their creations, but this is closed access according to standard museum procedure to any but *bona fide* researchers and museum management staff. As such this documentation can be considered a validation of whatever I claim in the thesis. So too, any items acquired while doing this PhD dissertation as well as all validating

⁹⁰ I have curated the Campbell Collections of UKZN holdings throughout the 1980s until 2009, done volunteer work in the Marriannahill Mission Museum and been consulted by and worked with other museum curators, particularly Dr Tim Maggs, Kathy Mack and Linda Ireland of Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg, Viv Garside and Jenny Hawke of the Zululand Historical Museum and Vukani of Eshowe, Dieter Reuchs of the KZN Museum Services, Robert Papini and Gillian Berning of the Local History Museum/KwaMuhle among others. I have assisted with research queries of Jo Thorpe, founding Director of the African Art Centre, Durban, Professor Sandra Klopper of first the University of Witwatersrand, Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Pretoria and recently returning to Cape Town, Carol-Borham Hayes of Ohio State University, Karen Brown of Indiana University, Dr Ute Siebt and Dr Wolfgang Wickler of the Max Plank Institute, Professor Alan Roberts of UCLA and his wife Professor Polly Roberts (now retired) of the Fowler Museum, UCLA, as well as independent researchers and collectors Paul Mikula, Alan Lieberman, Professor Frank Jolles, Marilee Wood and Professor Juliette Leeb-du Toit of CVA, UKZN. More recently I have had occasion to deal with respected researchers in Museology, Prof Steven Dubin of Columbia University, N.Y.. and Visual anthropologist Christoph Rippe of Leiden University, Netherlands, as too the professionalism of persons in other museums/galleries like, Professor Ian Calder of CVA, UKZN, Carol Kaufman, Joe Dolby and Andrea Lewis of IZIKO-S A National Gallery Cape Town, Brendon Bell of Tatham Art Gallery and Mdu Xakaza of Durban Art Gallery and the late Juliet Armstrong of CVA. All the persons I mention are recognized experts in their field and their referral to the Campbell Collections, UKZN, is more to the honour of the institution and its founder than anything to do with my own standing as a researcher, curator or anthropologist. It is these many associations that lead me to be familiar with the literature and research on the subject of this thesis.

research needed will be finally deposited in the Campbell Collections, UKZN, as is prescribed for the award of a NRF Competitive Research Grant received in 2011-2012.

I cannot undervalue the contribution made in my research methodology of both the bead-makers and my African colleagues, whether field-collectors or research-assistants and/or translators/interpreters. This comprises not only interpretation and field-assistance but also debate and contacts with elders to help in the understanding of texts and data. A useful reference work for interviewing derives from the Simolando Project of the Theology Department of UKZN, Pietermaritzburg, namely Denis, P., and Ntsimane, R. *Oral History in a wounded country: Interactive interviewing in South Africa* (2008). An insightful work that broaches methodology, both in interviewing and collaboration is Tomas Drønen's 'Anthropological Historical Research in Africa' in *History in Africa* 33:1, 137-153 (2006). As already stated, such research orientation/methodology can be termed qualitative rather than quantitative. I give a definition from Dr Margareta Jolly, Co-Director, *Centre for Life History & Life Writing Research, Centre for Continuing Education, Sussex Institute, University of Sussex* (<http://sussexuni.listserve> [accessed 15 August 2010]) who says that qualitative research contributes to a growth of understanding and its underlying epistemology questions the kinds of knowledge sought by researchers and offers subjective meanings of individual experience. She mentions four different qualitative approaches: Grounded Theory, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, Foucaultian Discourse Analysis and Narrative Analysis. She then indicates how these can each be used to extract meaning from the same interview text, all of which contribute to a multi-layered understanding thereof. Much of this data will be discussed in Chapter 2 on applicable theory.

Finally, although the norm is to follow the reference style of the department under which one is registered, and that of the Centre for Visual Art (now Visual Arts), UKZN is the shortened Harvard System with a drive toward doing away with foot and/or endnotes, I find, as I did in my Masters dissertation, that for various reasons I have continued the practice of footnotes. These are utilised for clarifying topics and terminology that pertain to many disciplines, supplies contextual unpublished data that derives from the field and is needed to clarify textual material so as not to compromise the flow of the main argument as it would if placed in the body of the thesis. I also need to comment upon the erratic isiZulu spelling modes and the various ways words are capitalised; this is often based upon the standard English practice of capitalising the initial letter, which is not that found in the isiZulu language itself, where only the initial letter of the word is capitalised (and not the class 7 prefix *isi-* in the case of the word isiZulu, for instance). Professor of Zulu at UKZN, Adrian Koopman debates the proper version as simply 'Zulu' when written in English, saying that other European languages when rendered in isiZulu are not rendered as *isiJalimane* (German) for instance but simply as *iJalimane*, so why should this be so for the Zulu language itself when rendered into English. ('Notes and Queries' *Natalia* December 2011:96-98). What is of interest is that such debates are still considered as late as the 2000s and it needs to be noted that in terms of this thesis to leave off the 'isi-' would confuse the many renditions where the reference is to the Zulu peoples themselves. The same conundrums apply to the italicising of isiZulu words and the fact of translators insisting on what seems proper to them, for instance no matter how often I wrote '*Inkosi*' (chief) it would be rendered '*iNkosi*' in the corrections and then being an appellation it was often not italicised. Also some isiZulu words are Anglized and now a part of English, like 'lobola' (bride-price) and thus they are not italicised in the text. My strategy is thus to admit ambiguities and try to apply an internal consistency within the thesis itself.

3. Historical, political and ethnic background of peoples of southern KwaZulu-Natal

3.1. The Bhaca and the Nhlungwini (Khuze) cultural groups of southern KwaZulu-Natal

The definitive works on the Bhaca and Nhlungwini peoples of southern KwaZulu-Natal, as against those of these clans living in the Eastern Province (former Transkei and East Griqualand) were written by Dr. Max Joseph Kohler,⁹¹ namely *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal* (1933) and *The Izangoma Diviners* (1941). Both works were written when Kohler was a Medical doctor at the Roman Catholic Mission of Centocow near Creighton, KwaZulu-Natal, the Mission being one of many such out-stations in southern KwaZulu-Natal and East Griqualand of the former Trappist order at Mariannahill near Pinetown, founded in 1882. The then Government Ethnologist, N. J. van Warmelo, edited Kohler's manuscripts, drew a map for inclusion in these texts and took photographs at the Mission for the former Kohler work (now housed in the collections of the University of Johannesburg and on-line at <http://www.ujdigispace.uj.ac.za>). The map clearly shows the Mission abutted by the clan-lands of the Khuze (Nhlungwini) and the Bhaca.

E. H. Brookes and N. Hurwitz *The Native Reserves of Natal: The Natal Regional Survey: Vol 7* (1957) says of the start of the Reserve/Location system in the then British colony of Natal:

(Colonial official) (Martin) West and his 'Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes (Theophilus) Shepstone, found they had 100,000 (returning refugees from the Shakan wars of the *Mfecane*) on their hands. Something had to be done and done soon – without money or police and but a small military garrison.... West...did not, however, make any final decision himself but instead appointed a commission (The Natal Native Commission of 1846-7) to investigate and make recommendations (Brookes and Hurwitz 1957: 2).

Further:

The commission consisted of Theophilus Shepstone; Dr Stanger, the Surveyor-General; two American missionaries; the famous Dr. Newton Adams, and ...Daniel Lindley (at the time ...(pastor) of the Voortrekkers (Dutch farmers who had trekked from the Cape ...) and an officer of Engineers, Lieutenant C.J. Gibb. (Brookes and Hurwitz 1957: 2).

The Commission accepted in principle the division of the land into settler and tribal areas and "...went further and recommended 'Locations' interspersed among the European farms...the locations were to be selected with reference to the nature of the ground, and as far as possible to the people's own preferences and prejudices" (Brookes and Hurwitz 1957:2). A subsequent Commission of 1852-3 confirmed the initial seven locations gazetted on 7 April 1849, while apportioning more land to these and adding the Kahlamba (Drakensberg) Locations. Later still, under Lieutenant Governor John Scott (1856-64):

A beginning was made with the Upper Umkomazi ... locations and probably with some of the Alexandra locations...(as a result) by 1864 the situation in Natal proper was substantially what it is today (i.e. 1957)...(namely) 42 locations of 2,067,057

⁹¹ Kohler was patron to the pioneer black artist Gerard Bhengu, and medical doctor stationed at the Mission's St. Appollinaris Hospital between 1925 and 1936. He cooperated with the "Government Ethnologist", Dr. N. J. van Warmelo, and illustrated his work with the latter's photographs taken at Centocow in the early 1930s. See Leeb du Toit, J. and Zouverdos ,A. *Gerard Bhengu Retrospective*, Pietermaritzburg, Tatham Art Gallery (1995).

acres, (and) 21 mission Reserves (of) 174,862 acres...transferred to the Natal Native Trust in 1864... (Brookes and Hurwitz 1957:5-6).

N. J. van Warmelo's work *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of Southern Africa* (1935) is still referenced⁹² as regards identifying the clan-lands of the various African indigenous peoples that the Commission had assigned to various areas. Map No 9 shows some nine areas of Bhaca homeland falling within the Umzimkhulu area of East Griqualand (that abutting Centocow Mission being the Bhaca Location Number 7) while indicating another 8 clan-lands of the Nhlanguwini and/or their related Khuze and Dlamini, which fall mainly within the Ixopo area, but also many of the people resident on white farms in the Richmond area (van Warmelo 1935: Map 9). The particular Khuze living next to Centocow Mission fell into what was then the Upper Umkomaas Location No 1 or Emakhuzeni.

Under the Nationalist Apartheid Regime in the mid-1970s, the Locations and Reserves (still largely, but not entirely populated with the original clans, this as local chiefs often gave the use of land to incoming African families) were subsumed into the KwaZulu 'Homeland'. The lower Bhaca and Khuze areas, fell to the Hlanganani Magisterial district, while the 'white' areas remained in their former magisterial areas, like Ixopo, Bulwer (Polela), and others.

After 1994, tribal areas and/or homelands were de-proclaimed and all areas (of what was settler farmland and African clan-lands) became 'back to back' municipalities so that for instance the Centocow Mission and former abutting 'Locations' now fall in the Sisonke District, locally administrated by the Ingwe Municipality head-quartered at the village of Creighton in southern KwaZulu-Natal. With a resurgence of interest in African histories and cultural values by the mid-2000s, the Nhlanguwini leadership, amongst others, made applications to the Nhlapho Commission on Traditional Chiefdoms, for independence from the Zulu royal house of King Goodwill Zwelethini. The issues are complex ones, such that this Commission was disbanded by the South African President Jacob Zuma to constitute yet another for submissions of cases of dispossession of chief/kingship post 1927 (*The Natal Mercury*, 19 April, 2012:4). These corrective Commissions are established in terms of section 22(1) of the *Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41 of 2003* ("the Framework Act") (<http://www.cogta.gov.za>[accessed 14 December 2012]). On 29 July 2010 President Jacob Zuma named seven traditional "Kingships and queenships" to be recognised in South Africa; these are the royal houses of the AbaThembu, AmaXhosa and AmaMpondo of the Eastern Cape; the AmaZulu in KwaZulu-Natal, the Bapedi ba Maroteng and VhaVenda of Limpopo and the AmaNdebele of Mapumalanga.(Mail and Guardian 29 July 2010). Meanwhile unsuccessful applicants have not lost hope as to being recognised, thus the inkosi of the AmaBhaca royal house of Madzikane II KaZulu at Mt Frere in the Eastern Cape, the *iNkosi* (king/chief) has the following to say on his official web-site " The Kingdom of the Bhacas is currently being revived by the great house of Ncapayi..."(www.bhaca.co.za [accessed 22 November 2015]).

At the time of Edgar Brookes and N. Hurwitz's survey of 1957, the African 'Reserves' (rural areas in Zululand) and 'Locations' (rural areas in Natal) were administered by the Native Affairs Department, with the 'Supreme Chief' the Governor-General of the then Union of South Africa.⁹³ Subject to him were various 'Native Commissioners' with finally the 'Chiefs

⁹² This fact is confirmed in a recent useful study conducted under the HSRC (Human Sciences Research Council) Houston, G.F. and Mbele, T. *KwaZulu-Natal History of Traditional Leadership Project*. Report of March 2011.

⁹³ Under The Governor-General was the 'Minister of Native Affairs' (and a 'Native Affairs Commission'), under him a "Secretary for Native Affairs" and these had a 'Chief Native Commissioner' reporting to them, with liaison to 'Technical Services' (with Agricultural Officers, Engineers, etc.) and the 'Appellate division of the Supreme Court' and 'Native Appeals Court'(Brookes and Hurwitz 1957:28).

(and Headmen)' administering the areas at 'grassroots' level (Brookes and Hurwitz 1957: 36 diagram). Thus African Customary Law applied at the 'grassroots' level made every homestead head the ward of his wives or wife and minor children. The authors note:

Any chief may be given civil jurisdiction to hear and determine claims arising out of Native⁹⁴ law and custom brought before him by Natives against Natives resident in the chief's area of jurisdiction (Native Administration Act, 1927, Section 12) (Brookes and Hurwitz 1957:28).

As such these 'Locations' were essentially clan-lands in which those of African descent lived according to customary life-style. However various manifestations of modernisation have impacted everywhere, especially as men have for generations gone to the urban centres (including those in Gauteng (former Transvaal and Reef Gold Mines)) for migrant-work. P.H. Guernault and J. N. Reedman *Handbook on Race Relations in South Africa* (n.d) say that " (o)ne of the main objectives of Native⁹⁵ taxation is, or was, to exert pressure on Natives to seek work in agriculture, mining or manufacturing..."(Guernault and Reedman [n.d.:295] cited in Brookes and Hurwitz 1957:75). Neighbouring settler or white owned farms also had local Africans resident as tenant-labourers up until the Nationalist Government labour-tenancy laws of the 1960s forced them into the 'Reserves' and/or 'Locations'. Generally these peoples on the farms⁹⁶ also lived a largely customary life-style but they would, like all migrant-workers, initiate modernisation along with the more widely operative western cash-economies. The Promotion of Black Self-Government Act of 1959 entrenched the National Party's policy of nominally independent 'Homelands' for African people. These supposedly 'self-governing Bantu⁹⁷ units' were to have devolved administrative powers, with the promise later of autonomy and self-government. The Nationalists in creating their Homeland Policy also sought to strengthen the former clan-lands by expropriation of settler/white farmers during the 1970s and these farms then became Bantu Trust Farms which have become Government lands under the ANC Government post 1994. Missions however had Christian converts or 'Kholwa'(also called AmaKholwa) resident on the mission reserves, and in southern KwaZulu-Natal most being Roman Catholic would have introduced Catholicism to the local neighbouring communities, the Khuze and Bhaca in this case. This Christianization, while sometimes exhibiting syncretism and/or assimilation with tradition, would nevertheless have had an equal if not greater impact on the changes in customary life-styles or traditional African beliefs and cultural practice over the period of the late 19th and 20th centuries until the present as did that of the migrant-labour system. It must be acknowledged that Christianity in its orthodox form was against such cultural practices as polygamy (more than one wife) and belief in the efficacy of the ancestral-spirits, both customs suffusing the very core of all indigenous custom, as it would for the intercessors with the ancestral domain, the *izangoma* (diviners).

⁹⁴ 'Native' was the appellation for a person of African descent in use in the mid-20th century. Later under Nationalist rule it became 'Bantu' and 'black (South African)'. This has changed to 'African' subsequent to the new democracy post 1994. The latter name can be thought insufficient to the task of indicating location in such a vast continent as Africa.

⁹⁵ See previous footnote on term 'Bantu'.

⁹⁶ As one proof of this statement, I was informed by the son of the chauffeur of the late WAC Campbell (Dr Killie Campbell's brother and Director of Natal Estates Ltd.) that his Ndlovu family had lived a fairly traditional life-style at Tweedie in the Natal midlands, but had fallen out with the farmer so had to move. The grandfather then approached WAC Campbell to request if the family (which included his five wives, each with her home) could reside as tenant-labourers on the Campbell's farm Shorelands, Nottingham Road (personal communication, Alfred Ndlovu, Verulam, August 2013).

⁹⁷ 'Bantu' is plural for 'Muntu' – a person; hence the name for the local indigenous black peoples. The Nationalist Government sought to do away with the colonial term 'Native' and therefore the homelands were also termed 'Bantustans.'

The Apartheid system had its start in colonial times when these ‘Locations’ and ‘Reserves’ were administered in terms of Colonial law (and that of African Customary Law known as the Natal Native Code). After the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 all four colonies and republics (Cape, Transvaal, Natal and Orange-Free State) fell to the British Empire, and the Union of South Africa was declared a self-governing dominion in 1910. Several Acts impacted the lives of black South Africans: The South Africa Act (1910) enfranchised whites, removing the right of blacks to sit in Parliament (formerly applicable only in the Cape), the Native Land Act (1913) prevented all Africans, except those in the Cape, from buying land outside ‘Reserves’ and ‘Locations’. The Natives in Urban Areas Bill (1918) forced blacks into ‘Locations’ or ‘Townships’ within urban areas. The Urban Areas Act (1923) introduced residential segregation and provided cheap labour for industry, the Colour Bar Act (1926), preventing anyone black from practicing skilled trades, the Native Administration Act (1927) that made the British Crown, rather than paramount chiefs, the supreme head over all African affairs, the Native Land and Trust Act (1936) complemented the 1913 Native Land Act and, in the same year, the Representation of Natives Act, removed previous black voters from the Cape voters' roll and allowed them to elect whites to represent them in Parliament (See Reader’s Digest *Illustrated History of South Africa: The real story* (1988) or http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apartheid_in_South_Africa [accessed 15 August 2012]).

3.2. Historical overview of the Bhaca and the Nhlangwini (Khuze)

More recent writings on the clans and peoples of KwaZulu-Natal, like those of Wright and Hamilton ‘Traditions and transformations: The Phongolo-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries’ which builds upon that of Maggs ‘The Iron Age farming communities’ in Duminy and Guest (Eds.) *Natal and Zululand: From earliest times to 1910. A new history* (1989), attempt to reassess the earlier Nguni clan histories. Basically the authors refute the notion that it was simply the Zulu King Shaka’s military genius (this being dismissed as a western grand-narrative that ‘great men make history’) that gave rise to the *Mfecane* or the vast movement of clans and peoples of the region (which particularly affected the peoples of the former Natal midlands, East Griqualand and those of the Eastern Cape) fleeing from the Zulu king’s hegemonic wars. These authors attempt to show that these wars of subjugation were consequent upon the attempt of this monarch to corner the ivory, bead, brass, cloth (and possibly slave) trades emanating from Portuguese traders in Delagoa Bay in the north and from English traders of Port Natal in the south. In this process new ethnic identities arose, and for the north Ntungwa Nguni (Shaka’s Zulu clan) a class-system comprised of three tiers was forged; at the apex of the first tier was the king and the aristocracy incorporating closely associated groups. The second tier comprised the Zulu-dominated society from which the *amabutho* (regiments) were drawn. Of this tier the authors comment:

(M)embers of these chiefdoms may be seen as having been full ‘subjects’ of the Zulu king, with certain rights as well as obligations. To foster the growth of a sense of corporate identity among them, they were encouraged by their Zulu rulers to regard themselves as all being of *amantungwa* decent...(Wright and Hamilton 1989:72).

The third tier comprised the majority of people of the peripheries of the Zulu kingdom of whom the authors confirm the noted prejudice against them mentioned in subsection 1.3., of this introductory chapter. To quote Wright and Hamilton:

They were variously known by members of the other two tiers by the derogative names such as *amalala* (menials), *amahlangwa* (destitutes), *iziyendane* (those with a

strange hairstyle) and the like. The subjugation of these peoples was carried out only in the final phases of Zulu expansion, and they were ruled less as ‘subjects’ of the king than as despised ‘outsiders’, who were seen as ethnically inferior to the peoples of the *amantungwa* chiefdoms. (Wright and Hamilton 1989:72).

However, archeological evidence indicates a relationship between all three tiers, for those resident in south east Africa were in all likelihood related to the present peoples. Thus Maggs says:

After about AD 1500 the evidence clearly indicates that the Iron Age people of Natal region were directly ancestral, culturally, linguistically, and physically, to today’s black population. (Maggs 1989:37).

Dr N. J. van Warmelo writing in W.D. Hammond-Tooke’s edited *The Bantu-speaking peoples of Southern Africa* (1974) classifies both the Bhaca and the Khuze groups as the Mfengu (Fingo) and placed them with “other immigrants to the Cape” consequent upon the early 19th century empire-building in Natal⁹⁸ by the Zulu monarch Shaka, when “many thousands of refugees crossed the Umzimkhulu (River) seeking a home amongst the Cape tribes, they came as both solid tribes and in large and small bodies of homogeneous or composite character ”(Hammond-Tooke 1974: 62-3). These were supplemented by Hlubi from Basutoland (Lesotho) pushed by the Ngwane in the Drakensberg, themselves refugees. Although not mentioned by van Warmelo, ‘the Cape’ in 1935 evidently included what was once ‘no man’s land’, including the town of Umzimkhulu and then East Griqualand with Kokstad as its main town, both of which have resident Bhaca communities.

Many of these peoples returned to Natal when peace was restored in the mid-19th century, some Khuze and Bhaca moved to the western Transkei - to become the Mfengu (Fingo), while the Bhaca section of the former Wushe and Zelemu clans remained at Mt Frere in the Transkei, those Khuze and Bhaca returning to Natal settled in the Bulwer and Ixopo Districts. Van Warmelo firmly classifies the Khuze in East Griqualand and Natal as Nhangwini (van Warmelo 1935: 65-69).

Amongst those fleeing the Zulu monarch Shaka were the Bhaca under their then chief Madzikane along with the Nhangwini, and while there were Sotho-speaking groups those fleeing were predominantly Nguni in origins (Duggan-Cronin Vol. III, 1954:10). The cultures of the Bhaca and Nhangwini peoples, while historically distinct are nevertheless akin to each other.⁹⁹ Shaka sought to amalgamate these small groups into one political entity and the adoption of his own Zulu clan’s culture and language (Duggan-Cronin Vol. III, 1954:10). Thus the whole of KwaZulu-Natal’s people came to be known as ‘Zulu’. The refusal of absorption and fleeing of clans resulted in important modification of traditions and customs, with the result that it is difficult for researchers to determine to which original section of

⁹⁸ Historian Carolyn Hamilton speaking of researchers questioning the accuracy of this *mfecane* movement as being attributed to Shaka’s wars of attrition, states “When the South African historian Julian Cobbing made his “case against the mfecane,” he claimed that the notion of the Zulu king Shaka as the devastator of regions around the Zulu kingdom was part of an elaborate alibi constructed by white writers in an effort to obscure the disruptive effects of their participation in a local slave trade” (Hamilton 2011: 1). One assumes the ‘writers’ are the Natal ‘freebooters’ Fynn and Issacs. This does not mitigate such a movement of peoples having taken place however, only giving alternative theories for it’s happening. (See Hamilton, C., ‘Backstory, biography and life of James Stuart archive’ in *History in Africa* 38.(2011), pp319-341).

⁹⁹ This does not mean the Bhaca and Nhangwini are identical to the Zulu who are North Nguni, but rather they are akin to those Nguni resident on the south east coast (later Natal) before the Shakan wars, a time in which each tribe was little more than an extended clan with its own particular culture and traditions, divisible into the ‘true’ Nguni or Ntungwa, the AmaMbo and the tribes of the Ama Lala group (Duggan-Cronin Vol. III, 1954:10).

Nguni these clans actually belonged.¹⁰⁰ The Bhaca lived with the Mpondo in Lusikisiki around 1837, later in the 1860-70s quarrelling among themselves and with their hosts, so that one section remained in the Cape, another moved to Ixopo in southern Natal and yet another settled in East Griqualand under the protection of the Griqua chief Adam Kok (Duggan-Cronin Vol. III, 1954:13). There is reported to have been many arguments as to which may hold the annual First Fruits or *Ingcubhe* ceremony, normally the prerogative of the senior faction (Duggan-Cronin Vol. III, 1954:13).

Migrations of the Shakan period have led to uncertain classifications for peoples in southern KwaZulu-Natal, for instance some Nhlangwini are termed 'Bhaca', even by their descendants, because of the custom of categorizing all tribes of southern Natal and East Griqualand as Bhaca.¹⁰¹ So too not all Kholwa (Christians) on the missions are from the same groups as the neighbouring 'Location' clans.¹⁰²

3.4. Characteristics of traditional Bhaca and Nhlangwini (Khuze) life-styles

Legend has it that the Bhaca/Nhlangwini moved from Swaziland, their having similarities in language to the north Nguni Swazi and southern Nguni AbaMbo (the Zulu while also related are north Ntungwa Nguni), being of the *thefula* speaking dialects (as were the very earliest inhabitants of southern Natal, the AmaLala) characterised by the substitution of *t* for *z* and a "peculiar fricative quality of most of their consonants; this imparts to the language a distinctive lisping effect" (Duggan-Cronin Vol. III, 1954:12).

A characteristic of the Nguni clan system is the use of praise-names or *izithakazelo* used as respectful address. These are most often the name of a forefather and the surname or *isibongo*, meaning that the family history is recorded in the clan praises.¹⁰³ Additional cultural similarities to the other southern Nguni peoples are; homestead and village layout, formed as clusters of "brown-thatched huts" (Xhosa-style rather than beehive Zulu-style) in the 1930s (Duggan-Cronin, Vol III. 1954: 26). Each family-unit consisting of a number of huts grouped around a cattle-kraal (of brushwood, stones or aloes), known as an *umuzi* (homestead) in isiZulu or *umti* in isiBhaca, it also has its own fields, own stock and relative

¹⁰⁰ It is suggested that the Bhaca may have originally been AmaLala of the Zelemu and Wushe groups, with a distinct dialect and culture, while the Nhlangwini and a number of other clans (the Mbhele, Funze, Nyamnywini, Gwentyane and Dunge) formed a confederacy essentially against the tribes fleeing Shaka's army (i.e. the Bhaca), so that the Wushe were totally scattered and the remnants of the tribe collected under the powerful chief Madzikane of the Zelemu (Duggan-Cronin Vol. III, 1954:13). Around 1820 war broke out between these Zelemu/Wushe and Shaka, who's army pursued them into the Mountains near Mt. Frere, where his army perished in a snowstorm attributed to the 'war-doctoring' (*Ukuqinisa amaButho*) of Madzikane, the burning of his medicines said to have caused smoke that formed a cloud which resulted in snow. After this event, the mountain was named *Intsizwa* (Young Warriors) as many men died there. It was Shaka who first applied the name of 'AmaBhaca' or as it is written in English 'Bhaca', when saying of Madzikane and his peoples "*Ubhacile kwaZulu* ('he has fled from Zululand')..." (Duggan-Cronin Vol. III, 1954:13). Their hiding in forests from Shaka's *impi* (warriors) lead to their name deriving from the verb *ukubhaca* (to flee or hide) and refers to this flight.

¹⁰¹ This according to a Mr Xulu of Centocow in interview with Vusi Buthelezi, June 2012.

¹⁰² The artist Gerard Bhengu is thus generally described as a Bhaca, based upon his place of residence. The Bhengu of the Centocow Mission for instance are Ngolosi from the Botha's Hill/Nyuswa/Inanda area and the family would likely have moved to the Mission as Christians, probably moving from St. Faiths with their Stainbank and Joyce (Joyisa) relations (personal communication Peter Stainbank, St Faiths, June 2004 and Mr Xulu, Centocow, June 2012).

¹⁰³ The Bhaca of southern KwaZulu-Natal's clan praise is 'Zulu' while the Khuze of the area's clan praises are 'Dlamini' and 'Sibalukhulu'. These are not the only Bhaca or Nhlangwini families residing in southern Natal; for instance the surnames of 'Hlombe' (of the abakwaCiya clan) and Mtolo and Dlangamandla (of the abakwaMtolo) are just two familiar surnames associated with Bhaca clans resident in the village of Umzimkhulu, East Griqualand. Amongst the surnames commonly associated with the Khuze or Nhlangwini are Mbanjwa and Vilakazi of Umzimkhulu, while there are Mtolo, Mbhele and Bhengu resident within the Eastern Province (former Trans and Ciskei), who are more commonly classified as Mfengu or Fingo (van Warmelo 1935: 65-69). It is important to realise that these families of Bhaca and Khuze (Dlamini) or Nhlangwini are resident within southern KwaZulu-Natal along with other families of either AbaMbo, Basotho or Zulu origins, in particular the Mkhize, Memela and Cele (van Warmelo 1935: 65-69).

economic independence. A number of *imizi* form a cluster (*isixeko*) of related kin or a 'village', persons being mutually dependent for grazing cattle and working the fields. A 'cluster' has a district headman (*induna*) who tries court-cases and who is/was formerly formally recognised in this administrative function by the Government in power. Headmen are under the authority of the chief (*iNkosi*). Upon the head of each individual *umuzi* rests the religious rites honouring the ancestral-spirits (*amathongo/amadlozi*) on the part of his family (usually comprising a man, his wife or wives and their dependent children) for whom he is ward in African Customary Law (Duggan-Cronin, Vol III. 1954: 26). The Bhaca are said not to rank wives according to great, left and right house but rather according to chronological order in which they were married. Notwithstanding this observation some studies of the Eastern Province Bhaca speak of the same homestead lay-out as pertains to the Zulu, so there may be regional variations. "Marriage is effected through the payment of cattle in bride-price (*lobola*) from the man's group to that of the woman's, giving the bride value in the society which can be translated into material terms –the value of the cattle given as *ikhazi (lobola)*" (Duggan-Cronin, Vol III, 1954:29). Of this custom Duggan-Cronin comments:

This is not a purchase but rather the entrusting of recognised rights to both spouses, and a woman, who is mistreated may seek the tribal courts for her grievances to be redressed, the family having to return the bride-wealth, so that it is in the interest of both sides to attempt reconciliation. (Duggan-Cronin, Vol.111, 1954: 28).

The style of female dress particularly of the Bhaca and Nhlungwini (Khuze) are very similar and also very distinctive comparative to their Zulu and AbaMbo neighbours. However as it is the topic of at least two chapters of this thesis, here I will only quote the essentials of scarification and dress from W.D. Hammond-Tooke *The tribes of the Mount Frere District* (1955):

Practically all Bhaca practice face-incision (*chaza*) which is performed on children, "to let out the blood of childhood" with a piece of sharpened iron called *igcaguba*....It is thought that if this custom is not performed the ancestral spirits will complain, causing sickness and perhaps death. (Hammond-Tooke 1955: 55).

This marking differs from clan to clan, hence becoming a tribal marking of identification, the Bhaca have many vertical cuts on the face (side of cheeks) and must have one between the eyes (Hammond Tooke 1955: 55). With the Nhlungwini it depends if they identify closely with Bhaca, but those of Richmond area who are Dlamini have two cuts on the face (side of cheeks) and one on the forehead between the eyes (personal communication Senzo Mkhize¹⁰⁴, Durban, August 2012).

Hammond-Tooke gives the Bhaca dress as follows, this dress accords in essentials with that of the Nhlungwini, however there are some variations in beadwork and headdress and terminology, which will be given in later chapters:

The chief article of clothing for young unmarried girls is a short apron of coloured beads with a bright square of red or yellow cloth bound firmly around the buttocks (the latter for Mount Frere area Bhaca). Bangles, bead necklaces and chaplets are much favoured and for more formal occasions, a breast-cloth is tied behind the neck

¹⁰⁴ Senzo Mkhize is my colleague and his mother's mother was a Dlamini of the Nhlungwini from Umzimkhulu (often said to be Bhaca because they lived with them) who married a Sithole of Hela Hela, Richmond. Both mother and daughter had the face-cuts as described in the text. Mkhize says there are two Nhlungwini in Richmond, the other being descended from the Nhlungwini of Fodo and these are the Bidla-Dlamini of Ndaleni Richmond. Their grandfather was executed in Richmond for 'treason' at the time of the Bhambatha Rebellion 1906 (personal communication Mkhize, Durban, August 2012).

and allowed to hang down in front. The head is clean shaven until betrothal when the hair is allowed to grow in preparation for the married woman's coiffure (Hammond-Tooke 1955: 55).

Further:

Bhaca married women wear skirts of dressed goatskin smeared with fat and supported by a leather belt. At home the breasts are left bare but on visits to the store or village a fat-smeared blanket is bound under the armpits and tied in front....The headdress (*umyaba*¹⁰⁵) of Bhaca women is distinctive. On engagement the hair is allowed to grow until it stands out in a thick mop and it is then rubbed with a mixture of fat and red ochre and twisted into long strings which hang down in a fringe. A wool-padded heading, smeared with ochre, forms the base, through which the ringlets are pushed and allowed to hang down all round the head, those before the eyes being drawn back with a headcloth (*iqhiya*)... (Hammond-Tooke 1955: 55-56).

This style of dress is nowadays only worn for ceremonies while invariably, even where a woman may comply with the leather-apron and headdress, she will in all likelihood wear a cotton-overall (*isishweshwe* or *iphinifa*) made by local African seamstresses and sold on the streets of such small towns as Ixopo or Umzimkhulu. These are also worn, with under cloth skirt and head-scarf, as "a black headcloth (*iduku*¹⁰⁶ or *umshuqulo*) with a dress of blue German print" (Hammond-Tooke 1955:56) by Kholwa or Christian women, but without the leather-skirt.¹⁰⁷ In the 1950s men of all the peoples of southern Kwa-Zulu-Natal, East Griqualand and former upper Transkei had "adopted European-type clothing...(although) the traditional dress is still met with" (Hammond-Tooke 1955: 55), this for ritual ceremonies like weddings. However such dress does show modernising elements (personal communication Bongzi Mdlalose, Umkomaas, December 2012 and see <http://umzimkulu.org/portal/news/1-latest-news/218-sacred-heart-pilgrimage-to-centocow-mission>[accessed 22 August 2013]). Dr Killie Campbell's protégé Barbara Tyrrell has perhaps recorded the dress of the Bhaca/Nhlangwini more comprehensively than anyone in her detailed costume studies of the 1950-80s.¹⁰⁸

The Bhaca and Nhlangwini (Khuze) are known for their strict rules of *ukuhlonipha* (respect) and *ukuzila* (avoidance) applied to women as they are essentially outsiders to the patrilineal and patrilocal society based on the father's ancestral line. Much of this traditional dress and beadwork is there to help in signalling compliance with such customary behaviours.

3.5. The Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours

The AbamBo (Embo) in their clan surname of Mkhize are perhaps the largest family/clan¹⁰⁹ resident in what was the former Natal (now southern KwaZulu-Natal), areas incorporated into

¹⁰⁵ Termed *umyekho* among the Nhlangwini. Around the 1960s the first wigs in the same style were made, women no longer lengthening their hair, yet later in the 1990s women had the style in the form of hair-extensions (See respective chapters of thesis).

¹⁰⁶ From 'doek' the Afrikaans word for a head-scarf.

¹⁰⁷ This last may not be the full truth, on a number of occasions I have been told that rural women who otherwise appear Christian in dress, particularly when older or once been traditionalist in attire, wear a very soft leather-apron under their many wrap-skirts and/or *amaphinifa* (overalls), this has to do with respecting (*ukuhlonipha*) the husband's male line (personal communication Nesta Zondi, Mariannhill, November 2009).

¹⁰⁸ So much so that small museums in the province, as too community museums, like that at the Bhaca royal homestead at Mt Frere request copies of her illustrations from the Campbell Collections, UKZN.

¹⁰⁹ They are currently the South African surname that is numerically strongest or most numerous, this according to clan historian Siya Mkhize (personal communication Durban, October 2015).

the ‘Locations’ of Umlazi, Umbumbulu, Umkomaas and Umzinto, as well as found over many of the ‘white-owned’ farming areas of Richmond, Camperdown and Durban (Mkhize, 2006).¹¹⁰ (See van Warmelo 1935: Maps 8-9). The AbaMbo speak the *tekela* (or *thefuka*) or ‘AmaLala dialect’ of the Nguni, a language still preserved in some parts of Embo territory and spoken by the AmaBhaca, Nhlangwini and the Swazi amongst others. Historian, the Rev. A.T. Bryant, in his book *Olden times in Zululand and Natal* (1935), states, “(e)arly Portuguese documents tell us of Mumbos (Embos/ AbaMbos), on the Zambezi and Vambe (Rivers?) in Natal. The Zambezi Mumbos were found in 1600 and the Vambe in Natal were found in 1589, and they occupy a greater portion of the ‘Terra de Natal’ ” (Bryant 1935: 312).¹¹¹

However in the table of “The Natal Locations, 1953” (Brookes and Hurwitz 1957: 18-19) it is difficult to locate “(Aba)Mbo” among the many other clans (almost all classified as Zulu, but some of which are known relations or sub-sections to the AbaMbo) within the former ‘Locations’ abutting the old Natal Province (that is the area below the Tugela River). Thus they appear eight times out of 125 other clans listed in the table.¹¹² The 2011 HSRC report on the *KwaZulu-Natal History of Traditional Leadership Project* gives a full updated listing of the Embo-Mkhize clans, most all resident as at the 1957 Brookes and Hurwitz listing, only assigned to new administrative districts post the new 1994 ANC government taking office. The 2011 HSRC Report lists these AbaMbo (Embo-Mkhize) clans according to district wherein they are given a number and their chief or regent’s (*iNkosi/Imbamba*) full names are given (surname followed by first name).¹¹³ In this commentary it appears as if the Embo-

¹¹⁰ I had the privilege to work with Siyabonga Mkhize from Zwebomvu (an area near Pinetown which falls under the Embo (Mbo) area next Botha’s Hill). Mkhize wrote up the clan’s history in *Uhlanga Lwas’Embo* in 2006, he having done research into the James Stuart Archives and the Zulu Society Papers held in the manuscript collections of the Killie Campbell Africana library. Mkhize was research assistant on the Andrew Mellon Internship Program under Professor Jeff Guy, then Research-fellow, Campbell Collections, UKZN. Mr Mkhize also did a museum internship under myself as Senior Museologist and in this role contributed toward the exhibition insert on iNkosi Tilongo Mkhize, who was exiled to St Helena at the time of the Bhambatha Rebellion or *Impi Yamakhanda* of 1906. The exhibition coincided with the launch of Jeff Guy’s book *Remembering the Rebellion* (UKZN Press, 2006) at the Collections. Mr Mkhize has also worked as educational tour-guide, has collected beadwork with myself in the Zwebomvu Embo area in 2008 and regularly helped with research-assistance and establishing contacts in the field. He also belonged to the *The Sibiside Heritage Trust* with Dr Bandile Mkhize (KZN Parks Board) that was founded to promote the cultural heritage and history of all the AbaMbo peoples. As such it is the heritage arm of the over-arching *Ubumbano Lwabambo Association* (The Association of the Greater AbaMbo). Most recently he has founded the *Tilongo Foundation* to promote this iNkosi’s ideals among the younger generation.

¹¹¹ Clan historian Siyabonga Mkhize however refers to those mentioned as resident in the 1500s as being the AbaMbo of forefather Sibiside’s line who became the Mpondo and Mpodomise of the Eastern Province, while the Embo-Mkhize are those now resident in the former Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal) who followed only after their forefather (and later in line to Sibiside) Zihlanhlo (who had an understanding with Shaka as ally) was murdered by Shaka’s successor Dingane, and thus as mentioned in the text, the Embo-Mkhize fled around 1833 to Natal. They presently form thirteen chiefdoms in southern KwaZulu-Natal. Mkhize holds that many of the Zulu clans neighbouring them were tribute clans, but historian Jeff Guy in his recent book *Theophilus Shepstone and the forging of Natal*. (2013) holds that Shepstone only considered those returning or still resident clans and those who applied for recognition within his Location System, hence listed in Brookes and Hurwitz’s work. Guy therefore mentions the Mkhize only once in his book (Guy 2013:304), explaining that their history really deserves a work on its own, being a complex history (personal communication Guy and Mkhize, Durban, September 2013).

¹¹² The following areas or ‘Locations’ have listings of these eight ‘(Aba)Mbo’ or Natal Embo-Mkhize clans: ‘Mbo’ appear once in the Ndwedwe, New Hanover, Pinetown and Camperdown areas (all north of Durban); ‘Mbo’ are found once among twenty-one other clans in the Umvoti, Ndwedwe and Mapumulo areas (again north of Durban); ‘Mbo’ appear once along with three other clans in the Estcourt area; one ‘Mbo’ clan is found along with the Khuze in ‘Upper Umkomaas Location No 6’ in the Ixopo area; again one ‘Mbo’ clan is recorded with the Nhlangwini in this series of Locations (namely No 7, also in Ixopo area); ‘Mbo’ are on their own in the area ‘Tilongo Location’ in the Richmond area (named after the well-known Mkhize chief exiled to St Helena at the time of the Bhambatha Rebellion, 1906, and direct line to Zihlanhlo) (this is the royal or senior house of the Embo-Mkhize); ‘Mbo’ appear once along with five other clans (including the Makhanya on whom Reader did his study) in the Umlazi area (south of Durban); finally ‘Mbo’ are recorded with the Dumisa and Nyuswa in Alexander Location No 2 in Umzinto area. Thereafter no other of this clan is listed in Brooks and Hurwitz list (1957:18-19).

¹¹³ Thus the 2011 HSRC Report gives the following: “Table I: Ugu District –No39-Embo/Nkasa/Isimahlha-Mkhize-Inkosi Kusakusa Kesington; No7-Ukuthula-Mkhize -Inkosi Linda Eric; Table 2: Umgungunglovu District- No14-Embo-Mkhize-Inkosi Themba; No15-Mbuzane- Mkhize-Inkosi Selby Makhosaonke; No18-Embo/Thimuni –Mkhize-Inkosi Langalasembu Derick; No 23- Embo/Vumukwenza-Mkhize-Inkosi Moyeni, Philmon: Table 7: Umkhanyakude District –No 2- Mngomezulu –Mkhize –Ibamba (regent) –Khanyisa Mpuco. Table 9-Ilembe District-No 13-Embo-Mkhize-Inkosi Bhokinduna Siphon: Table 10: Sisonke District-No 20-Inkwezi lokuse-Mkhize-Imbamba

Mkhize peoples have been subsumed into other mainly Zulu clans, but according to pre-history they dominated the areas of KwaZulu-Natal's midlands and abutting the city of Durban, both in their wider relations as with their Mpondo and Mpondomise AbaMbo relatives¹¹⁴ and in the latter's interaction with early outsiders; for example they are mentioned by shipwrecked mariners in the 1600s-1700s, who spoke (as remarked by Bryant above) of the 'Embo'.¹¹⁵ The European refugees regarded the Embo (AbaMbo) as hospitable and kindly and these older sections of the greater tribe/peoples settled in the Eastern Province (former Transkei) a long time ago, while those in the former Natal (the table mentioned in Brookes and Hurwitz) the now KwaZulu-Natal (the table in the recent HSRC Report) claim to have moved from their Swazi relations resident in the Lobombo Mountains (next to Swaziland in northern KwaZulu-Natal) and settled among the Zulu at Nkhandla. Here their most famous Chieftain, iNkosi Zihlanhlo Mkhize, had a 'no-war' treaty with the Zulu King Shaka, only for the latter's half-brother Dingane to violate the treaty, having not only his half-brother Shaka killed but the latter's friend and strategist, Zihlanhlo, also killed (Mkhize 2006). This section of the AbaMbo known as the Embo-Mkhize then fled to their present residence at the royal homestead of *Uhlanga Lwas'Embo* in the Umkomaas/Engolela area in the 1830s. This was before Shepstone's implementation of his 'Locations Policy' in which he apportioned the by then Embo-Mkhize lands to the returning refugees after the Shakan wars (it is likely that the latter resided in this territory before fleeing and were merely returning) and thus the AbaMbo culture of the Embo-Mkhize affected that of their Zulu neighbours and visa versa (Mkhize 2006).¹¹⁶ Of the Zulu clans neighbouring the Embo-Mkhize that are of import to this thesis, particularly as their beadwork and dress styles influenced that of the Embo-Mkhize (and indeed can stand alone in a study of the regional style in this regard) are the Makhanya of Umlazi/Umbumbulo, the Qadi (Ngcobo) and Ngcolosi (Bhengu) of Inanda/KwaNtaba (Valley of 1000 Hills) and more especially the Nyavu of Table Mountain (eMkambathi) falling into the post 1994 Umgungundlovu District, but formerly Emakhambathini and Ndwewe Districts.¹¹⁷ The Nyavu fled from Shaka's wars of attrition and returned in the times

(regent) Neliswe Janet: Table 11: Etheke District-No 10- Embo/Illanga-Mkhize-Inkosi Thamasanqa Benjamin Emanuel."(HSRC Report March 2011 [accessed 22 November 2015]).

¹¹⁴ Sibiside, who had many sons, among whom were Njanya the father of the Mpondo, Mpondomise and Xesibe of the Eastern Province, Mavovo the father of the Mkhize clan of KwaZulu-Natal in all its sub-sections. And Mvovo's brother Gubhela, now the praise name (*Izithakazelo*) of the Mkhize, who acted regent to Mvovo's son Khabazela. It is Mvovo who Siyabonga Mkhize says was the Mkhize heir to Sibiside and who moved the clan from Lobomvu to Nkandla (near Qudeni Mountain). Khabazela fathered Gcwabe, who fathered Zihlanhlo (Shaka's friend) who had Singele, who had Ngunezi who fathered Tilongo (chief at time of Bhambatha Rebellion 1906) father to Nkasa (who had a dispute with a brother Timony that led to an Appeal's Court case in the 1930s in which the clan was split (the seniority since still disputed), but said by historian Mkhize to be Zwelinjani, who fathered the present Chieftain iNkosi Kusakusa (Mkhize, 2006).

¹¹⁵ For instance John Bird, *Annals of Natal 1495-1845* (1965) mentions that W. Knyff (of the Dutch ship the 'Stevinnesse' wrecked 16 February 1685) says they fell-in with "two Englishmen" similarly wrecked at Rio de Natal (Durban coastline as Port Natal) who were hosted by the "Embos" in which a quantity of "copper rings and common beads" would see them in "meat and bread" for "50 years."

¹¹⁶ Mkhize says that when the abamBo arrived in southern KwaZulu-Natal in the 1830s they did find many tribes pre-occupying the land, like the Bhaca tribe, Zolo, abathwa, Dumisa, Vangane and Njilo. Some lost their royal position to come under the royal Embo monarch (personal communication Mkhize, Durban, September 2013). He also mentions that the Nyuswa of Ndwedwe/Botha's Hill actually fled from Zululand along with the AbaMbo, the latter's war-doctor being an Ngolosi (Nyuswa/Bhengu). So too did the abamBo supreme chief give ground to the Makhanya in Umlazi/Umbumbulo (personal communication Mkhize, Durban, September 2013). Some of this data is confirmed by clan histories of neighbouring peoples, like the Hlongwa of Zwelebomvu (personal communication, Christopher Hlongwa, Kloof, August 2013). Note however Guy's observations based upon archival records mentioned in a former footnote.

¹¹⁷ One must not forget that the Zulu (Bhaca/Nhlangwini, Embo-Mkhize) are exogamous, meaning that one may not marry a person of the same clan or subdivisions of this clan. In a conversation with Siya Mkhize on clan face-cuts (*izihlanga*), he asserted that these were influenced by one's mother's clan, so if a baby had any problems it is taken to its mother's people and cut according to the ancestral practice of her home. This was why "almost all peoples in southern KwaZulu-Natal have face-cuts." This led Mkhize to comment on the families or clans he was related to through his mother and grandmothers; thus his father's mother was a Luthuli and her mother a Zama while Mkhize's own mother was a Ngcobo and her mother a Zuma, the latter's mother being a Mdluli. Mkhize commented "you see Yvonne I am totally from southern KZN!" We also spoke of the European admixture in Mkhize's bloodline, both for his clan and those of his mother and grandmothers, these from early contacts, perhaps with Portuguese navigators as well as mid 1800 British soldiers. It is important to note that Mkhize (like many Nguni) considers his identity to be that of his father's clan, namely the Mkhize, discounting the other clans of

of Shepstone's establishing of the 'Locations', they split into the Maphumulo and the Mdluli (Kelly 2012: Introduction).¹¹⁸ In terms of dress and beadwork and customary life-style generally, the work of Absalom Vilakazi *Zulu transformations: A study of the dynamics of social change* (1965), a study of the Nuyswa (Qadi) of Ndwedwe, as too Desmond Reader's *Zulu tribe in transition* (1966), a study of the Makhanya of Umbumbulu, would give a good indication of the historical and changing characteristics of this people and their Zulu neighbours' cultures. As the analysis of this is the focus of later chapters, in particular that which surveys age-grades and marriage ceremonies (Chapters 3 and 4), I will return to it then. Suffice it to say that much of the artist-recorder Barbara Tyrrell's costume drawings are a significant resource in this regard, particularly those of the Qadi (Ngcobo) and Ngcolosi (Bhengu) of Inanda/Botha's Hill/KwaNtaba (Valley of 1000 Hills) in the mid-1940s.¹¹⁹

Modernisation of the Bhaca/Nhlangwini, Embo-Mkhize and others

The two big cities of the province of KwaZulu-Natal are Pietermaritzburg and Durban and these are the main centres to which black South Africans moved to obtain work. This migrant-work movement is especially associated with modernisation of dress and ornament, but the Christian Missions had an equal hand to play, as too the fact of modernisation generally. As indicated above traditional dress and beadwork itself has changed with global modernisation, the 'African Truck Trade' of cloth, beads, and other items, having altered over time historically, thus for instance cloth originally manufactured in India, like salampore and 'German-print', were then manufactured in England (Manchester), then in South Africa (such as by Da Gama Textiles and the Frame Company) and then some of the cloth was copied in Hong-Kong and Japan. However, most recently China has cornered the market and has introduced new textiles and blankets. My most recent visit to such towns as Ixopo, Umzimkhulu, 'downtown' Pietermaritzburg (Retief Street) and Durban (South Coast Road and Grey Street) indicate a shift from the older checked blanket style that had been *de rigour* for traditionalists to Chinese (and possibly Pakistani) flower-patterned fleecy double-sided acrylic blankets, all sold in a string of Chinese shops rather than the more familiar Pep Stores or Muslim-owned trading-stores found in these towns up until the early 2000s. These new items are part of bride-price (lobola) gifts and even used for mourning at funerals (personal communication Siya Mkhize and Vusi Buthelezi, June 2012). In the same way that various items of dress changed over the course of the 19th to the 20th century, so too have the beads moved from glass-beads made in Venice, to those made for the 'African Truck Trade' in Bohemia, Czechoslovakia (Jobolonex) to plastic ones made in South Africa (Foché and Coke in Pinetown, and Zablone in Port Shepstone) to imports from Japan and later still, India, Taiwan and other places.

mother and grandmothers as unimportant to who he is spiritually as a person (except in babyhood it seems, if one 'gives ear' to the practice of face-cuts discussed initially) (personal communication Mkhize 26 October 2015). One would surmise the deciding factor would be whichever customary rituals are required to legitimize the parents' marriage (a recurring theme in beadwork communications discussed in chapter 5) and any Nguni person 'illegitimate' in the western sense, falls under the mother's father's ancestral line. See also Ngubane's comments in chapter 4 as to misfortunes in families attributed to failures to undertake correct ancestral rituals, for those of both the father's and mother's lines.

¹¹⁸ The 2011 HSRC Report notes these clans residence, thus; "Table 2: Ugunkundlovu District- No7. -Maphumulo –Mapumulo- Inkosi Nhlakanipho Khulezweni. No.8. Mdluli/Manyavu-Mdluli-Inkosi Sikhosiphi Elliot. Table 7:Umkhanyakude District-No14. Nibela –Mdluli-Ibamba(regent)-Inkosi Nkszibeyiphika Johnson. ."(HSRC Report March 2011 [accessed 22 November 2015]).

¹¹⁹ This being Tyrrell's first commission from Dr Killie Campbell and arranged for her in the area in which the brother WAC Campbell (as well as the siblings' father Sir Marshall) acted as Honorary Chief or Tribal Councillor.

Prior to the 1994 first democratic elections, the Nationalist Party Government applied its infamous apartheid policies which meant that African people lived in townships, usually on the outskirts of the towns, those of Durban being Umlazi, Chesterville, Lamontville and KwaMashu (the latter taking displaced peoples from forced removals from the 2nd World War squatter camp of Cato Manor in the early 1960s). Migrant men moved between their families in their homeland areas to work on contracts of certain lengths of time in these cities, ranging from six months to a year. Often these men were traditionalist and they formed a complex class of their own, one of particular importance to African art, as they brought their traditional homeland art to town where it was subject to hybrid influences. On the Reef and in Kimberley they worked primarily in the gold and diamond mines, but in Durban and Pietermaritzburg they worked in factories, on the docks and as domestics in white homes. Fiona Rankin-Smith in 'Beauty is a hard journey' in Carton, B., et al., (Eds.) *Zulu identities: Being Zulu, past and present* (2008) says of this category's "multiple identities"¹²⁰:

With the easing of influx control in the mid-1980s, unprecedented numbers of rural amaZulu flooded into informal settlements on the outskirts of cities in the Witwatersrand region.¹²¹ They swelled the century-old movement of Zulu migrants, who experienced life as a struggle to sustain both an urban existence and a rural abode, where the prospect of one day retiring to their ancestors held a powerful allure. (Rankin-Smith 2008:410).

She continues to give a description of that unique big city phenomenon of the migrant-workers' hostel market "established in the 1940s by the Johannesburg city council, the Mai Mai hostel" (Rankin-Smith 2008: 411) and comments on the hybrid art forms that developed there:

(Such markets)...became flourishing bazaars for traditional Zulu consumers seeking meat plates (*ugqoko*), headrests (*izigiki*) and beadwork, many of which were obtained from rural artisans in Natal and Zululand....In recent years Mai Mai has spawned a wider popular interest in the creative objects of Zulu migrants....(Thus for instance) Night watchmen ...construct telephone wire lids (*izimbenge*) for beer pots, establishing a lucrative style of art that to this day satisfies the tastes of local and international tourists (Rankin-Smith 2008:411-412).

Durban has its own Dalton Road hostel markets and the Durban beachfront tourist trade, where traditional women, often from surrounding rural homelands, like Inanda or Ndwedwe would come to sell beadwork and other crafts to tourists. Durban also has its many informal settlements or shack-lands, like that which mushroomed at Cato Manor once more after the earlier clearance of the 1960s. Shack-lands are equally to be found, along with the ANC Governments 'RDP' (Redistribution and Development Program) houses, in smaller towns in the province, where the new 'back-to-back' municipalities are dominated by councillors and mayors hailing from the former townships.

The earlier generations of Christian blacks were educated and fell into yet another class of blue and white collar workers like pastors, teachers, nurses, clerks and delivery men, while some of the women went into teaching or domestic work for white settler families. Christians

¹²⁰ I have heard this group of persons termed the 'Diaspora' and there is contact between the Mkhize for instance and their clan members in Gauteng. The youth are brought yearly in groups to KwaZulu-Natal under the auspices of the *iNkosi Tilongo Foundation* when a visit to the Campbell Collections to view traditional regalia, Barbara Tyrrell costume studies and memorabilia from the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906 is a regular stop (personal communication Siya Mkhize, Durban 2013).

tended to live in the black urban townships. Pertinent to Christians is that most of the early schools as well as the art-schools were attached to missions and naturally those who attended them were Kholwa or Christians. Christian institutions were however also the 'home' of the generation of 'New African' writers and musicians of the 1930-50s as they were of the beginnings of the political powers of the ANC. The IFP, then the Inkatha Movement, also started as the local body of the ANC in exile before the relationship was severed by the Nationalist Government's hegemonies and then the UDF became the local front sympathetic to the ANC in 1983. This was the period of the armed struggle and clashes between ANC/UDF and Inkatha Movement/IFP mark the era of the 1980-90s as one of civil wars known as the *Udlame* in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands especially (Mchunu 2013 and Kelly 2012).

The build-up to the 1994 elections and an ANC Government resulted in the former group area laws, prescribing that black South Africans live in the townships, being rescinded and parts of the inner city became what were termed 'grey areas', like Albert Park in Durban where black people rented flats in former all white areas. Here too, reside foreign blacks, many of whom are refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Zimbabwe who tended to move into these areas, bringing with them a cosmopolitan pan-African aspect to the city where most ply street trading, including that of curios from the rest of the continent. Otherwise there remain certain continuities to the province's dynamics despite political change, as many blacks continued living in townships and/or rural men still migrate to work and continue to live in hostels in these townships. So saying, there are many 'middle class' Africans who have moved into former 'white' areas, introducing various new dynamics that are yet to fully bloom as regards artistic expression, like for instance lavish neo-Rococo furnishings, 'power-dressing' and status cars.

In post 1994, the Government in creating the third tier of local 'back-to-back' municipalities to govern provinces, towns and districts therein, changed the map of the former Natal and KwaZulu which was rezoned/redrawn forming a new map of magisterial/municipal areas. Of concern to this thesis are changes through rezoning to the names of those areas from which the Bhaca/Nhlangwini and Embo-Mkhize (and their Zulu neighbours) derive, as it is their beadwork and dress studied in the thesis.¹²² As these new 'back-to-back' municipalities only create confusion to the topic of this thesis, I have decided to retain the names of regions as and when the selected items of dress and beadwork were collected, and/or names given by their former owners/beadworkers, hence these may not synchronize with the new post 1994 names mentioned in the rezoned map.¹²³

This overview is a simplified rendition of the dynamics of the province but it does show some of the historical complexities as well as the constant change and adaptation that form the

¹²² These are the former district of Ndwedwe which has been split into six sub-areas all abutting the greater Durban known as eThekweni Unicity. Ndwedwe now falls into the greater iLembe district comprised of (a now smaller) Ndwedwe, Maphumulo, Endondakusuka and Kwadukuza. The former sections of Ndwedwe known as Emkhambathini or Camperdown now fall into a sub-district of Mkhambathini within the greater Umgungundlovu (the former isiZulu name for Pietermaritzburg which is now Msunduzi within this greater district). Richmond stays the same and also falls into this greater district of Umgungundlovu. The areas of Ixopo and Himeville come under a sub-section of Ingwe within the greater Sisoke district. Those areas of Umbumbulu and Umlazi of interest to the thesis now fall into the greater eThekweni (Durban) Unicity while Umkomaas is now in sub-district Vulamehlo in the greater Ugu district (<http://www.ewisa.co.za/ewisawaterworks/misc/municipaldocuments/kzndisugu/kzn-map/pdf> [accessed 15 June 2013]). These district changes are more clearly articulated in Adrian Koopman, 'Shield, Symbolism and Identity' in *Natalia* 2007:36-37.

¹²³ I am also circumspect with altering the original given locations because new district asignations can be under review, thus for example the royal house Isimahla of iNkosi Kusakusa Mkhize initially at Umkomaas, first fell post 1994 to the Ugu district (with administration at Port Shepstone) while recently it is to shift to eThekweni district (the old Durban Metro) as administrative headquarters (personal communication Siya Mkhize, Durban, October 2015).

matrix in which black South Africans, especially those in KwaZulu-Natal, find themselves. A matrix comprised of a variety of influences and conflicts, all impacting on identities, such as rural migrant versus urban township dweller, traditional life-style and religion of the ancestors versus missionary introduced orthodox Christianity or Zionist African Christian synchronism. To this must be added pressures of modernisation and adaptation to the metropolis which includes those realities of economic lack and struggle and the devastation of the AIDS pandemic, as too the 'new rich' finding their place within a democratic post 1994 South Africa and the cosmopolitan influx of refugees and foreign blacks (and others, like the Chinese traders), all of whom impact on the topic of this study.

Chapter 2: Issues and Theoretical background

Introduction

Despite my decision, outlined in the preceding introductory chapter, to privilege in this thesis the two theoretical modalities of Orality-Literacy Studies of Ong in particular (1982, 2002) and the ‘thick description’ of Symbolic and Interpretative Anthropology (Geertz 1973, 1979, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c) and its derivative Symbolic Interactionism (Denzin (1992 among others) with the intention of explaining the parameters of these modalities in this chapter (particularly in the light of their pertinence to the topic of beadwork and dress held in the Campbell Collections, UKZN), there are other issues as pointed out in the introduction that impact the topic at hand that need to be taken into account. These issues are those of Art and Aesthetics, Anthropology (and its main orientations of Social and Cultural Anthropology and the schools of thought that arose from them), ‘othering’, ‘the self’, Museology, African Feminism and modernisation. They are listed here in an apparently erratic way but that is because they reflect the multi-disciplinary nature of the topic and a number of perspectives on southern KwaZulu-Natal’s indigenous beadwork and dress that require recognition, clarification and deliberation. However not all the debates around these issues are necessarily applicable and many are contradictory, so that some contribute less and others more to this study and its various research problems and objectives as outlined in point 2.3 of Chapter 1.

1. Western and African aesthetic thought

In western thought, aesthetics is considered to be a branch of philosophy in which there is critical reflection on the nature of art, and until relatively recently the division between ‘High’ or ‘Fine Arts’ and ‘material culture’ (in both their western and non-western forms) was the criterion used to determine whether an item should be evaluated either as a piece of ‘(handi) craft’ or whether it could be reclassified as ‘Art’. Essentially the aestheticians of the west, and particularly those of the Enlightenment inspired by classical Greece, regarded an object’s beauty and aesthetic appeal as lying in its proportion, harmony and unity of parts, giving the object order and symmetry (Parker 2013). As such the object that complied with these criteria could stand alone as ‘Art’ or ‘High Art’. However, when considering the success of aesthetical elements applied to cultural artefacts (termed ‘material culture’ in Anthropology), these need to be in accord with the associated contexts and creative purpose of the item. This can only be assessed if the original purpose is known otherwise its full appreciation will remain lost to the viewer. Understandings have changed over time and so a 19th century British colonialist may have found an African mask disturbing and even ugly by the standards in vogue then, but this would have changed in the 20th century under new social, economic and political influences, as Colin Rhodes in *Primitivism and Modern Art* (1994) comments “(the) conventional Western viewpoint at the turn of the (20th) century imposed itself as superior to the primitive (referring to someone considered less advanced than the person to which he/she is compared)... (but) the Primitivist (follower of the early 20th century art movement that was inspired by the cultures of especially Africa) questioned the validity of this assumption...” (Rhodes 1994: 13).

Such changes affected dominant Eurocentric concepts of ‘Art’ and ‘Aesthetics’ as Modernism and eventually Postmodernism challenged the notions of beauty and particularly its western external standards of measurement, and thereby broadened the meanings of art and aesthetics. Modern psychological concepts were applied to the understanding of the

visual arts by Ernst Gombrich and Rudolf Arnheim in particular. Of Gombrich,¹²⁴ Uta Grundmann says "... (he) believed there was no vision without assumptions, no innocent eye... (i)n relation to the 'truth' of our perceptions, or images, we are always faced with the problem that there is no unmediated 'visual world' against which we can compare our perceptions...(that is) a world (not) already clothed in our representational systems." While of visual art and film theorist Arnheim's¹²⁵ theory, Grundmann says "... (he sought) to integrate the Gestalt theory of perception¹²⁶ with the traditional concerns of picture (art)-making...(and)...sought to show how perceptual laws *were intuitively applied by...artists*" (Italics mine) ([http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/2/Mapping Conversations Spring 2001](http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/2/Mapping%20Conversations)) [accessed 4 August 2013]). Art critic David Bordwell comments that in Arnheim's belief "even the most elementary processes of vision do not produce mechanical recordings of the outer world but organize the sensory raw material according to principals of simplicity, regularity, and balance, which govern the receptor mechanism..." (Arnheim cited by Bordwell at ([http://www.davidbordwell.net.Simplicity, clarity, balance: A tribute to Rudolf Arnheim](http://www.davidbordwell.net.Simplicity,clarity,balance:Atribute%20toRudolfArnheim) (June 15, 2007) ([accessed 4 August 2013])). More importantly Arnheim saw the same form-giving activity at work in non-western art and he argued that the Gestalt conception of form was both universal and inherently expressive, as in "A triangle resting on its base wasn't just balanced; it was weighty....a skyscraper isn't just tall, it's aggressively thrusting upward" (<http://www.davidbordwell.net>). Grundmann quotes Arnheim saying "Gestalt psychologists, referring among other things to the arts, emphasized that there are common connections in human nature, (and) in nature generally, in which the whole is made up of its interrelationship of its parts and no sum of the parts equals the whole" (<http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/2/>). Grundmann quotes Arnheim explaining:

(T)he essence of an image is its ability to convey meaning through sensory experience. *Signs and language are established conceptual modifiers; they are the outer shells of actual meaning....* Without form an image cannot carry a visual message into consciousness. Thus it is the organized forms that deliver the visual concept that makes an image legible ... (Italics mine) (Arnheim cited by Grundmann at <http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/2/>).

Mary Eaton in *Basic Issues in Aesthetics* (1988) gives details of 'Marxist Aesthetic Sociology' which takes a historical and sociological line rather than an aesthetical or psychological one, as it focusses on the way art functions socially, politically, economically and historically. According to such theories art is produced by historical conditions and so needs to be explained in terms of those conditions, particularly in terms of the ideologies that

¹²⁴ Sir Ernst Gombrich's best known work is *The Story of Art* (1952) and *Art, Perception and Reality* (1972).

¹²⁵ Rudolf Arnheim's most influential work was *Art and Visual Perception* (1954, new version 1974).

¹²⁶ "**Gestalt Theory of Visual Perception**-The Gestalt theorists were the first group of psychologists to systematically study perceptual organisation around the 1920's, in Germany. They were Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Ernst Mach, and particularly ... Christian von Ehrenfels and the research work of Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Köhler, Kurt Koffka, and Kurt Lewin...(They) were forced to flee (at the time of National Socialism in Germany)... to the United States where they continued to work.... Gestalt (refers to)...when parts identified individually have different characteristics to the whole ... (they nevertheless) form into a whole to the human brain and eye... (the German word) Gestalt means "organised whole" e.g. describing a tree - it's parts are trunk, branches, leaves, perhaps blossoms or fruit, but when you look at an entire tree, you are not conscious of the parts, (rather) you are aware of the overall object - the tree. Parts are of secondary importance even though they can be clearly seen." (<http://www.users.totalise.co.uk/~kbroom/Lectures/gestalt.htm> [accessed 4 August 2013]).

are reflected in and are perpetuated by them. Marxism is countered by 'Deconstructionist theory' which holds that one can never fully know or reconstruct an artist's meaning, or equate a work with symbols operating at a particular time or place, or understand what a work would mean to every person in a given audience (Eaton 1988: 97-99).

John Walker and Judy Attfield in *Design History and the History of Design* (1989) consider Social and Cultural Anthropology as extrinsic to the study of contemporary designed objects, because the applied aesthetical criteria of that studied is confined to western art-objects that do not have the same cultural connotations as non-western artefacts (Walker and Attfield 1989: 125-126). However where non-western art is studied they comment that as it derives from the study of Cultural Anthropology, the emphasis being upon other purposes and functions that any artefact may serve, including ones that may have little to do with practical use, such as imposing identity or signalling values (Walker and Attfield 1989:128). On the other hand, Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton in *Anthropology, Art, and Aesthetics* (1992) claim for non-western societies, not the absence of an aesthetical appreciation, but one so inherent in the culture's daily perception as to be ignored by western philosophy of art's need for a tangible object set apart for contemplation, noting "While our common human physiology no doubt results in our having universal, generalized responses to certain stimuli, perception is an active and cognitive process in which cultural factors play a dominant role" (Coote and Shelton 1992: 245).

When speaking of the emphasis upon the aesthetic dimension dominating western art appreciation of the mid-20th century, Clifford Geertz says in 'Art as a Cultural System' in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (1983):

... (I)t is perhaps only in the modern age and in the West that some people...have managed to convince themselves that technical talk about art ...is sufficient to a complete understanding of it; that the whole secret of aesthetic power is located in the formal relations among sounds, images, volumes, themes or gestures (Geertz 1983a: 96).

Geertz continues:

For everywhere else (predominantly in the non-western world)...other sorts of talk, whose terms and conceptions derive from cultural concerns art may serve, or reflect, or challenge, or describe, but does not in itself create, collects about it to connect its energies to the dynamic of human experience (Geertz 1983a: 96).

Walker and Attfield quote Mary Douglas, the well-known Symbolic anthropologist, in her work with Baron Isherwood, *The world of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption* (1996) in regard to Anthropology's employing of the 'ethnographic present', and give their understanding of the process. One can note that this paradigm does not claim that there is no modernisation taking place, rather it postures that the modern informs and is informed by a culture's past (as will be seen in the passage quoted below):

(It is) a special tense that aims to concentrate past, present, and future into a continuous present...(it) has more merit than a reconstructed and misconstrued time

dimension.¹²⁷ It synthesizes into one temporal point the events of many periods, the value of the synthesis lying in the strength of the analysis of the perceived present. *Whatever is important about the past is assumed to be making itself known and felt in the here and now* (Italics mine) (Walker and Attfield 1989:127).

One can see in this an echo of that already claimed for symbols by John Beattie. To repeat:

Sociologically... they (symbols) provide people with a means of representing abstract ideas of great *practical importance to themselves*symbolism is essentially expressive; it is a way of saying something important... What is said symbolically must be thought to be worth saying. ...*what is symbolised is always an object of value*. This means that people's attitudes to their symbols are rarely neutral; they are almost always more or less affectively charged (Italics mine) (Beattie 1970: 70-71).

Certainly all cultures have their own aesthetic concepts which may yet be argued to conform to the "universal signatures" of Denis Dutton¹²⁸ and these contribute to the understanding of the issues at stake for indigenous cultural aesthetics. Dutton defines "Tribal art" as that also termed "*ethnographic art*" and formerly "*primitive art*", saying they appear in small-scale non-literate societies, usually in isolation from large civilizations. Moreover, the arts of these societies include intangible heritage, like dance and music, oral literature and that artistry impossible to transport back to the museums of Europe, like body decoration. ([\(http://www.denisdutton.com\)](http://www.denisdutton.com).(1993)[accessed 23 July 2012]).

Dutton mentions Arnheim's claim that non-western art was not meant for aesthetic appreciation but was a practical item of daily use and that anthropologist Alfred Gell argued the use of 'tribal' art in magical technology and that European valuing of such items for their beauty was ethnocentric (Gell as cited by Dutton at <http://www.denisdutton.com>). Rather Dutton says:

(W)orks of tribal art....are deeply embedded in their cultural contexts, tribal arts are governed by systems of rules as complex as those that govern Western art forms. *Moreover, it seems probable that societies which lack writing as a means of recording information and tradition invest art works with a greater density of meaning than literate societies* (Italics mine) (<http://www.denisdutton.com>).

Dutton criticises museum/gallery curators who wish to acquire 'tribal arts' that were once used in ceremonies so as to designate them 'authentic' (such as African masks) while simultaneously denigrating contemporary tourist or 'airport' art made specifically for foreign visitors as being 'inferior' because it is assumed not to reflect usage and the indigenous

¹²⁷ I have only recently come to realise that with the multi-disciplinary orientation to the contemporary study of culture in which particularly the field of History takes exception to the use of the word "traditionalist" to describe particularly African persons following customary life-style, that one facet of the argument is with the depiction of a unchanging (non-modernising) "ethnographic present" so beloved by Anthropology (personal communication Carolyn Hamilton, Cape Town, 23 July 2013). These concerns and problems of using terminologies of one discipline in another will hopefully be addressed throughout the thesis in the appropriate contexts.

¹²⁸ Denis Dutton identified six "universal signatures" in human aesthetics: 1) Expertise or virtuosity. Humans cultivate, recognize, and admire technical artistic skills. 2) Non utilitarian pleasure. People enjoy art for art's sake, and don't demand that it keep them warm or put food on the table. 3) Style. Artistic objects and performances satisfy rules of composition that place them in a recognizable style. 4) Criticism. People make a point of judging, appreciating, and interpreting works of art. 5) Imitation. With a few important exceptions like abstract painting, works of art simulate experiences of the world. 6) Special focus. Art is set aside from ordinary life and made a dramatic focus of experience.([www:/http/wikipedia/aesthetics](http://wikipedia/aesthetics)[accessed 23 July 2012]).

values of the society of origin. He determines that this western upholding of ‘authenticity’ has been considered by Larry Shiner¹²⁹ to be “not merely an ethnocentric reflection of the modern discourse of Fine Art; it is also a piece of ideology, an unintended *justification of a continuing exploitative power relation*” (Italics mine) (Shiner as cited by Dutton at <http://www.denisdutton.com>).

African beadwork and dress have not yet received much museological/anthropological scrutiny as to their aesthetics and meanings. In Lidia Sciama ‘Gender in the making, trading and uses of beads’ in Sciama, L.D., and Eicher, J.B., (Eds.) *Beads and bead makers, gender, material culture and meaning* (1998), the author uses phrases that place beads within the context of Cultural Anthropology (See definition in section 4 of this chapter), and echoed in more depth by Margaret Carey in ‘Gender in African beadwork: An overview’ in the same volume:

(T)he use of beads is (or was) often tied to beliefs concerning both the social and cosmological order, ritual cycles related to human production and reproduction, persons’ progression through systems of age-sets, their position within status hierarchies, and above all, distinctions of gender. *Beads then clearly stand out as symbolic markers and their presence in conjunction (with) ...diverse styles of apparel stimulates anthropological questions concerning their meanings in different cultures* (Italics mine) (Sciama 1998:5).

It is significant that Sciama only uses the aesthetic terminology when she discusses Eleanor Preston-Whyte’s writings on the craft dolls or soft-sculptures of Ndwedwe, KwaZulu-Natal, those made by traditionalist women for the art-market and sold through the African Art Centre, Durban,¹³⁰ a development of former cultural beadworking into economically saleable art:

The success of the craftswomen may be partly due to their capacity to bring together two different traditions; the painstaking and fastidious accuracy of European work, mainly introduced by missionaries, with the exuberance and sense of colour of Zulu culture (Sciama 1998:28).

This phenomenon indicates the input of western teaching of not so much art but ‘handicrafts’, mostly in Christian missions like Mariannahill and non-profit organizations like the African Art Centre, Durban, all mainly geared to economic sustainable development of the indigenous crafts’ sector of KwaZulu-Natal. Yet a definite, if highly regionalized, indigenous aesthetics in KwaZulu-Natal’s beadwork and dress does exist. Important to this study is to establish exactly what constitutes these aesthetic criteria and how and why they are dependent upon the world-view of the culture itself . An attempt to suggest what these are likely to be has been made in Chapter 1. Introduction (point 1.3., Patterning and decorating and their cultural significance).

So saying, 19th century beadwork pieces from KZN that concur with the norms of western aesthetics have been recognised by the art/gallery/museum world, usually in the acquisition

¹²⁹ Larry Shiner authored *The invention of Art: A cultural History* (2003) and ‘Mythologies of Tribal Art’ in *African Arts* 28 (1995) pp 32-42..

¹³⁰ The African Art Centre’s early collection named after Jo Thorpe, the founder of the Centre, are now held in the Campbell Collections, UKZN.

of such items, via repatriation from Europe, Britain and the United States into the major South African galleries.¹³¹ Labelle in her publication on east and southern African beadwork held in Canadian Collections dedicates a chapter to evaluating these pieces of beadwork via universal aesthetic principals:

(I)n a great many pieces of eastern and southern African beadwork, *the choice of certain colours, colour combinations, designs and the use of space, reflects enduring aesthetic principals that are not affected by passing trends...* It is likely that these different aesthetic principles not only correspond to the search for an ideal of harmony and order, but are also a profound reflection of the social and religious values integral to these societies. (Italics mine)(Labelle 2005:63).

Further, it may be possible with later pieces still worn or lately so worn, to access these social and religious values of the society of origin, by applying the ‘thick description’ of which Geertz spoke (as considered in chapter 1 of this thesis), but it may well be too late to decipher such symbolic meaning in earlier items, modernisation having largely obliterated such data (unless recorded by an anthropologist or other interested party at the time of observation). Rather, other questions may have in time become equally valid concerning the ‘thick description’ of indigenous items. For instance, in the 1980s during the rise of the Inkatha Movement’s (subsequently IFP) politicising of Zulu identity and/or persons joining the Nazareth Baptist (Shembe) church (which combines traditional regalia with aspects of western liturgical dress) the debate centred on the psychological effects of identity, as to the discomfort of wearing the by then unfamiliar attire of a parent or grandparent’s generation (personal communication Patrick Ngubane and Mandlankosi Vuma, Durban, 1980s). While in the post 1994 ‘first democratic elections’ period, others voluntarily returned to such attire, inspired by the ‘African Renaissance’ or even their ancestral-spirits (personal communication Mwelela Cele and Henry Mshololo, Durban, 2000 and 2007). This begs the question of new meanings and identities accruing in relation to the importance of traditionalist regalia (inclusive of beadwork and dress) and its links to any operative political scenario as for example that debated by Gerhard Maré in *Brothers Born of Warrior Blood: Politics and Ethnicity in South Africa* (1992). While this issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 on age-grades, where pertinent to such re-introduced ceremonies as those of *Nomkhulbulwana* (Virginity-testing), here it can be pointed out that any item’s life-span can encompass a number of meanings, expressing aesthetic norms as well as changing cultural purposes applying to any piece over a period of its existence. It is this fact that allows Labelle for instance to use what she considers to be enduring aesthetic principals to the beadwork of southern Africa, for in doing this she is actually considering the new significance of the items as art-objects within western galleries/museums. Can this be termed a continuous ‘ethnographic present’ of current context(s) or the item’s history? What is significant is the constant morphing of aesthetic norms and one could argue then for not only a regional ‘indigenous aesthetic’ but for a ‘shifting universal aesthetic’ and moreover consider its causes, an aspect also pertinent to the section on modernisation in this chapter.

2. Museological orientations to collections, ‘Othering’, ‘Otherness’ and the ‘Gaze’

Eileen Hooper-Greenhill in *Museums and the interpretation of visual culture* (2000) states that ‘naming, classifying and displaying’ are the basis on which museums operate and

¹³¹ The Brenthurst Collection in Johannesburg and that of IZIKO – SA National Gallery in Cape Town are just two such galleries that can be named. The former taking up the Jonathan Lowen collection of repatriated pieces, while the latter had its collections acquired through transfer from the Natural History section in the 1990s (personal communication Carol Kaufmann and Nessa Liebhammer, Cape Town, March 2012 and July 2013).

discusses the difficulties around the shift from Modernism/Colonialism to Postmodernism/Post-colonialism in museum/gallery approaches. Modernism/Colonialism she contends originates in the imperialist museums of the conquering nations, the appropriation of artefacts from far-flung cultures that 'played' into the power hegemonies of the European Nation-States. Such artefacts were then displayed as the product of 'alien', 'conquered' and 'primitive' cultures (Hooper-Greenhill 2000:39). Modernism had much to do with colonialism and power-politics. Arguably such thought was adopted by the Nationalist Regime of pre 1994 South Africa, which itself stemmed from a reaction to British Imperialism's impositions consequent upon the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902, to then become a reactionary white minority control of an African majority. Its suppression via its policies, included the silencing and/or marginalizing of any indigenous 'voice' and was to influence the South African museum world up until the 1994 elections, whereafter attempts were made by museologists to catch-up with the Post-modern era. The doctoral study of Cecilia Rodéhn *Lost in transformation: A critical study of two South African museums* (2008) reflects the consequences of these happenings as they affect the histories of two Pietermaritzburg museums. A recent application of some of these ideas to a South African context can be found in the work of Annie Coombes *History after apartheid: visual culture and public memory in a democratic South Africa* (2004). She explains the displaying of art works in South African museums and how these allow alternate readings/ narratives of history. The acknowledgement of Postmodernism in galleries/museums has resulted in repatriation of sacred artefacts, community involvement, the 'voice' or narrative of the individual artist (bead/dressmaker) and the re-owning of cultures by indigenous peoples. To reiterate, these works all show that the newer Museology is many-voiced, multi-disciplined and respectful of alternative views and the necessity for reviewing of the old apartheid era museums in South Africa.

Most collections started in Colonial/Modernist times probably still remain somewhat shackled by early notions like those of the European Enlightenment and Darwinian Evolutionism. In the redefinition of the former 'ethnographic' as 'art' and the change of ownership from private collector to public gallery/museum, an item/artefact can undergo a metamorphosis as was indicated in the last paragraph of section 1, above. Invariably, as mentioned, in terms of traditionalist cultural artefacts, the item shifts from having a culturally accepted functional or sacred purpose (or both) to an 'Art-object', resulting in a new significance usually in terms of its success in reflecting aesthetical norms but also a value to both the art and curio trade. Moreover, while aesthetic standards can be argued as universally applicable, the very concept of 'Aesthetics' remains essentially a western one. In this, the obverse side to this metamorphosis of an object's significance is all of decontextualization, a neo-colonialist control of museums/galleries (and hence the public mind) and the dangers of 'othering'. Ann Wanless in her doctoral thesis *The Silence of Colonial Melancholy: The Fourie Collection of Khoisan Ethnographic* (2007) says of the metamorphoses of material cultural objects:

At the turn of the twentieth century material culture was grist to the mill of evolutionary anthropologists, who argued that developments in technology were important markers in advancements in human progress towards the ultimate civilised state manifested by western European cultures....In the second half of the twentieth century in Britain a new order of anthropology began to be practised, and, as a part of their struggle to debunk the old order, the new breed of professional anthropologist, which included Bronislaw Malinowski and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, de-emphasised material culture to the extent that from about 1950 to 1990 it was barely referred to at all. (Wanless 2007:35).

Wanless goes on to say that in the late 1980s and early 1990s, “ethnographic museums began to be subjected to scrutiny by anthropologists and historians influenced by aspects of deconstructionism and post-modernism, there has been a resurgence of interest in material culture...” (Wanless 2007:36). She mentions the 1987 review by historian John Wright and archaeologist Aron Mazel of pre-colonial museum-displays in KwaZulu-Natal in which they noted that black people were often represented as removed from their historical contexts and thus the displays visually symbolized the Nationalist Regime’s official version of the past and thus “museums were revealed as institutions of power and as perpetrators and sometimes even shapers of the (South African) *status quo*.” (Wanless 2007:37).

The above commentaries indicate the extent to which museums and galleries were (and most probably still are) often among the perpetrators of ‘othering’ as well as decontextualization. No doubt it is the task of academics in the fields of Art History, Anthropology and Archeology to correct these misperceptions through their research publications and these should inform all museum interpretation/representation. Ethically museums ought to indicate the possibility of such misconstruing and false interpretation/representations, this despite the best of intentions. Possibly there can be no true rendition of ‘other cultures’ in their functional holistic context and every attempt to do so, particularly in a museum display, merely perpetuate the problematic in the field of museological studies. In searching for some data on beadwork meanings in notes taken down from one field-collector in 1995, I came across my comment after talking to a fellow museum ethnologist who had dismissed all meaning in beadwork as “inventions of the ‘aunties’ ”. He called the suppliers this, as they were often aunts of the main field-collectors that museums worked with, believing their explanations to be given so as to sell, and he therefore ignored any such proffered data. I recall the discomfort this caused me, especially in its echo to Thorpe and Preston-Whyte’s implications that beadwork colour meanings were merely a romantic ‘myth’ aimed at the tourist-market (mentioned in the initial paragraphs of Chapter 1 (part 1.1.). One can concede that the primary concerns of a beadworker/seller of an item of beadwork/ dress, would be her family and community and the need to support them financially, but that does not mean she would necessarily be misinforming so as to sell, not when respect for her own culture (*ukuhlonipha isiko*) and her personal integrity is at stake. Moreover most contemporary traditionalists have an understanding of the concept of a museum as a repository of indigenous cultural artefacts preserved for future generations (a concept incidentally found in cultural thinking as traditionalists place their (gand)father’s headrest and personal effects on the *umsamo* or altar of the hut (which is a raised portion at the back opposite the door), sacred to the ancestors (Raum 1973)). Obviously one must be wary about possible fabrications, but how would one know? One can only hope that the cue would be there, something ‘off-key’, maybe no more than wondering at too elaborate a tale told by a beadworker/seller. Thus one needs to be mindful of ‘common-sense’ as applied to museum-collecting/acquisitions coming from the field, as Geertz advises (Geertz 1983b) and furthermore establish a respectful rapport and dialogue with the field-collector or ‘go-between’ and/or beadworker/wearer/seller in the field. It can be pointed out that such claims as “they only say there is a meaning (in order) to sell” is in itself an indication of ‘othering’ on the part of the collector; any real rapport established through respectful dialogue would have resulted in mutual honesty, for in fact many field-collectors as well as beadworkers/wearers, when selling an item (especially to a museum) are honest, saying either “I don’t know (if there was a meaning)”, or “the seller said she meant it as mere decoration”, or “I did not ask so I cannot tell you (if there was any meaning or not)” and where there is a proffered meaning, most often the seller welcomes the opportunity of a

further dialogue around the meaning itself. Many of the problems in this regard stem from the financial transaction involved, but generally even the most distantly dwelling rural persons have a sense of the value of their items and will refuse to sell if these should have special importance to them. Certainly Museology has become more complex and the challenges of all such debate as to the modes of acquisition, issues of 'ownership' by communities represented in the holdings, interpretations of 'other-cultures' customs/art-works, repatriation of such items when classified as national heritage (usually from European museums) and the ethics involved in these issues have all arguably become of consequence to the institutions, professional museum bodies and Government agencies (like SAMA (South African Museums Association) and SAHRA (South African Heritage Resources Agency), their audiences and those represented in them.

When considering the impact of museum displays on their audiences, many of whom are western tourists, one comes up against the danger of 'othering' of the non-western (and in this case) African persons and their cultures. Ann Wanless comments on this subject in relation to her thesis topic comprised of a vast holding of material of Khoisan interest, much of which had been dispersed over the years since its founder, Medical Officer for the Protectorate of South West Africa, Dr Louis Fourie had amassed it. In the elapse of time Fourie's collection had been variously subjected to 'othering':

It became increasingly obvious that this collection was not only about the Khoisan. The message had been changed by the times through which it had been sent down. *Other voices had been added to the original ones, not more about the Khoisan, but something of the meanings they held for the other*, those colonial/settler/civil servant/anthropologists who had appropriated their bodies, possessions, languages and customs for projects of their own. This growing chorus threatened to drown out the voices of the Khoisan. (Italics mine) (Wanless 2007:16)

Wanless highlights the very real dangers of museum holdings, particularly of ethnographic artefacts, in creating or amassing 'other voices' than those of the original makers. The most common concept of the 'other' must surely be that borrowed from the psycho-analysis of Carl Jung, where the 'other' is constellated within an individual human being's psyche as an archetype of the 'collective unconscious' and projected as either the 'contra-sexual' self or that rejected by the conscious self, namely the 'Shadow'. These denied parts are then seen as alien or 'other (than self)' but appear in the noumenal nature of the image of the 'other' outside oneself, which either attracts or repels, but never generates an entirely neutral response. The fact of it being essentially the 'self' can be seen in that its imagery emerges in dreams, is scripted into myth and fairy-tales and these archetypal images or symbols, deriving from the unconscious mind, have the capacity to evoke an energetic response making them particularly 'powerful' in their effect (Jung, von Franz, et al., 1976). Joseph Henderson in his chapter 'Ancient myths and modern man' (in Jung, von Franz, et al., *Man and his symbols* [1976]) describes symbols in dreams emerging from what Jung called the 'collective unconscious' as deriving from:

...(T)hat part of the psyche which retains and transmits the common psychological inheritance of mankind. These symbols are so ancient and unfamiliar to modern man that he cannot directly understand or assimilate them....the analogies between ancient myths and stories that appear in dreams of modern (psychiatric)patients are neither trivial nor accidental. They exist because the unconscious minds of modern man

preserves the symbol-making capacity that once found expression in the beliefs and rituals of ... (humanity's past) (Jung, von Franz et al., 1976: 98).

The 'collective unconscious' implicit in the above, is said to be found in all races of human-kind. In this the reason for the westerner's obsession with the African (and in this case their creative-art) is associated with Enlightenment's 'Rousseau-esque' thoughts of original primal innocence, which while being peculiar to his/her own self are yet shared with his/her fellow-human (from cultures thought to be less jaded by technology and other aspects of the modern world), who then stands for the 'other' (Jung, von Franz et al., 1976). While being universal the 'collective unconscious' is nevertheless particular to each individual's own social and/or cultural symbolic imagery. Moreover the world-view of the individual's culture of origin would indicate how such archetypal thinking is interpreted, and this would also include the image of a projected 'other'. Ironically this could be applied to myself and my fellow white anthropologists which could be posed as a question "who's 'other' is actually foreign to whom?" Once again Geertz's "common sense" and dialogue seems the source for an answer of sorts. Of course all of this implies that the main danger is that whoever shares in the prevailing dominant culture's 'master-narrative' (most-likely to be westerners, but may include African persons who are identify with western thinking for whatever reasons, like Christianisation or western education), will then seek 'Other-as-Self' outside him/herself and believe this to be an earlier 'Self' that resided in Africa (as suggested by the *Human Genome Project* in which it is claimed all humans emanated from Africa, and even feel a right to this claim/notion). But what the projecting individual cannot claim is that his/her own 'self' is to be found in or is one with the living 'Other(s)' in context of their present cultural and/or ever-changing lives in Africa. Such a notion, while permissible, would rather speak of yet another human capacity like empathy, identification, etc.

The implications of Jungian thinking for Anthropology/Ethnography/Social Research is in terms of their epistemologies' origins within Modernism. Paul Smith *Writing, general knowledge, and Postmodern Anthropology* (1989) ¹³² (<http://theory.eserver.org/anthropology.html> [accessed 23 July 2012]) criticises the work of Geertz:

Clifford Geertz, for instance, poses it in terms of self and other, asking in his inimitably grave and humanist manner his own fundamental question: "*how is it that other people's creations can be so utterly their own and yet so deeply part of us?*" The self/other dilemma for Geertz points to the necessity of interpretation...And this interpretative mould of anthropology has led directly to what I call the "literalisation" of the ethnographic text and to the fairly unmediated importation into anthropology of all the conundrums of western hermeneutics (Italics mine) (Geertz (1983a:53) cited by Smith 1989).

Smith even contends that this assimilating of the non-western cultural point of view with the anthropologist's 'gaze'¹³³ leads to paranoia – a claim to a "reality which he does not own"

¹³² Originally appearing in *Discourse : Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture*, 11(2), 159-170.

Paul Smith is co-editor with Alice Jardine of *Men in Feminism* (1987). (<http://theory.eserver.org/anthropology.html>)

¹³³ "**The Gaze** is a psychoanalytical term brought into popular usage by Jacques Lacan. It describes the relationship of the subject with the desire to look and awareness that one can be viewed. The gaze can be motivated by the subject's desire to control the object it sees, and an object that can likewise capture and hold the subject's eye. The term 'gaze' is often defined as looking long and intently with affection at a subject. The gaze in this case is a relationship and not something that can be performed....A person who determines a sense of themselves as an individual element in the world ...(is included in) the idea of the gaze. The concept of the gaze is also a central part of theories of looking within modernity"(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaze>[accessed 23 July 2012]).

and for this one can only recognise “ the fight for- itself as an ideology”(Trilling (1976) cited by Smith 1989):

In modernist anthropology the stress on this endless dialectic –between what is called the irrefutable (i.e. empirical) reality of the other and the internal and defensive coherence of the subject... pose a huge challenge to the sustained circling of the heumeneut by insisting upon the mediation of language, the unconscious, and ideology in the circuits of the self and other (Smith 1989: 159-170).

Smith considers Postmodern Anthropology/Ethnology as reflected in the work of James Clifford as resolving the challenges of the older Modernist perspectives when suggesting the methodologies of the dialogic and collaborative modes. The former is often in the form of lightly edited transcripts of field-work interviews and conversations, while the collaborative mode attempts to give the ‘other’ a co-equal voice (in other words, oral interviews as history). These then demonstrate the “absence of the anthropologist’s pretension to general knowledge, or its displacement into relativism. *Instead, the anthropological encounter is offered as highly provisional, specific, and non-generalizable...*” (Italics mine) (Smith 1989). Smith nevertheless warns that this position can entail more irony, such as the fact of the ethnographer still orchestrating the recording and thus one can question to whose authorship the final work should be attributed. Rather Smith suggests another answer, that of Meaghan Morris to men wanting to write on Feminism, namely to “*strategically withdraw into silence...*”(Italics mine) (Morris (1987:181) cited by Smith 1989). And one may have to accept the fact that an ethnologist/ethnographer/anthropologist will always be confronted with western representational practice of “privileging human ... abstraction and representation in signs/symbols and as the product of human perceptual data. Here sensory perceptions are assigned an utterly devolved reality” (Smith 1989), one, in effect, no more than the reproduction of endless allegories of the ethnographer's own self. Smith quotes Stephen Tyler’s work *The unspeakable: Discourse, dialogue and rhetoric in the Postmodern world* (1987), where this author suggests a “discourse of evocation” as the recognition of the commonplace, the common-sense or the everyday commonality of a particular community or cultural group, one thoroughly immersed ritually in the ethos of that group where word and action are once more whole and united (Tyler[1987] cited by Smith[1989]). Smith concludes that Tyler’s work is a response to the “condition we already call postmodern” (Smith 1989) and to a perceived loss of authenticity and honesty in social interactions, to the alienating agency of writing versus speech, and as a theoretical response to Post-structuralism, which he warns, can be the return to a quasi-Platonic mysticism. Further he warns that writing can be seen from this view as the suppression of the body and warns that a literalized western Anthropology may as easily begin to “theorise another kind of foreign body” (Smith 1989) given the prescriptions to try to escape its western modernist roots.

Eric Kramer derived his hypotheses from various social-scientists work to formulate his ‘Theory of Dimensional Accrual/Dissociation’ (discussed in yet more detail under Section 6. Acculturation, Modernity versus Modernism and modernisation). He talks of three modes of thinking, the ‘Magical or Iconic’, the ‘Mythological or Symbolic’ and the ‘Perspectival or Signifying’. The theory is useful for understanding the process of human thinking as well as the notion of ‘Otherness’. I quote from Kramer, E. and Ikeda, R. (‘Understanding different Worlds: The Theory of Dimensional Accrual/Dissociation’ in *Journal of Intercultural Communication* No.2.[1998]) which poses that ‘Magical’ or ‘Idolic’ thinking is the will to self-awareness as against the awareness of the world outside the self, resulting in the human production of:

(C)omplex systems of behavior, rituals, objects, and structures And awareness of language and communication as incantation...The incantation and the thing evoked are practically identical...(Thus) *Idolic communication* (the postured first category of thinking) *expresses little dissociation between the mode of communication or form, and the signified or content.* Such dualistic thinking does not exist in the magical world (Italics mine) (Kramer and Ikeda 1998: 44-45).

Kramer contends that this mode of thinking is evinced in the “Intensely emotional identification people have with group membership such as races, ethnic groups, teams, nation-states and other referents of identity...” (Kramer and Ikeda 1998: 44-45). Another category of proffered thinking, namely ‘Mythic (Mythological or Symbolic) thinking’ has the closest parallel to that used in beadwork communication, although I am loath to put it this way because of the underlying implications of evolutionary thinking in Kramer’s theory, despite his denial of this.¹³⁴ He and Ikeda say of ‘Mythic thinking’ that it is “...characterized by narrative story-telling. ... (that) yet contains ... magical identification ..(yet is) also recognized as a fiction ... distinctly different from that which is referred to. (While) mythic communication extends magical incantation into story and metaphor...” (Kramer and Ikeda 1998: 42-48). More importantly, “(m)yth ..(is) fraught with ambiguity and multiple interpretations ... Mythological texts present multiple meanings which disturb modern perspectival readers who equate knowledge with simple unambiguous definitive statements...” (Kramer and Ikeda 1998: 44-46).

Further, ‘Perspectival (Signifying) thinking’ in Kramer’s concept is characterised by a “strong valuation of logic.. (that)...manifested as philosophical (systematic) dialectics...(a) concern ... (with) issues in philosophy, politics, economics, science, and so forth. Truth ... is rendered through pitting perspectives against each other in argumentation (a battle of minds)...”(Kramer and Ikeda 1998: 44-46). Moreover ‘Perspectival thinking’ is expressed in “*Modern philosophies (that) are obsessed with the individual, with existential crisis, identity crisis, and the Other.... By comparison, objectivism is impossible in the magic and mythic worlds. They have no dissociated subject which can objectify the Other...*” (Italics mine) (Kramer and Ikeda 1998: 42-48).

Seyla Benhabib *Situating the self: Gender, community and postmodernism in contemporary ethics* (1992) warns about stigmatization of ‘the Other’ as in the study of the life-narratives/ life-styles/worlds of persons in other cultures. She says Postmodernist Lyotard presupposes an agonistic approach to the “social pragmatism” of “narrative-knowledge”, claiming it non-contemporaneous to discursive knowledge and geared to “power-effects” (Lyotard cited by Benhabib 1992: 233). Moreover, such classifying of narrative-knowledge by social scientists indicates other (non-western and also European peasant) cultures as “...belonging to a different mentality: savage, primitive, underdeveloped, backward, alienated, composed of opinions, customs, authority, prejudice, ignorance, ideology. Narratives are fables, myths, legends, fit only for women and children...” (Benhabib 1992: 233). Presumably “narrative-knowledge” would be analogous to “local-knowledge” so stressed in Orality-Literacy Studies and hence Lyotard, while a Postmodernist, is also a Critical Theorist, to have so negatively dispensed with what seems in accord with modern socio-cultural theory. Benhabib warns that such a global characterization of narrative-knowledge:

¹³⁴ It must be noted that all individuals think in mythic and even magical ways, but as they become subject to rationalism and western contemporary ways of thinking they seek to use what Kramer categorises as a third form of ‘perspectival thinking’; they then start to doubt their former modes of discernment. Perhaps this is another way of coming to understand Kramer’s insistence that his theory is not evolutionary, as any human mind is capable of each thought mode and often vacillates between them.

...flattens the internal contradictions and tensions which affect narrative no less than discursive practices...It also implies that all change in this episteme must come from without, through violence. Such an episteme has no self-propelling or self-correcting mechanism (Benhabib 1992: 233).

Benhabib also claims that this view makes of narrative-knowledge the 'other' of western dominant knowledge and that Lyotard must then "admit that narrative and scientific knowledge are merely incommensurable, but (rather) that they can and do clash, and that sometimes the outcome is less than certain" (Benhabib 1992:233). The admission of this, she claims, would mean that "narrative" and "discursive" practices occupy the same epistemic space, and therefore have equal claim on validity, making an argumentative exchange between them both possible and even desirable, as "*You cannot respect the "otherness" of the other if you deny the other the right to enter the conversation with you...and engage him as an equal...*" (Italics mine) (Benhabib 1992:234). This then is a problem of epistemic rationality and relativism. Benhabib's understandings are pertinent to the study of beadwork and dress as they speak to research methodologies, namely does one accept the input of the 'other' as in the traditionalist maker of the item and her intended communication while simultaneously indicating the possibilities of projecting onto a 'mythic Africanness' as was argued as a danger in western neo-Modernist thinking? Or would the mere warning of these contradictions inherent in the museological field be sufficient to ensure that the writer declares his/her stance up-front?

Sundar Sarukkai interrogates some of the discourse on the concept of the 'other' in his article, 'The Other in Anthropology and Philosophy' in *Economic and Political Weekly* (1997). He mentions that it derives from the dominant western discourse based on notions of perceived differences and is a cognitive process involving observation, collection of data and theorizing, in other words based in Ethnography/Anthropology's epistemologies and methodologies. Saying "non-western people were seen to embody what the primeval west was before its 'progress'..." (Sarukkai 1997:1406) and he shows that these ideas stem from presumed inherent domination dating from historical and biological, hence evolutionary theories, where the non-European was seen as a 'child' to the westerner's 'adult'. He mentions 'Others' like the 'Savage Other', the 'Black Other' and 'Ethnographic Other' (Sarukkai 1997:1406), the wording appearing to validate racism while reflecting western preoccupation with the non-west perceived to still reflect these prejudices (Sarukkai 1997:1406). His argument is that the only way to move beyond these perceptions is to 're-understand' the 'other' and integrate this into epistemology as an ethical responsibility toward that 'other', as Anthropology has 'forsaken' the responsibility of the subject (observer) toward the 'other' (Sarukkai 1997:1406). In some ways the anthropologist Malinowski's 'Participation- Observation' was an attempt to redress this. However Sarukkai declares:

.... (B)ut this remained a "...process of an anthropological 'stranger' seeking to define the native...(and merely) made the native alien while upholding autonomy of the western-self...(For) in this scenario the alien (westerner) who invades the territory of the native takes over the spirit of the native by constructing them as the other...(and) the initial anthropological other suffers continuously from this violence, the violence of the reconfiguration of the constitution of the native self. This other is in this case all that the ethnographer is not (Sarukkai 1997:1407).

He concludes:

It is the otherness of the ethnographer's self that this kind of ethnographic study yields and not the self of the native.....This activity is in its most fundamental sense an objectification of the native....(for) ...after all attempts at assimilation, the gaze is still not lost....the observing self continues to remain the epistemological 'not-other' (Italics mine) (Sarukkai 1997: 1407).

Sarukkai identifies the pre-cognate level where humankind distinguishes itself as 'Human' as against 'Animal', only by acknowledging the 'other as other', and this ability to call the 'other as like (unto) the self' begets ethical responsibility towards the 'other'. He says it is also important to admit that the knowing of the 'other' fully is impossible, that the 'other' is different. In the process of knowing, he claims, the 'other' is never complete but perpetual and that Ethnography/Anthropology should "...base itself on the concept of difference. Deconstruction partakes of responsibility in that its foundational sense is a search for the 'other' and by accepting this, one then continues on a path of possible infinite significations..."(Sarukkai 1997:1408).

Srinivas discusses the "self-as-the-other" indicating the connotation is of an "extension of the self. ..." (Srinivas cited by Sarukkai 1997:1408). This statement made me ask the Zulu word for 'other' of colleague Vusi Buthelezi, who claimed he did not know of such a concept in isiZulu, but that he would answer with the fundamental declaration of "*Ubuntu*", namely; "*umuntu ngamuntu ngabantu* [A person is a person because of another person]" (personal communication Buthelezi, Durban, April 2012). This statement places this African concept of 'other' as essentially a humanistic one of identifying oneself via the process of relating to one's fellow-man. But here the notion of extending this beyond persons of African decent may well be modern, for the early 19th century European was ironically seen as so 'other' as to be identified as non-human if one recalls the names for them of "*isolwane*" or "*izimuzimu*" (sea-monsters) when first contact was made (Winters 2009:99). Still one must acknowledge that we are no longer resident in the 19th century and as anthropologist the onus is on us to initiate dialogue and create a rapport of human to human and this needs to form the basis of any methodology in terms of field-work.

These last comments agree with Alana Conner Snibbe's 'Cultural Psychology: Studying more than the 'Exotic Other' ' for the *Association for Psychological Science*, December 2003 (<http://www.Psychologicalscience.org/observer> [accessed 14 May 2012]). She says that Cultural Psychology, which studies how cultural meanings, practices, and institutions influence and reflect individual human psychologies, is a sub-section of Psychology but "... (I)n contrast to psychologists who tend to assume that their findings and theories are universal until proven otherwise, cultural psychologists tend to assume that their findings and theories are culturally variable" (Snibbe 2003:1). She notes:

So far, cultural psychologists' efforts have yielded a bevy of intriguing, often controversial cultural differences in psychological processes, including reasoning styles, motivation, perceptions of time, space, and color (*sic*), relational styles, and emotional experience, regulation, and expression (Snibbe 2003:1).

This is because culture "comprises a set of ideas that coordinate the actions and construct the meanings of a group of peoples...(these then) guiding our practices, structuring our institutions, and generally infusing the everyday business of our lives..." (Snibbe 2003:1).

Thus people are cultural agents who apply, reproduce and transform cultural practices. Snibbe says this means that culture may “predict, but does not cause (behaviour)... (And further)...neither cultures nor psychologies exist independent of each other...” (Snibbe 2003: 1).

She touches on the subject of modernisation when quoting Ying-yi Hong, a social Psychologist at the University of Illinois, who identifies bicultural, multicultural and multiracial populations who are:

...not ‘pure’ enough to represent one culture...However, they are arguably the fastest growing population in many places because of increased mobility and migration... By investigating these individuals, we may be better able to understand how culture dynamically influences people’s psychologies and how people negotiate their different cultural identities (Ying-yi Hong cited by Snibbe 2003:2).

Ying-yi Hong may well be speaking for South Africa’s black populations, for persons of mixed race origins, or any of the indigenous groupings’ combinations and more probably those who are urbanized and migrant or Christianised or for that matter diasporic white South Africans. These could all give rise to ‘outside influences’ filtering into those classified as indigenous African, including acculturated, hybrid or syncretistic expression, all with their own psychological processing.

In summary one needs to acknowledge the warnings of social scientists about the possibilities of projections onto the ‘other’, particularly with a noumenal art-production like beadwork (and dress) and the perceptually ‘foreign and exotic’ in dress. In field-work one must foreground Geertz’s warnings concerning rapport and dialogue and wherever possible use the indigenous African creator’s own words concerning her creation, in her own language if possible. At the same time one must recognise that the western compulsion to collect ‘Tribal Art’ (including beadwork and dress) is most likely driven by the obsession or gaze, an enamourment with the ‘mythic Africanness’ of the ‘other’, who is both different and yet an ordinary person most likely akin to oneself, only referencing another cultural world-view and language. The conclusion would be that no museum display and no writing on the subject of beadwork and dress can or will be totally objective and do the topic full justice, but then surely the same can be said for nearly any field of human enquiry. One can only be aware of the drawbacks and foreground these. The suggestions of these many authors discussed in this section would it seems be that the anthropologist/art historian/ curator and/or collector seek to be as honest as possible (without being an apologist) with self, subject and audience.

3. Orality-Literacy and Indigenous Knowledge Systems

When speaking of the emphasis upon the aesthetic dimension dominating western art appreciation of the mid-20th century, Geertz says in ‘Art as a Cultural System’ in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (1983a) that “not the whole dynamic of aesthetic power is to be found in the formal relations among the aesthetics of images, themes or gestures but is only to be seen in what other concerns, like cultural ones, this art form (beadwork and dress in this case) may serve” (Geertz 1983a:96). Certainly in regard to indigenous Nguni Beadwork and dress there is an equally important aspect of the manipulation of aesthetic elements of colour and motif so as to symbolically express and communicate culturally valued norms and world-view. This was explored in some detail in Chapter 1: the Introduction, subsections 1.1.to1.3. It was decided that as beadwork

communications access the oral isiZulu poetic language, one filled with metaphor, allusion and simile, that the field of Orality-Literacy Studies would form one of the two main theoretical modalities used in this thesis. This section therefore seeks to explain this theory and align it to yet newer orientations of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the dangers inherent in decontextualization where the interpretation of beadwork/dress and other material cultural artefacts collected by museums/galleries moves too far from their cultural context.

While Geertz could be said to presage the Postmodernist era seeking an alternative narrative or 'voice' for non-western cultures, the 1980s saw the introduction into Postmodern debate of the Jesuits, Walter Ong and Marcel Jousse (See Sienaert. <http://www.esienaert.co/jousse> [accessed 10 October 2009]) on the difference between the mind-sets and thinking of mainly oral cultures, as against the relative mental exactitude found in literate societies, with their reliance upon written record and text rather than on memory. Works such as Keyan G. Tomaselli, Arnold Shepperson and Maureen Eke 'Towards a Theory of Orality in African Cinema' in *Research in African Literatures* Vol. 26, No 3, (1995) pp.18-35, and Juliette Leeb-du Toit's 'Phila Trevor Makhoba's narratives and Mores: a Dialectics of Artistic and Intellectual Leadership' in Addleson, J., (Ed.) *Trevor Makhoba Memorial Exhibition Catalogue* (2005) give an insight into the manifestations of what could be termed the oral genre in a variety of disciplines.

Orality-Literacy was introduced into the University of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal) by Professor of French, Edgard Sienaert in the 1980s. In the 1990s the Killie Campbell Africana Library, Mashu Museum of Ethnology and William Campbell Picture and Furniture Collection became *The Campbell Collections and Centre for Oral Studies* with Sienaert as Director. As Sienaert also offered courses in 'Oral Studies'¹³⁵, this period had a strong influence on the study of beadwork and dress, particularly through the writings of Frank Jolles and Thenjiwe Magwaza, as mentioned in the literature survey in point 2.1 of the introductory chapter. Sienaert hosted a number of Oral Studies conferences and the compilations of conference papers were published, as were those for the year that he was Director at Campbell Collections; Sienaert, E., et al., (Eds.) *Oral tradition and its transmission: the many forms of message*, 4th International Conference on Oral Tradition, Durban, 1994.

There is no doubt that Walter Ong's¹³⁶ work contributed to those scholars he described as the purveyors of New Criticism and Formalism, Structuralism, Textual and Deconstructionist analysis, Speech-act and Reader-Response theories, as well as those engaged in the study of Literary History, the Social Sciences, Philosophy and Biblical Studies (http://www.engl.niu.edu/wac/ong_rvw.html[accessed 23 July 2012]). Ong in his best known and definitive work *Orality and Literacy: The technologizing of the Word* ([1982]2002) says:

¹³⁵ Oral or Orality-Literacy Studies is often confused with Oral Histories. The latter predate the former, being long associated with the Killie Campbell Africana Library's acquisition of some two hundred Zulu oral testimonies recorded by the Natal Administrator James Stuart in the early 20th century. These were edited by University of Natal (now UKZN) History Professors, Colin Webb and John Wright in a number of volumes, (6 going on 7, the latter under Wright's editorship since Webb's death) *The James Stuart Archives* (Pietermaritzburg, UKZN Press, Killie Campbell Manuscript Series, 1976-2012) (<http://campbell.ukzn.ac.za/>).

¹³⁶ "The Reverend Father Walter Jackson Ong, PhD (November 30, 1912 – August 12, 2003), was an American Jesuit priest, professor of English literature, cultural and religious historian and philosopher. His major interest was in exploring how the transition from orality to literacy influenced culture and changed human consciousness. In 1978 Ong served as elected president of the Modern Language Association of America..." He drew upon Anthropology, Linguistics and Oral tradition (among others) in formulating his ideas.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_J._Ong#An_Ong_Reader_.282002.29[accessed 23 July 2012])

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), the father of modern linguistics, had called attention to the primacy of oral speech, which underpins all verbal communication, as well as to the persistent tendency, even among scholars, to think of writing as the basic form of language...he thought of writing as a kind of complement to oral speech, not a transformer of verbalization. (Ong [1982] 2002: 1).

It is also true that a culture can exhibit “residual orality” in its thought and verbal expression even when exposed to literacy, but as a culture interiorizes the technologies of literacy, the “oral residue” diminishes. “Oral residue” never vanishes completely, this because speech and human interaction remain essentially oral (http://www.engl.niu.edu/wac/ong_rvw.html). Ong hypothesised that there are ten certain characteristics of orality as found in primary oral societies with little or no literacy. These one can summarise from Walter J. Ong *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* ([1982] 2002) as follows:

1. Formulaic Styling: In oral societies thinking is done in formulaic expressions like heavy rhythmic, balanced patterns, repetitions or antithesis, alliterations or assonances, epithetic and other formulae (Ong [1982] 2002:34). Moreover, Marcel Jousse (1997) regarded all oral expression as linked to the human body in its rhythmic breathing, gestures and bilateral symmetry. These all act to retain orality in memory.

2. Additive rather than subordinative: Oral cultures lack the complex ‘subordinative’ clauses of literacy. Ong gives an example of the Biblical book of *Genesis* (Biblical texts were first oral before being committed to writing) to indicate this: “In the beginning God created heaven *and* earth. *And* the earth was void *and* empty,... *and* darkness was on the face of the deep; *and* the spirit of God moved over the waters. *And* God said ...”(Ong [1982] 2002:37).

3. Aggregative rather than analytic: Oral phraseology is aggregative, joining adjectives to nouns to give poetic expressions, such as “...(the) ‘sturdy oak tree’, the ‘beautiful princess’ or ‘clever Odysseus’. Analysing such expressions adds complexity to communications, and questions received wisdom....”(Ong [1982] 2002:39).

4. Redundant or ‘copious’: Oral speech is repetitive so as to keep the speaker and his/her audience focused on the topic and makes it easier for both to remember the essential points later in the absence of a written text (Ong [1982] 2002: 40).

5. Conservative or traditionalist: Because oral societies have no effective access to writing and print technologies, they must invest in storage of information, itself dependent on individual or collective recall and this means only important information (so categorized in the culture’s value-system) is remembered (Goody (1968) as cited by Ong [1982] 2002:42). Thus Ong concludes that new ideas are seldom explored as these have to be stored, however “ It does not prevent oral societies from change, but there is a *premium on ensuring that changes reflect traditional values*, and are presented as fitting the traditions of the ancestors.” (Italics mine) (Ong [1982] 2002:42).

6. Close to the human life-world: To be worth storing, information presented in an oral culture should concern matters of immediate practical concern or importance to the majority of its members (Ong[1982]2002:43). Literacy on the other hand has resulted in phenomenological analyses, abstract classifications and ordered data listings.

7. Agonistically or combatively toned: Ong suggests that writing and to an even greater extent print, disengages people from direct, interpersonal struggles. In oral cultures there is found “the highly polarized, agonistic, oral world of good and evil, virtue and vice, villains and heroes...”(Ong [1982] 2002:43-5).

8. Empathetic and participatory: In an oral culture learning or enculturation “take place via cultural mentors in close, empathetic, communal associations...”(Ong [1982] 2002:,43-5). M.T. Clanchy in *From memory to written record, England 1066-1307* (1979) says the residual orality of England in the 1600s, gave rise to debated solutions by “mature wise seniors of many years, having good testimony...” (Clanchy 1979: 230-3). The idea that truth emerges from communal debate continues in the present jury systems of such countries as Britain and the United States and arguably in other first-world inheritors of these customary laws, and this is also the recognised common-law of any culture that is still predominantly oral. The ‘Natal Native Code’ codified by 19th century colonial administrators derived from Nguni oral customary laws and as such still forms the basis of African Customary Law operative in rural chiefdoms in KwaZulu-Natal (Etherington 1989:172).

9. Homeostatic: Oral societies conserve their limited capacity to store information, and retain the relevance of their information to the interest of their present members, by shedding memories that have lost their past significance. Goody (1968) gives interesting examples of the loss of ‘unimportant’ data from his fieldwork in West Africa.¹³⁷

10. Situational rather than abstract: In oral cultural thinking, concepts focus on objects and situations directly known by the speaker, rather than complex abstractions (Ong (1982] 2002: 43-45). Ong gives examples of this characteristic of “situational thinking” as researched by Aleksandr Romanovich Luria comparing oral and literate persons in Uzbekistan and Kirghizia in 1931-2.¹³⁸

From this list of characteristics of the mental processing in oral societies one can see how deeply Kramer relied upon Ong’s work in formulating his own theory of ‘dimensional accrual’ in which he postured the three modes of thought (‘Idolic’, ‘Mythic’ and ‘Perspectival’ discussed in the section on ‘othering’ above) operant in societies, depending upon their degree of technological advancement and literacy. And once again one comes up against an element of Darwinian evolutionary theory, only Ong’s theory specifies that the change in thinking style is due to the introduction of writing into any society, if there was no access to writing and recording then all societies would be oral. Thus it is rather this fact (and not any measurement of degree of complexity of thought exhibited by a society) that makes

¹³⁷ One example is given by J. Goody (Ed.) *Literacy in traditional societies* (1968) of written records prepared by the British in Ghana in the early 1900s showing that Ndewura Jakpa, the seventeenth century founder of the state of Gonja, had seven sons, each of whom ruled a territorial division within the state. However six decades later, two of the divisions had disappeared for various reasons. The myths of the Gonja had been revised to recount that Jakpa had five sons, and that five divisions were created. “Since they had no practical, present purpose, the other two sons and divisions had evaporated” (Goody 1968: 31-3).

¹³⁸ In Michael Cole (Ed.) *Cognitive Development: its Social and Cultural Foundations*, (1976) these examples are given : 1) Oral subjects always used real objects they were familiar with in order to refer to geometric shapes; for example a plate or the moon might be used to refer to a circle. 2) Asked to select three similar words from the following list “hammer, saw, log, hatchet”, oral subjects would point out that without the log there wasn’t much use for the tools. 3) Oral subjects took a practical, not an abstract approach to such a question as “In the far north, where there is snow, all bears are white. Novaya Zemlya is in the far north and there is always snow there. What colour are the bears?” The typical response was “I don’t know. I’ve seen a black bear. I’ve never seen any others. ... Every locality has its own animals.” 4) Oral subjects proved unwilling to analyse themselves. When asked “what sort of person are you?” one responded: “What can I say about my own heart? How can I talk about my character? Ask others; they can tell you about me, I myself can’t say anything” (Ong, [1982] 2002: 49-54).

Ong's theory applicable to the topic of beadwork (and dress) central to this thesis as these are a product of an oral mode of thinking. In regard to Orality-Literacy and the Zulu, there were a generation of authors who hailed from the Mission Schools, notably St. Francis College, Mariannhill and Adams College, Amamzintoti, men like the Dhlomo brothers, R.R.R. and H.I.E., and others, like S.V.H. Mdhuli, who had a unique 'epic' and 'heroic' writing-style which stemmed from the earlier pre-literate tradition of praise-poets or *izinbongi* of their culture.¹³⁹ I quote Couzens on Mdhuli's writing style in the latter's work *The development of the African* (1933):

His whole book is full of ...phrases and epithets...(a) clichéd style. ... (But) His style is clearly that of the mission schools of the time...many of these formulaic phrases form a pattern –they are aphoristic messages such as ... 'Let us strike the iron while it is still hot' ...The important point to note here is that Mdhuli (and others) were not just using the phraseology, the vocabulary of the education system but that phraseology was collocated with a particular message, (that)...contained an ideology... (Couzens 1985:30-31).

One must also mention art-historian Juliette Leeb-du-Toit's first noting of the development of an urban hybrid oral genre, one of which she says:

...(Is) more readily expressed in such musical forms as *maskanda*, *isicathimiya* and *mbaqanga*, whose artists were 'Notorious for their directness in their attempts to chide and rebuke, they have become almost untouchable (despite frequent censorship) under the guise of entertainment and music, yet pursue their notorious irreverence and social criticism unremittingly (Leeb-du-Toit 2005: 39).

Also pertinent to the Oral style is that noted in my Masters on the Zulu folklore tradition. I include this section:

... Noverino Canonici in *The Zulu Folktale Tradition* (1993) mentions stylistic features used in oral tales: The main character's praise names/*izibongo* are repeatedly called. There are "more or less 'fixed' refrains that are used as formulaic language which help in the development of the tale." There are descriptive refrains which "encapsulate a narrative event and help its recall." Also boasting formulae, which Canonici terms "core...folktale images." And "*a number of stories have a proverb as their core-cliché...they are built around a proverb, which may, however, not appear in the actual folktale text, but be used in the contextual situation* ". (Italics mine) (Canonici (1993:125-128) cited by Winters 2009: 40).

My intention in highlighting the above is to consider how exactly the oral style would apply to a Zulu (Bhaca/ Nhlangwini and Embo-Mkhize) beadwork (and/or dress) item and elucidate it: As discussed in the introductory Chapter 1, beadwork colour/motif /alphabetical lettering/or pictogram¹⁴⁰ is used by women as a non-verbal metaphorical 'bead language' and

¹³⁹ I first learnt about their importance to the 'oral genre' when doing my Masters (History of Art) and was helped in doing so by colleague Mwelela Cele, who has become an expert on the Dhlomo brothers' contribution to KwaZulu-Natal history and literature. Cele also introduced me to these writers, poets and musicians works in Tim Couzens's *The New African: the A study of the life and work of H.I.E. Dhlomo* (1985).

¹⁴⁰ "A **pictogram**, also called a **pictogramme** or **pictograph** is an ideogram that conveys its meaning through its pictorial resemblance to a physical object. Pictographs are often used in writing and graphic systems in which the characters are to a considerable extent pictorial in appearance. Pictography is a form of writing which uses representational, pictorial drawings. It is a basis of cuneiform and, to some

it is still true that such visual communication needs to be mediated via interpretation and the more obtuse oral isiZulu idiom be accessed via elucidation. To do this local indigenous knowledge must be accessed. Of the various writers on the subject it is Frank Jolles who perhaps most clearly exemplifies the links between beadwork and the concerns of Orality-Literacy studies. I quote an analysis of a fairly simple beaded necklace from Maphumulo by Jolles in 'Interfaces between oral and literate societies: contracts, runes and beadwork', in Sienaert, E., et al., (Eds.) *Oral tradition and innovation: New wine in old bottles?* (1991):

The second (example of an *isibebe* necklace) shows a shield, *ihawu*, flanked by two chevrons. The shield says 'You are secure' or 'Protecting me'. The strength of the shield is emphasized by the deep blue colour in the centre, *isigwabe*, whilst the chevrons indicate extra protection on all sides. Mrs Mtshali said that they did not stand for objects (like 'shields') but for 'thoughts', and that this was associated with the green beads, a concept represented in the Zulu language by terms known as 'intensifying ideophones', in this case: *Cwe*, 'of blueness, greenness, clearness' (Doke and Vilakazi 1972:132). So the piece was made for a boyfriend to lend protection and strength in some task. However the maker was not quite sure of herself, so she introduced a single bead of dull yellow, *intuma*, ('Goat-Apple' that wards off bullets from a husband when worn round the neck of a wife or sister ...instead of the bright yellow, *iphunzi*) into the centre, leaving a trace of doubt (Jolles 1991:266).

Jolles further makes certain observations that synch with the nature of the oral genre:

It will be noted that in interpreting the beadwork my informants always used set phrases to describe the meanings ... *I became convinced that the continuity of interpretation was more dependent on such formulaic expressions than on the associations connected to the individual colours*, i.e. that the unit of recognition translates into a phrase rather than into a single word (Italics mine) (Jolles 1991:266).

To clarify Jolles somewhat ambiguously couched last statement. He is not saying that there is no associative link between colour bead and message at all, but rather that in the characteristic poetic mode innate to the oral style, this is recorded in memory in the form of a phrase or saying, as for example the declaration found in many bead messages (like those of MaMajola Dungwa (discussed in Chapter 1, point 1.1.) where she says "Asihambe..[let us go...]"). The connotation would still depend upon a royal blue bead (indicating an *inkankane* or Hadedda-Ibis) or in the modernised form of a beaded motif of 'wings' so as to indicate flying (away together). Moreover, the full understanding could only be accessed if referencing Nguni bird-lore as was shown by Biyela (2013) in her essay (see Chapter 1, point 1.2.).

Indigenous Knowledge Systems or IKS have been foregrounded extensively in recent decades and are supported by the ANC Government legislation, post 1994. D. M. Warren in 'Using Indigenous Knowledge in Agricultural research' says:

...local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society... is the basis for local-level decision making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural-resource management, and a host of other activities in rural

extent, hieroglyphic writing, which also uses drawings as phonetic letters or determinative rhymes..." (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pictograms>[Accessed 6 August 2013]).

communities...(Its recording ensures) the survival of indigenous peoples, their cultures and their environments in the face of colonisation, exploitation and, lately, globalisation... ([http://myfundi.co.za/e/Indigenous_Knowledge_Systems_\(IKS\)](http://myfundi.co.za/e/Indigenous_Knowledge_Systems_(IKS))[accessed 23) July 2012]).

Indigenous knowledge is described as having characteristics many of which echo those of Orality: local, tacit, transmitted orally, experiential rather than theoretical, learned through repetition and constantly changing. Emmis de Kock writing in December 2006, outlines the South African Government (Department of Science and Technology) Policy on Indigenous Knowledge ([http://myfundi.co.za/e/Indigenous_Knowledge_Systems_\(IKS\)](http://myfundi.co.za/e/Indigenous_Knowledge_Systems_(IKS))).¹⁴¹

As both theories considered here speak to issues of African cultural modes of thinking one needs to clarify the definition of culture and cultural. Throughout this thesis I use the word 'Cultural' in one of the most commonly used definitions given by Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckholm in *Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions* ([1952] 2003) as an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning. The concept of culture is also linked to the notion of 'world-view' taken-up by Franz Boas (the founding father of American Cultural Anthropology) who believed that the shared language of a community is the carrier of such a 'cultural world-view'. Melville Herskovitz in *Cultural Anthropology: An abridged revision of Man and His Works* (1963 edn.) says of world-view:

Wherever (anthropologists) have investigated the interrelations of...coexisting beliefs, they have found all such forms to be integrated into a unified world-view. This world-view ...is the expression of a system of logic that moves with sureness from premises concerning the nature of the world and man. (Herskovitz 1963: 215).

As such, the term 'world-view (or worldview)' derives from the German word *Weltanschauung* ... It is a concept that refers to a wide world perception and the framework of ideas and beliefs through which an individual growing-up in a particular culture interprets the world and interacts with it. As a concept, world-view was taken up by Structural, Cognitive and Symbolic Anthropology and used to refer to a specific culture's thought and belief processes (Forde 1970).

In summary, beadwork (and dress) colour and motif meanings are communicated orally by word of mouth in poetic and formulaic language; this between couples and worn as a form of public witness to the relationship and 'statements' and claims regarding it so as to signal the age/sex/status or profession of the beadworker/wearer. It is only the researcher who records what is said in writing and renders it into English (usually) via translation and this invariably requires a form of interpretation or elucidation of attached meanings by a local informant. To the traditionalists themselves living in their local communities such dress

¹⁴¹ In November 2004, Cabinet adopted an Indigenous Knowledge System Policy. This policy was submitted by South Africa in April 2006 at the Ninth Session of the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore in Geneva. The policy serves as an enabling framework to stimulate and strengthen the contribution of indigenous knowledge to social and economic development in South Africa. (de Kock (2006) at <http://www.dekock.co.za/oldsite/publishing.htm>[accessed 23 July 2012]). De Kock mentions the following requirements in order to implement this policy: an Advisory Committee on IKS, reporting to the Minister of Science and Technology; a development function, including academic and applied research, development and innovation in respect of the IKS; a recordable system for indigenous knowledge and indigenous knowledge holders, (and) where appropriate, to proactively secure their legal rights; the promotion of networking structures among practitioners, to be located in the Department of Science and Technology; and Legislation to protect intellectual property associated with indigenous knowledge, to be administered by the Department of Trade and Industry (<http://www.dekock.co.za/oldsite/publishing.htm>[accessed 14 August 2012]).

outfits signal roles and identities while beadwork communications are shared by those who are party to it as mentioned. I have hopefully argued for the utilization of Orality-Literacy as a valid methodology where appropriate in this thesis.

4. Anthropological Schools of thought and contemporary theoretical and methodological perspectives

4.1. Anthropology

Anthropology, the study (Greek *logia*) of mankind (Greek *anthrōpos*), derives from the Humanities, Natural-sciences and Social-sciences. While the study includes human Physiology under Physical Anthropology, it is more particularly associated with social and cultural organization of human societies, originating in western colonialism's attempts to understand non-western peoples' cultural diversity. In the United States, where the discipline of Anthropology was first defined, the most significant sub-field is Cultural Anthropology. In Europe the discipline originated in Ethnology that emphasised the study of social organization and kinship systems. It later merged with Anthropology and became what is now known as Social Anthropology. Cultural Anthropology while also studying social organization includes all human endeavour, hence economics, politics, law, religion and more importantly for this thesis, material culture and its technologies¹⁴², hence art and handicraft as well as language (Herskovits 1963 (edn.): 234-265 and Mair 1968 (edn.): Introduction). Cultural Anthropology is pertinent here as it concerns the nature of western Modernist and Enlightenment thinking from the 18th - early 20th centuries and furthermore, its wide-ranging concerns, while focusing on human cultures, also echo the collecting-policy of the late Dr Killie Campbell's original Africana Library with its many travel accounts of then remote places. In addition, it also reflects the early orientation of western interest in the 'other', in this case the 'other' being mankind in context of environment and nature typical of the early expeditions undertaken in search of 'scientific' classification; of races of men and their cultural systems, of flora and fauna, of geography, geology and the like (<http://campbell.ukzn.ac.za>).

It was persons such as William John Burchell¹⁴³ who inspired Dr Killie Campbell and her protégé, artist-recorder of African indigenous dress Barbara Tyrrell to collect and record 'Africana', a term for a multi-disciplinary array of ethnography, botany, geology, literature, history and cultures of southern Africa. Certainly Dr Killie Campbell's books, journals and manuscripts holdings, supplemented by her and her brother William's (WAC) collections of material culture (art and artefacts inclusive of beadwork and dress) reflects the same attitude of 'scientific' curiosity to be found regarding the regalia of the indigenous peoples of southern Africa (<http://campbell.ukzn.ac.za>).

One characteristic of Modernist Anthropological thought was the belief deriving from Darwinian Evolutionism that all societies passed through single evolutionary stages, from primitive to advanced. This unilateralism was countered by Diffusionism in which it was thought that all 'Culture' itself diffused from one central point such as Egypt (see Mair 1968

¹⁴² Herskovits for instance devotes an entire chapter to "The Aesthetic Drive: Graphic and Plastic Arts" in his definitive work *Cultural Anthropology: An abridged revision of Man and his Works*. 1963 (edn.).

¹⁴³ William John Burchell [1782-1863] "(He) ... is regarded as one of the greatest of the early African explorers. He was an accomplished naturalist, who amassed vast natural history collections and described many new species. In 1810, Burchell embarked upon his first expedition, which he documented in his two-volume work *Travels in the interior of southern Africa*. He returned to England in 1815 with over 50,000 specimens, many of which he donated to the British Museum of Natural History (now known as the Natural History Museum, London)" (<http://www.oum.ox.ac.uk/learning/pdfs/burchell.pdf> [accessed 13 August 2013]).

(edn.) for a discussion of these early schools of Anthropology). The problem with these views was that they lead to the idea that non-western cultures were indicative of a pre-industrial past akin to the Europeans' own past, and these ideas manifested in 'othering' and became attached to systems that upheld racism and prejudice. Such issues are of particular concern in South Africa with over three hundred years of colonial control and forty-eight years of Apartheid era domination pre the 1994 first democratic elections.

By World War I (1914-18), younger British anthropologists like Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) sought synchronic analysis of how societies held together in the present rather than historical speculative analysis of the ilk of Evolutionism and Diffusionism. This entailed field-work and Malinowski in his *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) advocates as his approach to ethnographic fieldwork the seeing of things from the indigenous cultural participants' point of view, in what was to become a standard practice of 'participant observation' (Mair 1968 (edn.): 26-27).

Another early 20th century British anthropologist, R. Radcliffe-Brown, founded 'Structural-functionalism', which focused on "how institutions in societies worked to balance out or create equilibrium in the social system to keep it functioning harmoniously" (Mair 1968 (edn.):32-35). Radcliffe-Brown furthered the cause of Social Anthropology by teaching at universities across the British Commonwealth. Stemming from this was a series of publications based firmly on field-work that became the norm for anthropological texts from British Universities.¹⁴⁴

Social Anthropology is considered to have been followed not only in Britain but also France. One distinctive French theorist was Claude Lévi-Strauss who developed 'Structuralism' which had an enormous impact on a variety of sub-disciplines, particularly Symbolic Anthropology. Jean-Marie Benoist *The Structural revolution* (1978) says:

Levi-Strauss's approach to anthropology ... assumes that customs, myths, attitudes, behaviours that an external observer of a culture collects at random, are not the accidental or fortuitous products of haphazard circumstances but the performances of an underlying logic which generates them from below, and that this logic can be deciphered and formalized far beyond the awareness to which the performers caught within a code have access (Benoist 1978:61).

Structuralist analysis is replete with complex systems and terminologies all of which are hermetic and difficult to apply out of context of one of the Structural/Symbolic anthropologists' cultural studies, and even then to follow their line of thought often results in a reactionary counter theory from the researcher, "(so as to attain)... liberation from the monster structuralism, which is coldly determined to choke human creativity in the coils of its systems and structures" (Benoist 1978: 21). It was this element of Structuralism that gave rise to Postmodernist reactionary 'multiple-voices'. Having said this, some authors of the 1970s have contributed to the field using elements of Structuralist-Symbolic thinking, like David Hammond-Tooke on Xhosa religion and traditional healing as appears in his edited work *The Bantu-speaking peoples of Southern Africa* (1974) and Harriett Ngubane's *Body and mind in Zulu medicine* (1977). Structuralism influenced the 1960s-1970s developments of Cognitive Anthropology and authors like Clifford Geertz established a concept of culture

¹⁴⁴ Often Dr Killie Campbell's Africana Library had copies of many of these works, she did not collect those that were chiefly to do with theory, however her library now has the collection of Eileen Jenson Krige, who was Professor of Anthropology at the then University of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal), yet another school influenced by British Social Anthropology.

as a web of meaning or signification known as Interpretivism/Hermeneutics (See contemporary Social Research theories below).

Cultural Anthropology with its strong reliance on field-work and the incorporation of arts as material culture was influenced by the ready availability of Native American societies as ethnographic resources. Of particular importance to Cultural Anthropology is the concept of 'Cultural Relativism' which originated with Franz Boas¹⁴⁵ in the early 20th century and was a deliberate move away from Eurocentric thinking when viewing 'other' non-western cultures. Essentially Cultural Relativism is the principal of assessing the practices, beliefs and values from the viewpoint of the particular culture studied itself.¹⁴⁶

Cultural Anthropology along with the study of 'Material Culture' (including dress and beadwork) was encompassed within the predominantly Afrikaans Universities in the pre-1994 South Africa¹⁴⁷ along with *Kultuurgeskiedenis* (Cultural-history) (this perhaps reflecting its roots in German "*Volkekunde*" which Boas imported into the United States).¹⁴⁸ *Volkekunde* (Afrikaans for Anthropology that studied African culture) was taught along with *Kultuurgeskiedenis* (Cultural History of Europeans) in Afrikaans medium universities and the latter study was also part of the Afrikaans high-school curriculum in the 1950s-1960s. This material cultural approach is reflected in the work of Professor Hilgard Schoeman, one of the few to do research on beadwork meanings in the 1960s¹⁴⁹. He taught at the University of Zululand (a Nationalist Government established institution) and then at the *Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit* (RAU) (now University of Johannesburg). At English speaking South African universities Social Anthropology was taught instead.

By the 20th century, the academic courses at most universities worldwide had become specialized and divided into disciplines, the major division being between the Natural

¹⁴⁵ Boas used his positions at Columbia University and the American Museum of Natural History to train and develop generations of students: His first included Alfred Kroeber, Edward Sapir and Ruth Benedict, all of whom produced detailed studies of indigenous North American cultures and supplied data that countered the theory of a single evolutionary process. Kroeber and Sapir's concentration on Native American languages helped establish Linguistics as an independent subject free from its historical association with Indo-European Languages. Younger 'Boasians' like Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict were influenced by Psychoanalytic Psychologists Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, and sought to understand the way that individual personalities were shaped by the wider cultural and social forces in which they grew up (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropology> [accessed 23 July 2012]).

¹⁴⁶ In Sociology, the principle is sometimes practiced to avoid cultural bias in research, as well as to avoid judging another culture by the standards of one's own culture. For this reason, cultural relativism has been considered an attempt to avoid ethnocentrism. Cultural relativism is related to but often distinguished from moral relativism, the view that morality is relative to a standard, especially a cultural standard (www.chegg.com/homework-help/definitions/cultural-relativism [accessed 23 July 2012]).

¹⁴⁷ My reference is to my own UNISA Anthropology Honours Theory course 1982 and my Pretoria University Higher-diploma in Museum Science course 1977.

¹⁴⁸ This fact is significant for Dr Killie Campbell's Collections: Eileen Jensen Krige, Professor of Anthropology (termed African Studies) at the British Social Anthropology orientated University of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal), refused to endorse Barbara Tyrrell's nomination for an Honorary Doctorate through her Department; not only was the artist-recorder depicting material culture in her costume studies but Krige claimed it was because Tyrrell had not done the prerequisite five years 'scientific' observation of one particular people, rather she having moved from group to group as an artist-recorder. It was left to the then Principal, Professor Ernst Malherbe, an Educationalist, to argue for the award (MS Tyrrell, KCAL). When Professor Edgard Sienaert was Director in 1993 at Campbell Collections, Professor John Argyll, then Head of Anthropology (African Studies) after Krige, handed over the Department's museum holdings to Campbell Collections. Much of this museum's holdings was put together by a departmental outsider Ms Uni Anderssen (a sister to Lil Radcliffe who lectured in the Department), who had been friends of Medical Missionaries in Morija, Basutoland (Lesotho) and had thus acquired South Sotho pieces. While the Zulu beadwork had been collected by an American exchange Anthropology student, hence a Cultural anthropologist (personal communication Anderssen, Durban, July 2007) and Professor Jim Kiernan of the Department confirmed that "Material Culture" (such as the artefacts in the departmental museum cum staff-room) was not "worth keeping...as it is not used as 'teaching collections' in Social Anthropology" (personal communication Kiernan, Durban, August 1993).

¹⁴⁹ As in 'Preliminary report on traditional beadwork in the Mkhwanazi area of the Mtunzini district of Zululand.' In *African studies*. - Vol. 27, no. 2 (1968). p. 57-81.

Sciences and the Humanities; the latter encompassing History, Languages, Arts and the Social Sciences including Anthropology. The methodologies applicable in the Humanities depend on events and histories of individuals while the Natural Sciences depend on verifiable data. Thus the Social Sciences have drawn from both the applied scientific methods to interpret social repeatable and quantifiable phenomena as well as the Humanities' orientation to individual qualitative cases from the field. After World War II, British and American Cultural and Social anthropologists borrowed ideas and methodological approaches from each other so that the discipline started to become known collectively as Socio-cultural Anthropology. With the debates of the 1980-90s into, among other topics Colonialism, Power-issues, Gender and Sexuality, History and Anthropology, Society and Individual Agency and Ethnographic Authority, Socio-cultural Anthropology started to move into the 'Postmodern' era.¹⁵⁰

4.2. Contemporary theoretical and methodological perspectives

In this section I consider how contemporary Social Theory and practice assist in the reassessment of museum data collected on beadwork and dress which was itself sourced sporadically, hence it may not conform (except by default and serendipity) to targeted field-work using these newer theories and their accompanying methodologies. However, as indicated in Chapter 1, the later interpretation of the data coming from the field draws primarily upon the field of Symbolic and Interpretative Anthropology, exemplified in Geertz's 'thick description' (1973, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c) and Orality-Literacy Studies discussed earlier in this chapter, exemplified by Ong (1992 [2002]), who drew his ideas from Anthropology and Linguistics in particular. Earl Babbie and Johan Mouton (*The practice of social research* ([2001] 2011) place Ethnographic Studies within the Qualitative Research paradigm (2011:278-9). "Ethnography can be described as the data of cultural anthropology that is derived from the direct observation of behaviour in a particular society" (Spradley (1979: 93) cited by Babbie and Mouton 2011:279). The authors concede the following humanistic stance of Ethnography:

...(T)he essential core activity (of ethnography) aims to understand another way of life from the native point of view...Field work, then, involves the disciplined study of what the world is like to people who learn to see, hear, speak, think and act in ways that are different. *Rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people* (Italics mine) (Babbie and Mouton 2011:279).

According to Michael Crotty, *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process* (1998) the epistemology used in a study of one form, like Ethnographic Constructionism, will reject another like Objectivism as a Modernist/Colonialist approach, for it holds that "...there is no objective truth waiting for us to discover..." (Crotty 1998:8) and sees that meaning derives from our interaction with our worlds and this cannot be discovered but is rather constructed, and hence different people/cultures may construct meaning differently around the same phenomenon, "in this view of things, subject and object emerge as partners in the generation of meaning" (Crotty 1998: 9). In Subjectivism, which Crotty says is the basis of Structuralism and Postmodernism (Crotty 1998:9), (and in this he is not speaking of the subjective view of the researcher (which would be 'othering') but rather the subjective views of those studied apropos their own mental constructs) the meaning does not come from an interplay of subject and object but rather is imposed on the object by the subject. Here one "...import(s) meaning from

¹⁵⁰ 'Postmodern' era. names especially associated with these movements are Michael Foucault, Clifford Geertz, Antonio Gramsci, Marshall Sahlins, Fernand Brandel, George Marcus and James Clifford (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropology> [accessed 23 July 2012]).

somewhere else (including from the subjective world-view of the persons studied). The meaning we ascribe to the object may come from our dreams, or from primordial archetypes we locate within our collective unconscious, or from the conjunction and aspects of the planets, or from our religious beliefs..." (Crotty 1998:9).

One could suggest that the presence of a Subjectivist epistemology could be applied to the topic of beadwork and dress as the questions posed by Crotty are pertinent to the topic, particularly meanings for beadwork colours/motifs/patterns that are "humanly fashioned ways of seeing things whose processes we need to explore..." (Crotty 1998:9). This is therefore an epistemology that one needs to be conscious of, one that can be balanced with a Constructionist approach that incorporates the actual 'voice' of the beadworkers/makers.

Subjectivism is common to Interpretivism (which encompasses Symbolic Anthropology of the 'Geertzian' sort) and is linked to the thinking of Max Weber (1864-1920) whose interpretative approach of *Verstehen* (Understanding) formed the basis to subsequent Interpretivism and Symbolic Interactionism. Frank Elwell gives the following explanation for Weber's *Verstehen* Sociology, which locates the study of society in context of human beings acting and interacting.¹⁵¹

" *Verstehen* is a German term that means to understand, perceive, know, and comprehend the nature and significance of a phenomenon. To grasp or comprehend the meaning intended or expressed by another. Weber used the term to refer to the social scientist's attempt to understand both the intention and the context of human action. (www.faculty.rsu.edu/users/f/felwell/www/Theorists/Weber/Whome2.htm[accessed 13 February 2015]).

The concept of '*Verstehen*', says Crotty, gives the Social Sciences a qualitative paradigm or methodology in seeking what is *idiographic*¹⁵², while the Natural Sciences tend to be quantitative in research methodology as they seek what is *nomothetic*¹⁵³ (Crotty 1998:67). What we understand as the Interpretative approach to Human Sciences inquiry has been formulated in three basic orientations within these theoretical perspectives identified by Crotty as; Hermeneutics, Phenomenology and Symbolic Interactionism (Crotty 1998:71). Theoreticians of these can differ sharply, for instance Phenomenology treats culture with a "...good measure of caution and suspicion. Our culture may be enabling but, paradoxically, it is also crippling..." (Crotty 1998:71). Symbolic Interactionism however is described as strongly humanistic and pragmatic, as it "focuses on the nature and genesis of a shared world, intersubjectivity, and communication" (Rodgers (1981:140) as cited by Crotty 1998: 74).

¹⁵¹ "Interpretative sociology considers the individual and his action as the basic unit...the sole carrier of meaningful conduct...for sociology such concepts as 'state', 'associations', 'feudalism' and the like, designate certain categories of human interactions. Hence it is the task of sociology to reduce these concepts to 'understandable' action, that is without exception, to the actions of participating men (/women)." (Weber (1970:55) as cited by Crotty 1998: 68-69).

¹⁵² "Ideogram - *n.* a character symbolizing the idea of a thing without indicating the sequence of sounds in its name (eg. A numeral and many Chinese characters). ...idiom *n.* - 1.a group of words established by usage and having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words...2. A form of expression peculiar to a language, person or group of people 3a-the language of a people or a country.b. the specific character of this. 4. A characteristic mode of expression in music, art, etc..." (Oxford 1993:740) No "idiographic" is mentioned in the rendition of the Oxford Wordfinder used but "Idiogram-*n.*- a **karyotype**..[idio+gram].is listed in the Universal Dictionary [Reader's Digest 1991 (edn.): 765). The reason for being so exacting in translation of Crotty's words mentioned in the text is because the same word roots are those used heavily in Orality-Literacy as are used in Interpretivism and as such they are words used in the interpretation of beadwork and dress meanings.

¹⁵³ "nomothetic - *adj.* 1. Lawmaking; Legislative. 2. Of or concerned with the formulation of general or scientific laws ... (Reader's Digest 1991: 1050).

Norman Denzin in *Symbolic Interactionism and cultural studies: The politics of interpretation* (1992) says of this theory:

...(It is) that unique American sociological and social psychological perspective that traces its roots to the early American pragmatists James, Dewey, Peirce and Mead...the most sociological of social psychologies...it rests on three root assumptions: ...that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings the things have for them...; second, that the meaning of things arise out of the process of social interaction; and third, that meanings are modified through an interpretive process which involves self-reflective individuals symbolically interacting with one another. (Denzin 1992: Preface xiv).

Symbolic Interactionism has the social researcher seeing the world from the view of the actor or 'other' studied:

Methodologically, the implication of the symbolic interactionist perspective is that the actor's view of actions, objects, and society has to be studied seriously. *The situation must be seen as the actor sees it, the meanings, and objects and acts must be determined in terms of the actor's meanings, and the organization of a course of action must be understood as the actor organizes it.* The role of the actor in the situation would have to be taken by the observer in order to see the social world from his (her) perspective (Italics mine) (Psathas (1973:6-7) cited by Crotty 1998:75).

This 'role-taking' of the standpoint of the 'other' studied is both an interaction but yet symbolic, because this process is possible only because of the 'significant symbols' of language and material objects (such as dress and beadwork) that humans share and via which they communicate. Thus to Crotty "(o)nly through dialogue can one become aware of the perceptions, feelings and attitudes of others and interpret their meanings and intent..." (Italics mine) (Crotty 1998:75-76). As regards qualitative research this perspective is "diversified" and an "enriching matrix" that "clearly proved useful in identifying research questions and framing research processes for several generations of researchers..." (Crotty 1998: 78). Crotty sums up with reference to the anthropological roots of such a social theory:

Given the emphasis on putting oneself in the place of the other and seeing things from the perspective of others, it is not surprising that symbolic interactionism should take to its heart the research methodology developed within cultural anthropology, that is, ethnography (Crotty 1998:76).

Clearly then the methodology of Symbolic Interactionism as a Symbolic and Interpretative approach to Anthropology (Crotty 1998) and a psychological perspective on Sociology (Denzin 1992) is invaluable to any such thesis as this – the views and declarations of the beadworkers/wearers and the purpose of the original contextual ritual is integral to the understanding of the topic. Symbolic Interactionism spawned Grounded theory, a form of ethnographic inquiry built up of an understanding of the study from the 'ground-up' as it were (Crotty 1998:76). Phenomenology is the response of going "back to the things themselves" (Crotty 1998:78) as phenomena that present themselves to human consciousness; it is a revisiting of our immediate experience of them, providing possibilities of new meanings or validation and authentication of former meanings. Crotty comments:

An object is always an object for someone....(and) cannot be adequately described apart from the subject, nor can the subject be adequately described apart from the object. From a more existentialist viewpoint, intentionality bespeaks the relationship

between us as human beings and our world. We are beings-in-the-world... (Italics mine) (Crotty 1998:79).

Crotty says that in relation to culture, through learning and enculturation, we all are introduced into a world of meanings provided by our culture, ones that shape our thinking and behaviour throughout our lives. Thus “*Phenomenology...invites us...to engage with phenomena in our world and make sense of them directly and immediately....*”(These are)... the objects of our experience (long) before we start thinking about them, interpreting them or attributing any meaning to them...” (Italics mine) (Crotty 1998:79). The danger of this is that our symbols can come to stand between us and direct experience and can “substitute for what we actually hear, see, feel, smell, taste and even imagine...”(Crotty 1998:82).

Babbie and Mouton extend the understanding of the Phenomenological view by grouping it along with Interpretivism, saying that this position is based upon “ the fact that people are continuously constructing, developing, and changing the everyday (common-sense) interpretations of their world(s)...(And this) should be taken into account in any conception of social science research” (Babbie and Mouton 2011:28). It seems that Crotty’s (1998) explanation versus that of Babbie and Mouton (2011) is somewhat contradictory. Shutz formulated a methodological postulate for the Social sciences, that of “Logical consistency” and that of “Adequacy”. Thus every interpretation or description generated by the Social scientist “must be internally consistent and such theories should be understandable to the actors themselves (*i.e. our informants/interviewees must recognize themselves in our theories of themselves*)” (Italics mine) (Shutz cited by Babbie and Mouton 2011: 28-29). This orientation is that taken by Geertz in ‘From the native point of view: on the nature of anthropological understanding’ (that appeared in both *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretative Anthropology* (1983) and Rabinow, P., and Sullivan, P.P., (Eds.) *Interpretative social science: A reader*. (1979). Using this perspective I would argue as in Chapter 1, that it would be a risky venture to move too far from the cultural world-view of the beadwork/dress makers/wearers in regard to the interpretation of their communications.

In the 1960s, Harold Garfinkel took from Shutz’s work to formulate “Ethnomethodology” as Phenomenology’s applicability to people in their everyday worlds in lived socio-cultural groups. He rejected Structural-functionalism’s view of an objective social world which influences human behaviour, rather social order is accomplished from within through the practices of the actors involved themselves. Babbie and Mouton say: “ *For him (Garfinkel) - as for Shutz - the real object of social inquiry is everyday life and common-sense knowledge, and the unstated rules and assumptions which people draw on to make their own actions understandable to themselves and other people*” (Italics mine) (Babbie and Mouton 2011: 30). This allows for stability and order even where there is a possibility of ambiguity and misunderstanding, moreover Garfinkel believes “*people are ‘highly knowledgeable’ about their lives and they use this understanding to bring order to them despite tacit inconsistencies.*”(Italics mine) (Garfinkel cited by Babbie and Mouton 2011: 30). In this way people are continuously trying to make sense of their life experience and in this they function like social scientists, hence his terming it Ethnomethodology or “methodology of the people” (Garfinkel cited by Babbie and Mouton 2011: 30).

Hermeneutics is an earlier thinking mode that emphasizes the “subjective understanding of interpretation”(Babbie and Mouton 2011:30). Being an early formulation it emphasizes the difference between the Positivism of the 19th 20th centuries’ Natural sciences and the Constructionism of the Human Sciences. As against universally valid natural laws the Human Sciences aim for understanding the internal relations between actions by relating them to the

ideas, values and purposes that gave rise to them. In the same way as we understand the meaning of texts through interpretation (also termed Hermeneutics) “we should aim in a similar fashion, to interpret the ideas, purposes and other mental states expressed in the world of human action” (Babbie and Mouton 2011: 31).

Clifford Geertz explodes the myth of an objective anthropological methodology, saying of the notable anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski:

Bronislaw Malinowski’s *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* rendered established accounts of how anthropologists work fairly well implausible. The myth of the chameleon fieldworker, perfectly self-tuned to his exotic surroundings, a walking miracle of empathy, tact, patience and cosmopolitanism, was demolished by the man who had perhaps done the most to create it (Geertz 1983c:56).

Concerning the “Insider-Outsider” debate in the Social Sciences¹⁵⁴ Geertz prefers the concept of “experience-near” versus “experience-distant”. The former is what an informant might define as what he thinks/feels and what he applies similarly to others in his knowledge, while the latter is one that specialists like Ethnographers (and Art historians), “employ to forward their scientific, philosophical, or practical aims” (Geertz 1983c:56). In Postmodernist Narrative Therapy¹⁵⁵ this same concept is encapsulated in “Structured” versus “Non-Structured” meaning-making. Thus ‘Structured’ speaks of those practices that dominate western scientific thought, such as “needs, drives, defences” versus ‘Non-Structured’ wordings’ like “beliefs, hopes, dreams (and) values”, the latter taken ironically from anthropologists’ experience of persons’ behaviours in the field (Morkel 2007: 2-3).¹⁵⁶

Geertz’s Interpretivism’s basic proposition derives from Anthropology and is a form of hermeneutics or “the enterprise... of the understanding of understanding” or “the theory and methodology of interpretation” (Geertz 1983b:69). Geertz describes this concept:

(The concept of the) hermeneutic circle.... is ... central to ethnographic interpretation, and thus to the penetration of other people’s modes of thought, as it is to literary, historical, philosophical, psychoanalytic, or biblical interpretation, *or for that matter to the informal annotation of everyday experience we call common sense...* (Italics mine) (Geertz 1983b: 69).

Geertz speaks of Ethnography/Anthropology as being a form of “thick description” where the Analysis thereof is sorting out the structures of signification so as to determine their social ground and import. In his essay ‘Thick description: toward an interpretive theory of culture’ (1973). He says:

¹⁵⁴ This entails an explanation of ‘insider’ behaviour/ritual/artefact/art in terms of social/cultural context to make this meaning accessible to an ‘outsider’ to that cultural context. The anthropologist’s position can straddle ‘insider/outsider’ or be either at the extreme end thereof (Geertz 1983:56).

¹⁵⁵ Narrative therapy, generally described as the most humane of psychotherapies, which uses art-therapy to access the deeper emotions and subliminal intentions of a person, speaks of the validation and healing offered by the narrative approach, especially in cases of identity crises or individuation. Narrative therapy itself is based upon the work of Australian family councillor Michael White and New Zealand anthropologist David Epston. One reference is *Experience, contradiction, narrative and imagination: selected papers of David Epston and Michael White, 1989-1991* (Dulwich Centre Publications, 1992.) They developed a post-modern epistemology that is anchored in the respect for the individual, no longer does a healing-professional impose interpretations, but people are asked how things work for them, what is of value to them within their own local context.

¹⁵⁶ The Morkel referred to in the reference is Narrative Therapist Elize Morkle and the reference is to course-notes taken at an *Intensive Narrative Therapy Training* session I undertook at Table View, Cape Town in November 2007.

Doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of “construct a reading of”) a manuscript - foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs or sound but in transient examples of shaped behaviour.....Analysis then is sorting out the structures of signification - what Ryle called established codes, a somewhat misleading expression, for it makes the enterprise sound too much like that of the cipher clerk when it is much more like that of a literary critic - and determining their social ground and import (Geertz 1973: 9-10).¹⁵⁷

Crotty citing Rundell discussing the hermeneutic understandings of Hans-George Gadamer, says that the philosopher sees human societies as “thoroughly historical – as, indeed, ‘historically effected’ consciousnesses....” and that Gadamer thus argues that “hermeneutics must start from the position that a person seeking to understand something has a bond to the subject matter that comes into language through [tradition]...” (Rundell (1995:32) cited by Crotty 1998: 100). Overall the various forms of Interpretivism are intuitive forms of study (Crotty 1998:112) bringing one to Critical Inquiry as another theoretical perspective. The two forms contrast in that the former seeks to merely understand and the latter is one that challenges the situation and ‘reads’ it in terms of conflict and suppression. Interpretivism accepts the status quo while Critical Inquiry seeks to bring about change (Crotty 1998: 113). Developed by the neo-Marxist Frankfurt School (Crotty 1998:114-5), Critical Inquiry has a long and complex history in the new era and certainly Feminism is one area requiring special attention as it impacts on the topic of this thesis. Crotty comments on Paulo Freire’s¹⁵⁸ *Cultural action for freedom* (1972), which postulates the “culture of silence”, an expression of the culture of the oppressed which is of particular significance for South Africa (with its pre-1994 neo-colonial European dominance):

These are the masses upon whom, within culturally alienated societies, a regime of oppression is imposed by the power elites.....Consentisation does not come easy, however. For the oppressed to become critically aware of their true situation, intervene in its reality and thus take charge of their destiny is particularly difficult because they belong to “a culture of silence”....the masses are mute. They have no voice. They are excluded from any active role in the transformation of their society and are therefore ‘prohibited from being’ (Freire (1972:30) cited by Crotty 1998: 154).

In such a ‘culture of silence’ the dominated and oppressed have internalized the myth of the dominant and the oppressor “comes to be ‘housed’ within the oppressed and they seek to be like the oppressor...”(Crotty 1998:154).

Valerie Bentz and Jeremy Shapiro in *Mindful inquiry in Social Research* (1998) talk of “Triangulated Research Design” saying that although each research methodology is discussed as if distinct:

¹⁵⁷Two of Geertz’s invaluable contributions to the literature on Interpretation/Interpretivism are ‘Common Sense as a Cultural System’ and ‘Art as a Cultural System’, in *Local Knowledge: Further essays in Interpretative Anthropology* (1983) titles which speak for themselves (Geertz 1983: 9-10).

¹⁵⁸ “Freire is a Brazilian (educator and liberation theologian). He was born in the North East in 1921 of middle-class parents, better off than most. He then went on to work with the poor and this sharing of their life led him to the discovery of what he describes as the culture of silence, of the dispossessed. He came to realise that the ignorance and lethargy of the poor people in his country were the direct product of the whole situation of economic, social and political domination.”(<http://stclares.ca/pdfs/The%20Theory%20of%20Paulo%20Freire.pdf> [accessed 7 August 2013]).

...(But) some of the most interesting social research occurs when the researchers use methods from several distinct cultures of enquiry to get a richer understanding of the phenomenon. *The idea of triangulation is that different theories, cultures of enquiry, methods, and techniques will elucidate and cover different aspects of a situation.* A design is “multiple triangulation” ... when you triangulate at several levels – for example, by using several theories, methods, techniques and researchers on the same situation (Italics mine) (Bentz and Shapiro 1998: 88-9).

Of the various methodologies used, it is worth considering that of Discourse Analysis. Babbie and Mouton (2011) define this approach as concerned with language use beyond the boundaries of a sentence or utterance, and also concerned with the interrelationships between language and society and the interactive or dialogue aspects of everyday communication (Babbie and Mouton 2011:495). For some Discourse Analysts, like Michael Foucault the essence of analysing discourse lies in “...making explicit the unspoken, lived notions around power...once (one) begins to do discourse analysis (one) takes up a moral and political platform...” (Babbie and Mouton 2011:495).

Finally Postmodern theory can be described as a particular body of thought and theory, especially in Philosophy and Human Sciences which breaks with or extends Modernism’s enquiry. Benhabib takes Jane Flax’s work *Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West* (1990) and its conceptualization of Postmodernism as the “death of Man, of History and of Metaphysics” (Benhabib 1992: 211) as characteristic of Postmodern thought:

(In) *The Death of Man...* ‘Postmodernists wish to destroy... all essentialist conceptions of (the) human being or nature...In fact (they contend) Man (as in mankind) is a social, historical or linguistic artifact, not a noumenal or transcendental being...Man is forever caught in the web of fictive meaning, in chains of signification, in which the subject is merely another position in language’ (Flax (1990:32) cited by Benhabib 1992: 211).

Of the ‘Death of History’ Benhabib explains Flax’s Postmodernist understanding that the Modernist notion that History “exists for or is his (Mankind’s) being” is yet another “fiction of Man” (Benhabib 1992:211) and this Postmodern notion also breaks down the concept of progress so essential to Modernism’s notion of History. Of the ‘Death of Metaphysics’ Flax says that for Postmodernists the “quest for the Real conceals most Western philosophers’ desire, which is to master the world once and for all by enclosing it in an illusory but absolute system they believe represents or corresponds to a unitary being beyond history, particularity and change...” (Flax (1990:32-34) cited by Benhabib 1992: 211).

These epistemologies, theoretical perspectives, methodologies and methods have surely filtered into many disciplines, inclusive of the primary orientations taken in this thesis of Orality-Literacy and Symbolic Interpretative Anthropological theory and methodology and multi-disciplinary approaches are almost a prerequisite for contemporary research. I also cannot see how I can exclude a discussion of the theoretical and philosophical antecedents to these privileged orientations in this Chapter 2. Jana Gašpariková, et al., *Methodological challenges of interdisciplinary research in the social sciences* (1996) noted that the contrast between academic histories of Africa and historical and cultural knowledge (of African

societies) found outside the universities is merely included in historical discourse as the ‘guardians of oral archives’ while “*Africanist knowledge and understanding has constructed its own Africa and provided it with an appropriate past...*” (Italics mine) (Gašpariková, et al., 1996:185). Thus outside of academia, ‘other’ cultures comprised of African communities have produced their own histories and anthropologies and created their own discourse as to their identities (Gašpariková, et al., 1996: 185).

The many italicised quotes in this section are an attempt to indicate the orientations that may be applied to the topic of this thesis; essentially an acknowledgement of the people themselves as ‘owners’ of their own cultural output and creativity (dress and beadwork in this case) thereby allowing a Postmodernist ‘voice’ if one will. Another way of putting it, is that the researcher/collector would do best to ‘give ear’ to what the beadworkers/wearers claim to be their meanings ascribed to their regalia, this in light of the participants’ socio-cultural context and thinking (or cultural world-view). This is accepted as changing in a globalising world and while yet watching for a ‘culture of silence’ as endangering open communication, one could also argue for the African societies

possessing elements of subversive reaction to such outside dominant master-narratives, a characteristic honed in the long political struggle for freedom in South Africa. The use of multi-disciplinary methodologies and more especially ones that favour dialogue and collaboration would seem all of ethical, valid and productive. In this Symbolic Interactionism as a product of the ‘thick description’ of Interpretivism, while requiring one keep the perspective of ‘common-sense’, is perhaps the most productive of the contemporary socio-cultural theories for the study of beadwork and dress.

5. The Self, African Feminism, identity and Postmodernism

A sub-theme of Postmodernism is narrative. Oral history is essentially the articulation of the narrative and in this thesis, the cultural narrative, of the beadworkers/wearer’s own story (Whitaker 1985 and Crowther 2003). Narrative therapy, which uses art-therapy to access the deeper emotions and subliminal intentions of a person, speaks of the validation and healing offered by the narrative approach, especially in cases of identity crises or individuation and disappointment in expectation and circumstance. Narrative therapy itself is based upon the work of Australian family councillor Michael White and New Zealand anthropologist David Epston¹⁵⁹ who developed a Postmodernist epistemology that is anchored in the respect for the individual. No longer does a healing-professional impose interpretations, but people are asked how things work for them, what is of value to them and acknowledge local content. Narrative therapy is not just telling stories; rather it is based upon the assumption that people organize meaning in their lives by telling their own life-histories. The language used is never neutral and it constitutes people’s realities (Morkel 2007). Narrative therapy owes much to Postmodernism and Foucaultian thinking. So too, Paul Crowther in *Philosophy after postmodernism: civilized values and scope of knowledge* (2003) formulates a new approach to Philosophy which instead of rejecting the currently debated anomalies found in the complexities of Postmodern thought, tries to redeem and assimilate some of its more positive features and identifies conceptual links between value, knowledge, personal identity and civilization.

¹⁵⁹ See footnote above for details of Narrative therapy.

No study of beadwork or dress can ignore Feminist theory simply because beadwork as an art-form has become one tacit mode of particularly traditionalist female communication. Bernice Stott in her Master's thesis *The reconstitution of African women's spiritualities in the context of the Amazwi Abesifazane (Voices of Women) project in KwaZulu-Natal (1998-2005)* (2006) speaks of how African Feminism differs from western Feminism in certain basics. The latter represent so-called Third World women as a composite, undifferentiated 'other', poor and powerless and thereby succeed in 'othering' the 'other woman' (Stott 2006:59-62). Postmodernism embraces diversity and seeks to draw out previously subjugated 'voices' and knowledge and recognizes that there is no one homogenizing Feminism. African Feminism's defining mark is holism, deriving from a cultural world-view of the indivisibility of the visible and invisible worlds in which all persons find their meaning and place in the greater cosmos (Stott 2006:59-62). This is essentially a culturally structured cosmos in which males and females have specific roles, ones with which western Feminism takes issue (such as race, class and gender inequalities). In African Feminism these issues are subsumed and incorporated into cultural/religious constructs (world-views/values) that give the lives of females in the cultural context meaning, particularly where every day strategies for survival eclipse all but spiritual fortitude. In this, African Feminism takes its cue from Liberation, African and more specifically African Women's Theology (Stott 2006: 59-62). One Methodology employed in accessing these newer perspectives and thereby allowing for empowerment and re-owning of meaning is the use of story-telling or narratology, which invariably includes elements of art therapy. Andries Botha of the Durban University of Technology has employed these elements in his *Amazwi Abesifazane: Voices of women Memory-cloth Project* (a Trust (since 2002)). My perception of Stott's and Botha's understanding of the healing function of the memory cloth designs parallel those I have found in traditionalist beadwork that document African women's life-histories and show their spiritual resilience in the face of gender inequalities and circumstantial hardship (Winters 2005a, 2006a).

One insight into Postmodernism in relation to Feminism is the work of Seyla Benhabib (1992) already referred to in Section 2 above. Her work focuses on ethics and morality in connection with Feminist issues; a concern of this thesis in that African beadwork and dress remain essentially female art-forms.

Benhabib points out that one's identity does not refer to one's potential of choice alone, as in the Kantian concept of "an autonomous self, as a being freely choosing his or her own ends in life" (Benhabib, 1992:162), but rather the:

(A)ctuality of ...(one's) choices, namely ... *how ... (one) as a finite, concrete, embodied individual, shape(s) and fashion(s) the circumstances of ... (one's) birth and family, linguistic, cultural and gender identity into a coherent narrative that stands as ... (one's) life's story.*the question becomes; how does this finite, embodied creature constitute into a coherent narrative (those)... episodes of choice and limitation, agency, and suffering, initiative and dependence? *The self is not a thing, a substrate, but the protagonist of a life's tale* (Italics mine) (Benhabib 1992: 162).

Of Flax's contentions for Postmodernism discussed in the previous section, Benhabib's opinion is; "(It) will enable us to see why feminists find this critique of the ideals of western rationalism and the Enlightenment more than a congenial ally" (Benhabib 1992:211). However she herself sees the Postmodern position as more of a:

...*(M)ove toward the radical situatedness and contextualization of the subject...*I see a transformation in the object as well (as) the medium of epistemological representation from consciousness to language, *from claims about truth and reality to a more limited investigation of the conditions under which a community of inquirers can make warranted assertions about truth and the real...*” (Italics mine) (Benhabib 1992:211-212).

Further, Benhabib declares the Feminist counterpoint to the Post-modernist theme of the ‘Death of Man’ to be the “Demystification of the Male Subject of Reason” (Benhabib 1992:212) while to that of the ‘Death of History’ as the “Engendering of Historical narrative” (Benhabib 1992:212). Of the male she says “If the subject of the western intellectual tradition has usually been the white, propertied, Christian, male head of household, then History as hitherto recorded and narrated has been ‘his story’...” (Benhabib 1992 :212) and thus she argues:

...Furthermore, the various philosophies of history which have dominated the Enlightenment have forced historical narrative into unity, homogeneity and linearity *with the consequence that fragmentation, heterogeneity and above all the varying pace of different temporalities as experienced by different groups have been obliterated.* We need only remember Hegel’s belief that Africa has no history. Until very recently neither did women have their own history, their own narrative with different categories of periodization and different structural realities (Italics mine) (Benhabib 1992: 211-213).

Of Flax’s Postmodernist stance on the ‘Death of Metaphysics’ Benhabib says the Feminist counterpoint would be “Feminist scepticism toward the claims of transcendent reason” (Benhabib 1992:213). Basically here the subject of reason is not a supra-historical and context-transcendent being but a practical and context-bound one where knowledge-governing interests mark and direct her activities. And she comments that each of these counterpoints “can be interpreted to permit if not contradictory then at least radically divergent theoretical strategies...” (Benhabib 1992: 213).

Benhabib comments on the ‘Death of History’ that even should one discard meta-narratives there is the question of how one can rethink the relationship between politics, historiography and historical memory. She queries if it is possible for struggling groups not to interpret history in the light of a moral-political imperative, namely, the imperative of their future interest in emancipation (Benhabib 1992:220). For me, in this point she foreshadows the debate on modernisation or social change, one that must perforce also form part of this dissertation.

As regards female sense of identity as to selfhood, agency and autonomy despite cultural positions, Discourse Analyst Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble: feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) discusses Modernist notions behind anthropological field-work which presumed a viable stable ‘agency’ or subject, one with a discursive ‘I’ (Butler 1990: 143). Benhabib counters Butler saying that the narrative codes of a culture define the content with which the pronoun “I” is invested, the appropriate instances when it can be invoked and moreover that no individual is “merely a blank slate upon whom are inscribed the codes of culture” (Benhabib 1992:217) and she questions:

... (W)hat mechanisms and dynamics are involved in the developmental process through which the human infant...becomes a distinct self with the ability to speak its

language and...to participate in the complex social processes which define its world? (Benhabib 1992:217).

Finally Benhabib, suggests much that Feminist historians in the mid-20th century contributed to Postmodernist debate, essentially a response to the former Modernist 'grand-narratives' of History:

(F)eminist historians...have (not only) discovered women and their hitherto invisible lives and work, but ...also revalorized and taught us to see with different eyes such traditionally female and previously denigrated activities like gossip, quilt-making, and even forms of typically female sickness like headaches, hysteria and taking to bed during menstruation. In this process of the "feminist transvaluation of values" our *present* interest in women's strategies of survival and historical resistance has led us to imbue these *past* activities, which were wholly uninteresting from the standpoint of the traditional historian, with new meaning and significance (Benhabib 1992:220).

Quite clearly Benhabib could have included African beadworking in her list of traditionally female 'dismissed' activities, and then one needs also to note how central to sustainable development such crafts have become to the informal economy, this despite the fact that the makers may well have modernised and no longer wear their ethnic attire or beadwork in daily life.

Further, the importance of the understandings of African Feminism (as against that of western Feminism) cannot be emphasised strongly enough in regard to the topic of this thesis, this because of the position of females in the patrilineal Nguni cultures. The irony is that women within such societies, while arguably 'voiceless' are not entirely so, for it can be argued (particularly when reviewing the actual beadwork communications in Chapter 5) that beadwork in its role of 'communicative medium' became their 'voice', for traditionalist women expressed not only their expectations and disappointments and triumphs but their own life-stories in their beadwork messages. In doing this the female beadworkers/wearers show a wide range of individual characters, despite their 'repressive' male dominated societies. Thus African traditionalist women, while no doubt seeking to conform to their cultural roles are nevertheless not stereotypes but individual persons, ones possessing dynamic thinking, interactive and 'many-sided' selves. I would venture to say that this fact is the single biggest reward of studying actual beadwork communications in the field and one that equally speaks to the artistry of the craft itself, as a piece of beadwork is as unique to a single maker's 'hand'¹⁶⁰ as is any writing-style to its scribe.

6. Acculturation, Modernity versus Modernism and modernisation

The terms 'Modernity' and 'Modernism' refer to movements in Art, particularly the art of the early 20th century influenced by Africa or 'Primitivism' as it was called (see Rhodes 1994). In contradiction Christopher Pierson, in *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making sense of modernity* (1998) defines modernity as associated with certain key attitudes, of a world open to human intervention which advantages industrial production and a market economy, accompanied by nation-states and mass democracy as a political orientation, all of which makes modernity "...vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society—more technically, a complex of institutions—which, unlike any preceding culture,

¹⁶⁰ This is an understudied aspect of beading but one readily acknowledged by any beadworkers,, for like any craft or art-work, no one person's mark is the same as for another. I have personally witnessed Mrs Banukile MaMbanjwa Mbhele (the artist-recorder Barbara Tyrrell's friend and informant) in her declarations as to who crafted a particular piece dating from the 1950s (judging by tension, finish and other technicalities) years later (personal communication Mbhele, Ndaleni, August 1989).

lives in the future, rather than the past”(Pierson 1998: 94). In this socio-political, historical context ‘Modernity’ and ‘Modernism’ refer to the globalising, industrial ‘modern’ world of the 20th century and as such it has been defined by Critical Theory as dehumanising and resulting in psychological alienation and commodity fetishism/materialism while the process of rationalization has led to ‘progress for the sake of progress’. As such Modernism has affected not only the western-world that begat it, but through colonialism and subsequent globalization affected the entire world’s peoples including the most remote of non-western societies. Thus Modernism or modernisation is a process of change that could also be said to constitute westernization, and as such it is a dynamic found in all societies that have come in touch with it. Modernisation in terms of societies manifests as a wide social integration characterized by increased movement of goods, capital, people, and information among formerly discrete populations. So too it results in increased formal social organisation of mobile populaces, development of "circuits" on which they and their influence travel, and societal standardization conducive to socio-economic mobility; increased specialization of the segments of society, i.e. division of labour, and area inter-dependency (Pierson 1998).

Even despite the more contemporary theories which concentrate upon globalisation as discussed above, one of the most useful concepts to do with change, modernisation or westernization is that termed ‘acculturation’ in Anthropology described by Melville Herskovits in *Cultural Anthropology: An abridged revision of Man and His Works* (1969) as “the study of cultural transmission in process” (Herskovits 1969:472). Herskovits in discussing Bronislaw Malinowski’s Functionalism, perceived studies of African acculturation as “(an) impact of a higher, active culture upon a simpler, more passive one....(where) the conception of culture-change as the impact of Western civilization and the reaction thereto of the indigenous cultures (can be considered) ...the only fruitful approach (to the study of acculturation)” (Herskovits 1969:474). Such talk does unfortunately rear the ‘ugly’ head of ‘Evolutionism’ in Anthropology once again, but Herskovits challenges:

Malinowski’s preoccupation with administrative problems led him to overemphasize the weakness of African ways of life in the face of the impact of European culture. *The very works of his students, that he himself cites, contain abundant proofs of the extent to which African culture, despite the pressures brought against it, has withstood these onslaughts.* This same preoccupation, too, caused him to neglect the phenomenon of interchange of cultural elements under contact. In contact between Europeans and Africans, this interchange has at least been sufficient to make the life of Europeans living in Africa quite different than it is in Europe, a fact of theoretical, no less than practical, implications (Italics mine) (Herskovits 1969:475).

Herskovits also notes that even hostile interactions between peoples result in mutual borrowing and cites the Nguni peoples in south east Africa’s borrowing of San language ‘clicks’, this despite the latter’s raiding of their cattle (Herskovits 1969:476-477). He says that contra-acculturative movements arise when there is dominance of one group over another, these movements can then “stress the values in aboriginal ways of life, and *to move aggressively, either actually or in fantasy, toward the restoration of those ways*, even in the face of apparent impotence to throw off the power that restricts them” (Italics mine) (Herskovits 1969:477). In regard to the latter scenario one immediately thinks of the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906, where the Colonial Government of Natal was actively resisted by the Zulu, under influence of iNkosi Bhambatha Zondi, where everything that was “white” and associated with the settlers, inclusive of utensils, clothes, animals, etc., were done away with (see J. Guy *Remembering the Rebellion* (UKZN Press, 2006).

Herskovits also says that “Reinterpretation marks all aspects of cultural change. It is a process by which old meanings are ascribed to new elements or by which new values change the cultural significance of old forms. It operates internally, from generation to generation...in integrating a borrowed element into a receiving culture...” (Herskovits 1969: 492). Syncretism is one of the more obvious forms of reinterpretation and demonstrated by the African Independent Churches identifying of the ancestral-spirits with the Holy Ghost of the Christian introduced missions (see B. Sundkler *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (Oxford University Press, 1970). Herskovits concluded that reinterpretation “sharpens certain propositions regarding the dynamics of culture. Linton has suggested that ‘every element of culture has qualities of four distinct, although mutually interrelated kinds: i.e. it has form, meaning, use and function...’ (Herskovits 1969: 494). Culture-change can affect each of these qualities independently, for instance “New meaning can be read into old form, or a new principle can be applied despite the retention of previous function...” (Herskovits 1969: 494-495). Vital to reinterpretation is the reason why a culture would accept one introduced idea or thing yet reject another from the same source. The explanation is that only those elements that are in agreement with preceding cultural concepts are accepted, while those that are not, are rejected (Herskovits 1969: 495).

Some helpful pointers as regards modernisation are to be found in Julian Steward (Ed.) *Three African Tribes in Transition* (1972). He explains that Anthropology post World War II “has devoted attention to societies and to sub-societies or subcultural groups that have become modernised or transformed to some degree owing to influences from a rapidly changing industrial world...special attention must be paid to the nature of causal factors, the meaning of processes and the conceptualization and categorization of phenomena observed in any study” (Steward 1972:1-2). He continues to say that traditional descriptive ethnography indicates little about modernisation, and this because every aspect of the subculture has a close link with the institutions of the larger society, hence “(it) could not exist in isolation from its context” (Steward 1972:3). Therefore a subculture:

Consequently ...cannot be understood if described as an ethnographically independent unit. The many factors that penetrate the local society from the larger sociocultural system create a dependency relationship that initiates processes of internal transformations or evolutionary changes (Italics mine) (Steward 1972:3).

While the use of words like ‘subculture/subsociety’ were used to show that groups do not stand on their own but function within a wider context, for convenience sake as well as in acknowledging the contemporary multi-disciplinary understandings of the subject, I keep to ‘cultures’. However, I agree that one can often forget this very point, that a rural ethnic group living say at Umkomaas or Umzimkhulu in KwaZulu-Natal have contacts within the wider South African context, which would make their circumstances more complex.

When Steward uses the words “internal transformations” or “evolutionary changes” the latter word does not refer to Darwinian Evolution but rather an adaptation, one that would be termed hybridity in more contemporary accounts of culture-change, and as such these are continuous processes taking place not only within the Zulu (Bhaca/Nhlangwini/Embo-Mkhize) sections of the overall South African society, but also in those of all others comprising the larger society.

Any transference of culture traits, practices and/or ideas from one society to another has been designated “diffusion” by Steward (1972:4) and it is considered to be a cumulative process by which the receiving society or sub-group is made more complex. However the existing value

system of the importing society will have a screening effect, and thus “Many societies are extraordinarily conservative and resistant to change, and they tend to reject traits that create imbalance...”(Steward 1972: 4).

Cultural anthropologists Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits gave the first definition of acculturation in 1936 in ‘Memorandum for the study of acculturation’ In *American Anthropologist* No. 38, as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups...under this definition acculturation is to be distinguished from...assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation” (Redfield; Linton, and Herskovits 1936:149-152). It must be pointed out that in this definition changes can derive from contacts between cultures where one is not necessarily the modernised and dominant one of the west or ‘globalising’ world, hence ‘acculturation’ (while certainly most often dealing with this process of modernisation) is not the same as modernisation.

Culture-change can have various effects, some notably negative, as in the psychological pressures manifesting as drug or alcohol abuse induced by the alienating process of such changes, thus breaking down positive aspects of the culture of origin, particularly home-life. While acculturation entails a two-way process of change, much research has focused on the adjustments and adaptations made by minorities such as immigrants, refugees, and indigenous peoples in response to their contact with the dominant majority. Thus according to J.W. Berry ‘Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation’ in *Applied Psychology: An International Review* (46 (1).1997), individuals approach acculturation in a number of ways. The first concerns the retention or rejection of an individual's minority or native culture, which will be dependent on how important the latter is to the person's identity. The second concerns the adoption or rejection of the dominant group or host culture and this will depend on how valuable such a larger society is to the individual. Usually one or other of the following strategies emerge: Assimilation which occurs when individuals reject their minority culture and adopt the norms of the dominant culture; Separation which occurs when individuals reject the dominant culture in favour of their culture of origin's norms, thus forming ethnic enclaves; Integration which occurs when individuals adopt the dominant culture's norms while yet maintaining some of their culture of origin; Marginalization which occurs when individuals reject both their culture of origin and the dominant culture (Berry 1997:10).

The modes of integration tend to be dictated by the dominant social group into which either an immigrant is arriving or the power group in the case of neo Colonialist societies like the former South Africa's apartheid regime. In a melting pot society like the United States, in which a harmonious and homogenous culture is promoted, assimilation is the endorsed acculturation strategy. While in a segregationist society, like that of pre 1994 South Africa in which people were separated into racial groups in daily life, a separation acculturation strategy is endorsed. Finally, in a multi-culturalist society, in which multiple cultures are accepted and appreciated, individuals are encouraged to adopt an integrationist approach to acculturation. In societies where cultural exclusion is promoted, individuals often adopt marginalization strategies of acculturation (Berry 1997:10).

W. Gudykunst and Y-Y. Kim *Communicating with strangers: An approach to intercultural communication* (2003) postulate a Modernist version of Acculturation, one open to abuse by dominant political powers, as no doubt informed the early 20th century Aborigine policies in Australia and that for the Native American in the United States. They define intercultural

adaptation as an "...‘upward-forward’ progress of acculturation that brings about change in strangers in the direction of assimilation, the highest degree of adaptation theoretically conceivable. It is the process by which strangers resocialized into a new culture so as to attain an increasing functional fitness... complete adaptation is a lifetime goal" (Gudykunst and Kim 2003:360).

Eric Kramer ‘Dimensional accrual and dissociation: An introduction’ in J. Grace (Ed.), *Comparative Cultures and Civilizations* (Vol. 3). (2012) postulates a theory of ‘Dimensional Accrual and Dissociation (DAD)’ so as to explain acculturation. This theory emphasizes how acculturation is based on the observation that different cultures manifest predominantly different modes of communicating; idolic, signalic or perspectival (see Section 2), which are merely different relative to each other, but not in terms of physiological capacity. No one mode of communication is inherently and universally superior to the others, acculturation varying from one person to another depending on what world-view they manifest. E. Kramer and R. Ikeda (1998) give more detail:

The thesis presented here is that as one moves from the magic, to the mythic and to the perspectival worlds, dimensional awareness accrues or adds up. *As a person becomes aware of more and more dimensions, that person becomes more and more dissociated from other phenomena in the world.* The world increasingly fragments, not only psychologically and interpersonally but also in terms of measurement and mechanism (Italics mine) (Kramer and Ikeda 1998: 44).

Kramer also holds that:

So-called "previous" orientations, like the magic and the mythic, are not "displaced" or "surpassed" (these being perspectival spatial concepts). No linear progressivism (positivism) is presupposed. Rather, all "previous" orientations are present in more complex ones (Kramer and Ikeda 1998: 44).

A fundamental premise in hermeneutics and semiotics, which Kramer's DAD theory accepts, is that identity depends on difference as do meaning, communication, and learning. If everyone assimilates into a monoculture then identity, meaning, and communication would cease to be.

Kramer and Ikeda comment on the modern world in which human-beings find themselves, one with modern perspectival thinking according to the theory of DAD:

The generation gap can (bring a)... crisis of identity and confidence in the individual who finds him or herself to be the nexus of nothing less than a revolution in world views. Their everyday lives are torn between traditional modes of comportment and modern ways which are characterized by what Gebser called "temporal anxiety," or a constant sense of urgency (Kramer and Ikeda 1998: 49).

C. Ward ‘The A, B, Cs of acculturation’ in D. Matsumoto (Ed.) *The handbook of culture and psychology* (2001) mentions that psychological acculturation concerns the behavioural shifts and experienced thoughts, feelings, and stress associated with cultural change (Ward 2001: 411-415). Differences in psychological acculturation then affect how well individuals adapt to their new cultural environment, leading to both psychological and sociocultural outcomes such as experiencing low self-esteem or acquiring a new language.

The realities of culture-change and modernisation, within the context of this thesis is a given phenomenon. No group even if identifying themselves as ‘traditionalist Zulu, Bhaca/Nhlangwini or Embo-Mkhize’ have stayed culturally intact (and unchanging) in its entirety. In fact a review of the histories of these peoples given in Chapter 1 will show that those Nguni resident below the Tugela River in what was the former Natal with its adjacent African ‘homelands’ (the locus of this study), are perhaps more historically transformed through culture-contacts with the urban (and mainly western but also Asian) than perhaps those of their culture resident in the former Zululand. Culture-change does ‘rear the head’ of the much debated word ‘traditionalist’ which this thesis argues to retain, but it must be emphasised that no traditionalist is unchanged as to his/her life-style; in other words this is no longer a fixed descriptive term, but rather it is a relative one, as a person who identifies him/herself as ‘traditionalist’ will more correctly be one who references a greater degree of his/her own cultural values and practices than another of his/her own society, who may be totally or partially integrated with the global world ‘out there’ as it were and so consider themselves ‘modern’. So too it is understood that any study of other cultures will perforce reference texts in the ‘ethnographic present’ by earlier generations of anthropologists, this is an inevitability so as to establish a ‘bench-mark’ for measuring any alteration in culture-trait from source (even although the basic point of this source is ever-changing). Thus what one is studying is in fact cultures in continual process of transformation and this happens to all cultures and societies as indicated in the texts cited in this section. One needs to know the nature of as well as the historical impetus causing any changes to come to a more contextualised understanding of the topic studied (beadwork and dress in this case). Equally one must know the original cultural practices and beliefs so as to assess what change there will be before offering suggestions as to why one aspect of the original cultural trait/system is retained and another is changed, reinterpreted or rejected.

Conclusion

The extensive overview supplied in this chapter enables a deeper insight into the many issues that impact the study of traditionalist beadwork (and dress) of the Bhaca/Nhlangwini and Embo-Mkhize (and their Zulu neighbours) of southern KwaZulu-Natal, which are held in the Campbell Collections of UKZN.

Firstly, the impact of the Collections institutional history, one deriving from a private collector, Dr Killie Campbell’s interests in ‘Africana’ bequeathed to the University of Natal (later KwaZulu-Natal). This institution not only underwent shifts in ownership (and management as discussed elsewhere) but shifts in thinking, from Modernism/Colonialism to Postmodernism for instance. In this, the particular holdings of beadwork (and dress) moved from the Anthropological classification of ‘material culture’ to works of Art. As a field the study of ‘material culture’ came under the domain of Cultural Anthropology and was excluded in Social Anthropology which concentrated upon kinship systems, the latter being that taught at the University of Natal (now UKZN). This fact lead to the marginalisation of the museum holdings and they became the domain of tourist and the lay-public, thus subject to the dangers of ‘othering’ as many (particularly European) visitors sought their own mythic rendition of ‘Africaness’. Later introductions of a more Postmodern Orality-Literacy Studies in the 1990s along with a further shift of the institution from a university library to the academic department/faculty (firstly Humanities and then Research) meant that cognisance of more theoretically grounded and multi-disciplinary approaches to understanding of the import of these Collections holdings is required to contextualise these museum holdings. Postmodernism also arrived with the advent of ‘corrective’ post-apartheid museum

exhibitions spear-headed by the various big galleries like Durban Art Gallery, Witwatersrand University Galleries, the Johannesburg Art Gallery and the introduction of African art into the Fine Art/Art history courses at the University of Natal (later KwaZulu-Natal). A discussion of issues like those of the disciplines of Museology and Anthropology along with their changing perspectives as they were influenced by Postmodernist thinking are necessary to situate the Collections themselves within this debate.

Secondly, there was a need to orientate the topic of beadwork/dress particularly within the above debate as it applied to the institutional history. The main argument of the thesis is that beadwork (and dress) function within the indigenous Nguni cultures in a specific way; they not only indicate age/status identities of the wearers and thus have a purpose in signalling these within applicable ritual-ceremonies (like marriage, betrothal, mourning, etc.), but they are the craftwork of illiterate and primarily oral females who must follow speech avoidances (*ukuhlonipha kolwimi*) so as to respect their lovers/spouses and in-laws (both living and deceased). This situation means that their beadwork takes the form of non-verbal symbolic communications, in which the colours and motifs selected are given meaning. The latter choices differ from region to region and hence such designs do not constitute a 'language' as such, yet the chosen regional design's 'reading' via the mediation of age-mates/co-wives/work-mates is often couched in the metaphorical and poetic language and idiom of pre-written, oral isiZulu. In order to help access these complexities of context of beadwork communications, I privileged two theoretical modalities, that of 'Geertzian' Symbolic Interpretative Anthropology's 'thick description' (along with its derivative Symbolic Interactionism) and that of Orality-Literacy Studies. All of these matters were discussed along with the main argument in the Introduction in Chapter 1. However the details of these theories and their place within Postmodernist thought has been supplied in this present chapter. Dealing with them along with the argument would have made the lay-out of the thesis too lengthy and failed to supply their links to the other equally pertinent issues discussed in this chapter, those of African Feminism, and modernisation or culture-change.

Chapter 3:

Age-grades/sets, dress and beadwork among the peoples of southern KwaZulu-Natal, with particular reference to the Bhaca/Nhlangwini, supplemented by that of the Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours

1. Historical and socio-cultural background to age-grades

In order to contextualize the phenomenon of age-grades, groupings or sets, characteristic of the Nguni peoples, as with all *Isintu* (or Bantu)-speakers, one needs to understand the fundamentals of the interplay between self and social identity and how these are formed through indigenous education, socialization and/or 'enculturation'.¹⁶¹ Wilhelm Jordaan and Jackie Jordaan in *Man in Context* (1992 edn.) discuss the dynamic of self-imaging, both individual and social, in which the self is experienced as an inner "something which ... contains everything of vital importance to a person's being" (Jordaan & Jordaan 1992:683). It is of this 'self' that one must enquire along with Benhabib (as in Chapter 2: section 5) "how ...(the self) as a finite, concrete, embodied individual, shape(s) and fashion(s) the circumstances of ...(its) birth and family, linguistic, cultural and gender identity into a coherent narrative that stands as ...(its) life's story. (For) *(t)he self is not a thing, a substrate, but the protagonist of a life's tale*"(Italics mine) (Benhabib 1992: 162).

However as Jordaan and Jordaan (1992:683) explain, for the individual living in a social or kinship group it is this social-system that determines much of his/her self-evaluation/image and if and in how far he/she conforms to cultural norms. The concept of Symbolic Interactionism (see Chapter 2) is particularly applicable here as it holds that the outer world of things, people and events do not incur a direct reaction as such, rather it is the individual's subjective response to the socially standardized meanings or symbols attached to these outer happenings that incur the reactionary response in the individual. Thus the focus is on the individual's "self-evaluation based on the interaction between people" in which the evaluations of others "become an integral part of ...(his/her) self-image" that is at issue (Jordaan & Jordaan 1992:684).

There are echoes in the above description of Symbolic Interactionism of the African concept of '*ubuntu*' (generally considered a humanist paradigm that holds that 'One is human because of (one's interaction with) others')¹⁶²and when looking at African societies one must necessarily, like in any other society studied, move into the domain of Sociology and Psychology from that of Anthropology (the study of human beings in terms of their cultural origins and prevailing world-views). However, one should not forget that the individual's 'self' remains central and he/she derives direction from the society's cultural values and or meanings.

¹⁶¹ When studying Anthropology with UNISA in the 1970s the term 'enculturation' was used to indicate the process by which children acquired their culture of origin's values and behaviour patterns with its unique 'world-view' as a compound of inter-related kinship, political, economic and religious systems. This was essentially Functionalism, discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

¹⁶² **Ubuntu** (Zulu/Xhosa) is an African ethic or humanist philosophy focusing on people's allegiances and relations with each other. Some believe that *ubuntu* is a classical African philosophy or worldview whereas others point out that the idea that *ubuntu* is a philosophy or worldview has developed in written sources in recent years. The word has its origin in the Bantu languages of southern Africa (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ubuntu> [accessed 4 June 2011]).

Perhaps this is the place to refer to the role of dress (clothing) in context of self identity. Marilyn Horn in *The Second Skin: an interdisciplinary study of clothing* (1975) claims that “Clothing is a part of the ‘silent language’ that is communicated through the use of visual but nonverbal symbols” (Horn 1975:179).¹⁶³

Of the cultural setting of dress Horn says:

Like other aspects of culture, beliefs and values are not inherent, but are acquired in the process of living with others and sharing ideas. The dominant themes of a culture are reflected in those values which are most commonly shared, and the socialization of an individual always takes place within the value patterns that prevail in the larger cultural group (Horn 1975:75).

When it comes to African age-grades it is arguable that the primary focus derives from the perception of an evident distinction between the traditionally different roles assigned the sexes; women doing agriculture, home-making and child-bearing/rearing while men were assigned animal husbandry (cattle), warrior-hood and, owing to the patriarchal system, the central role as heads of families and/or clans/nations.¹⁶⁴ In terms of this present chapter, those studied are specifically the peoples who have remained essentially traditionalist in world-view, from southern Kwa-Zulu Natal, discussed in more detail in the first chapter. These include the Zulu and Embo-Mkhize within the latter’s historical chiefdoms in Umkomaas and Ndwedwe, and the Bhaca and Nhlungwini of the midlands to the lower Drakensberg/East Griqualand. These peoples inter-married, thus influencing each other, moreover it seems that the Nhlungwini, being of Swazi origin were related to the Embo-Mkhize in the remote past.¹⁶⁵

Father A. T. Bryant’s accounts in *The Zulu People: as they were before the white man came* (1949) give first-hand albeit ‘outsider’ insight into Nguni culture and society. While admittedly he describes a now nostalgic past located in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, one before too much impact was felt by the agents of modernisation and change in the social, economic, political and religious spheres. Of this early Nguni life-style, Bryant mentions the holistic or ‘functional’¹⁶⁶ integration then found in the Zulu homestead, and its effect on the education and ‘acculturation’¹⁶⁷ of the youth and the resultant respect for custom (*isiko*) that entrenched in them an identity focused upon traditionalist conservatism. Of the original *isiZulu*-speaking homestead, described by Father Bryant, the homestead head and father was the ritual head who ensured the link with the ancestral-spirits and the wealth of cattle, the medium of exchange for wives through bride-price (lobola) to legitimize the children born to that homestead. Mothers added to the homestead and the clan’s numbers in the children they bore. The Zulu, Embo-Mkhize and Bhaca/Nhlungwini were also traditionally polygamous,

¹⁶³ Horn goes on to discuss Erving Goffman ‘Symbols of Class Status’ *British Journal of Sociology*, 2 no 4, 1951. Such symbols then become “ ‘sign-vehicles’ or ‘cues’ which select the status that is to be imputed to an individual and define the way others are to treat him. (And thus)... set(ing) the stage for further interaction. ” (Horn 1975:179).

¹⁶⁴ See A.T. Bryant *The Zulu People:As they were before the white man came* (1949).

¹⁶⁵ See S.P. Mkhize *Uhlanga Lwas’Embo* (2007) and A.T. Bryant. *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*. (1965).

¹⁶⁶ I deliberately use this word as it relates to Functional anthropology’s understanding of cultures. Bryant, however was a Diffusionist, itself a school of thinking predating Functionalism which claimed culture-complexes emanating from a centre, usually Egypt or Israel. However his elements of functionalist understanding derive from his firm observation of Zulu life and histories.

¹⁶⁷ See the earlier given footnote in this chapter on the anthropological terminology. Here the word is used as a synonym for ‘enculturation’.

practicing *isithembu*,¹⁶⁸ where the homestead head could have a number of wives, the number being prescribed only by his status, personal predilection and the number of cattle he had. Each wife had her own hut (*indlu*) in a well ordered structure, either main (*undlunkulu*), or right (*ikhohlo*) or left hand side (*iqadi*) thereto, the position of which was of importance to her children's inheritance and position in the clan/family (Bryant 1949:412-457). In such a social-structure, age-grades of both male and female children and youths, find their context.

Jordan K. Ngubane in *Conflict of minds: Changing power dispositions in South Africa* (1979) attempts to give the African philosophy of the continuous self-definition of personhood (*ubuntu*) that is encapsulated in such aphorisms (*izaqa*) as *ukuba ngumuntu* (the person's essential humanness) and *umuntu akalahwa* (the person is never so evil he is beyond redemption) (Ngubane 1997:78). These notions he attributes to "The sum-total of family or nomarchic self-definitions ... (And) customs, laws and other legal usages (which) were part of (this) self-definition" (Ngubane 1997:78). Ngubane indicates how he, as a Zulu from Maphumulo, acquired these philosophies from his father via old aphorisms, these being expressions of the laws and customs of his forefathers and more especially that these concepts are also located within the clan's *isithakazelo* or praises taught the children of the family. These he says carry the very self-definitions or identities that become the destiny of a clan "(e)ach social cluster (or family or nome in Zulu society) has its own tradition (*izinkamba*) for establishing its identity" (Ngubane 1997:78).

Initially, western style education and schools were introduced by Christian Missions and only later was Colonial and then Nationalist Government education ensured via the Native and Bantu Education Departments in the 20th century. Post 1994, these departments are obviously no longer split along racial lines as before, yet because of the cost of providing education it still meant that the rural and mainly black commoner's children must perforce continue with the schools of old. Culture-changes that impacted the Nguni socio-cultural-system and thereby the 'enculturation' of its children and youth could be historically ascribed to the increasing impoverishment and disempowerment of the Zulu (and their satellite peoples) after the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 and the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906 (a Rebellion which impacted profoundly on the southern KwaZulu-Natal areas of the Embo-Mkhize under *iNkosi Tilonko kaNgunezi* and the Nhlanguwini, under *iNkosi Miskofili ka Khukhulela Dlamini*¹⁶⁹); the latter stemmed from a refusal to pay the imposition of poll-tax on all males over 18, in addition to pre-existing hut and dog-taxes by the Colonial Government, rallying itself financially after the then recent cost of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. This tax, also realized the European community's desire for cheap labour on the mines and in the cities, for young men (initially of the *izinsiswa* age-group¹⁷⁰) but in time including married men or *amadoda* were thus forced into such migrant work in order to earn money, not only to pay the tax, but to sustain their families. Such labour became the norm with short contracts of six months to a year and was a system characterised by men commuting back and forth to rural homelands where their girlfriends, wives, minor children and elders resided. This scenario is most important to the thesis topic, as it set the social parameters and scene for the beadwork/dress communications as operative in Nguni society.

¹⁶⁸ *Isithembu* is the Nguni cultural practice of a man having more than one wife (Bryant 1949:412-457). Orthodox Christianity introduced by missionaries, no matter the sect, were invariably against this traditional Nguni practice.

¹⁶⁹ See Jeff Guy, *Remembering the Rebellion: The Zulu Uprising 1906* (2006, pp. 52-3). The Embo-Mkhize chief was tried and sent into exile in St Helena for rebellion while the Nhlanguwini chief was forced to hand over his cattle and his men as rebels, many of these were flogged or fined to make an example of them. This led to the chief being seen to participate in the suppression of his people.

¹⁷⁰ *Izinsizwa* are young men from their late teens until 35 when getting married and becoming *amadoda*. This is the main male age-group dealt with in this chapter and discussed in detail later in the text.

Martine Mariotti in *Apartheid under Pressure; the end of job reservation in South Africa* (Dept. Education, UCLA. n.d.) (at <http://www.iga.ucdavis.edu> [accessed 2 June 2011]) notes that white Labour Unions lobbied for the promulgation of laws in the early 20th century South Africa that forced blacks into unskilled jobs in the mining industry, restricted their access to land, prohibited strikes by blacks and reserved skilled and semi-skilled jobs in mining for whites. Migrant labour thus remained unskilled, requiring little education and the system barely changed for some decades and was entrenched in the apartheid years by the Nationalist State. Both Colonial and Nationalist Governments were astute at keeping Africans tribal, even without the patriarchally dominated traditionalism so much a part of Nguni culture. These Governments, especially that of the Nationalists, were suspicious of the Kholwa or Christian black South Africans, their being seen as the product of liberal, imperialist political hegemonies of especially Great Britain and the Catholic, American Board or Anglicized churches. The Catholics taught trades at such missions as Mariannhill and these declined in keeping with the rise of job-reservation legislation, utilized by the government of the time as it sought to deal with the ‘poor-white’ question that arose from the Anglo-Boer War and the ‘Great Depression’.¹⁷¹ The American Board Mission at Inanda and Amamzintoti, was noted for offering a ‘royal education’ that qualified the black elite as doctors, teachers and others in the professions, after furthering their studies in the United States (and sometimes Great Britain), giving rise to “The New Africans” of the 1930-50s.¹⁷² With such a checkered history, it is not surprising that some degree of traditionalist life-style, with its emphasis upon highly structured age and status grading, remains among the African Nguni peoples even up until the present generation, particularly in more rural areas, this despite changes in the 1960-70s of growth in semi-skilled manufacturing jobs for blacks and then the job reservation law being flouted by industry and then rescinded by the government in 1984 (<http://www.iga.ucdavis.edu>[accessed 2 June 2011]).

Interestingly, Mxolisi Mchunu in his chapter ‘A Modern coming of Age: Zulu manhood, domestic work and the ‘kitchen-suit’ ’ in Carton, B., et al., (Eds.) *Zulu identities: Being Zulu, past and present* (2008) referencing his own family from KwaShange outside Pietermaritzburg, (who had come from farms in the New Hanover area as tenant labourers¹⁷³), states that employment and the first job in particular were equated with initiation into manhood, with its attendant hardships and deprivations under the white employer: thus the ideal marker of manhood being that of bread-winner. Mchunu’s findings for his History Masters study (2006) on father-son relationships in KwaShange appear to support an understanding of more contemporary Zulu manhood, perhaps overriding the earlier marker of becoming a man, namely being that of ‘warrior-hood’.

It remains to be seen how these notions are influenced by an ANC Government post 1994, and one cannot but realise that black elitism and wealth indicate a link between economics and BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) and status. There have been certain marked elements of modernisation reflected in increased emphasis on Primary education (and

¹⁷¹ See the *Report of the Carnegie Commission* (1932). E.G. Malherbe, later principal of the University of Natal (UKZN), was an educationalist by training and conducted the research into education for this commission undertaken in 1929. The field notes and other Commission material are held in the E.G. Malherbe Papers in the Killie Campbell Africana Library. The notes and photographs indicate that some poor-white families were working for the Mapoga (Ndebele) chiefs at places like Marabastad. For general information and how the Commission impacted the lives of black South Africans.

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnegie_Commission_of_Investigation_on_the_Poor_White_Question_in_South_Africa. [accessed 9 September 2013].

¹⁷² These histories are discussed in A. Vilakazi *Zulu transformations* (1965) and T. Couzens *H.I.E. Dhlomo and the ‘New Africans’* (1985).

¹⁷³ As well as from his interviews with the families of men from the Engome area near Greytown,

increasingly on Secondary and Tertiary education), western style housing and furnishing, electricity with its accompaniments of stoves, music centers, computers and TVs, and access to municipal water (both the latter a Constitutional Right and a recurring electioneering promise post 1994). And with modernisation comes often few or no cattle, meaning that such concepts as lobola (bride-wealth) have been impacted upon as well, it being increasingly replaced by the equivalent monetary value of cattle. Also to be noted post 1994 is the move toward an ‘African Renaissance’ and the introduction of ANC Government departments encouraging the preservation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in upholding a re-claiming and reowning of what is considered truly ‘African’.¹⁷⁴ So saying, the IFP versus ANC political battles that resulted in civil-war in KwaZulu-Natal during the 1980-90s, are arguably still unresolved, though much weakened subsequent to the 2011 local May 18th elections, and ‘Neo-Zuluness’ as represented by the current State President, Jacob Zuma, an ethnic Zulu proud to be a polygamist and to have been a herd-boy at Nkandla (the home area of Bhambatha Zondi’s ally Sigananda Shezi). Even before the 2009 ANC National Conference held at Polokwane the drive for a return to ethnic values was present. This conference voted overwhelmingly for Zuma despite his many trials and tribulations (claimed by the party faithful to emanate from his leadership clash with former President Thabo Mbeki). Now five years later (despite the scandal of the huge cost of his Nkandla home-upgrade), the local KwaZulu-Natal electorate still offer in his defence that such expenditure behoves his status as President and once accorded to chiefs.¹⁷⁵

Within most families, particularly among the Bhaca/Nhlangwini, are to be found clan-members who can either be traditionalists, following customary life-styles (and thus often dressing in indigenous costume, inclusive of beadwork and such regalia’s accompanying rituals) as well as Christians, most likely Catholic or independent sects of African-Christians, known as ‘Zionists’. Those families of the United Christian Church (U.C.C), formerly a member of the American Board Mission, tended to split from their traditionalist relatives to form Christian enclaves located around the mission. And among this latter grouping exist perhaps more conflicts as regards ‘all things traditionalist’(to put it euphemistically), and the older generation would not even wear a beaded necklace let alone traditional attire, as they equated western civilization (including its dress) as being ‘Christian’. However, there is evidence that the younger generation of United Christian Church (U.C.C.) are returning to tradition in response to post 1994 neo-Africanism.¹⁷⁶ All Christians, no doubt experience conflicts where their faith instructs one line of action while tradition demands another, and hence the attraction to and numerically strong following of independent African-Christian churches, like the Zionists and those of the *Ibandla lama Nazaretha* (Shembe or Nazareth Baptist Church)and other groups that have synthesized African and western-introduced Christianity. Catholics however are more sympathetic toward traditionalism than are

¹⁷⁴ Thabo Masemola gives a full-page to such a resurgence in the January 26th 1999, *Natal Witness: Inside Story*, titled ‘Old ways for new days’ in which he mentions the revival of a “somewhat controversial” ceremony of “60 girls and young women, ranging in age from eight to 27... in a two-day *ukubuthwa kwenzintomi* ceremony (regimentation of girls according to age) at KwaVukani, Ofafa” (Masemola 1999). This was a revival of the old virginity testing under the cultural watchdog group of *Isivavane Samasiko Nolwazi*, under the chair of University of Natal (now UKZN) lecturer in isiZulu, Ndela Ntshangase. The organization was founded in 1997, and its membership included academics, medical professionals, teachers and civil servants and television journalists like SABC announcer the late Thokozani Nene. Ntshangase is quoted as saying “We encourage our young people to look to their peer group for identity and place an emphasis on history not only on the war aspect ...but in such obscure things as genealogy of tribes...” (*Natal Witness*, 26th January, 1999).

¹⁷⁵ My source for this current political history and the ‘African Renaissance’ is particularly the *Mail and Guardian* newspaper and black, politically conscious friends.(most notably, Mxolisi Mchunu and his circle of black intellectuals).

¹⁷⁶ I am referencing conversations and a paper on his family history by colleague Mwelela Cele, a descendent of Revd. Posselt Gumede of the Inanda Mission (which was an American Board Mission and now the U.C.C.). His paper was given at the South African Historical Society conference, hosted by UKZN History Dept., Durban 26-28th June, 2011.

Protestants. Of interest in regard to the topic of traditional age-set dress and Catholicism is that from 1982-1984, when I first collected such dress in the St Faith's/Highflats and Ixopo areas, among the Khuze (classified as Nhangwini) along with research assistant Rebecca Msomi,¹⁷⁷ our contact was with female cousins of the Mbanjwa family: Malikhona was still traditional (in world-view and dress), unschooled and engaged to marry a Dlamini (Nhangwini) and would thereafter reside on a Bantu Trust farm¹⁷⁸ near Highflats. However, her cousin Sandile (who was in later years to become both friend and informant) was a Roman Catholic (her widowed mother having a homestead on Mariathal Mission near Ixopo) with schooling to Std. 5., as she had to leave school at the behest of her father so as to herd cattle that were up to then the responsibility of the brothers who needed to go to school. Sandile Mbanjwa, although a Roman Catholic would dress according to the traditional age-sets for the St Faith's/Highflats' area, and was allowed to attend church so dressed, but when she married a Mkhize (an AbaMbo or Embo) from Umlazi township, south of Durban, in 1987, she surrendered traditional dress for a German-print (*iphinifa/isishweshwe*) skirt, western-style shirt and black cashmere head-kerchief, as correct dress for a newly married Roman Catholic woman.¹⁷⁹ One thus assumes a basic acceptance of indigenous cultural modes and mores by the Catholic Church, with the proviso that the person's soul be saved to an eternal life as perceived by this church's tenets, sacraments and rituals.¹⁸⁰

Age-grades, or age-sets, are not merely a part of indigenous 'child rearing' but vital to African socio-political systems and, as shall be seen later in the text, the changes consequent upon modernisation, inclusive of the advent of Christian Missions in South Africa, did not perforce destroy the indigenous cultural kinship, political or even religious systems. Rather, syncretism took place and traces of the past cultural world-view remain, even if only nominally. And in terms of age-grade systems, a child still needs to be guided through his/her developmental stages to eventually take on the roles of adult within his/her society and in a culture as gender-based as that of the Nguni, his/her fullness of identity as person (in Ngubane's sense) is in attainment of adulthood and seniority and eventually ancestor-hood (the latter particularly for the male, but also for certain status realizations for females, such as a mother-in-law or headman's mother). So saying, as perceived in the light of Symbolic Interactionism, the individual takes his/her place within a social kin-group or culture, deriving meaning and purpose from such a place. Gerard Maré in *Brothers born of warrior*

¹⁷⁷ This was in terms of my work as professional museum assistant at Campbell Collections, UN (now UKZN) which I discuss under methodology in Chapter 1.

¹⁷⁸ Such farms were formerly white-owned and in the apartheid/Bantustan era, the Government would expropriate and buy out such farms with the intention of absorbing them into the former 'locations', or during the 1970-80s into the KwaZulu Homeland. These Highflats' farms would have become part of the magisterial district of Hlanganani. By the time of the 'crumbling' of the apartheid system many such farms were still termed 'Bantu Trust Farms' and registered as such in the Pietermaritzburg Deeds Office. Often they were still known by the name (and sometimes even by his 'African' name) of their former white farm owner or by the original farm name. By then there was often little of the original farm's infra-structure left, as local black families would move onto them in the settlement style of small clustered homesteads that was their indigenous mode. Other such farms were leased back (I am unsure if from the 'Bantu Trust' or from the local chief in whose territory it was meant to belong) by the former white farm owner for grazing. Initially this sale fell to the South African Native Trust (SANT) then Bantu Trust and finally Development Trust (Kelly 2012:141).

¹⁷⁹ Unfortunately Sandile MaMbanjwa Mkhize lost her wedding photographs during the floods of 1987. Later she become entirely western in dress but has never lost her love of her culture. She officiates at many ceremonies, like family *umemulo* (coming-of age), tombstone-unveiling and *imibondo* (gift-giving between future in-law families). For a period of time around 2000 she would invite me to these occasions, not all of which took place in Ixopo but some in Hammersdale/Mapumalanga as some of the family had dispersed to this area to work during the era of Nationalist government policy of creating 'Border Industries'.

¹⁸⁰ When working as a volunteer at the Mariannhill Monastery Museum in the late 70s, early 80s I would be befriended by a number of the Roman Catholic Fathers and Brothers. We would talk of African tradition, particularly beadwork and dress and the church's surprising tolerance toward it. In particular I think of the charismatic Dutch priest, Father Kops, stationed at Centocow and St Bernard's Missions. At the latter, I attended a Feast Day in 1982 in company of Dr Barbara Tyrrell and her friend, then ex-trader Mrs Jean Anderssen. Here Father Kop explained the regalia of converted diviners and Zionist sect's prophets displayed around a statue of the Virgin Mary. In African thinking the converts had been drawn to the priest in dreams, but Father Kop attributed this to the Virgin, hence the display in the mission side-chapel.

blood: Politics and ethnicity in South Africa (1992) furthers the sociological understanding on ethnicity, saying that it entails membership of an ethnic group of people who are both aware of and accept belonging together and being categorized as similar (Hogg and Abrams cited in Maré 1992: 7).

Maré provides an explanation for the multiplicity of roles that most persons assume, particularly in this case, those required of participants in traditional ethnic roles, persons who are yet any of; Christian, migrant-worker, school or college student or any other that is expected of contemporary Africans.¹⁸¹ He notes that Hogg and Abrams have made a distinction between the social and personal dimensions of an individual's self-concept and this links to the concept of a range of identities which can be 'called-up'. Self-concept is not experienced as an entirety, but as "relatively discrete self-images which are dependent upon 'context'..." (Hogg and Abrams 1988:24). Maré makes mention of distinct dress and ornamentation in regard to strengthening social group and ethnic identities. Here one thinks of the image of the Zulu warrior King Shaka, in *ibeshu* and *isinene*, with feathered head-dress and carrying shield and assegai.¹⁸²

Of the 19th century Zulu, the famed monarch Shaka followed his mentor Dingiswayo Mthethwa's lead by ensuring "(e)xisting age sets were transformed into military regiments which provided a fighting force capable of welding together the remains of more than a 100 different peoples under a Zulu aristocracy" (<http://www.iss.co.za> [accessed 26 May 2011]). Before Shaka, age grades were ubiquitous in the region and formed periodically when a local ruler called together young men of roughly the same age from the homesteads under his authority to undergo initiation and circumcision. Among peoples of the southern KwaZulu-Natal initiation was (and still mainly is) a local affair that "placed little emphasis on fighting or transcendent national values" (<http://www.iss.co.za>). Of these regiments, Bryant notes that while circumcision had been discontinued "(u)ntil Shaka turned them all into real soldiers and real 'regiments', these youth-bands continued for the nonce (present) simply (as)'age-groups'..." (Bryant 1949:494). In regard to Shaka's incorporation of all subjugated clans within his Zulu nation, Bryant notes that the regiments numbered thousands of the "nation's manhood...regardless of clan origins (and)... youths of a like age were re-drafted into larger bodies (still called *amaButó*, or collected bands), ... whose sole purpose (was) ... to perform the services of the state...(in which) conquest and raiding held the first and most important place. Thus did the original 'age-groups' become henceforth pure 'regiments' " (Bryant 1949:495). Of female age-groups among the Zulu, Bryant says:

(W)ith the accession of Shaka and his organization of the male adults into *amaButó* (or regiments), ... (and) as each of the male 'fighting' *amaButó* became sufficiently advanced in age (say, 40-45 years old), all marriageable maidens not yet married were by royal decree now nominally 'collected together' (*ukuButá*) into a single 'marriage'

¹⁸¹ Any interaction with Africans within their own social or cultural setting can elicit such a split on their part and a 'double-take' on the part of outside witnesses. I will give only one such example; when in the field with two Zulu researchers on the Bhambatha Centennial Project in 2004, an elderly Mr Zondi earlier gave one of my Zulu researcher companions 'a riveting account' of pro-Bhambatha Zondi sentiment, only to change his conversation entirely when he and I (as a white outsider), sat to tea and egg-sandwiches. He then confided that Bhambatha "somewhat as the whites thought, was a 'trouble-maker' " and he diverted to talking about the changes to the telephone para-statal, Telkom SA, where he had been employed before retirement. While my Zulu colleagues were convinced he 'played' to what he thought I as a white wished to hear, certainly a possibility, my own explanation was somewhat along the lines of Hogg and Abrams's understanding viz. that Mr Zondi evidently valued his former job and the fate of the para-statal was of interest to him as person, his self-identity being engaged – for how else could he have conducted such an intelligible conversation with me? Thus perhaps his identity was both as a patriot (but questioning patriot) and a 'modern man', fully-resident in the 21st century. Just because he was elderly, retired and a Zondi did not make him perform a Zulu 'die-hard'.

¹⁸² So prevalent has this iconic image of the king become (and owned as a national symbol by the present monarchy), that it is no wonder that a statue of King Shaka depicting the king 'as no more than a herd-boy' by sculptor Andries Botha (for the 2010 King Shaka International Airport at La Mercy, north of Durban) elicited such a negative response..

iButó, and ordered to form early matrimonial alliances with the regiment of males just released from bachelorhood. ... *We say 'nominally' collected because the girls never actually left their homes to be massed, like the males, in any common barracks...*(Italics Mine) (Bryant 1949:495).

The youth age-grading for warriors could start at an early age, usually from age 14 acting as porters (*udibi*) until they were enrolled into same-age-groups (*intanga*) when “they would go to the nearest *ikhanda* to *kleza* (literally, “to drink directly from the udder”), at which time the boys would become *inkwebane*, cadets. They would spend their time training until they were formally enlisted by the king...” (Bryant 1949:495).

In the historical 19th century ‘three tier social-system’ applied by King Shaka’s nation-state (Wright and Hamilton 1989:72. Discussed in Chapter 1. point 3.) the clans resident on the periphery of Shaka’s Ntungwa Nguni area (which included the peoples of southern KwaZulu-Natal) were delegated to the ‘lowest level’ of the tier. Of their regiments of young men it is said:

Their chiefly houses were required to maintain identities clearly separate from that of the Zulu ruling house, and their leaders, although accorded a number of privileges which distinguished them from the bulk of their subjects, were excluded from certain central decision-making processes. Their young men, far from being recruited into the ranks of the king’s *amabutho*, were put to work on menial tasks like herding cattle at outlying royal cattle posts. (Wright and Hamilton 1989:72).

While generally the Zulu regimental-system was thought to have ended with the Anglo-Zulu-War of 1879 (in King Cetshwayo kaMpande’s time), this is not in fact correct, for the literature on the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906 indicates the presence of the earlier regiments that could still be called up, although ‘illegal’ and somewhat less well trained and impoverished under decades of British Colonial rule.¹⁸³ It would appear that this recruitment was treasonable by the 1880s and W.G. Stafford’s *Native Law as practiced in Natal* (1935) gives the Natal Native Code (of Law) which declared it an offence against public order and authority, both for a chief to summons an armed assembly of his people or to call his men to form regiments and moreover it forbid any person, other than police to carry “assegais, axes, knobkerries or other dangerous weapons to any feast, dance or other gathering” declaring that such would be confiscated (Stafford 1935:153).

Nevertheless, later 20th century Zulu monarchs were permitted to again ‘raise-up’ Zulu men into regiments, and both the present King Goodwill Zwelethini and his father Cyprian ka Solomon ka Dinizulu have done so. Such *amabutho* must be considered to be less a military *Impi* and more in the line of support of the monarchy and chiefdoms, although under the IFP this was not necessarily so and they caused much political tension in the 1980s-90s.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Thus at the Court-Martial of Sigananda Shezi, who was Bhambatha Zondi’s ally at Nkandla, Induna Polomba gave evidence of involvement of King (then paramount-chief) Dinizulu’s regiments (the Mavalana, Urayulengwenya and Velapakati) and a mix of men from different wards and chiefs who owed obedience to him (of the Imbogotibomun and Umfalaza regiments) all of which comprised the ‘rebel’ *impis* (regiments) (Bosman 1907:184).

¹⁸⁴ “(On) 27 September, 1992- at a meeting held in Ulundi, Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi warns that the deals struck between the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Government were “illegitimate” and “unimplementable”. Referring specifically to the proposed ban on carrying traditional weapons in public, he said that Zulus would continue to carry their cultural weapons during their marches. The intention of this ban was to curb growing violence resulting from the use of these weapons to attack bystanders caught in the way of IFP marchers...The first attempt to ban the carrying of traditional weapons came around the 1880s when the

Members of these regiments are found in rural areas of what was formerly KwaZulu (IFP dominated) and post 1994 are now part of KwaZulu-Natal. Thus the *Pondo LweNlovu* (the horns (tusks) of the elephant) comprises mostly men of 60 years of age and older. The regiment was raised by King Cyprian. Even men who were not at a royal ceremony will be praised by being addressed with this regimental appellation as happens at traditional functions, like beer-drinks, where it is still to be heard (personal communication Vusi Buthelezi, Durban, May 2011). *INala* (plenty, as in food) comprise men below 60 years of age, and was raised in the 1980s, while the ‘youngest regiment’ *Udakwa ukusutha* (persons who abuse hospitality, a name deriving from an incident of men drinking before the ‘catching of the bull’ at the First Fruits ceremony, making them ‘weak’ and resulting in a death during the ritual, are men of 40 years of age and below (personal communication Vusi Buthelezi, Durban, May, 2011). Clearly these men have not fought in any acknowledged war (but may well have participated in faction-fights or in the 1980-90s violence in KZN), and regiments or *amabutho* accompany the present King and *iNkosi* Mangosuthu Buthelezi, as for instance to the commemorations for the Isandlwana Battle, on 22nd January of each year.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, dating from at least the era of the KwaZulu homeland circa 1975, all clans resident in areas falling to this homeland, inclusive of those belonging to the formerly independent and/or marginalised in Shaka’s ‘three-tier system’ mentioned by Wright and Hamilton (1989:72), like the Bhaca/Nhlangwini and Embo-Mkhize (and their Zulu neighbours) fell under the royal house and had *iNkosi* Buthelezi as Prime-minister, hence these chiefs and their *amabutho* would have been available to attend royal occasions in Ulundi. Moreover, this situation is still operative post 1994 in regard to the rural chiefs of southern KwaZulu-Natal.¹⁸⁶

Maré in his afore-mentioned publication tracks the rise of Inkatha/IFP in the former KwaZulu and, as indicated, recent regiments are invariably associated with this party, particularly in the era before 1994. He says “The movement had not hesitated to demand and accept its ‘own’ police force for KwaZulu...the KLA (KwaZulu Legislative Assembly) ‘not only aimed at taking over the police but would also ask Pretoria (i.e. the Nationalist ruling party) to give military training to tribal regiments’ (Natal Mercury, 12.05.78)” (Maré 1992:88). He continues:

This brought together the two most prominent aspects of Inkatha’s direct and indirect organs of control (police and tribal regiments). Chiefs too, were mobilized to serve within a broad ‘law and order’ front. In 1974, for example, the KLA passed its own Zulu Chiefs and headmen Act, repeating many details of the Native Administration Act of 1927 and its amendments (Maré 1992:88).

Natal Code of the then British colony of Natal banned these weapons. The KwaZulu Homeland authorities under the Chiefs and Headman Act, which empowered headmen and chiefs to outlaw the carrying of weapons in unrest areas, carried out the same policy.” (<http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/buthelezi-says-zulus-would-continue-carrying-cultural-weapons>[accessed 13 September 2013]).

¹⁸⁵ In the 2010 ceremony, these men accompanied the arrival of *iNkosi* Buthelezi and his Royal Highness, King Goodwill Zwelethini. The tent had areas demarcated for various categories of persons, including that for the *amabutho*.

¹⁸⁶ Around 2006-9,, I shared an office space with Siyabonga Mkhize who then acted as praise-poet to his great house *iNkosi* KusaKusa of the Embo-Mkhize of Umkomaas. Mkhize would regularly share photographic images of ceremonies taking place at the Mkhize royal homestead in which the Zulu King, Goodwill Zwelethini, was present. Both royals had supporting *AmaButho* and the Zulu king spoke of the alliance between Shaka and Zihlanthlo, the Mkhize regent in the early 1800s. From 2010, this relationship was cemented with the ANC Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Dr Zweli Mkhize who is an AbaMbo, meaning that the clan’s politics is more in favour of the present ruling party than the IFP which dominated the rural chiefdoms during the years of Nationalist rule.

Maré comments concerning the 1974, *Zulu Chiefs and Headmen Act* promulgated by the KLA(KwaZulu Legislative Assembly)¹⁸⁷:

a chief or headman 'shall be entitled... to the loyalty, respect, support and obedience of every resident of the area for which he has been appointed.' It placed chiefs and their assistants as local representatives of the KwaZulu government in control of law and order enforcement, unrest, distribution of 'undesirable literature', and the prevention of 'unauthorised entry of any person into his area' (Maré 1992: 88).

Maré comments further:

It is not often that Buthelezi acknowledges the existence and operation of 'Zulu regiments'. In 1980, however, he was driven to do so in reaction to a newspaper report on the operation of 'mobs' during the KwaMashu schools boycotts. Buthelezi justified the presence of regiments and the sticks they carried as 'part and parcel of the Zulu national grouping, and the formation of regiments...(It) is (a) Zulu tradition' (KLAD, 19,1980-662) (Maré 1992:88).

As indicated, while the KLA of pre 1994 could be thought remote from the Bhaca, Nlhangwini and Embo-Mkhize chiefdoms with their Zulu neighbour or tribute clans in southern KwaZulu-Natal, situated as it was at Ulundi (a capital built upon the British razed royal homestead of the Zulu King Cetshwayo KaMpande at the time of the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879), in fact during the 1980s, most of these southern chiefs were represented on the KLA as their territories (termed 'Locations' in colonial times) then formed a part of the 'Home-land' of KwaZulu.¹⁸⁸

2. Modernisation and cultural continuity of age-grades

One could therefore argue that for the era of the 1980s up to the 1st democratic elections of 1994, conflicting 'multiple identities' were imposed upon then contemporary Africans, mainly males in the case; while yet valuing earlier traditions and 'warrior-hood' that had become the ideal in the heyday of the great Zulu Kings, reaffirmed by the Inkatha/IFP in the KwaZulu homeland era, the peoples of particularly the Natal midlands had nevertheless modernised in response to the impact of colonialism (with its missionaries, wars and economy), so that men had to find work. Thus the breadwinner role now vied with that of 'warrior-hood' but both remained as social-values/norms motivating male behaviour. Economic changes and the rise of unions meant the breakdown of some of the restrictions on job reservation laws and by the mid-1980s working men were more inclined to become UDF/ANC supporters because these struggle parties were aligned with Unions like COSATU, especially in KwaZulu-Natal, the area which saw such violent civil-war between the IFP (supported by the SAP (South African Police) as the 'Third Force') and the UDF/ANC factions.

¹⁸⁷ African Customary Law is still operative in rural KwaZulu-Natal and under the clan chieftains (*amakhosi*) guardianships, from whom it is passed down to ward heads and finally homestead heads who are in turn the custodians of all women and unmarried children/youth as legal minors.

¹⁸⁸ When asking the Mbanjwa cousins in 1984 to which ethnic group they belonged, they said they were Khuze (Nlhangwini) but because the then chief attended the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly (KLA) the cousins considered themselves 'Zulu'. The politics of the latest chief, an educated man with wealthy business interests and a 'court' at Highflats, is much altered since this comment of the Mbanjwa cousins, for his clan applied to the Nhlapo Commission in 2009 to be recognized as a kingdom, historically independent of the Zulu kingdom. As argument for sovereign status, matters of custom and ethnicity, like unique dress (and beadwork) were factored into the application. (KCAL Research query for Ms P. Henderson, HIVAN, 2009).

While male age-grades still continue to exist, their actual formation into the ‘regiments’ as in older times, particularly of the younger age-set of men/youths which would have formed junior regiments and/or been *izitudibi* (mat/weapon carriers for older men of senior regiments) in earlier times, one can assume to have been a thing of the past, especially given that most young boys would be in school. However, this is not necessarily so. In their strictest earlier format, they may no longer be found, yet they are arguably there in a modernised form, as the ‘warrior-ideal’ (found conflictingly along with that of ‘bread-winner’) continues to be inculcated in Nguni males as part of their ‘multiple-identities’. One must also recall that in the traditional labour-division of the sexes, Nguni men were both warriors and breadwinners. This earlier social structuring into age-sets was ‘re-deployed’ by both the Inkatha/IFP and the UDF/ANC during the unrest or civil-war (*Udlame*) in the province, particularly the midlands, during the 1980s-1990s.

This civil-war was especially responsible for escalating social-change as it disrupted families, and both IFP and UDF factions drew upon the early Nguni age-grade system to turn the youth, particularly males into ‘young warriors’ or *Amaqabane* (Comrades). Historian Mxolisi Mchunu’s History PhD *History of Political Violence in KwaShange, Vulindlela from 1987-1994 and its effects on the survivors* (2013)¹⁸⁹ following from his Master’s thesis on father-son relationships in the same locations, centers on the socio- historical causes and effects of this civil war, particularly referring to the impact on the youth of the KwaZulu-Natal midlands. He describes how his uncle Nunu Mchunu,¹⁹⁰ as local head of the KwaShange Inkatha/IFP branch, had conscripted school-children to Inkatha Cadets. He, Mchunu junior, when still a ten year old, along with school-mates, would march¹⁹¹ and sing Inkatha songs as part of these Cadet activities, until his parents, finding themselves in an UDF/ANC partisan area refused their children to be so forced, thus falling out with the uncle, who once the civil-war escalated, fled to his Inkatha stalwarts at Ulundi/Zululand. However, at the height of the civil war Mxolisi Mchunu’s two brothers and one cousin, all little older than himself, became UDF/ANC ‘Comrades’(*Amaqabane*).

The term ‘Comrade’ is generally associated with Socialist and Communist groupings and used in connection with those parties which have leftist struggle sympathies, like the UDF/ANC/SACP. The translation *amaqabane* (singular: *iqabane*) is a Xhosa word for friend, i.e. a comrade (defined as a “mate or fellow in work, play or fighting, an equal with whom one is on familiar terms (usu. of males)” (Concise Oxford English Dictionary 1989: 194),¹⁹² while the word used by Bryant in the extract above, *inkwebane* for cadet, is also used for a group of boys between five and twelve years old, before they are old enough to go out herding (Doke and Vilakazi 1948:581). Many youths during the 1980-1990s unrest endured

¹⁸⁹ At time of drafting this chapter Mchunu was in process of his PhD, but as at editing (September 2013) he has attained it.

¹⁹⁰ Mchunu had established the KwaShange branch of Inkatha/IFP as the ANC in exile before these parties (ANC and Inkatha) split over Inkatha/IFP receiving Nationalist Government SAP support. Upon establishment in 1983, the UDF (United Democratic Front), with its liberal sympathies then become the ANC front when this party was still banned.

¹⁹¹ Mchunu had an incredible piece of synchronicity as regards this incident, after he had already attained his Masters and was doing his PhD he moved from Campbell Collections, UKZN, to work at Msunduzi Museum. There he found an uncatalogued photograph in the “Road to Democracy Exhibition” titled “*Inkatha Youth on the march, PMB 1987*” depicting a mass of school-going youth marching in a rally. The central teen-age girl dressed in an Inkatha Tee-shirt holding the Inkatha flag (then indistinguishable from that of the ANC flag) is his uncle’s daughter, then heavily politicized, and he himself runs as a ten year old boy in khaki-coloured school-uniform and black school-jersey at far left and front, next him are two older boys who would be killed in the KwaShange Massacre some short while later. Mchunu says he recalls the march well as his mother severely disciplined him for being involved (personal communication Mchunu, Pietermaritzburg June 2011).

¹⁹² Not found in any Dictionary but said to be used by ANC in exile for those who think alike –thus for instance President Zuma referred to Thabo Mbeki as *Iqabane* (Comrade-in arms) (personal communication Mxolisi Mchunu, Durban August 2011).

forced marches and camps, like colleague Vincent Mzobe,¹⁹³ who was so forced when still in Std. 6 at Umzinyathi School, Inanda, the area being an ANC stronghold at the time. Mzobe recalls not knowing much of politics until forced into bush-camps in the evenings, there he and his companions were taught about “Mandela, MK (*Mkonto wesizwe*, the military wing of the ANC) and the Freedom Charter.” The youths were sometimes made to sleep overnight in the bush in order to stop busses (as part of “military training”) early the next day. As such they usually continued with school and wore “their ordinary clothes...but had no particular uniform for Comrades (in recall)” (personal communication, Mzobe Durban, August, 2011).¹⁹⁴

Other young people during the early 1990s, like colleague Senzo Mkhize, then a teenager and from an Embo-Mkhize home area of Hopewell/Thala Valley, east of Richmond, subsequently schooling at Ndaleneni (the UDF/ANC partisan township outside Richmond) described how “Commanders” under the UDF (and later ANC ‘War-Lord’ Sifiso Nkabinde) would move around this area calling all young persons over a megaphone to march at erratic times, like 5am or 6am.¹⁹⁵ These youngsters, both male and female were forced to march, to set up stone barricades and burn tyres as roadblocks, the girls helping in collecting rocks and tyres, while the boys set(ing) them alight in defiance of the SAP and to mark IFP ‘no-go zones’. In regard to the identifying dress of the Comrade(*Iqabane*) of the UDF/ANC in KZN, Mchunu recalls a painful incident of his cousins and brothers who were Comrades stripping him of a shirt his mother had given him for Christmas 1986, because it had within its design all the Inkatha colours of red, black, green and yellow. As a young boy he was heartbroken and perplexed that his mother did not reprimand his brothers and he understood the implication only later.¹⁹⁶ Mchunu also says that the ankle length lace-up ‘takkie’ (sandshoes) that marked the youthful Comrade not only to the IFP *Impis* but in the eyes of their SAP allies, possibly gave impetus to these youths becoming known as ‘*Comtsotsies*’ – or ‘Comrade-Gangsters’ as usually in peaceful times the *tsotsie* or gangster wore such shoes (personal communication Mchunu, Pietermaritzburg, May 2011).

Mkhize says that Comrades (*AmaQabane*) as a designated UDF/ANC fighting-group were marked by white short-sleeved T-shirts with round neck-lines, trousers with straight legs in any dark colour, and white ‘All-Star’ ankle length lace-up ‘takkies’. They could also wear a white cloth hat termed a “Stetson”. This was the dress IFP *Impi* recognized as marking their rivals and Mkhize recalls working as a gardener in 1991 and being dropped off in Pietermaritzburg near the City Hall, and being surrounded by such an knob-kierrie (*iwisa*) carrying *impi*, who when ‘roughing him up’, one man said “*Nxa asimyekeni akalona iqabane lo* [Leave him, he is not dressed as a Comrade!]” (personal communication Mkhize, Durban, May, 2011). One other youth Thulani Mchunu, expatiated his experiences by repeatedly

¹⁹³ Mzobe describes his luck in his teens of being good at maths and taken under a Belgian Medical Doctor’s mentorship when going for extra lessons at Diakonia (a church organization involved in social outreach). He is now into Computers.

¹⁹⁴ It is possible that Mzobe thought of uniforms when I asked this question, and that Tee-shirts with political identifications were handed out by camp Commandos. There is also memory and time lapse between lived experience and integration in present time, some 20 years later.

¹⁹⁵ This account coincides with that of persons living in Richmond and Ndaleneni at the time. I, myself, had been doing a Masters on marriage beadwork and forfeited my studies as the situation was becoming untenable. I recall one mother, a petrol pump attendant, bemoaning her children forced into these marches and her helplessness as a parent because the Commandos made children turn in informant on their parents. This would lead to homes being burnt as happened to my interpreter who then fled to Verulam.

¹⁹⁶ This shirt Mchunu requested me to paint and he was to give a paper on this incident to the British Sociological Association’s Auto/biographical group “Keeping up Appearances: the auto/biography of dress” in London, 2008. The paper was not accepted but he mentions the incident in his Phd chapter on the self. What really struck me about his painting request is that he refused me to paint him wearing the shirt, instead it was to be simply the offending shirt on its own, making of it an iconic piece of civil-war memorabilia.

drawing them. When returning from school to his home in an IFP stronghold of KwaGengeshe (near Taylor's Halt/KwaShange), Comrades stopped the bus in the UDF/ANC stronghold of KwaShange and forced out and beat the assumed IFP occupants, "to within an 'inch-of-their lives' " for which Mchunu still bears the scars (personal communication Thulani Mchunu, Pietermaritzburg March 2010). The fighting 'Comrades' were those conscripted into Self Defense Units (SDU's) and in this they were given basic training in the use of weapons and would 'sleep-out' at night on patrol.¹⁹⁷ Each area became a 'no-go zone' for rival political parties, thus in the Richmond surrounds, Ndaleni and Hopewell were UDF/ANC, while Magoda, Esimozimeni and Pateni were IFP. Senzo Mkhize said that 'Comrades' attending Rallies or Boycotts wore Tee-shirts in the ANC/SACP/UDF colours, with leaders faces or party logos emblazoned across the front, this to identify their allegiances. Later, I again approached Mkhize for photographs of his 'cousin-brothers' (as I had come to refer to these groupings of young males from extended Nguni homesteads¹⁹⁸) of the times [see Appendices. Chapter 3: Figure 7(composite 1-7). Composite photographs of Senzo Mkhize and Comrade brothers. [Figure 1]. He obliged with a photograph of his peer - relatives at a party in 1991 and although he says this was just "ordinary dress of the time" it is evident that it is yet 'smart-casual'.¹⁹⁹ All the youths wear striped or patterned open neck and loose shirts, only Musa, the fourth from right, wears a NUMSA Tee-shirt as a member of the teachers Union SADTU (both organizations falling under COSATU).²⁰⁰

I consider Mkhize's testimony especially pertinent to the subject of age-sets and male identities, this because an entire age-grouping of 'cousin-brothers' born between 1969 and 1973 were involved, a grouping that would have been formed into a junior regiment of *impi* (warriors) had they lived in earlier times. Of course these youths, particularly those in the Self Defense Units or SDUs of either political faction, would have been responsible for violence, many also doctored with war-medicine or *muthi* to give them the courage to be 'valient' and even brutal in fighting (Mchunu 2013,Chapter 3), caught up as they were in the political ideologies and apartheid-struggle of the times. As such they were certainly 'youth-soldiers' and like unacknowledged soldiers the world-over, their destinies can be

¹⁹⁷ Many young African men, now in their 30s were conscripted either as Comrades or into SDUs in their rural home countries and this, plus an inherently shaky 'Bantu-education' system applied by the Nationalists had a profound impact on the course of their lives. From around 1998 I worked with numbers of these young men who did internships at Campbell Collections and we would swap life-stories.

¹⁹⁸ In terms of classification in Nguni thinking, the western concept of a cousin remains western and Africans explain a relationship according to older or younger brothers (and sisters) but then, if asked to classify according to western thinking, these are as equally bothers (or sisters) as cousins. The same is applicable to the classification of fathers (and mothers) and uncles (or aunts).

¹⁹⁹ The 'cousin-brothers' pose from right to left: Senzo Mkhize as the youngest in the group; his cousin Zibuse Mkhize from Hammersdale/Mapumalanga next him, posing holding a bunch of bananas also held by Senzo's older brother Mbe Mkhize, a much loved local ANC activist; next the latter is a more distant cousin, Musa Mkhize who had fled from Edendale to Hopewell, posing sharing a beer and with his arm around the last cousin, Thembiso Shange (an aunt's child), who fled with Zibuse from Hammersdale/Mapumalanga to Hopewell, there to start a Soccer Team during the violence, known as the *Mkhize Black Pirates*. Musa was a teacher who, because he was so politically conscious at the time, had the Hopewell School students boycott the permanent Mathematics teacher to have him as teacher.

²⁰⁰ What strikes one is the strong camaraderie and group-identity of what were essentially a peer-grouping or age-set of often related young men. Their fates were not all bright, something that can undeniably be blamed upon the civil-unrest and the apartheid system that gave rise thereto. Briefly: While Senzo, having been too young to be a Comrade, is a family man working as a UKZN librarian, none of the others were as fortunate except perhaps for Musa who left teaching and was last known to be a male-nurse in Edendale. Of the others I will not give his individual name so as to keep his privacy, but one "became a Comtsotsie" and is serving a life sentence in jail for armed robbery; another joined the SADF in 1992-1993 and he died, as did one other in the early 2000s of HIV related symptoms (personal communication Mkhize, Durban, May, 2011). Mchunu's PhD draws attention to the fact that HIV/AIDS was thought by the people to result from failure to be ritually cleansed from war-doctoring.(Mchunu 2013, Chapter 3).

seen as consequent thereon.²⁰¹ Nevertheless one must argue these youths were also hardly the ‘terrorists’ of white Nationalist and conservative imagination of the times. It is when one gets an insight into who they were as individuals and then track their various destinies that the collusion of the struggle forces against Apartheid and the African age-grading of youth into what were ostensibly ‘regiments’, is brought into focus. The various fates of the Mkhize ‘cousin-brothers’ echoes Monique Mark’s findings on the youth violence of Diepkloof (in the former Transvaal) described in *Young Warriors: Youth politics, identity and violence in South Africa* (2001) for a comparative period.

More extraordinary concerning Mkhize’s photographs, giving a deeper insight into youth identities of the times, were those on which he wrote details on the backs, these notes indicating what was happening to him at the time he was photographed.²⁰² I include that written on the back of two such images; the first is of a smiling Mkhize who had recently returned to finish his Matric in 1994, posed leaning back against a school desk, behind him on the class-room wall is a newspaper image of the Russian inventor of the AK47 gun. I quote:

I was very interested in communism. I also favoured communist leaders like Lenin & Stalin & African communists: Chris Hani, Sam Njoma (sic) & Haile Salase (sic) of Eth(i)opia (the picture behind me in this photo is one for Charack Chiknov (sic) & his AK47)... (Mkhize 20 June 1994).

What strikes one is the difference from a school-photograph that dates from around 1990, in which a withdrawn Mkhize stands on a gravel township road with two school-mates.²⁰³ Written on the back is a catalogue of woes for the young of the era:

This was the times of difficulty & great confusion. Here I was undecided as to my future. Since I left study and (?) schooling at uMlulama (?) Secondary at Hopewell. There I can describe the situation as...mismanagement – poor education facility including human resources. As a result I did not perform very well. So there was no option but to seek education somewhere else. The alternative was Table Mountain & Richmond. Unfortunately for me I never completed even a year in these areas since these areas had become the ‘pot’ of political violence ... (Mkhize 23 January 1991).

²⁰¹ Western thinking accords war-veterans the world over - be it the Vietnam-vets, POWs of the 1st and 2nd World-wars and the SADF troops in Angola -the kindness of recognizing their suffering from ‘Post-traumatic-stress syndrome’ - so too one would think these young men, along with the MK veterans, should be judged victims of politics and combat and hence be seen as ‘soldiers’ in Self Defence Units. These moreover conformed to their early Nguni regiments based on age-grade..

²⁰² This he confirms he did close to the dates the photographs were taken, although some may have been recorded at a later date for the paper he gave at the Msunduzi Museum conference on “Remembering the KZN violence...” on March 25-26th, 2010.

²⁰³ Mkhize and one of the other youngsters, wear school-uniforms of grey trousers, open neck white long-sleeve shirts over white short-sleeve vests, and he and his companions wear black school-shoes. Unlike the youths marching with John Aitchinson in protest against the violence of the times (photograph in Alan Paton Centre Aitchinson Papers) who wear takkies or sandshoes (to run if need be from the police was Mchunu’s interpretation). Of interest is that Mkhize and the youth at the centre (dressed in black Tee-shirt and trousers and white cloth hat) both have black ‘mourning’ cloth patches on their left upper arm-sleeves, indicating that a family member has died. This could well have been persons killed in the KZN violence at the time, but they would have been family members. This in itself would indicate the contagion of death and one colleague who had a spate of deaths from HIV related illnesses told me he had had enough and was so often not out of mourning and contagion that he could barely lead a normal life of any sort. He and others I know started to ‘choose’ the funerals they then attended. One must not forget that the communities have been decimated and disturbed by war, violence and then AIDS over the period in question.

Monique Marks (2001) found that Comrades were often student youths aged between 14 and 35 (Marks 2001: 129), which is the age-group that coincides almost exactly with the traditional Nguni one of *izinsizwa* as against *amadoda* or married men (traditionally 35 years and older). Marks says leaders were often detained, and in the vacuum formed while they were in jail, discipline fell away and criminal elements and gangsters often took over. One must not forget that students often forfeited schooling because there was unrest and that the response to impoverishment is looting and lawlessness, exacerbated by civil-war and internecine violence (known as the *Udlame*). This 'ill-discipline' was worsened after the ANC was unbanned and the adult leadership concentrated upon negotiations with the Nationalist Government toward establishing a democracy. Activists found themselves ignored for their mobilization and political activities that had rendered the State ungovernable and disillusionment set-in. The transformation from 'Comrade' to 'Comtsotsie' came about in earnest, as the then newly formed ANC Youth League failed to rally these elements (Marks 2001:131). Marks's comments are borne out by Mchunu, who highlighted in his Masters' chapter on Discipline, that the Inkatha/IFP believed that the UDF/ANC Comrade was lacking 'discipline' (Mchunu 2008, Chapter 4), itself an age-old regimental ideal for warriors. And in his PhD chapter on healing, he highlights the fact that these young 'warriors' had to be ritually cleansed of any killing or *muthi*-strengthening by *izinyanga*, before being accepted back into their families (Mchunu 2011: Chapter 8). This is an aspect that is integral to historical Zulu military action, where soldiers or *impi* are ritually cleansed before being re-absorbed into a community.²⁰⁴ This gives further evidence that 'Comrades' of the 1980-90s were indeed 'boy or youth-soldiers' collected into age-groups that were ostensibly the 'junior-regiments' of old. Most informants concur that it was most likely the old Nguni age-set system that made of the youths in this period easy targets for political factions/parties' indoctrination. Generally traditional dress was associated with the IFP, as were knob-kierries (*iwisa*) permitted by the Nationalist Government as 'cultural weapons'. However, despite the commonly held stereotype, not every traditionalist was in fact an Inkatha/IFP party member (many of whom had colluded with the old South African Police force to the detriment of local KZN communities). Thus for example Senzo Mkhize's father, a peasant farmer and herbalist, was an ardent UDF/ANC supporter, his nephew Bongani Khoza being a trained MK (*Mkhonto Wesiswe*) Commander who fled to his uncle's home during the violence. Post the 1994 elections Khoza became a Ward-Councilor for Hammarsdale South. The family are still traditionalist at family ceremonies and the older generation practiced *isithembu* or polygamy (personal communication Mkhize, Durban, May and August, 2011).

Despite the realities of the 'Regimental-system' of old, and those continued in modernised form as 'Comrades', males graded according to their ages and peer-groupings are central to the socialization of all Nguni peoples.²⁰⁵ Among the Nguni of south east Africa, male adolescents aged between approximately 16 and 18 years are termed *amabungu*, followed by

²⁰⁴ As happened with those involved at Ambush Rock at Mpanza during the Bhambatha Rebellion, 1906 when killing and mutilating Sergeant Brown for 'muthi' to strengthen them against the enemy that he represented (Thompson 2004:107-8).

²⁰⁵ In the course of my work as museum ethnologist I would be given and sometimes buy Studio photographs by downtown Indian photographers in Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Richmond. I am pleased to say that while I sought out those of traditional dress I was reluctant to discard those of urban Africans and reasoned that so long as the photographs were embargoed for sake of the original posers/sitters identities that they ought to be kept as a social record. I was struck by the young male peer-groups posing, often with arm around the shoulder of a mate, and posturing with cigarettes or telephones (a prop no doubt for this was 1986 before cell-phones) and others with tool-kits and torches. It indicated something of their self-image and identities, as much as did their clothes, the inevitable Tee-Shirt, 'takkies' (as described for 'Comrades' in the text) and cloth hat, trousers often slipping down over their buttocks, a style that I was informed by friends of the time as indicative of a "breeker" (an Afrikaans word for 'bouncer') or 'Tsotsie' and also told that when these young men walked down a path, old black men would give way.

izinsizwa, or young men from 19 years until about 30 to 35, depending on when they marry and then become *amadoda* (men) (Anderssen 1983). Amongst the Bhaca of Mt Frere are groupings of young men of the *izinsizwa* age known as *indlavini* (*-ndlavini* (*ubundlavini*) – ‘savage nature, vagabondage’ (Doke et al., 2008:540) as mentioned by Duggan-Cronin. These young men who return from the mines and factories generally ‘rabble-rouse’ at parties when back home and they would no doubt have been classified as ‘Comtsotsie’ during the 1980-90s civil war in KZN (Duggan-Cronin 1954: plate CLXVII). I recall Mxolisi Mchunu trying to understand an incident of thirteen youths killed in KwaShange, Vulindlela in which their UDF supporting fathers and brothers tried to ‘discipline’ them for terrorizing the district and yet they had been his uncle, Nunu Mchunu’s IFP ‘Youth-*Impi*’. The community declared that the incident derived from a lack of discipline and Mchunu debated whether to call them ‘Comrades’ or ‘Gangsters’.²⁰⁶ More recently Mchunu said that these youths could be seen as *indlavini* whom his uncle had taken up in an *Impi* as he had been the right-hand man to the local Zondi chief, a man who attended the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly at the time when all such had to attend the Inkatha/IFP dominated government in Ulundi (personal communication Mchunu, Pietermaritzburg, June 2011).

I find these examples of continuous ‘modernisation’ as a process dating back to the mid to late 19th century of significance. The first employment (of a young man) can be likened to rites- of -passage (from youth to adulthood) that took place in earlier times and the change could be argued as due to political, social and economic modernisation. So too with the decline in regiments, and the increase in ‘Comrades’, ‘Comtsotsie’, *indlavini* and other more contemporary male peer-groupings, all seen by the older generations as requiring discipline, could be said to derive from earlier cultural notions of preparing youth for manhood via soldiering.

The findings of Marks concur with those of Mchunu in consistently referring to “discipline”, both within the youth organizations of errant members and in regard to the ‘gangster’ element among the ‘Comtsotsie’ (Marks 2001:94). The IFP and KwaZulu Government of 1975-94, supported by the Nationalist Regime also had a ‘traditionalist revivalist’ agenda. Much of this is in line with anthropological concepts of culture change as reinterpretation and syncretism of the new with the cultural world-view of the old. Also apparent is that no clear classified and named age-groupings exist in the modern era and this indicates why dress is of account, as it often assumes the status of a ‘uniform’ that identifies its wearer’s group affiliation. Marks identifies theoretical underpinnings to child and youth violence at the time of the civil-war, and any focus on identity formation that “veer(s) off the map of (the concept of) social movements (with their political ideologies)” (Marks 2001:148). In reference to young soldiers, Marks quotes Touraine (1985) posing a question reminiscent of Symbolic Interactionist debate, “How does the link occur between individual consciousness and identity and the ‘group consciousness’ so essential to collective action?” She concludes “*To understand this, one needs to study collective action based on the ‘self-analysis of militants’it is important to ask whether the ‘militants’ saw themselves as youth, comrades, men, the poor, or black – and what do these identities mean to them?*” (Italics mine) (Marks 2001:148). One could posit that the answer to this question lies within the African traditional cultural classifications of roles and age-status groupings, and if Senzo Mkhize’s account as

²⁰⁶ See Mchunu, M. “Cultural Change, Zulu Masculinity and Intergenerational Conflict in the Context of Civil War in Pietermaritzburg (1987-1991) In, Shefer, T. Ratele, K and Strelbel, *From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*. UCT publishers, 2007

youngster, along with those of his 'cousin-brothers' is tracked, then one can obtain an insight into the dynamic of this process of identity, even as regards Hogg and Adams's theory of "multiple-identities"(1988) called forth of the maturing youth, inclusive of both 'breadwinner' and 'warrior'. The latter remaining in some form whether the young man has been modernised or stays close to his cultural roots, for in the Apartheid-struggle of the 1980-90s the 'call-to-arms' was surely shown to be the same fighting spirit of the 'warrior', be he Inkatha/IFP *Impi* or UDF/ANC *Amaqabane*.

3. Male traditional dress in the light of age-grades

To understand the role of beadwork and dress of traditionalist males among the Bhaca/Nhlangwini and the Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours in southern KwaZulu-Natal, one needs to appreciate the fact that it is the *izinsizwa* age, be he an *indlavini* or not, who was, in terms of his courting experiences also classified as an '*Isoka*' or 'Lover'. As such he wore beadwork within an often prescribed regional dress as both a mark of his success in wooing a girl and his intention of going upon a courting 'expedition' (*ukutshela*) to visit or find such a girl. The girl of course would have been given permission to be courted, of which more is said under the sub-heading on female age-grade/set dress.

An insight into the traditional *isoka* or courting male of the Bhaca and amaKhuze (Nhlangwini) peoples is to be found in the writings of the German missionary Doctor, Max Kohler, who was stationed at the Roman Catholic outstation of Mariannahill at Centocow Mission Hospital in the 1920-30s. He is not only known for his patronage of the pioneer black artist Gerard Bhengu, but also for his ethnological publications, of which Vol.1V., *Marriage customs in southern Natal* (1933) concerns us here. He says "(w)hatever puberty rites may have existed in the past, very little survives today. In the whole of my practice (at the Mission hospital) I have not come across a single circumcised male" (Kohler 1933:11). Nevertheless, it appears that at some earlier time Bhaca males, upon attainment of *ukutomba* (commencement of puberty) would have gone into the hills and lived in a grass *indlu* (hut) for some time, food being supplied by their mothers and apparently they were circumcised "...whether other rites were performed or any teachings imparted, is not stated. On the whole we are reminded of the practices of the tribes of the Cape Province..."(Kohler 1933:11). Further, "(t)o-day (i.e.1933) all this is obsolete among the (Natal) Bhaca, who do however slit the frenulum...(therefore)... men also still wear a penis-box (*iqoyi*) which is either carved of wood or made out of the cocoon of the bagworm (*Acanthospsyche junodi*)..." (Kohler 1933:11). This practice is no longer found, but I was informed that it was known to have continued in isolated rural areas until around the 1950-60s (personal communication Alf Taylor, Himeville, June 1979).

The Khuze (Nhlangwini) however simply acknowledge the boy's attainment of puberty when he takes the cattle out early to graze after he has had his first nocturnal emission. He then takes emetics and washes himself downstream of his father's cattle's drinking place. Of this Kohler comments "The Khuze custom, (as described...) is what is to some extent still practiced today (i.e.1933)" (Kohler 1933:11). Kohler then focuses on the youth's "(c)ourting (of the) girls (*ukutshela izintombi*)" and I quote his disparaging comment on the dress of young *indlavini* and/or *isoka* on such courting trips (Kohler 1933:20):

These lads are ridiculously dressed up and the stranger unaccustomed to the sight would take them for lunatics at large. The mixture of heathen ornament and European

baubles²⁰⁷ especially produces a weird effect...I know of practically no other occupation that the young native lads devote themselves so whole-heartedly to as this serious business of *ukutshela izintombi* (lit. “burning up”), i.e. running after or courting girls, for after all, the periods which they spend in town or on the mines are relatively brief (Kohler 1933:20-21).

I quote Kohler primarily because data is limited on Bhaca/Nhlangwini dress, but also because this is the age when girls (and there may be more than one whom a young man courts), make him beadwork once they have ‘*qoma’d*’ him (accepted his attentions). Such courting visits are found among the Zulu and the Embo-Mkhize as with most Nguni peoples, and they continue today only in more modernised form. Another reason for quoting Kohler is that the theme of the traditional courting-visit is taken up in beadwork motifs, mostly dating from the 1970-1990s, as a zig-zag pattern (said to trace the route of the courting man to his girlfriend, up mountains and over rivers) characteristic especially of the Embo-Mkhize from Umkomaas and as such will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5. It is also a theme of a soft-sculptural tableau doll²⁰⁸ collected by Jo Thorpe, former Director of the African Art Centre, Durban (now held in the Campbell Collections); the doll depicts a male in the Ndwedwe region’s courting-dress of *mshoshovu*²⁰⁹ or *imbozayembe*²¹⁰ (a long ‘night-shirt’-like garment) playing a concertina to the accompaniment of a love-song sung to his girlfriend/*makoti* (bride). So popular is the courting love-song that *maskanda* musicians like Mfiliseni Magubane and Vusi Ximba have ready audiences and CD (compact-disc) sales among contemporary rural and urban Africans (personal communication Siyabonga Mkhize, Durban, June 2009²¹¹). The theme of the courting visit is now almost mythic for some urban Zulu painters, being done by the famed ‘master of the oral genre’ Trevor Makhoba²¹², and art collector Bruce Campbell-Smith has photographic images of this artist’s gradual ‘improvement’ over time (i.e. adding to) of a painting that depicts girls at the river bathing while young men ‘spy’ on them from the forest path (personal communication Campbell-Smith, Durban, November 2010). In a more modernised rendition of such a painted courting scene by Makhoba’s student, Welcome Danca, the artist depicts a man dressed in

²⁰⁷ These are obtained from traders and were part of what was termed the ‘ African truck-trade ‘. It included beads, brass and copper wire, cloth and various trinkets like mirrors, combs etc. It also included cheaper lines of musical instruments such as ‘Jew’s harps’, mouth accordians and concertinas.

²⁰⁸ This work was marked as being by Katherine Mchunu but Celani Nojiyeza identified it as the work of her co-wife Sizakele MaMchunu Nojiyeza (personal communication, Durban, July 1999) and dates from the 1980s (Campbell Collections, UKZN [JT341]).

²⁰⁹ Initially I had assumed the name to be *mshoshoba* from (*isi*) *shoshoba* –point or end of long object, as bundle of grass. (Doke and Vilakazi 1948: 745). Hence the v-shape point of the shirt, as I was told of a dance with a similar name, accompanied by a dipping motion in which the shirt touched the ground (personal communication Ephraim Ngcobo, August, 1985). However, I was wrong and the name is *mshoshovu* and derives from the verb *shovu* an idiophone (usually repeated) hence *i(li)shovushovu* –loquacity, talkative and a person very free in his promises (Doke and Vilakazi 1948:745-6). Note that the word itself cannot be traced in a dictionary as it is perhaps too regional in form. The dance is known as one in which the participants dress in such long ‘night-shirts’ (personal communication Mxolisi Mchunu and Vusi Buthelezi, Durban, July 2011).

²¹⁰ This is the term supplied from the field in 1992. Most likely the word derives from the verb “*ukumboza (to cover)*” and “*yembe*” – a Zulu rendition of the Afrikaans “*hemp (Shirt)*” (personal communication Mxolisi Mchunu and Vusi Buthelezi, Durban, July 2011). The item description on the catalogue is; “Long ‘night-shirt’ in pink cotton with black trim and lapels, short sleeves. Split up sides to about the knee, a rounded bottom-edge, the back slightly longer than front.” The item had belonged to a man of the Nojiyeza family of Emaphephetwini, Ndwedwe and “worn by courting males and married men to weddings, dances, and other special occasions in Ndwedwe area, c1970s.” (The owner was from the same family as the doll makers mentioned in text) (Campbell Collections, UKZN [MM4016]).

²¹¹ Mkhize is brother-in-law to Ngubane and has done me the courtesy of translating and singing such love-songs, this as I wished to interpret a headrest dating from the 1950s from Paulpietersburg (Dumbe) with the “concertina (*inkosithini*)” pattern carved in its legs, c1946 (Campbell Collections, UKZN[MM5416]). Paper delivered at Zulu Beadwork Conference CVA, UKZN, Pmb., Dec 2-4 2009).

²¹² I deal with this style in context of Makhoba’s works in my Introduction and Chapter 2:Essay 1, of my Masters (History of Art) thesis titled, *Indigenous aesthetics and narratives in the works of black South African artists in local art museums* (UKZN, 2009).

*umblaselo*²¹³ (appliqué work) trousers and waistcoat, in a scenic valley offering the *intombi* (dressed in similar modernised plastic and appliqué *isigege* (girdle) and carrying a water-pot on her head) a bunch of roses. Danca is from KwaShobashobane, Izingolweni, on the lower south coast and the *umblaselo* trousers used to be identified with the Mpondo peoples of the Transkei (just across the Umzimvubu River) in the 1980s, but have since become common throughout KwaZulu-Natal as migrant-worker's dress.²¹⁴

I quote Dr Max Kohler because despite his oftentimes European judgmental 'gaze' his writings remain one of the few anthropological texts dealing with African sexuality in cultural context. He concedes that this African courting behaviour inclusive of beadwork and dress is all geared to heighten "sexual potency" (Kohler 1933:21). Philosophically this 'behaviour' accords with Ngubane's concept of '*ukuba ngumuntu*' quoted above "... (As the) promise of being human and the glory of being a self-defining value..." (Ngubane 1997: 98), for in Zulu thinking it is arguably but the biological dimension of a deeper spiritual process within the cycle of becoming a human being. Age-groupings then ensure the smooth progress of this process, and for a man, one that in the afterlife will continue 'on the other side' as an ancestor, but only if he should have been 'lucky' in his pursuit of winning wives who bear him sons to carry his 'personhood' or identity forward. These 'sexual mores' which were abhorred by the Christian missionary are then rather a process of ensuring 'true personhood' within Nguni thinking, and it is no wonder then that courting (and its accompanying clothes, ornamentation, grooming and use of '*imuthi*' or medicines/potions) is taken so very seriously.²¹⁵ A more contemporary, modern response to the sociological understanding of males in the grip of what Vilakazi terms the '*isoka* complex' would be that mentioned by Maré above, as but one of the multiple 'self-identities' pertaining to the life-cycle of a traditionalist Nguni man.²¹⁶ Absalom Vilakazi in *Zulu transformations* (1965), studies the traditionalist versus Christian Zulu of Nyuswa, Ndwedwe (in the historical clanlands of the Embo-Mkhize, but now considered Zulu), indicating the missionary bias of the European when he speaks of "... the prohibitions which the Christian churches have imposed on things like love affairs and the whole of the traditional *shela-qoma* complex" (Vilakazi

²¹³ I first heard this name from *iNkosi* Thamisanqa Mkhize of Hammersdale to describe the neo-African trousers worn by his clansman Siyabonga Mkhize to a clan celebration in 2006. My mind or 'English ear' heard the Zulu rendition of the Afrikaans for farm or "*plaas* (*eplazini*)" and I thought that it was a reference to the rural nature of the dress item, only when writing up this chapter did colleague Vusi Buthelezi correct me, rather the source is a reference to "patch" as the trousers are made up of pieces of cloth and applique inserts (personal communication Buthelezi, November 2011).

²¹⁴ This I know from having acquired such trousers (MM2844) from a friend who owned Cosmo Drycleaners, Stanford Hill Road, Durban in 1985, these plus some *Uthela* and Shembe Sect smocks were unclaimed and she donated them to the Campbell Collections, UKZN. The trousers were made by African tailors in Durban who would take two pairs of ordinary trousers in differing colours and cut them to recombine in a new pair which would be decorated with cloth insets, binding, rick-rack and appliqué. At the time, Ephraim Ngcobo from rural Inanda called them "Mpondo trousers" and said he would never wear such as he would be taken for being "stupid", a then local version of KwaZulu-Natal xenophobia. Since then the 'African Renaissance' has changed perceptions and more recently the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Senzo Mchunu has worn trousers and waistcoat in this style to a gathering of his clan at Msinga as a form of ethnic male dress (August 2014).

²¹⁵ As an aside I have often been told by Europeans familiar with the indigenous African languages that they would not recommend other whites acquire this proficiency, this because of the sexually explicit nature of African conversations. My own African 'nanny' or caregiver refused my mother when she begged her to teach my sister and myself isiZulu, saying she feared us becoming too Africanized and losing our 'Englishness'. It is with irony that it was beyond her control for children acquire insights and language in the process of growing-up, particularly those on farms or those with African care-givers, and what she took for 'Englishness' was arguably but 'class-pretentiousness' and when it came to knowledge of 'sexuality' it could as well be defined as 'ignorance of another sort'. I quote this because of how it echoes the commentary of Vilakazi on Christian black attitudes quoted in the text.

²¹⁶ I used to know three older African male associates in the category of cleaner, builder's assistant and *induna* (supervisor); men who were essentially traditionalist themselves but also migrant-workers in towns. All took a paternal interest in instructing me as a young white female anthropologist on correct procedure for cultural rituals. I found myself fascinated at their 'acting-out' for my instructional benefit and then when invited to family weddings, seeing these men, who were essentially my friends in the work-place, now transformed in these roles that they had taken on. When I read Hogg and Abrams theory of 'multiple identities' I recalled these men in both their cultural and urban roles, one's which could often be at odds with each other.

1965:140). Elsewhere he says, “Christians decry *ubusoka* as it is associated with sexual sin” (Vilakazi 1965:54). He, unlike Kohler, gives a more ethnographically sound and more importantly, African, perspective:

Like the girls, he (the young male ‘Lover’) acquires the knowledge of the techniques (of courting) by listening to his brothers’ conversation and talking to his peers, or by listening to older men when they talk to the girls; he learns directly from his elder brothers the art of verbal traps, i.e. *kila*.... Besides love-making techniques, young men learn the medicines that are used in love to remove *isidina*, ie. unloveliness, which is due to ritual impurity, which can only be cleansed by medicines (Vilakazi 1965:47).

Kohler was especially critical of the custom of *ukuhlobonga* which is sexual activity that he describes as “...only avoiding proper intercourse per vaginum which might result in conception, in order not to infringe the rights of some other, to whom the female and her reproductive power will in future belong (i.e. her future husband and his clan)” (Kohler 1933:21). Vilakazi claims that in the 1960s Zulu and Embo-Mkhize people of Nyuswa, used the word “*soma*” rather than *hlobonga*, although he acknowledges this is the word used in literature about the Zulu (Vilakazi 1965:53), and he explains “Zulu customary practice allows premarital sex play between men and woman. This is the custom of *soma*. This is intercrural intercourse and is definitely not coition” (Vilakazi 1965:53).

Kohler does however fortunately give inserts that are evidently taken from less biased and African informants, of which I quote:

When young fellows go courting girls, they dress up very elaborately. They bedeck themselves in beadwork, put on hats with ribbons and feathers, or wear fur caps, and take guitars to play on while on the march, besides concertinas and mouth organs²¹⁷(Kohler 1933:20).

He continues:

Girls are waylaid along the paths when going out to collect firewood, or when they return from the lands.... A girl is courted a long time. When such a girl does not consent to love a man, he seeks medicines with which to cast a spell over her, so that she may come to love him...(Kohler 1933:21).

Kohler goes on to describe some of these love medicines obtained from Indian herbalists who stocked traditional African medicines or local *izinyanga* (traditional healers) and aimed at bemusing the girl with the lover’s appearance, so she will fall in love with him. He also explains *isiphonso* in which the body-dirt (*insila*) of the youth is mixed in sweets given the girl who accepts his attentions to attract her affections. If a girl refuses she can be bewitched with *umhayiso* that can result in hysteria and only an *inyanga* (herbalist) can rid her of this. It may seem that Kohler refers to the 1920-30s and southern Natal but anyone who has had

²¹⁷ In an interview with 1920-30s trader Mr Alex Frangs who had a store at Donnybrook, southern Natal, claimed that such musical instruments, along with beads (of a certain colour and size) and specific cloths (like stripped salampore or ‘*ulwembe*’) were his stock in trade, of what was termed the ‘African truck trade’(Y. Winters Interview with Alex Frangs, Durban, 1982).

dealings with African youths can attest to the realities of the continued use of love-medicines today throughout Kwa-Zulu-Natal.²¹⁸

Gerard Bhengu the early black artist protégé of Kohler, born at Centocow Mission, situated at the lower reaches of Emakhuzeni between Khuze (Nhlangwini) and Bhaca tribal areas, often depicted *indlavini* (as in the classification of such by Hammond-Tooke for the Transkei, rather than for Natal), invariably occupied with playing musical instruments like concertinas, jews' harps or guitars (Campbell Collections, UKZN [WCP2770,2776]), as men on courting-trips (*ukutshela*), who went from one gathering to another in rural areas. If actively courting, such a youth would be termed an '*isoka*' or 'lover' and if Embo-Mkhize or one of their tributary clans and/or Zulu neighbours in Nyuswa, Ndwedwe in the 1960s, such young men would usually go out on such trips in the afternoon. Vilakazi notes they would be:

...(B)edecked in beads, complete with shields and two sticks, to places where the girls are likely to be. The girls may be out ostensibly to collect water, to wash in the river, or to gather wood...It is important...that there be ample leisure time for dalliance. A young man who embarrasses the girls when they are busy hoeing...or doing some other domestic chores...is considered stupid and has in any case to contend with the presence of either the girl's mother or some other sisters all of which makes the visit thoroughly inauspicious (Vilakazi 1965:48).

Both the *indlavini* and the *isoka* categories of young men are well known, not just among the Bhaca/Nhlangwini but also Zulu and the Embo-Mkhize of Umkomaas and Ndwedwe areas. Being polygamous, any traditionalist married man of the Zulu, Embo-Mkhize, Bhaca or Nhlangwini can also be termed an *isoka*, and Vilakazi gives a fascinating definition of the '*isoka complex*', in which men are socially expected to woo unattached females, and both a man who fails in his bid as lover, and a woman who fails to get suitors are called *isihimane*, or persons with misfortune or stigma, a condition treated with medicines. Vilakazi notes "(f)or a woman to be so unattractive and to lack admirers and suitors is to invite the cruel appellation of "*umgodo onganukwanja*" ... 'a big bit of human excreta which is so odourless that it does not even invite the sniff of a passing dog!'²¹⁹ " (Vilakazi 1965:51).

The sexual encounters of the as yet unmarried, especially from a female perspective, is presaged by whether a girl accepts a boy as her lover. In this case she is said to have 'chosen'. Kohler notes that "A girl is said to choose (*qoma*) a sweetheart, while the lad is said to 'cause to choose' (*qomisa*) the girl in question" (Kohler 1933:32). Moreover "(t)he young man is the active party, courting the girl until she consents to become his partner, giving him presents in token thereof and declaring the fact in public" (Kohler 1933:32). As this concerns the giving of beadwork, it is as well to quote Kohler's informant under the heading of "*ukuqoma*":

The hoisting of a white flag (*ukuhloma iduku*) is a great and widely known event amongst native young men. For the young man concerned is much praised, and is now called *isoka* since he has had a declaration of love from a girl (Kohler 1933: 32).

²¹⁸ The stories are legion but I will just give reference to a good family friend, Mr Boris Pillay, who owns a chain of '*muthi* shops' in KwaZulu-Natal. His customers freely share their seeking of love-*muthi*. As I write this Pillay is considering opening a further such shop at Dalton near New Hanover.

²¹⁹ Such 'horrible' slurs are common even among educated Zulu in conversation, and it is as well to recall that there is still an oral aspect of effective and excessive use of descriptive language to be found.

The informant continues:

Sometimes it is a whole year that the young man courts the girl. Then one day the girl realizes that this man has been courting her a long time and that she now loves him, so she tells him it is well and that she will love him, but that she still wants to get ready the things to love him with. Later on she fixes a certain day when someone must come to fetch those things, and when she will declare to him that she truly loves him....Some of these things are made of beadwork and others are bought in the store (Kohler 1933:31-32).

The couple arranges a rendezvous to which each invite their same-sex peer-grouping. The gifts exchanged are to tell the young man she accepts him and the occasion is usually accompanied by a small celebratory party of “sugar and sweets and bread...” (Kohler 1933:33). After this the young man and his group raise the white flag in his home to show that in that homestead is a youth who has been ‘chosen’ (*qoma*’d).

After this the girl makes beadwork and adds articles of dress for the boy to wear when on courting visits to her. The youth also buys gifts for the girl and usually she says what she wants in terms of future gifts, or he can give her money to buy what she wants, which may include beads to make ornamentation for either of the couple and Kohler says “(a)ll these things which they give one another are worn on festive occasions such as at Christmas or *ingcubhe* (the feast of the first fruits), at weddings, when the young folk bedeck themselves out therewith” (Kohler 1933: 33). Such a girl can *hlobonga* or *soma* with the boy, provided she has had the *uhlonyane* (*umemulo*) beast slaughtered for her, whereafter she is called his *isixebe* or ‘sweetheart’ while he is her *isoka* or lover. At this stage, until engagement (*ukugana*), only their peers know of the liaison, although mothers may know by rumour but say nothing. But if a girl is caught going to visit her lover the male must pay an *umnyobo* fine, usually in monetary form. The young man may have a number of girlfriends, and while these may give beadwork and gifts to him, he generally only gives to his favorite, causing considerable jealousy among his girlfriends (Kohler 1933:35-36). The artist/author Barbara Tyrrell mentioned in her book *Suspicion is my name* (1972) that one young Richmond Bhaca man she drew sold his courting beadwork to her as the girl he was finally betrothed (*ukugana*) to, objected to his other girlfriends.

For the Zulu and Embo-Mkhize of Nyuswa, Ndwedwe the *soma* visit by the lover follows a week after the *qoma* ceremony. This is because the young men often work in the city of Durban and come home on weekends and both *qoma* ceremony and *soma* visits happen at this time. He arrives in the neighbourhood at dusk and stands or sits concealed some distance from the girl’s homestead (Vilazaki 1965:53-4). Often only his grandmother knows of the youth’s visits and for the girl’s mother to in any way actively interfere, like prepare food for the young man, is considered inappropriate. It is the *iqhikiza* or senior girl in charge of the girl, who helps her sneak out of the hut to visit with her lover in the veld at night after payment of a ‘*soma* fee’, which in the 1950-60s was 10 Shillings, “Both the girls steal out...carrying a sleeping mat, a sleeping rug and some beer for the young man. The boy is warned by the *amaqhikiza* (senior girls) to behave himself properly and the girl is told: *ungazeneki izinkomo zikababa*, i.e. “do not open yourself to being deflowered” (literally, do not expose our father’s cattle)...The girl must however, get back home very early before the father wakes up, i.e. 3 or 4 am.” (Vilakazi 1965:53-54).

The practice of *soma* while no longer followed by the majority of Nguni is nevertheless still valued by contemporary traditionalists, indicated by the emphasis placed upon virginity at the time of marriage mentioned by a number of women who have shared their beadwork communications or marriage negotiations discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Countering this perception of the Nguni value placed on virginity are the many illegitimate babies and pregnancies among black teenagers, but even in 1965 Vilakazi attributes these to the fact of integrating ‘Christian mission morality’ which so forbids any sexual congress before marriage as to have made the topic forbidden (Vilakazi 1965:55). He says of the difference between Christian and traditionalist (and one must recall he speaks for the 1950-60s, as by now Christian concepts have filtered into traditional thinking and the resulting synthesis can be considered a ‘new traditionalism’ if one will) that “(t)he Christian has a new explanation of his universe and a new religion which supplies the reason for his actions. The non-Christian, whatever his other contacts, remains essentially heathen in his world view, and everything he does can always be referred to his basic Zulu terms of reference” (Vilakazi 1965:55). Of the matter of sexuality and Christianity he says of this missionary introduced teaching:

...any kind of sex relations are considered as lewd and therefore thoroughly condemned....A Christian boy is supposed to *thembisa*, i.e. to engage a girl as soon as they think they are in love with each other. Clandestine love affairs are known to friends of course, but the knowledge is not made public although people get to know about it...love affairs are personalized rather than public...(a) decrying of public and collective responsibility in marriage and in matters of love which detracts from the individual contractual nature of the union. Christian practice cuts out the *iqhikiza*, i.e. the senior girl who advises the younger ones, altogether, and leaves the matter of control to the parents, the schools and the churches (Vilakazi 1965:54).

Contemporary young Christians are as much controlled by their church pastors and communities as was prescribed culturally for traditional communities in former times. This could be seen as cultural traditionalist continuity taken up within Christianity and in fact there is much less individual and private actions than Vilakazi found in the mid-20th century, this particularly so amongst the new charismatic urban Christian movements.²²⁰ Vilakazi comments that for Christian lovers, gifts in the 1950-60s were strictly personal and consisted of handkerchiefs, sweets and fountain-pens and sometimes a ‘date’ of visiting a cinema in Durban. Perforce such gifts could no longer consist of beadwork, for not only did Christians not wear traditional dress but the beadwork ‘spoke’ openly of the fact of the girl having *qoma’d an isoka* or lover and engaging in *soma* visits (Vilakazi 1965:55). Vilakazi notes that where *soma* visits do take place among Christians, these cause guilt and later confessions of “sexual sin” at prayer meetings. And in the absence of any form of sex education, full coitus took place and pregnancies resulted (Vilakazi 1965:55). Vilakazi also mentions the importance of ‘cleansing’ the fact of such illegitimate pregnancies having happened:

²²⁰ Movement of especially younger Zulu to the cities post 1994, has given a strong African bias to such ‘Churches’ as the Durban Christian Centre, Pietermaritzburg Christian Centre and Christian Student groups. The entire ethos and style of these ‘community churches’ has changed from the American evangelical healings and Spirit possessions of such as the ‘Toronto Blessing’ among European South Africans during the 1980-90s to an African American style preaching synthesis with African style community testimonies and worshipful singing. My commentary is from personal experience, in which a Zulu friend got me to attend a bible-group of one of these churches in 2007, I found the group leader totally intimidating and excused myself as often as I could. Pre to this I had been a part of this church in its ‘white-only’ days, equally as intimidating but in a different way, the former era emphasized faith and its lack, while the new Zulu dominated era emphasized morality, both being implied as one’s ‘discernible’ ‘sin’.

Both among the traditionalists and the Christians, premarital pregnancy, as such, is considered a ritually dangerous state for both the family and its girls and for girls of the neighbourhood. A girl who has become pregnant has, by such an act, “soiled”, i.e. *ngcolisa’d* the girls of the whole neighbourhood, and has given a bad example to them. They must, accordingly, be cleansed or washed with a goat (*bagezwe*) (Vilakazi 1965: 55).

Ultimately only keeping the teenagers of both sexes apart could resolve these issues for the earlier generations of Christians, while in modern times this is almost impossible, for rural schools are co-educational. Also, the advent of HIV/AIDS has mostly placed the topic of sexual education firmly within the domain of Government run clinics and NGOs. More monied and educated families will send their children to private single sex schools (essentially based upon the British school-system) and in what were before 1994 termed “model C” schools, this not only for the reasons stated but also for a better education. Nowadays perhaps most black parents contend with having to ensure their children’s moral values are imparted by themselves, as happens among their white counterparts. However, the old traditional Zulu fines for “damages” in the case of pre-marital pregnancy continue among most urban blacks, no matter how westernized they may be.²²¹

Male courting dress is not worn as regimental attire of the *amabutho*. This dress is a regional variation of the early Zulu skins and fur regalia (the *umutsha* of *ibeshu*, *isinene*) shield and knob-kierrie (*ihawu* and *iwisa*) synonymous with the ‘Zulu warrior’, an outfit also worn for *ngoma* dancing or by the groom at the ‘traditional’ part of his wedding. Contemporary Christian urban Africans always have both a Christian and a traditional wedding ceremony (*umshado* and *umabo*), the latter to inform the ancestors of the arrival of a new bride, for they still believe in the ancestors despite the long missionary prejudices against indigenous religion centered on the *amadlozi* (ancestors). Neither is male courting dress that worn by men to magisterial or tribal courts within southern Natal, particularly in areas dominated by the Embo-Mkhize chiefs (and their associated clans), an outfit (termed *uthela*) that usually comprises tailor-made, black (sometimes brown) gabardine trousers (*ibhulukwe*)²²² that can be either long, three-quarter or above the knee, the waistbands comprising rows of buttons, either five, seven or ten rows of buttons.²²³ This style is accompanied by a pure woolen ‘fisherman’s pull-over jersey’ with a series of watch-straps encompassing the upper arms, and sometimes braces and/or waistcoats (*intolibhantshi*)²²⁴, the latter also from black (or brown, or two-tone, some even with leopard-spotted synthetic cloth inserts) gabardine cloth, again these can be decorated with buttons [see Appendices. Chapter 3: Figures 2-6. Traditional males from Ndwedwe and Emkhambathini wearing *uthela* and *mshoshovu*

²²¹ Once again my source is from conversations around these matters, which are quite common topics, with black friends and colleagues in more recent years.

²²² This outfit is also called *uthela*, a word most likely to be as indicated in Dent and Nyembezi *Scholar’s Zulu Dictionary* (Shooter and Shuter, 1981: 262) a straight borrowing from the English for ‘Tailor’. This was confirmed in an interview between Vusi Buthelezi and Ephraim Ngcobo, Durban, 15 November 2011. Both outfits were obtained only from specific tailors’ shops. Like KwaKweswa’s.

²²³ I insert a description from a catalogue card of one such suit coming in from the field (Campbell Collections, UKZN [MM4018A-B]) “Tailor made suit of short trousers in black gabardine cloth with waistband decorated with 7 rows of black buttons at the front and 7 rows of buckles with ties on each side, small front and back pockets with over-flap, tied with button, side pockets. Waistcoat has black gabardine front, two small front pockets and four double-breasted buttons at front, back is black silk-cloth with buckle and ties. Worn by courting men or married men to weddings, dances, umemulo ceremonies and to magistrates-court in Ndwedwe c1960-70s. Belonged to husband of one of the soft-sculpture doll makers Celani Nojijyeza from Ndwedwe and acquired by museum in 1992” .

²²⁴ I can only find the word in Dent and Nyembezi (1982:310) as indicative of a jacket and assume that this is because of the comparative late date of its introduction in terms of traditional dress, the word “*Bhantshi*” being a Zulu rendition of the Afrikaans “*Baaitjie*” for coat. This was confirmed by Vusi Buthelezi, Durban, November 2011.

Photographed at Kitty's Studio, Pietermaritzburg and Panbro Studio, Durban Figures 2-6]. Such dress can be accompanied by beadwork, and is also accompanied by head-kerchiefs, large store-bought looped earrings and the man can carry a shield (*ihawu*) (also regional in style, those of the Embo-Mkhize being long ovoid in shape and often from Nguni cattle hide of any pattern and colour) and a knobkerrie (*iwisa*) and two long sticks meant for stick-fighting and for resting-up (*izinduku*).

This above described male dress (*uthela* and *mshoshovu*) was the style during the 1940s through to the 1990s and I, accompanied by my colleague Ephraim Ngcobo (whose father had been a traditionalist at Inanda and worn such dress²²⁵ although he himself had followed his mother into the *Ibandla lama Nazaretha* (Shembe or Nazareth Baptist Church), acquired such attire for the museum, from the Gujarati tailors of downtown Durban, in early 1985.²²⁶ The place to order and buy them was *Kwa Keswa's* at 111a Victoria Street and evidence of their popularity was to be found in the Studio photographs taken at such photographers as Mr Manilall's "Bobson Studios" in Cross Street, opposite to the City Bus Rank. Furthermore, I would collect such images from the now deceased Mr Manilall in the early 1980s, along with an Indian colleague, Mr Ishwar Bindha, himself a photographer.²²⁷ Courting dress was made by seamstresses and/or tailors working for *Kwa Keswa*. The proprietor, Mr Bhana, himself a Gujarati (important because both male and female family members were from the 'tailor-caste' and would pass on their trade to their children) told me that his wife was asked by a Mr 'Chocolate' Ngcobo during the years of the 2nd World-war to copy a 'night-shirt' that had been popular dress among urban Zulu in compliance with city bye-laws requiring them to be covered from "neck to knee" (Moodie 1856:87-98). Only recently have I had confirmation that this shirt is rather a derivation of the earlier military shirts (most likely as worn during any of the many South African wars) and that the earlier generation of traditionalists from Inanda/Ndwedwe wore ones closer to the military original (termed *isisosha* (soldier) and worn with their skin-fur 'kilt' (*umutsha*)).²²⁸ This military shirt developed into the *mshoshovo*, in poplin-cloth of various colours, some being two-tone during the 1980s in response to westernized fashions prevailing in urban areas at the time. *Mshoshovo* would have rick-rack or braiding on lapels, if so chosen, for traditionalist men would come into

²²⁵ On the 23 August 2012 Ephraim Ngcobo paid me a visit after retiring from the Museum and began to reminisce about the *mshoshovu* or what I euphemistically called the "long-night-shirt" worn by traditionalist courting males from Inanda/Ndwedwe (see in text). For the first time did its origin become apparent to me. Ngcobo described his late father, a man with two wives, the first MaNgidi being my retired colleague's mother (who I remember clearly from ceremonies I attended in the 1980s, and who was the first in the family to convert to the *Ibandla lama Nazaretha* (Shembe), and a traditionalist in dress and life style. Ngcobo Senior dressed in a long-shirt or *isisosha* (soldier), literally a long khaki-coloured military shirt, the back a little longer than the front, with 'Mandarin color', lapels that could extend to tying up rolled-up sleeves or be tied back with a button neatly on the shoulders (leaving the sleeves long) and accompanied by pockets fitted with flap-tops. Often the back of the shirt had an additional band that could be adjusted with a button to draw in the shirt. Such a shirt was accompanied by the *ibeshu* and *isinene* (traditional fur/skin loin-covers together termed *umutsha*) and this morphed into the short trousers in the 1950-60s, Ngcobo Senior still wearing the skin/fur 'kilt' of tradition. I looked up military uniform on the web and found the "Army and navy stores" which sold surplus stock post the 2nd World War (and recalled my own father supplying his farm workers with items of such, inclusive of the ubiquitous military great coat, worn until recently by elderly African men). These *isisosha* (a Zulu rendition of 'soldier(s)') were copied by seamstresses at *Kwa Keswa's* and are still to be found in the more rural areas (personal communication Henry Mshololo, Inanda, September 2013). The Umvoti area have a rendition of such a shirt, made by seamstresses in a deep green poplin cloth (said to have also been worn with the skin 'kilt' by a headman [uncatalogued MM holdings]), to which beadwork is attached at the back. What I find of moment is that Ngcobo helped me acquire *mshoshovu* in 1985 and at all my querying of the origins of the 'long-night-shirt' he never once connected or extrapolated back in time to his own father's dress. There are a number of possible answers why – the most credible would be that a Zulu son is so trained to respect his father that he would not interrogate his actions let alone his dress.

²²⁶ The outfits were accessioned as MM2828-2844.

²²⁷ I wrote on this with an accompanying exhibition; Winters, Y. 1996a. 'More than a postcard Zulu: contemporary traditional dress from the Valley of 1000 Hills (Inanda/Ndwedwe)' In Bell, B; and Addleson, J. (Eds.), *Jabulisa: the arts and crafts of KZN*. Tatham Art Gallery: Pmb. and Durban Art Gallery.

²²⁸ See footnotes above.

KwaKweswa's and select the colours and have their measurements taken. A template in cardboard was available for choice of edging, the deep V-shape being preferred as the outfit was worn to a dance in which the deep bowing—steps ensured the base of the shirt touched the ground (personal communication E. Ngcobo, Durban, August 1985). *Mshoshovo* were also accompanied by head-kerchiefs, a small hand-bag (to carry torch, sweets and no doubt medicines on courting trips), the customary large loop earrings (*iligalinga*) and the man would carry two long sticks (*izinduku*) with a small towel (*ithawula*) wrapped to keep them together and easy on the hand. He could also carry a shield (*ihawu*) and studio photographs from the 1970s show pleated *mshoshovo* (again an echo of western fashion of the times), their colours more muted as in soft pinks and blues and some men wore them with the *intolibhantshi* or waistcoat that normally accompanied the trousers or *ibhulukwe*²²⁹ spoken of above. *Mshoshovo* were apparently worn with short *ibhulukwe* underneath, this as when a man sits, he will lift the back of the *mshoshovo* over the chair or eadrest (*isiqhiki*) he is seated on (personal communication Ngcobo, Durban, November 2011), but this is difficult to see in photographs.²³⁰ Such dress is worn for ceremonies (like weddings and coming-of-age or *umemulo*), parties (associated therewith and/or beer-drinks) and for courting-trips (*ukutshela*). It takes preparation and careful grooming as well as the use of courting-medicines, like steaming and cleansing by emetics (*ukugquma ngomuthi*) before dress in such outfits and a man dressed like this will behave in a prescribed manner that is assiduous in its respect (*ukuhlonipha*) for situation. There is a required greeting accompanied by bowing, walking with arms swinging and a jaunty step (*ukuzolozza*) and no man, even if a ruffian by nature will act in a discourteous way when so dressed. This respect extends to all behaviours in front of older men and women, particularly of the parents' generation and even if a man drinks beer or smokes (inclusive of dagga), he will not do so in the company of those of this generation (personal communication Ngcobo, Durban, November 2011).²³¹

Also applicable is the nature of the work followed by such traditionalist Zulu, Ngcobo confirming that his father who died in 1976 wore such regalia; otherwise he wore overalls as a Durban Corporation trench-digger for electrical cables (personal communication Ngcobo, Durban, November 2011). Around 1984 a foreman of the Corporation visited the museum and told me that this dress, which I had then just collected with Ngcobo, was worn by his trench-digging and pipe-laying work force of traditional Zulu who came mostly from Inanda and Ndwedwe, claiming that come Friday the men would wash and dress in such to go home to their homesteads (Winters 1995b).²³² This dress was characteristic of KwaNtaba or the Valley of 1000 Hills which falls within Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours and tribute

²²⁹ *Ibhulukwe* are trousers (Dent and Nyembezi 1984 ,273) and once again the word is a Zulu rendition of the Afrikaans 'broek' .

²³⁰ The Campbell Collection, UKZN has many Studio photographs of such dress from the 1970-90s in which men (and woman) would pose in their regalia often to obtain a documented record of their dress (particularly where this indicated engagement or other status). These derive from such Pietermaritzburg photographers as Kitty's Studio, Retief Street and Bobson's Studios, Cross Street, Durban.

²³¹ Vusi Buthelezi confirmed this data in November 2011 in interviews with the Luthuli chief from Umkomaas, including the vitally important information that such dress is still worn in the more remote rural areas. When enquiring of Ngcobo what behaviours a modern man would have, he said all such applies now only to such rural situation and dress, and that within towns "there is a possibility I may meet a woman on the street and I will chat (her up). It does not matter as tomorrow I will maybe meet another woman in the street and do the same. It is not necessary to be respectful in town, this is correct behaviour in the country."(personal communication Ngcobo, Durban, November 2011).

²³² What has always made me wonder is that while all the photographic Studios have photographs of this dress, there are little or no paintings, including Barbara Tyrrell costume-studies depicting such dress. One assumes that this is because it was either a later introduction and/or was not considered traditional, taking as it did from various, one must assume, western dress features, something referenced in the names for the items.

clan's territory.²³³ I had recently thought these styles out of fashion, especially when Art History lecturer, Professor Juliette Leeb-du-Toit came with the order book from Kwa Keswa's around 2000, knowing that I had once put together an exhibition of this courting-dress for *Jabulisa: The arts of KwaZulu and Natal*, hosted by the Durban Art Gallery in 1995. I was therefore surprised when later collecting traditional dress, along with colleague Siyabonga Mkhize, at Kwa Zwelebomvu in 2008, and while waiting for the matrons to dress in their regalia, a youth of the homestead put on a family video for our interest, and there in an *umemulo* ceremony filmed around 2006 were some ten men dressed in *ibhulukwe* and matching jerseys, with large loop earrings and matching red head-kerchiefs.²³⁴ Later Mkhize himself acquired such a tailor-made suit to wear at his *iNkosi* Kusakusa Mkhize's royal homestead's ceremonies. I then learnt that the dress had not in fact died out but the making of it had been taken over by informal black tailors and seamstresses in the rural areas themselves.

As insight into the nature of the beadwork worn along with courting dress, that made by the 'sweetheart' or girlfriend for her lover or *isoka*, I have taken from a panel put together by Barbara Tyrrell and with her accompanying drawing of a Richmond Bhaca courting man of the 1950s-60s which was acquired by the museum in 2004.²³⁵ Such beadwork of a young man, made by his girlfriend for him has perhaps as much to say about beadwork communication and age-groups as any of that belonging to a girl. The beadwork comprises pieces fairly representative for courting youths of the 1960-70s in the Richmond area. Hat bands with red triangles alternating with green ones or red and blue ones, both on a white background, both motif and colour combinations characteristic of this era and location. A courting whistle (used to call the girl from her homestead as it was considered disrespectful for a girl to receive her lover in the family home). Also part of this set of beadwork is a diamond-shaped *udonsathando*²³⁶ in the form of a head-band, one that Tyrrell termed a "Love-strengtheners", echoing both a shield (*ihawu*) and a double-heart (*inhliziyo*) shape²³⁷, meant to be worn close to the head so the boy would think of the girl. Further included is a 'muthi' medicine-necklace of goat or duiker horn meant to contain love-potions (*ibodhlela*) and a necklace choker consisting of a number of beaded squares with geometric patterns, this last termed a book or *incwadi* that should be "read as if pages" (Tyrrell, 2004). On one is the ubiquitous hexagonal-shape of a 'beer-drinking-pot' (*ukhamba*) said to indicate a request by the girl for her lover to take her as wife so she can make beer for him, a task of the senior

²³³ When I first came to Natal I recall a male friend giving such young men a lift in the Nagel Dam area, they invited us to the 'party' they were going to, but my friend said they had been smoking marijuana (or dagga) and he had just become a Transcendental Meditation teacher himself and wanted none of what had once been his old life-style (talking of the smoking of marijuana that is) so he declined their quite gracious invitation.

²³⁴ Confirmed by Buthelezi's interview with Chief Luthuli of Umkomaas.

²³⁵ I assumed this to be based upon a field-sketch and comprise the original beadwork of a young Richmond man as illustrated in *Suspicion is my name* (1972) but in writing this up I realise that the artist was so secure in her knowledge of the area's age-grade beadwork that she compiled this panel and supportive sketch at a later date, possibly around 1982 when she had her collection at PheZulu at Botha's Hill. There is no original sketch in her bound copies in Campbell Collections holdings, while Brenthurst Library acquired the original field-sketch for the book's illustration.

²³⁶ The word means "to draw the love."

²³⁷ I will discuss these important symbols within their context of beadwork in a later chapter that deals with beadwork symbolism. Here one needs only to note that the former refers to 'protection' and the latter to feelings.

wife in a polygamous homestead.²³⁸ There is also an *uthayi* or neck-tie, the first example in this set of beadwork of the absorption of western concepts, and in colours more typical of neighbouring Umkomaas, perhaps signaling that the girl hailed from that area. The tie in itself replaces an earlier generation's *ulimi* or 'tongue' necklace. It is feasible that both have phallic connotations as do western ties, an association long forgotten once the convention of the dress/ornamental item becomes standard dress (Horn 1975:154).

That which is significant in this beadwork and portrait is that a young man's self-image would be bolstered by the fact of his girlfriend making him beadwork, and as stated above he was within his rights to have more than one girlfriend and could well wear more than one girl's proffering's at once, thereby enhancing his status and image as *isoka* or lover of note. Also significant is that girls will include in this beadwork their desperate attempts to be the one to lavish him with beadwork, usually also of quality workmanship, this not only to communicate feelings but to win his affections over rivals.

There is an element of sympathetic magic in all of this beadwork, as many of these items were meant to 'hug' the body as a reminder of the girl. Usually men would keep their beadwork, particularly if the liaison lead to engagement or marriage, as this was seen to record or 'document' the existence of the relationship and it could be presented in tribal court-cases where there were divorces or any wrangling (by either party). It is also true that it is most often wives who sell their husband's beadwork, especially that which they themselves made, occurring when he is deceased or when the couple is now old and it is unlikely that they could separate. Often the accompanying courting beadwork dating from the 1990s has written messages which are Zulu idioms and aphorisms or exhortations from the girl to her lover.²³⁹

²³⁸ I take my information and assumptions as to these items meanings/names not only from Barbara Tyrrell but more especially from a series of similar beadwork items acquired from the artist which she had held in Natal Museum until 1989. That museum's Dr Tim Maggs and Ms Kathy Mack shared the acquisition of the items and accompanied by interpreter Rebecca Msomi, I interviewed Banukile MaMbanjwa Mbhele on 5 October 1989 at her home in Ndaleni. Those items taken by Campbell Collections are accessioned as MM3777-3792. The actual panel I regard as a re-constituted work of art by Tyrrell and as such it, along with some other such, were firstly on Loan from the artist, displayed in the ethnology gallery entrance in showcases made for them and purchased in late 2004 when the artist returned to Fish Hoek.

²³⁹ The following beadwork came from the well-known soft-sculptors or doll makers of Ndwedwe; all of it is courting beadwork worn by an *izinsizwa/ isoka* along with either the *mshoshovu* or the *uthela* attire: [MM3980-3984]. The beadwork was made by Celani Nojiyeza (2nd wife) for her husband when courting, 1984. Acquired by Campbell Collections 7 October 1992. These were interpreted by Mphostoli Mzila and later Siyabonga Mkhize concurred with the meanings given. For examples of some of these items of characteristic male beadwork of the 1980-90s with designs of written proverbs, aphorisms and the like, see image in Appendices. [\[see Appendices: Chapter 3: Figures 7-9 .Male courting beadwork from Ndwedwe, Emaphephetweni c1980s \(\[MM3980-4\]held in the Campbell Collections, UKZN\). \[Figure 7\].](#)

MM3980 Beaded belt Large plastic beads in red and white with words "ASIWAKHE MATHULA"[let us make this (house) and keep quiet (so people do not gossip)]. The implications being if you make a big home (house and family) people can become jealous, asking where you got the money. etc. Alternative meaning, "You need to keep our activities to yourself." (Comment: The Nojiyeza were relatively wealthy traditionalists, especially as the women made beadwork originally for the African Art Centre but later for Kate Well's Ziyazama Project).

MM3981 Beaded belt in small plastic beads in multiple colours on black base, edged in lime-green with V-shape tabs along bottom of belt. Words "NGEKE USITHATHE ISIPHIWO SOMUNTU APIWA(SONA)"[You cannot take a talent from someone (it is) a gift (from God).] The implication is that you can be jealous of another's talent (say for making money) but you cannot take it from them, as it is God's (or Ancestors?) gift to that person.(Comment: The owner's "luck" may have been obtaining a 2nd wife (meaning the children borne will ensure the expanding of the family).)

MM 3982 Beaded belt in small plastic beads in multiple colours on black base. Backed by cloth with V-shape tab edge. Words in continuous writing "NINGANAKIABANTUBAYIZONIEZWENIBHEKAMINA"[You must not look to people because they are sinners, look to me (as an example).The implication, for example a parent may say to look at elder brother as an exemplary example for the child, not to the outer world where there are 'way-ward people' as they can mislead the child].

MM3983 Beaded Necklace in small plastic beads in mid-blue beads 'dotted' with white beads against a half sky blue, half red base. Words "UMONAOWANI"[What is he jealous for?]. Connotation may be to wealth again. (Comment: The husband gave permission for the wife to sell this beadwork as he no longer wears it).

In 1983 I acquired the full courting outfit of one of the Mbanjwa male cousins from St Faith's/Highflats in southern Kwa-Zulu Natal. The young man being photographed dressed therein at Bobson Studio's, Cross Street. Durban [see Appendices. Chapter 3: Figures 7-9. Male courting beadwork [MM3980-4] and Young men of the Mbanjwa family from Highflats/St Faith's in courting dress [MM2406-23] and dance dress photographed at Bobson Studios, Durban [Figures 7-9].²⁴⁰ It appears that the trousers (black, with even leg width throughout) and the synthetic cloth long-sleeve shirt (green with buff, white and green vertical stripes) were fashion for courting men of the region and period. All the beadwork consisted of large and small plastic beads, with motifs that are often words worked into combs, or beadwork-pins (*isipelethu*) to be pinned down the trouser legs. These are often apparently 'trite' word-communications, like "angazi" (I don't know) "lihle" (he is handsome) and the like²⁴¹ and no doubt indicate attraction and more importantly show the girl has some schooling (considered important as she can then read her migrant-working lover's letters) as to her possible economic and literate value to the family into which she marries. The beaded belt with the sentiments of courting anxieties 'written' into a continuous sentence "Oheangaliumohabantuhezenganiuzwakushiwona [Ohe! I'm not refusing, jealousy, Hehe! What are you doing with yourself. Are you hearing it being said(?)]."²⁴² The implied meaning is a reference to courting jealousies of a personal nature. There are also the characteristic shoulder-bands, belts, purse, headbands and even a beaded hat. The man has a beaded tin-mug on a shoulder-band,²⁴³ this to drink water at the river while on courting trips, again with an ulterior motive that witchcraft or 'muthi' cannot be worked on him through unfamiliar food or drink. The trouser legs are tied with two men's cloth handkerchiefs just below the knee to hitch them up for dancing and to protect the trouser ends. In some ways it is possible to see this dress and its accompanying beadwork as perhaps the 'last of its kind' and somewhat of a token-traditionalism, it being overtaken by more modern dress and fashion in recent times. In a later 2000 *umemulo* held by the

MM3984 Beaded necklace in small plastic beads with words in black against green, pink, orange base. "UHLEKA NGEZINYO KANTI U(I)NYOKA"[you love with your teeth but you are a snake] A Zulu idiom meaning when I am with you, then you are nice but slander me behind my back, you are untrustworthy. (Comment; Unsure if this has reference to the husband's character or if it is just a Zulu saying. It is hard for an outsider to ask directly the intention, only those party to the courting couple's lives, like senior girls would know what the intention was).

²⁴¹ Items from courting youth's outfit with communications. Highflats Nhangwini people. Meanings interpreted by Sandile Mbanjwa and Rebecca Msomi on 24 June 1983 [See Figure 8]:

MM2406 a comb/handbag or *Imbambathoni* with the words "ANGAZI" on one side and "PHOKE" on the other side. In small glass beads each in a different colour on a black base, the handle in large plastic beads, the general meaning of the article "I wonder who will love me" The colouring of the item was said to not be important.

MM2415 Beaded girdle with Word "Esese" [In the state of being happy]

MM2417 Beaded pin *Isipelethu* with Words *Ishele*" [Court her]

MM2418 Beaded pin *Isipelethu* with Word "Hama"[I will not refuse.]

MM2419 Beaded pin with word "Lihle"[he is handsome]

MM2420a Beaded pin *Isipelethu* with word "Angali"[hug or kiss from verb *Anga*]

MM2420b Beaded pin *Isipelethu* with word "Bhungu"[youth in his late teens]

MM2421 Beaded pin *Isipelethu* with word "Pouhi"[meaning not deciphered]

MM2423 Beaded belt, synthetic leather backed with writing motif as continuous sentence in small glass beads in full multiple colours on black base. "Oheangaliumohabantuhezenganiuzwakushiwona [Ohe! I'm not refusing, jealousy, He! What are you doing with yourself. Are you hearing it being said(?)]".

²⁴² The understanding of what seem to be incomprehensible communications to outsiders, is most likely to be a reference to the period in which the youth goes to work in an urban area and the girl (and as often the boy) will be filled with doubts as to faithfulness on the part of a partner they are separated from and reliant on brothers (or sisters) (including classificatory such who will be termed cousins in the west) communications as to if there are others (male or female depending on the communicator) taking the attentions of the lover away from the girl.

²⁴³ MM2414

Mbanjwa family [see Appendices, Chapter 3: Figures 18-22. Umemulo of a girl of the Mbanjwa family at Hammersdale, 2000. [Figures 18-22], the girl already had a child so wore a brassiere along with the requisite leather skirt (*isidwaba*) and other items for the coming-of-age ceremony, while the same youth who had once modeled the outfit described above in 1983 (and listed in the accompanying footnote), and who was now a Principal of a teacher's training college in Umbumbulu, was called upon to dance for the men's group. He did so dressed in a blue overall, and carrying a knob-stick (*iwisa*), the item of dress said to have replaced the 'kitchen-suit' of old, worn by migrant-worker males when home from the city.

One 1979 born girl from Ndwedwe said that when playing 'Ubaba' and 'Umama' ('Father and Mother') with her siblings and cousins in the 1980s, the boy dressing as 'father' wore such overalls and acted out with 'play-play' Bibles. Needless to say her family were partly Christian and partly traditionalist (personal communication, Hlengiwe Mavuyana, Durban, May 2007).

4. Female traditional dress in the light of age-grades/sets

While males fall into age-grades/sets that often have ramifications in terms especially of the modern world (being 'breadwinners' in the wider world and having political duties as heads of families within a still male dominated Nguni society), females within these societies are perhaps more subject to the prescriptions of earlier age-grades/sets. This is not only because of their gender-assigned roles and division of labour but because of the very high value placed upon the control of female fertility within such societies. In patriarchal societies the female is said to supply the blood (body), while the male the spirit, the female womb then nurtures a child of the father's ancestral-spirit-line (Berglund 1976: 253-5). Matters of legitimacy are important for these reasons, the female bearing children to her husband's clan and family in exchange for the bride-price (*lobola*) payments to her father and brothers. The woman is an intermediary between the world of the living and the ancestral spirits or the dead (Ngubane 1977:114-5). In these roles a woman has to be especially respectful, following *ukuhlonipha* and *ukuzila* (respect and avoidance) prescriptions otherwise her behavior, as an 'outsider' to her husband's family will endanger them, for there are a number of mythical sanctions for taboo-breaches (Ngubane 1977: 114-5). It is for this reason that age-grades are still operative among even modernised African Christians. Colleague, Siyabonga Mkhize, who apart from other activities mentioned in this thesis is also a prophet with his own independent church, the *Holy Salem City of God* at KwaZwelibomvu (Shongweni) has a ministry to particularly traditionalist Zulu and Embo-Mkhize who he allows to attend services in traditional attire but for a white church over-smock, much like that of the *Ibandla lama Nazaretha* (Shembe). However his church emphasizes Jesus Christ rather than Isaiah Shembe as African redeemer. When inviting me to his church inauguration gathering he told me of the importance of the separation of the congregation into sexes and age-grades, and in regard to these virgin girls were especially to have their own grouping. On my asking if this was an echo of the *Ibandla lama Nazaretha* (Shembe) customs, he denied that was the reason, rather it was the "old Zulu way of doing things, at no ceremonies or functions have we as a nation ever mixed the sexes or ages. This is why my church, like that of Shembe's followers, has such an attraction for traditionalists, we do things according to correct custom" (personal communication Mkhize, Durban, October, 2011).

L. G. Hallett in his *African tribes employed on the Witwatersrand Gold Mines* (1944) gives short distinctive traits peculiar to the various peoples employed on the Gold Mines. That which is immediately obvious of the Bhaca (and related Nhlanguwini) of southern KwaZulu-

Natal and upper Transkei is the excessive respect and avoidance customs to be followed by the females of these groups. The Zulu and Embo-Mkhize are perhaps less strict but this regimen of respect (*ukuhlonipha*) and avoidance (*ukuzila*) customs are engendered into females from a very young age and the comprehensive age-grouping of females into age-grades or stages marked by dress and beadwork must be seen to aid a girl in the increasing strictures and taboo regimens that will be imposed upon her as a maturing female. The localized variations of these age-groupings' dress, as too their rather evocative and obscure naming, can be confounding to the outsider. However there are sufficient similarities in regard to both elements of dress and to the exact strictures and rights applied to the girl to extrapolate the operative classificatory criteria. As will be seen in the discussion around these stages, what is of central concern is the girl's potential fertility with the many references to fecund nature (especially seasons, landscape and fauna) securely placing the traditionalist girl within the context of her body as a product thereof, one that needs control within her society. Modernisation and especially schooling has had its influence on changes and in regard to early sexual activity, teenage pregnancy and incidents of marriage by abduction (*ukuthwala*) of girls as young as 14 by older men, claiming to keep them pure, has become common.²⁴⁴ The Zulu royal house's conducting of virginity testing within rural communities under the auspices of the Reed Ceremony co-ordinators, also commonly termed *Nomkhubulwana* Ceremonies (after the Zulu virgin goddess) speaks to the need felt within communities to control young females' fertility (personal communication *iNkosi* P.M. Ngcobo at *Nomkhubulwana* ceremony, Noodsberg, 2005). These ceremonies are considered by social-scientists to be a form of ethnic revival as can be seen in the title of Louise Vincent's article 'Virginity testing in South Africa: Re-traditioning the postcolony' in *Culture, Health & Sexuality*. January-February (2006;8(1):17-30).

The importance of this in considering African Feminism and modernisation cannot be underestimated, especially as it is so central to the issues around beadwork, dress and status and age-grades. The concerns with young girls' virginity and the protecting of their potential fertility is found echoed in the description of nature and its Zulu patron *Nomkhubulwana* the 'sky-princess' as recorded in Father Bryant's *The Zulu People: as they were before the white man came* (1949). I quote:

Later on we shall tell of the Zulu 'sky-princess', *Nomkubulwana*, who, when the world was young, taught mankind to plant the millet grain and to brew there from good beer, and who now and then still appears to bring some message to mankind. Herself, say the Zulus, she is 'partly a human-being, partly a wood, partly a river, and partly overgrown with grass' (Bryant 1949:57).

²⁴⁴ See "police ready to set-up fight against 'ukuthwala' –abduction of young girls for marriage." (<http://www.the.newage.co.za>. [accessed 18 November 2011]). I quote on the abduction of girls in Loskop near Estcourt in the KZN midlands " Police spokesperson Brig. Patricia Msweli, cluster commander in the Estcourt area, said about five girls had been abducted in the Loskop/Estcourt district since December. She said three men were arrested recently and warned that police would act against parents who lay charges of abduction but later withdraw them if the abductor offers to pay lobola for their kidnapped daughters. "We are working closer with rural women to stop this practice. These men wait for the girls when they come from school or when they go to fetch water from the river," Msweli said. "Now we have come up with a strategy where the men who abduct these young girls will be arrested and face charges of rape and abduction. "If the parents of the girls are colluding with these men by accepting lobola, they would also face charges," she warned. Msweli said there were often cases where parents of abducted girls withdrew charges against the abductor after negotiating with him." What surprises in this report is that Msweli (herself an African) does not admit the custom is a traditional one now corrupted in the wake of the HIV/AIDS pandemic so that girls formerly considered by both the communities as well as African Customary Law as too young (hence virgins) are being abducted. It could also be that the reader needs to 'read between the lines', if aware of the custom then Msweli's claim of consulting the women indicates a knowledge of African Feminism, where the mothers in the community will put pressure on their male guardians (husbands, fathers, brothers and uncles, depending on their own marital status) to stand firm on Customary Law (and female age-sets of old where a girl under 16 is not ready to court and hence it is essentially rape, itself forbidden in Customary Law), while 'shaming' the perpetrators. Even if this is so it still shows the difficulties for African policemen/women who may need to appease what are outside and western expectations (of the reader audience in this case). This indicates the complexities of the South African situation and law-making, as Msweli appears to be referencing Roman-Dutch Law operative in urban environments.

In connection with this description, it is important to recall the role of traditional Nguni women in agriculture, an activity that required reference to the forces of nature, be they to the seasons, rain or drought or crop-pestilence. In times of crop failure women would ask the *Inkosazana ya-s-eZulwini* (Princess of the sky) to bless and prosper their crops and virgin girls would request of each homestead corn to brew ceremonial millet-beer. When this had been made they would dress in their brothers' male attire and herd the cattle until milking-time, (the boys staying at home) while their mothers hoed and sowed "a garden for the Princess' (*Ukulimela iNkosazana*) -only a small patch a few feet square- and finally poured out the beer (here called, not *uTshwala*, but *uNomdede*) upon the earth as a libation. Should her rites be neglected then *Nomkhumbulwana* would be offended and in revenge would cause the corn to blight (*isiWumba*)" (Bryant 1949:665,667). He continues:

From time to time she even herself appeared, 'mostly to women-folk, while hoeing in their fields, and dressed in white', her purpose being to give them some new law or foretell them something that will happen....Should there be a woman so impious as to disregard her injunction, that woman the Sky Princess would 'transport away with her to where she dwells; afterwards, when more submissive, returning her to earth to preach her precepts to mankind'. And where she dwells is 'up above, because she travels on the mist' (Bryant 1949:668).

It is perhaps from the description of *Nomkhumbulwana*, daughter to the Supreme God *uMvelingqangi*, that one gets an image of the idealized virgin in Zulu perception. She is described as bare breasted and dressed in a girdle of beads, a beautiful girl, who men must never see or "become blind because they have looked where they ought not to see" (Berglund 1976:65). Bryant surmises that the name *Nomkhumbulwana* derives from the word *ukuPukula*, to stand with pouting lips (Bryant 1949: 668), this was done by virgin girls when they go to receive the corn to brew into beer for the goddess's libations, from the neighbouring homesteads as described above. Tyrrell in discussing a girl of the Richmond area of the *amajongosi* age-group, who may not be courted without permission of the senior girls, says that any boy interested in her, "may not touch her but he can talk to her at the waterhole and walk with her. He must take his leave outside the perimeter of her home kraal and must not court her if her mother is in sight. And at this stage women may borrow her to help prepare for a party but she must remain in their care" (Tyrrell 1972: 172). Elsewhere Tyrrell writes "Disdain, surliness and pouting are all part of the stock-in-trade of the girl who fascinates" (Tyrrell 1972: 91) and still elsewhere mentions "When men or boys of courting age appear, she turns away and lowers her gaze... They are permitted to admire but she must remain aloof" (Tyrrell 1972:36). Among the Khuze (Nhlangwini) from the Ixopo/Highflats/St Faiths area, this age-group is termed either, "*ukumisa*, meaning 'to stand firm', or *ukungqonga*, meaning 'to growl or be obstinate'. Both terms refer to the girl's stand-off behavior" (Winters 1988:49).

In the Bhaca/Nhlangwini area of Emakhuzeni near Underberg/Himeville the first stage (one below an *ijongosi* (Richmond) or *ukumisa* (Ixopo/Highflats/St Faiths), is termed an *ihlefulela* and also so named in Ixopo/Highflats/St Faiths, but named *ishitshi* in Richmond. A girl of this age-grade is told by the *igoso* or dance-instructor (a man appointed by the chief to oversee the local community children, a role taken by the senior girls group in most other areas) exactly what she should answer any male who approaches her with courting in mind.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵ I quote the prescriptive text as given to trader/farmer Jean Anderssen by her traditionalist servant. The *igoso* is instructing the girl as follows: "Now see, because today you have become an *ihlefulela*, do not dare to reply to any address made to you. If a man courts you, say,

Max Kohler in his study of marriage practices of southern Natal says for Bhaca/Nhlangwini girls' initiations, that the girl's first menses, termed *ukutomba*²⁴⁶ (Kohler 1933:13) is marked by the *umhlonyane* ceremony, which is the slaughter of a goat or cattle when the girl has emerged after some eight days of *umqongo* or seclusion and has washed with her age-mates at the river (Kohler 1933:12-13). The *umhlonyane* ceremony "indicates that the father of the girl rejoices because his daughter has become a full grown woman and has reached the age where she is an *intombi* in the true sense of the word, that is to say, if she marries she will be able to have children" (Kohler 1933:13). The 'official' recognition of a girl's maturity is the *ukwemula* (or *umemulo*), a more formal ceremony to announce that a girl can now be engaged and marry. Kohler says the word itself means "to commence eating *amasi* (sour milk) again after a period of abstinence (it is a taboo for her to do so during mensuration)" (Kohler 1933:14). A father can decide to hold this ceremony at any time, often delayed because of financial constraints, but when he decides he informs his brothers and the girl's brothers, beer is prepared for all who will contribute towards the ceremony in the form of cattle to be slaughtered for consumption (Kohler 1933:16). The father then slaughters a beast for the girl which indicates that she is now of marriageable age and may be courted (Kohler 1933:17). On that day the girls of her age-grade and all neighbours will have a feast, drinking, eating and dancing, the girls dressing in ceremonial attire because "(c)ustom demands that her (the girl for whom the *umemulo* ceremony is being held) change of status must also find expression in a change of dress and coiffure" (Kohler 1933:18). Kohler remarks "all girls like to have their *ukwemula* celebrated, and to have a great feast upon that occasion, for a girl (who) has not yet had her *ukwemula* feast is laughed at by others" (Kohler 1933:19).

Harriet Ngubane in *Body and mind in Zulu medicine* (1977) discusses some of the important symbolism of 'light' and 'luck' in the *umemulo* ceremony. She refers to the Zulu of KwaNyuswa of the 1970s, but there is no doubt that the importance of the symbolism articulated in the father's speech (also referred to in Chapter 5) is still operative in Zulu thinking. The father would be addressing the ancestral-spirits expressing his sentiments as a father and asking blessings for his daughter.²⁴⁷

'I cannot reply to any such talk.' The boy will then say, 'Very well, I will ask the *igoso* if this is true.' You must answer, 'Yes, you may go (and ask him).' The youth will then ask me and I will say, 'Yes, that is true. I commanded her to say nothing, for she is too young.' The youth will then return to you, (the maid) and say, 'Indeed I have asked, you speak the truth. But as you may not answer me yet, when will you?' You answer, 'No, I do not know until the *igoso* tells me.' Then the youth will answer, 'Maiden enough. I shall see you again in a year's time'.' (Anderssen notes on 'Age groups Emakhuzeni/Underberg 1982').

²⁴⁶ In Zulu thinking a female menstruating is ritually impure and must abstain from *amasi* or sour milk during her period. Women preparing beer for a ritual slaughter are expected to be "cool" i.e. they should not be menstruating, pregnant or suckling. Also sexually active women may not have to do with preparations for rituals involving the ancestors, this because as such they are "hot" or contagious, in contrast to the ancestors who are "cool" or ritually pure. Realities of life will intercede and not all prescriptions can be followed, Berglund gives an example of a suckling woman helping brew beer in the absence of other help, upon enquiring an old woman explained "Today we do not worry much about these things They just do it, not thinking very much. So I do not know what to say about it. But according to tradition (*ngomthetho*) she should not be doing it." (Berglund 1976:227-228).

²⁴⁷ "*Nangu umtwana wenu uMalezi* [Here is child yours Malezi]; *Ngiyamemulisa* [I perform nubility ceremony for her]; *Akube mhlophe konke* [Let it be white all]; *Lzindela zake zibe mhlophe* [Pathways hers be white]; *Kukhanya, abone* [Let there be light, let her [be enabled to see]; *Kudeduke umnyana* [Out of her way be darkness]; *Abe nezinhlanhla* [Let her be of good fortune]; *Azale abantu* [Let her live well]; *Aphile kahle* [Let her health be good]; *Kube mhlophe konke empilweni yakhe* [Let it be white all in life hers] (Ngubane 1977:114-5). The Zulu verb *khanya* means 'to be light', 'to be bright' and 'to shine forth.' White is used as a synonym for light when used in ritual contexts. In such cases it refers to fortune, health and fertility. The very earliest of Zulu texts talk of thanksgiving as, "Let the *Amatongo* (*amaDlozi*) be bright and white, and not dark, that they may save us on another occasion." Misfortune is described as the ancestors turning their backs and that "...their *Idhlozi* is dark" (Berglund 1976:160). I will return in this thesis to these concepts as they stand at the basis of much beadwork symbolism.

The age-grades pertinent to the peoples of southern KwaZulu-Natal, particularly those of the Bhaca/Nhlangwini are far more complex than this short synopsis and I will go into more depth as regards these age-grades hereafter when I compare them with those illustrated by Barbara Tyrrell in the 1950s-60s.

Here I repeat some salient points of my presentation ‘Thoughts on African concepts of beauty as reflected in beadwork and dress’ at the Beadwork Conference, CVA, UKZN, Pietermaritzburg (2009). Different age-groupings of girls are considered to be beautiful in their own way, which is often a combination of physical features and culturally valued character traits that will prove an advantage in the girl’s role as a wife and mother. To quote Vilakazi:

The personal qualities which are thought very important in a wife among traditionalists are: physical robustness, a well-built and well-filled body, with good legs, diligence and respect (Vilakazi 1965:59).

It is hard to appreciate these points in the abstract, so I will give one example of the effects of African beauty from personal observation. I have mentioned the same incident in Chapter 1 but in another context. Some years ago I worked with a singularly striking African domestic. She conformed totally to Vilakazi’s profile for beauty of body and personality, and this was confirmed by African males who would praise her with epithets indicative of her beauty being one with fertility, saying that, “Her legs are like ripe pumpkins”²⁴⁸ and that, “She is worth every *labola* cow paid for her.”²⁴⁹ Until then I found it hard to portray the ‘tangible’ effect of beauty expressing itself in the bearing of children, and subsequently I could more fully appreciate its celebration in the poetic communications I had so often found in traditional beadwork. As an aside, this implies that beadwork, when divorced from its wearer/beadworker, may possibly present as an ‘incomplete *gestalt*’²⁵⁰, one which museum collections often inadvertently perpetuate.

As noted, young virgins who have just reached puberty and whom the senior girls have not allowed permission to be courted, are nevertheless appreciated for their near naked bodies in their own version of beauty contests, because “They have nothing to hide (being virgins)” (personal communication Siyabonga Mkhize, Durban, November 2008). The early 20th century Zululand carver Ntitzinyanga Qwabe’s panels feature the archetype of this age-group; she wears no more than the *isigege* girdle and her body is strong and healthy, emphasis being on the thighs, breasts and the hip area, all of which indicate her future potential in child-bearing.²⁵¹ It is this age-group which is currently subjected to virginity

²⁴⁸ In translating some of these Zulu texts, my interpreter spontaneously came out with this same traditional description for female beauty. He also said that a man never has ‘thighs’ but has ‘legs’. Other female body parts also borrow from nature’s abundance and fecundity, for instance the breasts are termed “*amabele*” which is the name for African corn (personal communication, Mxolisi Mchunu, Durban, June 2004).

²⁴⁹ These appellations were those of traditionalist males who had come to cut trees at the Campbell Collections in 2000. Perhaps it may be wondered if I stood listening to this praise. Unfortunately I did not have this privilege, but it was shared with me by my then colleague Dingani Mthethwa, who wished me to appreciate the beauty of the isiZulu language’s spontaneous poetry. Perhaps this communication may seem of no comment, for who really cares about some male responses to the beauty of a cleaning lady. But it is of moment, for such appreciations are a part of our daily experiential realities and are a part of the “residual orality” spoken of by Ong (1992(2002)).

²⁵⁰ I am of course borrowing a concept from out of Fritz Perls’s psychological theories used in Gestalt therapy. The word derives from the German for “a whole” and is used to refer to the human mind’s tendency to always complete a pattern so as to attain a whole or a “*gestalt*” when proffered an incomplete or ambiguous image, memory or experience.

²⁵¹ I have often spoken with African girls or been an observer in conversations that drift to the significance and uniqueness of African female shapes. I have been struck by the description of African girls as “*iNglishe*” (English/European) if they have trim figures, without wide hips and large bottoms, some even describe their female friends as, “English in shape but African in complexion” or visa versa, “English in complexion but African in shape.” I have also been told that certain designer jeans, like ‘Levi’ and ‘Dezil’ cater for and

tests, and at one virginity testing celebration at Noodsberg, the girls who were school-goers were prevailed upon by the female testers,²⁵² to forsake their panties in an attempt to conform to this early 20th century version of Zulu ‘virginal innocence’. It appears that these reintroduced tests have become known by the name of *Nomkhubulwana* ceremonies²⁵³, indicating the link between virginity and the early Zulu goddess of this name. As already mentioned she is also known as *iNkosazana yezulu*, the “Heavenly Princess”, patron of virgins and concerned with fertility in nature and mankind. In 19th century accounts, she is described as having shining skin, white teeth, of shy and pleasing demeanor and as naked or innocent, but for a beaded girdle or *isigege* worn by a virgin.

The naming of this age group gives some support to this archetypal reference to youth, health and fertility [see Appendices. Chapter 3: Figures 10-17. Barbara Tyrrell field-sketches and photographs of junior *itshitshi/intombi ezivundile, ijongosi* and senior *iqhikiza* age-grades from Hela-Hela, Richmond and Highflats/St Faiths [Figures 10-17]; among the Khuze of southern Natal this age group is termed, *izintombi ezivundile*²⁵⁴ which could be translated as “ripe girls”, while in Zululand the common name is *amatshitshi*, most probably deriving from the word *thiki* –to quiver(as jelly) (Doke et al,2008:794), a word referring to the sprightly walk of a young girl, and in the Natal midlands such a girl is an *ijongozi*, a word deriving from Afrikaans or Dutch, “ *n jong os*” meaning a “young ox fit for in-spanning”(Doke and Vilakazi 1964:364). In Maphumulo an *ijongosi* is a girl slightly older and more physically developed than an *itshithi*, but still a virgin (personal communication *iNkosi* P.M. Ngcobo, Noodsberg, 2005). Zulu have more subtle names for girls as they mature. For example *amaqhikiza* are fully-grown girls who may be courted, the word referring to the somewhat provocative movement of these girls, one informant’s personal imagery when thinking of this category is of “Budding springtime peach blossoms!”(personal communication Mxolisi Mchunu, Durban, June 2005). In the lower Drakensberg area, this age-group is a successor to that termed *iphambanisa*,²⁵⁵ meaning to confuse, while among the

recognize this unique African female shape (personal communication Hloni Dlamini, Lindi Mthembu and Hlengi Mvuyana. Durban, 2004-5).

²⁵² There is off cause nothing wrong with the fact that these same girls were dressed as their grandmothers in the 1920s in no more than an *isigege*, nevertheless the contradictions remain: outside testers, schoolgirls who are told not to forego their panties (but for natural functions of course) yet now forced to do so for the celebration. Girls who then did not know how to execute the stamping step of an old fashioned dance and received exclamations of “For shame!” if too revealing in their steps, from the organizing women leading and encouraging them in the dance. What was particularly interesting were some contemporary traditionalist girls from a more remote part of the area and these simply refused to be naked under their wrap skirts. However an African colleague who comes from an area known for such tests says that the mention of such contradictions indicates a western ignorance of African traditions, as the girls’ parents would have prepared them for this testing and their near naked dressing as is customary for the celebratory dance, and further that it is voluntary, as one girl in a family will willingly be tested while her sister may refuse (even if still a virgin). Yet I have heard other Africans, both male and female, who are themselves upset by these matters and who point to these very contradictions as indicative of the confusion of the participants themselves (personal communication Mthunzi Zungu, Mxolisi Mchunu, Senzo Mkhize, Hlengi Mvuyana, Durban, 2005)

²⁵³ Refer to other comments on these ceremonies in the text.

²⁵⁴ For the Khuze (Nhangwini) of Highflats circa 1983 this outfit is represented by MM2338-2352A-B within the Campbell Collections, UKZN, holdings. The skirt is a wrap accompanied by a short two tone blouse that leaves the midriff bare. The beadwork comprises plastic beadwork in the regional colours of the time. Sentiments on beaded pins like MM2346 “*Umona*” [Jealousy] and MM2347 “*Uzenzani*” [What are you doing?].

²⁵⁵ This dress is represented in the Campbell Collections UKZN holdings by MM2470-2489A-B. It is from the people of Emakhuzeni, Himeville, circa 1983. As with that of the Khuze of Highflats it comprises a cloth wrap skirt, Tee-shirt and much beadwork in large plastic beads, some with bells meant to draw attention to the thighs and waist area. A senior girl or *Iqhikiza* in this area’s dress is represented by MM2499-2523, again with Tee-shirt, wrap-skirt, over towel wrap-skirt and head –ornamentation, the latter for respecting the boyfriend’s family. Two pieces of beadwork contain words, MM2504 is a rectangular necklace in glass beads with the word “*Soli*” and MM2505 with the word “*Usolani*”. The complexities of translating and cataloguing of such necklaces is something I dealt with in a paper titled, ‘Facing up to the task: retrospective cataloguing considerations and the chance to ‘rewrite/right’ the record ‘presented at SAMA KZN, Kokstad 7 Nov. 2002: I quote: “What are you doubting... (presumably) about me/us...? “ but the other necklace’s word *Soli* is not easily translatable. Because of the association of the two necklaces, the early museum record presupposed that *Soli* was a misspelling of the verb *Sola* – “to grumble...be doubtful or suspicious about (someone)” (Bryant 1905: 596). But *Soli* simply meant, “sorry”, it being an appropriation of the English word in which the Zulu difficulty with pronouncing the letter R resulted in it being softened into an L. *Soli* was now an acceptable

Khuze as mentioned above, this stage is preceded by the breaking down the girl's reserve as an *ukumisa*, (one who stands firm) or alternatively an *ukungqonga* (one who growls). It should be noted that even an *iqhikiza* with permission to *qoma*, must in fact 'stand firm' throughout the *soma* practice or disgrace her family, herself and her peers. These latter localized words refer to the fact that the girl must play 'hard to get' and resist male advances and retain her culturally valued virginity until marriage (Winters 1988a, 2009b).²⁵⁶

African males will be testing females' suitability as future wives in these earlier stages. One young man told me a touching story of his father's careful selection of his mother, as the girl with the requisite strength of character to become the center of the home, in which he sought to regroup his orphaned and scattered siblings. The father had in fact assessed his future wife while she acted as go-between her cousins and himself on his courting visits back from work on the East Rand (personal communication Paseka Nkhoesa, Durban June 2004). Girls who have accepted the attentions of a lover, while generally still termed *amaqhikiza* are given such localized appellations in the lower Drakensberg, as *ihloba*, meaning, "one who is decorated or beautified (with beadwork)" (Winters 1988a, 2009b). The word is related to that used for summertime or *ihlobo* (Doke et al., 2008:481), when the trees and plants are similarly decorated in greenery and flowers. This last category straddles that of an engaged girl who is termed an *ingoduso* among the Khuze, the Zulu-English Dictionary describing her as, "A betrothed girl who has returned home after running away to visit her boyfriend's home, so as to ensure the start of *labola* (bride-price) payments" (Doke and Vilakazi 1965:257). In the Drakensberg she is a *makoti o gobela*, meaning one, "stooped to respect" (Doke and Vilakazi 1965:250). This would no doubt be the stage among the neighbouring Embo-Mkhize and Zulu at which time a girl or woman puts her hair up in preparation for marriage (Winters 1988a, 2009b). Thus it is only when the marriage negotiations are under way that a young woman can be termed an *inkheli* (a word that refers to the building up of the hair into an *isicholo* as found worn by married women in Zululand and among some of the Embo-Mkhize, but not among the Bhaca/Nhlangwini whose married women wear their hair in dread-locks or *umyekho*). But more commonly the female is then known as a *makoti*, which can be translated as a "bride" but includes the status of newly married woman. *Makoti* derives from the word for "Hair or flowering tuft on mealie-cobs"(Doke et al., 2008:478), which as the male part of the flower (but whether the Zulu know this botanical detail I am not sure) so I surmise that the association is to the *isicholo*, an obscure reference that correlates with what artist-recorder Barbara Tyrrell once shared concerning the Zulu married woman's head-dress. She was told in Zululand in the 1940s that the built-up headdress was a 'phallic symbol' indicative of the woman's belonging to her husband, and hence a woman had to have his permission to cut her hair and the *isicholo* was taken down when the woman was widowed (personal communication Barbara Tyrrell, Scottburgh, March 2004).

Vilakazi says, speaking of his study in Nuyswa in the 1960s, that no girl is considered marriageable until her breasts are fully developed and her body "solidified, i.e. *usuhangene*"

and recognizable Zulu word. What the wearer was in all likelihood saying, was, "I am sorry...(I cannot marry you/it did not work out/ I have another boyfriend/ (or) my father has 'lobolled' me to another)," the actual context being obviously dependent on the wearer's particular circumstances. The two necklaces were indeed linked, as in, "What are you doubting (about me/us?)" With an answering, "I am sorry (that the relationship has failed)...." It may even have been possible that the answering necklace was made by the boyfriend's sister and given to the girl to wear (Winters 2007).

²⁵⁶ In regard to the heated discussions around virginity testing, it became quite clear that the African male is never thought culpable for prevailing upon a girl to forfeit her virginity, and it is a basic axiom that "good girls have stood firm." It is also true that traditionalist African men marry "home wives" who are the, "good girls back in the rural areas" who become the mothers of their legitimate children, but they nevertheless keep town mistresses for companionship and sex. These matters are also mentioned in Vilakazi (1965).

(Vilakazi 1965:46) and her having menstruated “does not make a girl nubile” (Vilakazi 1965:46). Further, that until she is around 16, men do not regard her as eligible for courting, even despite the custom of *bekisa* in which “a man who feels attracted to a young girl, but feels she is still too young to love, makes known his feelings toward her and asks her to wait for him until she is a little more grown up” (Vilakazi 1965:46). He also adds that at this stage, “(n)or has the custom of *omula* (“coming out”) any relevance for the informal relations at the present time” (Vilakazi 1965:46). This is the stage when the girl learns the correct ways to handle suitors from older girls, both by instruction, and by accompanying them to the river or forests on various domestic duties like collecting water or fire-wood. She also learns, “lessons in quick repartee and *izifenqo*, i.e. witticisms which are aimed at ridiculing young men and their words” (Vilakazi 1965:46). She may also parry with her sisters’ suitors on the latter’s behalf, using the same techniques; this as girls discuss their feelings as regards their potential suitors. Vilakazi says this is more of a game and “involves a certain skill” (Vilakazi 1965:47) and moreover the whole community knows which suitor is courting which girl. All of this description is pertinent to understanding age-grade dress and beadwork and their incumbents’ posture and gesture. I give images of these later in the Appendices. (see Appendices.Chapter 3:Figures 10-17.Barbara Tyrrell sketches of an *iqhikiza* and *ijongozi* in correct posture [Figures 13-14]) but here I wish to share some commentary on beadwork and courting told me by colleague Siyabonga Mkhize: When working for the Mission KwaSiza Bantu’s *Radio Ukwezi*, Mkhize would broadcast cultural programs and got to interview women in Kranskop and Umvoti concerning these matters. Mkhize said that beadwork was the visual rendition of female courting, a tacit communication, that would reflect the process thereof, including the witticisms of *izifenqo* (the only verbal response permitted at this stage of her development) and the later ‘softening (toward)’ and final acceptance of the suitor by the girl. This was because it was not correct for a girl to declare verbally as regards her actual feelings of love, rather, in Mkhize’s understanding, - talking or the ‘wooing with words’ - is the domain of men (personal communication Mkhize, Durban, March 2008). It is thus that men become the *isiscatimiya* singers, like Mkhize’s brother-in-law Msifihle Ngubane, a popular singer of courting songs. Such words are couched in an amalgam of repartee, coercing, praising and poetry, what Vilakazi terms the “art of verbal traps, i.e. *kila*” (Vilakazi 1965:47). As with girls, so too do boys learn from their peers and this relates to the importance of being a recognized *isoka* or lover. Vilakazi gives a relatively classic rendition of such courting quests of young men who go out in the afternoon, “bedecked in beads, complete with shield and two sticks” (Vilakazi 1965:48) to places where the girls are likely to be, like the river or forests where they are not busy with other domestic chores but are in fact setting the scenario for courting “It is important, in the whole of the courting complex, that there should be ample time for dalliance” (Vilakazi 1965:48). I quote from Vilakazi’s description of such a scenario:

Young men never like to be seen by the girls before they have seen them. They like to make a dramatic appearance. There are several reasons for this. In the first place, a young man likes to use his medicines before appearing before the women, and these cannot be applied in full view of the girls. These medicines are *iziqqabo*. Also, there is a psychological advantage to be gained from a dramatic appearance. When a girl is taken by surprise, she is “hit by apprehension” (*ishaywa uvalo*) which makes it easy for the *iziqqabo* to have their effect immediately. Besides if she is excited she is not likely to remember the *izifenqo* and the routine word devices for warding off his onslaughts (Vilakazi 1965:48).

Vilakazi continues:

A sure sign that the girl is softening up, and may after all accept his importunities, is when she begins to be coy, to avoid his eyes, to be soft-spoken, and when she stops making fun of him. This is the time when he either takes some article from her, such as a string of beads or a bracelet, or she tells him to go and talk to her senior sisters (who then give the girl permission to accept the boy) (Vilakazi 1965:48).

A boy who is accepted as been discussed under male age-grades, and it is then he raises the flag in his home cattle kraal for he has *qonywa*'d (the passive form of verb *qoma* which means "to be accepted as a lover") (Vilakazi 1965:49) and he must pay a *qoma* fee or *imali yokuqoma* (the fee for accepting a lover) which along with a list of presents for the girl and women of her lineage is payable at a "formal *qoma* ceremony" (Vilakazi 1965:49). Vilakazi notes that the girls use the money to buy gifts for the boy and his companion who is known as an *uhlalisi* or *umkhongi*. In Nyuswa in the late 1950s these gifts were:

Other gifts, which the boy has to get and over which no controversy existed, are a Persian shawl, an umbrella, a large towel, a washing basin, toilet soap, Vaseline, a mirror, a portmanteau, a billy-can full of sweets, some white sugar, a mouth organ, and a sleeping rug (Vilakazi 1965:50).

Obviously the more personal items are for the boy's subsequent *soma* visits. The food is for the children of the home and the shawl is for the girl's *hlonipha* or respecting visits to the boy's people. It is at this stage that the girl makes beaded gifts for her lover, the most essential being the beaded "Love Letter" (Vilakazi 1965:50). These bead gifts are termed *impahla* and are "done in white beads, and white as a colour (when connected to courting virgins) is supposed to show a white heart full of love" (Vilakazi 1965:50).²⁵⁷ It is only when this gift is exchanged as a token of acceptance that the boy raises the flag (Vilakazi 1965:50). Vilakazi says that socially the girl who accepts a boy as lover boosts his social status and the "Zulu way of putting it is *umenze umuntu* i.e. she has made a human being of him by recognizing him as an adult personality and as a man" (Vilakazi 1965:50).

There are understandably cultural changes over time, and Vilakazi does go into the difference of Christian blacks' secrecy and sin-filled attitude regarding sexuality, some of which was discussed more fully under male age-grades and modernisation. However, more important to the subject of beadwork and dress (worn only by traditionalist non-Christians) are the regional variations on some of the details of beadwork. For instance the Nhangwini of St Faiths and Bhaca of Richmond gave bracelets for *impahla* gifts between courting couples while the Zulu of Zululand gave *ucu* or beadstring shoulder-bands as *impahla* gifts (examples in the Campbell Collection, UKZN). More subtle are those cases in which regional and culture changes have come together and there are alterations within what are generally thought as being traditionalist practice, as for instance in the disparity of Buthelezi and Vilakazi as regards whether a couple practice *ukusoma* or *ukuhlobonga* on visits before the *umemulo* ceremony. Are these regional variations of the past or changes due to modernisation? This can be regarded as a drawback to doing research that extends across times, and over too wide a geographical area, as I am guilty of in this thesis, for there is no gainsaying the value of the earlier anthropological methodology employed by Vilakazi, of an intensive study in one location and at a specific date. But then on the other hand, no museum collection (such as that of the Campbell Collections) is so intensive or limited in

²⁵⁷ Campbell Collections have an example of a simple white beaded patch necklet dating from c1960 that is displayed on a panel with an illustration of courting dress by Barbara Tyrrell, acquired in 2004.

location's origins.²⁵⁸ So saying, Vilakazi himself queries the understandings of D.H. Reader who did a comparative study *Zulu tribe in transition* (1966) among the Makhanya of Umbumbulu, and where he finds these do not coincide with his own findings for Nyuswa, he assumes the disparities stem from the author's misunderstanding (Vilakazi 1965:50). In Reader's defense it may be noted that one of the hallmarks of KwaZulu-Natal's indigenous cultures is the number of clans and peoples in the region and thus differences are surely to be expected. Such are borne out in the regional variety of beadwork and dress itself, as too in these various regional specifics as to age-grade and their naming. It seems then that the more likely answer lies in regional variation between each area's clans plus culture change due to modernisation over time.

Vilakazi says that to *qoma* is important for a girl, as it marks her as a grown-up, nubile girl "who is mentioned when 'people of the home' are discussed. Before that she was merely a child. To *qoma*, therefore invests her with status and individuality..." (Vilakazi 1965:51). She is now an *intombi* (nubile girl), who must be careful of her reputation as any indiscretion will prejudice her chance of marriage, and cause humiliation to her lover and both her and his families. The *qoma* ceremony also brings the liaison into the public domain, something that Christians are taught to keep secret in Vilakazi's estimation. However to *qoma* does not mean the girl cannot accept a rival to her lover for it is a contractually loose attachment, this indicated in the terminology "She is his (the lover's) sweetheart (*intombi yakhe*) and he is her *isoka*" (Vilakazi 1965:51). Vilakazi mentions that to Christians from Nuyswa in the 1950s courting was a purely private affair and involved only the couple and the boy received a "very short letter" to say she accepted his offer of love (Vilakazi 1965:52). This terminology would give credence to the argument for beaded necklets and tokens being *incwadi yothando* or letters, ones that Preston-Whyte and Thorpe say have particular appeal to tourists (hence their still being made as curios) and one can surmise that the appeal is in their association with African 'romantic' courting, which reflects a fascination with the 'mythic African Other' as mentioned in Chapter 2 (Winters 2008a:418).

Barbara Tyrrell in *Suspicion is my name* (1972) gives detailed black and white sketches of some thirteen stages that the Nhlanguwini/Bhaca female must follow (Tyrrell 171-183), each annotated with the beadwork and/or dress item that constituted these stages in the period that she lived in Richmond, from the mid-1950s until 1982. Looking at Tyrrell's original field-sketches (now held either in the Campbell Collections, UKZN or the Brenthurst Library) some of the original sitters, most notably Banukile MaMbanjwa Mbhele (written up as Bonigile) posed dressed in these stages for the artist. Tyrrell identified the age-groups found in Richmond/Ndaleneni and surrounding areas for this period from Mrs Mbhele, whose life-story she wrote up in the book. On a field-visit of the 27 February 1990, I enquired of a number of Bhaca/Nhlanguwini traditional married women at Hela-Hela outside Richmond if they still recognized these thirteen stages and the women answered as indicated below (personal communication Fakile Mchunu and Mrs Mtolo, Hela-Hela, March 1990):

- The first age of girlhood or *itshitshi* has reached puberty but may not be courted. Boys may admire but not approach. Even Tyrrell makes a note that when drawing the dress only the bead apron was still to be found (Tyrrell 1972:171). In 1990, however, women said the age-group was known and the name/classification was still applied

²⁵⁸ I may note here that in 1999 I was told to broaden the area of collecting for the museum and not to collect any more items of beadwork from Ndwedwe. My arguments for an inclusive area collection fell on deaf ears. This was by an Acquisitions Committee set up by the then Director.

but that no traditional dress marks the age as the girls were school-going and wore western dress.

- The second stage of girlhood, *jongosi*. Tyrrell claims a girl may now be courted but the boy must obtain permission from a group of senior girls to do so and she remains untouched by the boy and in the care of women when helping to prepare for parties. In 1990 this stage was still recognized with the wearing of traditional dress but it is no longer accompanied by beadwork, generally the girl is not courted but can be if the boy gets permission.
- The third stage of girlhood, *casimba*, is one that Tyrrell claims is a time of serious courting with gifts and the girl can engage in *ukusoma*. In 1990 this stage was eclipsed with that of an *iqhikiza*.
- The fourth stage of girlhood, *cinsi*, one that Tyrrell says was marked by heavier beadwork and dancing, was unknown in 1990 and it was thought that perhaps it would be known in Greytown. This presumably because tradition was still strong amongst rural females from the Msinga district outside Greytown and numbers of girls generally identified as *amaqhikiza* worked on Sappi forests in the Hela Hela and Byrne areas, living in *isiskomplasini/inkomponi* (compounds) as *toght* (casual labourers).²⁵⁹
- The fifth stage of girlhood or *celiwe* in which a girl was bespoken (*celiwe*) but not fully engaged, when the girl drops her head in token respect for her boyfriend's parents but does not observe any more severe respect customs, and starts to grow her hair for marriage. In 1991 this was positively identified as still recognized custom to the point of the exact dress still being worn on special occasions. This evidently because it marks the 1st stage of bride-price (lobola) payments.
- Senior girlhood, for which Tyrrell does not give a name, is a stage in which the girl gives instruction to junior girls concerning courting. She has grown her hair in an *umyeko* preparatory to marriage, but this is left partly black but for the front tuft reddened. In 1990 this stage was positively recognized as an *iqhikiza* but nowadays the girl was distinguished by a hair-net and hair that was still black and this indicated her being engaged.
- Engaged girl, (*i)ganile*, a stage accompanied by dress that is distinctive, particularly the beaded back apron and the respecting of future in-laws is indicated by a covering of the head by a calico blanket in white with a red, navy and yellow striped edge. In 1990 this stage was still recognized and described as "near to being a *makoti* (bride) with the lobola nearly paid", and by then the special back-skirts were hired for the wearing during this stage.
- Marriage incomplete. This stage was no longer recognized in 1990, possibly having been eclipsed with that of a newly married woman.
- Bride. Tyrrell mentions that this stage is a deviation from other stages as the woman dresses like a Zulu bride in leather *isidwaba* with built-up reddened *isicholo* (headdress). In 1991 this stage was known, for the bride writes up her wedding (*ukubhala*) at the magistrate's court and the bridal regalia is similar to that worn in neighbouring Embo-Mkhize and Zulu areas. (As this stage is dealt with in Chapters 4 and 5 it is mentioned here only to give its context as one of the series of status/age-groups of a woman's life).

²⁵⁹ These girls work with many of the same families of Bhaca/Nhlangwini studied by Tyrrell in her later studies in the 1970s, while my informants in 1990 were Forestry workers, who defied the then nationalist Government to be removed from ground ear-marked for forests.

- Newly wed woman. An outfit marked by the reddened full *umyekho* covering the eyes but no top-knot, beaded *iphaca* or head bead panel for respect, goat skin long leather skirt in two sections and shoulder cape to “respect with the covered shoulders” (Tyrrell 1972: 180). In 1990 there were present at every visit, women who fell into this category, most clearly pregnant (and no longer wearing the grass belt in Tyrrell’s illustration), but who essentially still dressed traditionally very like the Tyrrell depiction but again the beadwork worn was minimal and only what was essential for respecting the in-laws.
- First child and married woman stages were eclipsed by 1990, but the top-knot was covered by a head-kerchief for daily usage.
- Older woman-Gala dress. Such exaggerated dress was not found in 1990.

While I include Tyrrell’s engaged and married women, I do so only to complete the comparative listing, but will deal with them more fully as regards dress, beadwork and appropriate ceremonies and ritual in the following chapters. It is possible to extrapolate from this comparison of 1950-60s and 1990, the impact of culture change upon traditional persons. There is no doubt that the strict monitoring of girls, while still in place, is now far more relaxed because schooling made an impact on the home.

This also impacted the making of beadwork, the depth of meaning placed in patterned beaded communications that emanated from the cultural norm of a female not being allowed to verbally express her feelings, was replaced by writing which appears in beadwork. Senior girls still feel responsible for junior girls but there is now a ‘school-ground’ to contend with where boys and girls can flirt surreptitiously or openly. So saying, the ultimate reasons for the early insistence on age-groupings and their marking in dress and beadwork is as *ukhlonipha* and *ukuzila* (respect and avoidance) norms of control on the behavior of girls and women. So entrenched a custom were these prescriptions that when asking where I could buy an *Ipaca* (headpiece for a newly married woman) in 1990 a young married woman disappeared from the communal home, returning to her own neighbouring homestead and sending a small child with the item she had been wearing for sale (one much faded by the sun as it was made of plastic beads) but she would not return herself as her head was now “uncovered” but for her red-wool wig. The fact that only women were present made no difference to her need to follow this respect custom.

Conclusion

In summary to this latter section on female age-grades discussed in this chapter, it is important that such detail is needed for the contextualization of dress and beadwork in terms of age-grades for a deeper understanding of the topic. It is also important that aspects of modernisation be considered, to foreground the link between old Nguni Zulu regimental ‘warrior-hood’ and their link to male age-grades and how these notions were taken up in the Apartheid era struggle. For females the notion of virginity and control of younger age-grade girls by senior-girls preceded some of the re-introduced ceremonies like virginity-testing considered alien and intrusive to western concepts of human rights. Beadwork is there to regulate courting and along with ceremony and ritual acts as a control to promiscuity. This may sound a contradiction in terms but it is not so for traditionalists themselves, who still consider Christian missionaries as having destroyed the fabric of Nguni society. Also in this chapter are examples of less commonly found beadwork and dress, namely that worn in

southern KwaZulu-Natal, much of it, like courting attire, seldom seen outside of the particular local area itself and apart from photographic studio images there is little visual imagery to record this dress. Finally this chapter is a precursor to the next two chapters which address the topic of beadwork communications in greater depth. Here communications are subjugated by the context of the age-grade itself and examples are recorded mostly in footnotes as otherwise they would have disrupted the flow of the text arguments.

Chapter 4:

Female betrothal/marriage dress and beadwork, with particular reference to the Bhaca/Nhlangwini, supplemented by that of the Embo-Mkhize and their associated clans

1. Cultural understandings of the role of women

Understanding what Harriett Ngubane in *Body and mind in Zulu medicine* (1977) terms a “fundamental framework of the world-view within which social interactions take place (this for the Nyuswa of Inanda/Ndwedwe in the 1970s)” (Ngubane 1977:2) is a necessary insight into the full dynamics of dress and beadwork of women who are still traditionalist in terms of clothing and resident in southern KwaZulu-Natal. Despite the proximity to the metropolis of Durban and Pietermaritzburg, the Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours and/or associated clans resident in Ndwedwe, Umbumbulu and Umkomaas areas are among those who remain the most traditionally dressed of rural peoples. This is also true for a significant number of the Bhaca/Nhlangwini of the Richmond to Umzimkhulu areas, although there has been more modernisation than elsewhere in the province as to replacing earlier skin, beadwork and cloth-wraps for the now ubiquitous German-prints (*izishweshwe*) and poplin cloth overalls or *amaphinifa*. The latter conform to the earlier notions as to head and shoulder covering in compliance with indigenous respect (*ukhhlonipha*) and avoidance (*ukuzila*) behaviours and mores. Ngubane says this “social behaviour that was considered traditional...was referred to by the people themselves as “doing things in a Zulu way” (*Sigcina isiZulu*)...(and thought) worth ...defending against intrusive ideas or conflicts arising from new or alien contacts” (Ngubane 1977:2).

Nguni cosmological concepts as to the place of humans within the greater cosmos can be described as holistic, where mankind is located in relation to the environment and wherein the female role centres on child-bearing and nurture, this to the male progenitor and provider. He in turn is seen as spiritual inheritor of his forefathers, the ever present ancestral-spirits. While there is a Supreme God, *uMveninqangi* (Lord of the Sky), he is too distant to concern himself with the daily concerns of humans. Even his daughter *Nomkhubulwana* (Princess of Heaven) interacts only with females in spring-rites “performed by married women and maidens to ensure good crops, more cattle and healthy babies” (Ngubane 1977:47).²⁶⁰ The important ‘beings’ in a woman’s life will be her own and her husband’s ancestors and the husband’s oldest living kin, like her father and mother-in-law. Thus any incomplete ritual introduction of a female at the time of her joining her in-law-family and/or falling pregnant before the appropriate rituals, has serious implications as to her health and that of her child.²⁶¹ For a woman who is properly ritually married (see marriage ceremonies below) the

²⁶⁰ Most authors pre to the 1994 new democratic dispensation which is sympathetic to an African Renaissance, claimed these rites (as too the belief in the High-god) to have largely died out under culture contact with Christianity. Although Ngubane mentions in a footnote that there were still occasional rites for “*uNomkhubulwane* in Nuyswa” (Ngubane 1977:47). However as mentioned in Chapter 3 nowadays these re-introduced rites have become eclipsed with virginity testing.

²⁶¹ Ngubane gives examples of cases in the Nyuswa area: The first of a girl made pregnant by a man who paid damages but when the baby was born it was incorporated ritually under the mother’s father’s line, but when he grew-up he adopted his genitor’s name which resulted in bad-luck. This was considered to have been due to a “lack of ancestral protection” (Ngubane 1977:47), he having never been ritually introduced to his genitor’s ancestors, this despite having had the *imbeleko/eyeziphandla* ceremony performed by his mother’s father as a baby. The second case is of a woman who failed to conceive a child in her marriage, this was attributed to her father having failed to perform nubility (*umemulo*) rites for her, her own ancestors being angry at the omission and their presence causing a “heaviness” (*bayesinda*) which stopped her conceiving (Ngubane 1977:49). The third case was a weak baby born as the mother’s ancestors were angry

“husband’s ancestors are interested in her as their wife and in ...(who) she reproduces as a mother”(Ngubane 1977:53) while her own ancestors are interested in her as their daughter, “but since the baby is the product of her fertility, for which they are responsible, they are also interested in the baby, and can cause harm to demonstrate that they control the mother’s fertility” (Ngubane 1977:53).

Such a complex situation means a woman in her relationship with the ancestral realm “stands astride (both groups) - as a daughter to one group, and as a wife and mother to the other” (Ngubane 1977:53). Ngubane notes that if a woman misbehaves she is “sent home to her parents to be taught once again how to behave, and she is expected to return with a live goat from them which her affines (husband’s people) sacrifice to appease their ancestors” (Ngubane 1977:54). Ngubane also notes that the woman progressively becomes integrated into her affinal group and after menopause she no longer observes *ukuhlonipha* (respecting) or *ukuzila* (avoidance) laws. Upon her death she is called back (*ukubuyisa*) as a mother (to her grandchildren), and never by her own people as a daughter (Ngubane 1977:54). One can only but wonder at the fate of a barren woman as spiritual being once she is dead, but possibly her spirit could possess a diviner (*isangoma*) (Ngubane 1977:51). However what is important socio-culturally is the pressure on a woman to marry, be fertile and conceive which is extremely important in Nguni society and barrenness is a social stigma which no doubt is a concern her own and (if married) to her husband and his ancestors.

In regard to the ambiguous position of a married woman, where she falls between ancestral groupings, it is understandable that part of the correct “behaviours” she needs to learn, quite in addition to the necessary ritual ceremonies she and her children require to establish her status position, are the importance of respect (*ukuhlonipha*) and avoidance (*ukuzila*) regimens and these are incumbent particularly upon married females. One can note that such ‘realities’ of a Nguni woman’s life make debates on female-rights promoted by Postmodern Feminist thinking moot as they fail to grasp the spiritual dangers the traditionalist woman faces when not conforming to her customary life. Christian educated black women can and do fall into another category where their individual rights and freedoms can be more profitably negotiated within a changing cosmology, but it is doubtful that a traditionalist female experiences in practice more than the rights her culture’s customary law ensures her (addressed under marriage rituals for such indigenous rights in the section below).

Otto Raum’s PhD thesis *The social-functions of avoidance and taboo amongst the Zulu* (1973) remains the most detailed study of these prescriptions for the Nguni cultures. The link between respecting (*ukuhlonipha*) and avoidance (*ukuzila*) can be expressed as did one of Raum’s informants “(y)ou do not abstain (*Zila*) unless you respect (*Hlonipha*)” (Raum 1973:419). Further, it is said that avoidance and respect are particularly aimed at newly married brides, it being steadily relaxed in the case of women who have borne a child and women past menopause²⁶², nevertheless it is recognised that there is reciprocal respecting between and a man and his wife (or wives) and children and that hospitality (particularly the

as the father had “not sacrificed to his ancestors when his wife came to his family” (Ngubane 1977:49), only sacrificing to them when the child was born. Those ancestors who are concerned primarily with their descendants having the power to punish or reward are the father’s mother, father, father’s mother and father, that is the patrilineal ancestors to whom the homestead head (*umnumzane*) sacrifices (Ngubane 1977:51). A woman or child who has not been ritually introduced to husband and/or father’s such ancestors would fall under the mother’s own father’s line. In terms of this cosmological influence on a Nguni person’s life one can only think of the impact of poverty on the ability to perform necessary rituals to ensure good-fortune in the lives of a headman’s wards and hence the need for employment within his clan/family.

²⁶² See Marianne Brindley *The role of old women in Zulu culture* PhD thesis Univ. of Zululand (1982).

generous serving of beer) is also seen as a woman's respecting of others (Raum 1973:420). Generally Zulu find it difficult to define the differences between what constitutes an avoidance versus that meant for respecting, these as pertain women: "The avoidances between H(usband) and W(ife) become *Z(ila)*(avoidance) during the latter's menstrual period (this includes preparing food and beer for him). The W(ife)'s stepping over her H(usband)'s legs, touching his sex organs, sleeping on the male side of the hut (without being called there) are critical avoidances and *Z(ila)*" (Raum 1973: 420). Also "(a) bride may not pass between her H(usband)'s cattle because they represent his ancestors" (Raum 1973:424). She also avoids sour-milk (*amasi*) from the cattle and the explanation is that cattle, milk and semen are her husband's *insila* (essence) and as such "represent his agnatic group and its vitality" (Raum 1973: 425) and violation on her part of any one of these prescriptive taboos would threaten them spiritually.

The purpose of such taboo regimens (the essential aspect being the isolation of the taboo observer from the community) are that they are protective in times of physical, magical or religious danger and hence are prescribed for times of transition in status or rites-of-passage, like at puberty, marriage, childbirth and death (with funerary rites). It is thought that abstention at such times from normal life protects the main participant from danger, when the danger is passed the person is released from the taboo regimen (Raum 1973:421). Raum concluded that the purpose of taboos is the "maintenance of life" (Raum 1973: 428) and comments:

Some informants clearly recognize that persons observing taboo regimens appear to be in need of, or to share in, superhuman powers. For this reason taboo observers are a danger to ordinary humans or can harm the profane by their extraordinary powers...(Women thus especially need to)...remain on good terms with the source of life which rests in the agnatic group of her H(usband) or F(ather) and which is represented in cattle and ancestors... (Raum 1973:424-425).

Conversely women's presences, as outsiders to their husbands' agnatic groups, are considered dangerous and as such they are seen as potential witches (*umthakathi wesifazane*) and this "can threaten the continuity of the lineage in that sorcery between co-wives or brothers' wives is often said to aim at depriving the victim of children" (Ngubane 1977:92). In their role as a 'bridge' between their own lineage and that of their husbands and children it is men (fathers or husbands) who exercise legal powers over wives as minors. In this Ngubane points out women are submissive and men dominant, but paradoxically women are a magical danger to the lineage as they are mothers too, because they remain outsiders to their husbands' clans (Ngubane 1977:92-93). Jeff Guy 'Gender oppression in southern Africa's pre-capitalist societies' in C. Walker (Ed.) *Women and gender in southern Africa, 1910-1945* (1990) talks of these paradoxes of Nguni women's roles, particularly in regard to their 'reproductive power' this because "(i)t was fertility that could create value, through its link with labour power, by means of cattle. And fertility is the preserve of women" (Guy 1990:33-47).

He says further:

Writers on African society have failed to distinguish between fertility and sexuality...In many pre-capitalist societies' sexual relations took place before marriage, but fertile sexual relations were expected to await marriage and the establishment or expansion of a homestead. And even here, the fertility of the

homestead –that is, the fertility of its women-was in many cases more important than the potency of its men (Guy 1990: 41).

The breach of taboos of respect and avoidance would entail serious magical sanctions, usually via some form of misfortune (*umnyama*) to a family member through the contagion implied in the breach (Raum 1973: 432). Thus for example a man who co-habits sexually with his wife after the birth of a child can delay the walking of the child, while a father who violates a sex taboo will himself have his *isithunzi* (dignity) lowered, and hence could not command authority as a household head (Raum 1973: 426).

Ngubane examines the importance of symbolic colour in healing of states of contagion deriving from taboo breaches. These are important to the topic of beadwork and dress because of the use of the three colours used in healing, which is essentially a correcting of the imbalance between the world of the ancestral-spirits or life and that of deliberate breach of taboo, which is indicative of witchcraft or *ubuthakathi*. These colours are black (*umnyama*), red (*ubomvu*) and white (*umhlophe*). Ngubane adds green/blue (*uluhlaza*) as in *kuluhlaza cwe* (blue of the sky) and *kuluhlaza tsoko* (green of leaves) saying these are identified in Nguni symbolic thinking with white (Ngubane 1977:113-120). Black is negative, white is good while red signals a transitional state between the two. Healing entails the application of the three major colours in a sequence of herbs identified with each colour; this is then a matter of taking out the negative (black), balancing or strengthening (red) the ambiguous state between it and good and then restoring good (white) (Ngubane 1977:113-120). Axel-Ivar Berglund in *Zulu thought patterns and symbolism* (1976) says his informants identify red as “the colour of women...” (Berglund 1976:160), this because it is thought that the blood of menstruation is equated with fertility and that the foetus is a blood-clot (*ihlule*) that forms around the man’s seed to create the body (Berglund 1976:160-1). This statement is also in line with Ngubane’s claim that women are ‘go-betweeners’ or mediums between the world of the living and the dead who possess the power. Berglund’s study confirms that white is associated with goodness and the ancestral-spirits are considered to be white (Berglund 1976:364,371) while black is associated with evil and the negative or illegitimate power of witchcraft (*ubuthakathi*), the latter most often associated with women who fail to follow taboo regimens (Berglund 1976:260). This concurs with Ngubane’s claim that women are inherently dangerous in Zulu thinking, this once again because it is women who act as ‘go-betweeners’ between the realms of the living and the dead (through birth(ing) (children are given by the ancestors) and death (mourning falls to them), they are also in a liminal-space because of their position as outsiders to the in-law-family to whom they bear children (Ngubane 1977:92-93). It is this ambiguous relationship to the source of spiritual power then that needs controlling by a regimen of taboos and sanctions and if one considers the examples of dress and beadwork items discussed in this chapter one will note how much of traditional attire for women is aimed at such control and/or signalling to others the situation of a female in terms of this. Raum lists items of female dress and beadwork that are required to be worn as part of avoidance and respect regimens; thus for a bride “Do not: walk about ‘bare-headed’ in H(usband’s kraal...SIGN:Top-knot” and for a woman who has just given birth “SIGN: Grass belt:hair not shaved.” (Raum 1973:25).

Perhaps an insight into Nguni concepts of the centrality of patriarchy is also needed and these are issues that do concern Feminism and women’s rights. In Nguni thinking males are equated with positive life affirming values (see Berglund 1976). Ngubane gives an

intriguing rendition as to concepts of conception amongst her Nyuswa area informants. I quote:

Inkosikazi yamukela ithathe uhlamvu olukhula lube
The woman received, takes in, the seed which grows to be
Yingane –njengohlamu lommila okuthi ngemfundemalo
A baby-just like the seed of the maize which because of the warmth
Yenhlabathi evundile,luqhume lumile.
Of the soil which is fertile, germinates and takes root.
Ingane eyendoda ngoba inyona etshalile.
The child belongs to the man because it is he who has sown.
Inkosikazi umhlabathi, njengoba ufaka ummbila Phansi
The woman is the soil, as you plant the maize in the soil
Base umila. Uma umhlabathi ungavundile ummbila
It germinates. If the soil is not fertile the maize seed
Awumili.
Does not take root

(Ngubane 1977: 94-5).

The topic of African customary bride-price or lobola has had many detractors, particularly western early missionaries, mainly because it was perceived as ‘buying’ a woman. But its main purpose is to establish social ties between families/clans and it was legalized and the cattle price/number were set (ten beast except for the *umqoliso* ox, paid for deflowering of the bride) by the Natal Native Code (now termed African Customary Law) (Kohler 1933:66-8). Nguni women were invariably proud of their lobola (Kohler 1933:68) and the examples of beadwork communications given in Chapter 5 indicates that this attitude toward the bride-price lobola payment made for them remains the norm for traditionalist women. This would also be so because the payment means that the formal marriage rituals have been completed and the ambiguous position of the bride in her new home is made more secure. W. Mills in *The status of women in Africa in the 20th century* (2010) discusses the characteristics of bride-price or lobola customs in Africa, which can be summarized as follows: Lobola is a demonstration that a man is able to provide for his wife (and children) in the marriage and it bestows exclusive sexual rights to the wife (which may be seen as promoting faithfulness in the marriage). Generally it gives the right to the labour of the wife (one assumes mainly in the fields and thinks of Guy’s understanding discussed above). It can be argued as a compensation for the expense of rearing the woman as a child/young girl. Perhaps most importantly lobola grants the right to the woman’s child-bearing capacity, which is particularly valuable and highly prized within southern African ethnic groups. This last then means the children belong to the husband and his family and if a woman fails to conceive the bride-price may have to be returned or a replacement wife be sent by her family. Additionally, lobola gives both sets of families an incentive to ensure the success of the marriage as divorce creates difficulties in Customary Law courts. Finally, lobola is an incentive to preserve a girl’s virginity as her family can then demand a much higher bride-price for her and hence they have an incentive to protect her virtue and purity (Mills 2010:10). Kohler comments that amongst the Bhaca/Nhlangwini traditionalists’ “virginity (as understood by them in the sense of physical intactness) is valued so highly that the husband has to pay a special animal (*umqoliso*) for it...(and the animal) must always be a specially fine fat beast” (Kohler 1933:71). If this beast is paid along with the lobola cattle “this very fact is public testimony to the physical intactness of the bride” (Kohler 1933:72). W.D.

Hammond-Tooke in his introduction to Duggan-Cronin's series, *The Bantu tribes of southern Africa ... The Nguni. Section V. Baca, Hlubi, Xesibe*. (1954) states "(m)uch has been written about the degrading nature of the lobola transaction; some writers maintain that it is a 'sale' of the woman who is regarded as a chattel with no rights and no legal protection. Investigation reveals this concept to be incorrect" (Hammond-Tooke, 1954: 28-9). He explains:

In the first place, the word for sale (*ukuthenga*) is never applied to the lobola transaction... Then too, the woman has certain definite rights. If her husband ill-treats her unduly she may seek refuge at her father's kraal and, if the courts find that she has a genuine grievance, the return of the lobola cattle will be ordered. As her family have received the cattle on her marriage, they have a deep interest in the success of the union and will usually do all in their power to effect a reconciliation. The bride is thus given a value in society which can be translated into material terms- the value of cattle given as *ikhazi* (isiBhaca term for lobola) (Hammond-Tooke, 1954: 28-9).

Pregnancy resulting from the failure of a girl to keep herself intact during *ukusoma/ukuhlobonga* (intercrural intercourse) will result in ritual uncleanness of her girls' group and needs to be 'washed away' by a slaughter of a goat provided by the male who impregnated her. He or his family, are also fined two head of cattle, the *ngquthu* or 'mother's beast' and the tenth beast of the lobola cattle. If the girl is already *celwa'd* (asked in marriage) these beasts are deducted from the marriage negotiations (Reader 1966:176,178).

A.M. Duggan-Cronin in *The Bantu tribes of South Africa. Vol. III, The Nguni, Section II, The Mpondo and Mpondomise: reproductions of photographic studies* (1949), identifies the practice of abduction or *ukuthwala* (termed *ukugcagcisa* among the Bhaca/Nhlangwini (Kohler 1933:61) within the customs of the peoples of the Eastern Cape, like the Xhosa and Mpondo. W.D. Hammond-Tooke in *Bhaca Society* (1962) says:

Apart from the formal type of marriage called *umtshato webhozo* or *umtshato wesicelo* in which the full ceremonial is performed, there are two variant forms, the elopement (*gcagcisa*) and the abduction (*thwala*). Today...the latter two types of marriage are of more common occurrence... (Hammond-Tooke 1962:100).

This is not only so amongst traditionalist Bhaca/Nhlangwini but also for the Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours in southern KwaZulu-Natal, not only dating from the 1960s as noted by Hammond-Tooke but still the most common marriage form up to the present, as will be seen in the beadwork communications from the field discussed in Chapter 5, and confirmed by persons resident in the greater midland areas²⁶³ (personal communication Senzo Mkhize, Durban, May 2013). Nicole Soucie, a Canadian Human Rights lawyer writing in 'Culture and Human Rights: Challenging Cultural Excuses for Gender-Based Violence' in *Gender Across Borders* (<http://www.genderacrossborders.com/2011/10/28/child-marriage-ukuthwala-in-south-africa/> [Accessed May 2013]) quotes Joan Broster's work *Red blanket valley* (1967) on Thembu abduction or *ukuthwala* practices, as meaning the pursuing and carrying off of a girl in marriage. It was a culturally legitimized abduction of a girl or woman, in which the prospective husband's friends or relatives 'abduct' the female:

²⁶³ Senzo Mkhize (who I have referenced in Chapter 3 on age-grades/sets), is from the Embo-Mkhize of Hopewell/Thala Valley (also sometimes referred to as mid-Illovo) falling to inNkosi Thamisanqa Mkhize of Botha's-Hill, Ndwedwe (also known as (Kwa)Embo). Mkhize's family have been resident since 1833, thus predating Colonial Native Commissioner, Sir Theophilus Shepstone's Location System, which is said to be the precursor of Apartheid in South Africa and the ground-plan for the present clan-lands of KwaZulu-Natal. Mkhize's mother is a Nhlangwini from Hela- Hela outside Richmond. The artist-recorder Barbara Tyrrell drew Mkhize's Dlamini grandmother and indicated her as Bhaca (MaSithole Mkhize 2011).

Often, it was a mock abduction used to force marriage negotiations if a girl's family objected her choice of suitor.... the girl's parents most often consented, however the girl expected that at some time or other, she would be taken for her anticipated duties of marriage (and be married legitimately according to custom) (<http://www.genderacrossborders.com>, 2013[Accessed May 2013]).

Kohler comments that the girl does not run away (from the boy's home) once abducted there, so as not to deprive her father of the fine of a beast before the start of formal marriage negotiations. He also says that the girl is not treated unkindly at the man's home but she cannot be made to stay if she refuses to do so (Kohler 1933:61).

2. Marriage and engagement rituals

D. H. Reader in *Zulu tribe in transition* (1966) says of the traditionalist Makhanya clans from Umbumbulu/Umlazi (an Embo-Mkhize associated clan of southern KwaZulu-Natal) that there are three essentials that their marriage ceremonies and ritual are aimed at, and comments that such ritual enactment is a gradual process that cannot be concluded in a short time, as is characteristic of Christian sects. These essentials are that the couple are transferred from one status group to another with accompanying rituals to indicate this and that the woman is gradually incorporated into her husband's group. There is then an exchange of rites between the two groups of husband and wife to create the social stability wherein "the ancestors are as much concerned as the living members (of the two clans/families)" (Reader 1966:174).

It is against this context that one can best understand the various engagement/betrothal and marriage rituals and ultimately the dress and beadwork as being important indicators of these changes in status, particularly for the female. How beadwork 'speaks' to this changing female status will be analysed more fully in Chapter 5, while the processes of 'choosing and promising' (*ukuqoma* and *ukuthembisa*) as pertaining to selecting a potential spouse, has been dealt with in Chapter 3 on age-grades/sets. These latter processes will ideally lead to marriage, and certainly among the Bhaca/Nhlangwini, the next stage is *ukugana* (cause to marry²⁶⁴), wherein the girl goes to her lover's home, while this is still essential in lower southern KwaZulu-Natal, Reader says the Makhanya do not *ukugana* (Reader 1966:179), while it is not unknown amongst their Embo-Mkhize neighbours, but these similarities may also be due to intermarriage with Nhlangwini families resident in the same midlands' areas of Richmond and mid-Illovo (personal communication Senzo Mkhize, Durban, May 2013).

²⁶⁴ "*Ganisa* .v. -1. Cause to marry, give in marriage, as a father his daughter...2. Accompany the bride as one of the bridal party to the wedding ceremony..."(Doke and Vilakazi1948:231). The earlier derivation given by Rev J.L. Döhne *Zulu-Kafir Dictionary* (1857) is intriguing, "*ukuGana* -v.t. (From *ga*, to bend or desire, and *ina*, to join, unite....It is, at the same time, a repr., Verb of the root *ga*, denoting inclination or affection toward one another)...*Literally and primarily*: to join in affection or inclination; to wed; to marry..." (Döhne 1857:93). The American Board Missionary in the Rev. Döhne mentions the element of affection and then says it's hard to match to the "buying" of the girl that the custom of lobola indicated! What is of interest in this is that the original African intention indicates a measure of free choice in regard to a girl's selection of husband during pre-colonial times, one ironically lost via missionary interference to such a degree that Reader in the 1960s (see text) wholly interprets the *iphoyisa's* (policeman) asking the girl if she consents to marrying the man to have been a western introduction (Döhne's musings concern moral issues while Reader's are of secular law issues, both derive from a sophisticated (and spiritual/secular divide) characteristic of western thought pre Post-modernist attempts to reintegrate them). It is hard to do justice to issues of Feminism as regards African culture where such colonial impacts have been made, customs broken and reinterpreted. Nowadays the complexity of early Nguni marriage customs and their element of localization means that not all contemporary Africans know the meaning of such a word as *ukugana*, those who do, associate it with the girl's covering herself in an *ukuhlonipha* attitude of betrothal, and in southern KwaZulu-Natal the stage was translated as "engaged girl visiting her in-laws" and even "a trial marriage" hence a stage of the marriage process in which she is a "*iganile*" while Senzo Mhize from closer to Durban, recognised it as being when the girl wants to force marriage negotiations to begin, hence it is essentially similar to Vilakazi's mention for Nuyswa of 1965 of *iyokuma* "to stand" (see text) (personal communication Sandile MaMbanjwa Mkhize, Ixopo, August 1984 and Senzo Mkhize, Durban, May 2013).

A girl's betrothal visits are termed *ukugana*, and such visits are especially characteristic of the Bhaca/Nhlangwini while the Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours only require a girl to visit her future in-laws to pay respect, in this she is carefully watched by the women of the boy's family and his sisters pay reciprocal visits (Reader 1966: 178f). The full scale *ukugana* visit is invariably arranged with the girl's lover and she will usually be accompanied by a companion who could be a small girl. This visit is without the girl's own family knowing, but her lover will inform his family of the intended arrival and an *indlakudla* goat is slaughtered for food for her and her companion. The intention is to force the marriage negotiations and the boy's family will then appoint an *umkhongi* or negotiator (often his maternal uncle) to inform the girl's family (Kohler 1933:48-49). Kohler's informant mentions that one reason for *ukugana* is for the girl to ask "things to wear and ornaments, so that she can behave with due decorum (by being covered up to conform to *ukuhlonipha*) so that it can be seen that she has *gana'd*" (Kohler 1933:49). During this visit the girl, now called a *iganile*, acts in a subdued manner and remains in seclusion or *ukugoba* (Kohler 1933:50).

Vilakazi in *Zulu transformations* (1965), talking for Inanda and Nuyswa districts of greater Ndwedwe, says it is permissible for a "girl to go 'to stand' (*iyokuma*) at the boy's kraal (so as to force negotiations)...there is no anxiety on the girl's part about the possibility of being 'refused' (*aliwa emzini*) because everybody in the home is ready for her to marry into the family..." (Vilakazi 1965:65). He comments, "(t)he girl is usually accompanied by her age-mates who are also dressed in finery, although they do not have to be as elaborately dressed as the central character in the drama (namely the bride)"(Vilakazi 1965:66). *Ukugana* and presumably *iyokuma* are followed by the choice of *umkhongi* and his companions as witness (*umphelekezeli*) to act go-between in negotiations between the two clans/families (Reader 1966:180). The *umkhongi* has to be carefully chosen, for the success of negotiations depends on his diplomacy (Vilakazi 1965:62). In this, traditionalists of the Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours now mostly follow the Christian-influenced custom of *ukucela* (asking) in which the *umkhongi* plays a major role (Reader 1966:179 and Vilakazi 1965:61). Vilakazi gives four visits of the *umkhongi* concerning the asking (*ukucela*) process (Vilakazi 1965:64-5) of which the first is to establish the girl's consent²⁶⁵ and the boy's wish to marry the girl as well as informing all relevant persons on both sides. If there are no objections the *ukucela* ceremony is readied. In this rite the main features are the groom's father indicating the beasts he will give in lobola and the negotiations contain demands for certain payments (*izibizo*) for the expense of the girl's family and thus it is said that "money and goods claimed now will be precisely counterbalanced by gifts made and monies expended by the girl's side later" (Reader 1966:181). The most important of the *izibizo* gifts, "asked for by both traditionalists and Christians... (is the) 'Mouth-opener' (*imvulamlo*), without which her (the girl's) kinsmen, her fathers and brothers, would not begin to talk" (Vilakazi 1965:63). There are also visits of the bride (*makoti*) to her future-in-laws, especially her future mother-in-law to give *imibondo* gifts, usually beer, pumpkins, samp (dry chopped mealies), fruit and bread, also sweets for children of the home, and the groom's father will slaughter a goat for the visit (Reader 1966:191).

A ceremony that nowadays is often eclipsed by the actual wedding is the *umabo*²⁶⁶ or distribution of wedding-gifts by the bride to members of the groom's family as her new in-

²⁶⁵ See previous footnote on *ukugana*.

²⁶⁶ The process of giving gifts itself can be termed *umwabo*. (personal communication, Thabile Xulu, Durban, May 2013) the word being from *wabo* –to agree, but the ceremony is *umabo* (plural *imabo*) (Doke et al. 2008:2,84). The ceremonies around marriage could be seen as reciprocal gift-giving so as to establish a relationship between the families linking via the union. There is the *umbondo* or *imibondo* of a betrothed girl to her future mother-in-law. The *izibizo* where the boy's family give to those of the girl's during the negotiations, including

laws. The bride usually has a friend or aunt to help her in this task who is called an *umhlalisi* (Reader 1966:193). In this the father and mother of the groom each receive a blanket, the *umkhongi* and groom also receive gifts, as too any of the groom's homestead members considered of importance and singled out as so by the future mother-in-law. The bride's father pays for these gifts and must also pay for his daughter's leather-skirt (*isidwaba*) of marriage. Reader states that this ritual had "virtually died out among the Makhanya of Umbumbulu" (Reader 1966: 193). Yet most of the Makhanya neighbours who are contemporary traditionalists still have such a ceremony usually following the day of the actual wedding (personal communication Bongzi MaMdlalose Mbhele, Durban, May 2012). Vilakazi's informant explained that quite apart from incurring ancestral displeasure, a failure to meet these traditional payments (*izibizo* and *umabo*) for either family "is to make a dog of oneself (*ubunja*) and...your daughter would always be taunted with having come (to the marriage) 'empty-handed'..." (Vilakazi 1965:68). He also mentions that "*umabo* gifts are given to the deceased members of the lineage as if they were living, and the mats and blankets so given are taken by the heads of the houses to which the deceased people belong(ed)" (Vilakazi 1965: 69).

Thengiwe Magwaza in her Masters in Orality-Literacy *Orality and its cultural expression in some Zulu traditional ceremonies* (1993) includes some *umabo* ceremony songs of both bride's and groom's groups. These give more insight into the concerns of both groups as against the position, character and nature of both main participants. Thus one bridal song is said to remind the girl that the lobola paid for her is a loss to her in-laws and hence she must behave well, a message that is often repeated in beadwork patterns discussed in detail in Chapter 5. I quote:

Ubuhle bendoda zinkomo zayo, uze ungalibali ntombazane
 Man's worth is his cattle, don't forget that girl
Uze uziphathe kakuhle emzini wako ntombazane
 Behave yourself well in your new home girl
Ubobhalo, ubobhala, ubobhala
 Please to write, write, write (Magwaza 1993: 86).

Magwaza says chants can be rude and may be meant to warn the groom's people to treat the bride well or face the wrath of her father and his people, thus:

Thina singabomuzi woMkhomazi
 We are of the Umkomaas region
Wathinta thina uyafa
 If you provoke us you die
Ngcoba singabumuzi woMkhomazi, siyimpi
 Because we are of Umkomaas, we are a hostile band (Magwaza 1993:88).

Preparations for the actual wedding ceremony require beer-brewing while the bride prepares to leave her father's home. Reader comments, "(n)obody hurries her or bothers her, although there is much activity going on all around...her sisters ...rub oil and charcoal into the *isidwaba* which she will wear, to make it black and supple..." (Reader 1966:194). Both

goats and beer (this is quite apart from lobola, which is not classified as gifts but as necessary exchanges to legitimise the marriage) forming a part of the many reciprocal rituals. The *umabo* is the major gift-giving of the bride to the husband's family. In common language the *umabo* is termed 'lobola -gifts'. I recap here as it is difficult for someone who has not read the anthropological literature to figure this out, and even looking at African friends' wedding photographs can get one confounded as to which ceremony one is viewing.

homesteads' young people practice wedding-dance songs, "(s)ome...are specially composed for the occasion, and enable veiled references to be made to the peculiarities of each side as seen by the other" (Reader 1966:194). The *ukwendisa* (giving in marriage) beasts from the bride's family to those of the groom's comprise the *inkabi yezinkomo* to thank the boy's father for the lobola cattle and the *isikhumba* beast, said to be to make the *isidwaba* or leather-skirt of marriage, which is meant as a symbol of "joining the ancestors of the two descent groups..." (Reader 1966:194). These cattle accompany the bridal party or *umthimba* to the groom's homestead. The bride and immediate attendants wait outside while their party (*umthimba*) approach the groom's party (the *umkhaya*) at his family homestead. Meanwhile "...the old women of the kraal begin to *kikiza* with joy *-ki,ki,ki* in shrill falsetto cackles, calling at the same time that they are glad to have a new wife today. 'They are weeping there where she comes from' sing the old women, 'but here we are glad'" (Reader 1966:197). The *umthimba* party will deposit the *umabo* gifts brought from the bride's family in a hut set aside for them in the groom's homestead and return to the bride and her attendants outside the homestead, there they slaughter a gift of a goat from the groom's father. Meanwhile "...female members of the party are ...washing themselves, dressing up in their finery, preparing the *makoti*, and rehearsing their wedding songs. The bride is surrounded the whole time by members of her party so that people in the bridegroom's kraal may not see her" (Reader 1966:198). The real proceedings start only with the arrival of the bride's father and the senior group of the *umthimba* party, escorted by the *umkhongi* (negotiator) to the main-hut (*indlunkulu*) of the groom's homestead (Reader 1966:198). There is beer-drinking, eating of goat-meat and preparations for the main dances on the dance-ground. "The bride herself, wearing the *isidwaba*, is swathed with bright cloths and gay ribbons. She carries an open umbrella for concealment, and a knife which she will point at her husband during the ceremony to signify that she is a virgin. Others around her may also be carrying umbrellas, with the result that she is completely hidden from view (Reader 1966:199). At this stage the groom, if the girl is to be his first wife, will be with his *umkhaya* (now called *ikhhetu*) group, or if married (with Nguni polygamy this is a possible scenario) he is within the group of older men or *amadoda*, watching the bridal-group who perform first, the bride still at the back while the younger of the *umthimba* party sing their traditional *inkondlo* age-set songs.²⁶⁷ The bride's father then speaks or *khuleka* (prays) to the groom's ancestors "(h)e speaks directly on this one occasion to the ancestors of the boy's father, a privilege to which he is entitled by virtue of having brought his girl to their place" (Reader 1966:200). This 'prayer' is important and hence I quote Reader:

'We pray to you of...(naming the boy's father's father and his father). I of so-and-so (naming two of his own ancestors) ask for good friendship. I have come to put my child here: I give you my child. Treat her well. She is still a child: treat her as your own child. If she does wrong, tell me. If she is ill, let me know. If you are tired of her, return her to me. She has been good (healthy) all the time so far as I know' (Reader 1966:200).

The bride's father then thanks for the lobola cattle and lists the three beasts he supplied (see above) and concludes by wishing the bridal couple well "I wish they ...could sleep as two

²⁶⁷ It may seem to be too much detail, but the reason I include it is that when it comes to the beadwork communications discussed in Chapter 5, this data may be integral to their understanding. Although I have attended Zulu weddings, even when with an interpreter, it is possible to miss much of this detail, for reasons that a smaller ceremony could happen on another day to the main function or that only certain persons attend certain sections. I especially realised this when looking at Zulu wedding-video footage by photographer Phulani Zuma of Imbali in 2008, this included some film footage that was cut at request of the groom, this because it was of the actual ritual slaughter and of ancestral prayers. Hence the necessity of the reliance on anthropologists like Reader's in-depth studies.

and wake up tomorrow as three (i.e. he hopes they have a child very quickly)"(Reader 1966: 200-1).²⁶⁸ At this the man will dance and the bride will move to the forefront of her group and sing and dance with engaged girls of her home, pointing the knife at the groom to indicate her virginity. All this time the old women will rush about ululating (*ukikiza*) to praise the fact of the bride coming to her new home (Reader 1966:201). At this stage "An administrative procedure is now inserted for the purpose of legalizing the union and having it registered at the Court House (usually the next day/week)²⁶⁹ " (Reader 1966:202). The court official (*iphoyisa elibuz'intombi*) asks if the bride loves the groom, she indicating her assent variously, by shaking the groom's hand, leading him out from the group or otherwise. Her *umthimba* party will then sing the final song "*anophuza, ngigoduke ishonile* (drink and go home, the sun has set)..." (Reader 1966:202) leaving the dance-ground to return and sit quietly as part of the audience.

The groom's father then gives a speech in answer to that of the bride's father. I quote Reader once more:

'You of so-and-so (giving the ancestors of the girl's father), I thank you for bringing me a bride. I am glad to have her. I have given you (seven) cattle, with which I agree. 'I thank you for the *ukwendisa* cattle: for the *isikhumba* and the *inkabi yezinkomo* and the presents. I know I still owe you three head of cattle, and I am willing to give them to you when I get them. Now I am going to work for you (i.e. he is going to realize the money to buy these beasts)' (Reader 1966:202).

Reader continues:

'I hope your daughter will treat me (as father-in-law) well. She must give me food when I am hungry. I must be her father and she must be my child. She must respect me. She must stay at my kraal and not wander away in every place' (Reader 1966:203).

Reader explains the purpose of such speeches as making public the contract and that on-lookers and relatives can infer if there has already been a child by the number of lobola cattle mentioned and if the bride is dancing with the married-women or the engaged girls' group.

This speech is followed by the groom's group dance, the group arranged according to regimental ward membership, the dance becoming more and more competitive to outdo the girl's party which can lead to fights (presumably between the men of the respective groups) in which case the elder men will intercede and cancel the dance. The older persons remain in the huts assigned to them and drink beer while wedding guests will start to join in the dances (Reader 1966:03-4). Traditionally such wedding activities will be followed by integration rites of the bride with her husband's ancestral group. In this cattle (the *isikhumba* or second

²⁶⁸ Again I feel the need to explain the inclusion of this seeming sexual innuendo. In contemporary society no one would think to query the wearing of a white gown (once symbolic of the bride's virginity) by the bride yet the older prejudices may still be operative. In the same way westernised young black couples will indicate earlier generations 'ought to prescriptions', thus I have heard otherwise westernised young Zulu men marrying virgins say that the flowers at the wedding should cost a lot, as they are meant to honour their bride's virginity. I have also heard a groom declare that his bride must "conceive on the first night of the honeymoon" (which is the first night they will have intercourse, not being the first they are married, as Reader reported way back in 1966). I have also listened to a Christian Zulu female debating if a non-virgin can wear a veil in her church-wedding, and if so should it be worn up (showing the face) or down (covering the face)? Because such seemingly inconsequential topics obsess those who are the actual participants in any ceremony of marriage, one can only but wonder at those females making beadwork in preparation for their wedding- day who are traditionalists. So my reason for quoting these passages of anthropological texts is to add to the insight on the context for the items discussed in Chapter 5.

²⁶⁹ In neighbouring Richmond this is considered a significant ceremony in itself, the bride going to court (or Home Affairs office in modern times) to 'write-up' (*ukubhala*) her wedding that is to have the African customary marriage registered at court (personal communication Barbara Tyrrell, Richmond, 1982).

of the *ukwendisa* cattle) and the *inkomo yokucola* provided by the groom's father are sacrificed. For this ceremonial slaughter the bride and her attendants are in the cattle-kraal, normally taboo to her, for the ancestors of the groom are thought to be present, it is they who "demand their presence so that they may know that a new bride is coming to their family..."(Reader 1966:206). The gall of the beasts is sprinkled over the feet of the bride, this is to make her known to the husband's ancestors, "(t)he sprinkling of the gall marks the end of the religious ceremony as far as the bride is concerned, and she and her attendants go back to their hut"(Reader 1966:206). The men apportion the beasts according to custom and from then on the ceremony continues as largely secular, the bride will then distribute the *umabo* gifts, "(w)omen who receive gifts usually *kikiza*, while the men thank the bride"(Reader 1966:207). Drinking and feasting will take place after apportioning of the cooked meat from the slaughtered beasts.

On the third day the bride must still show her willingness to work for her new home and thus she and her attendants will rise early and fetch water and collect firewood for the mother-in-law. Once finished and after washing themselves they come to serve food to the husband's people. The bride's group, but for one, her *umhlalisi* (attendant) (also called an *umakojane* (helper) by some southern KwaZulu-Natal groups) will leave the groom's homestead to return to their own homes whereafter the bride then goes to cook and do chores for her mother-in-law with the help of her *umhlalisi*, who will stay for about a month. Normally the bride must contribute by doing all homestead tasks like working in the fields, grinding mealies, sweeping and smearing hut floors (she is usually released to enter the cattle-kraal quite early in marriage to obtain the cow-dung for the latter process) however she must obey respect (*ukuhlonipha*) and avoidance (*ukuzila*) laws, and apart from linguistic ones concerning the names of her father-in-law, a serious one is never to enter the right-side of her father-in-law's hut for "(i)f she offends in this or in the linguistic aspect of *hlonipha*, then the *amadlozi* will punish her, either by refusing to allow her husband's seed to enter her, or if it succeeds, by refusing to allow the resulting child to come out" (Reader 1966:210). The bride will sleep with her husband on the third night, otherwise she has her own hut put up for her at the time of the marriage negotiations (Reader 1966:208-9).

3. Dress and beadwork of betrothed, newly married, married and widowed females

The rather detailed rendition as to the marriage rituals is given so as to place this section as well as the contents of the discussion on beadwork communication in Chapter 5 in context and explain certain references otherwise lost as to meaning. Such a highly ritualized society will perforce need to be outwardly marked as to dress worn by the various status groups. As such dress serves to enable the enactment of rituals pertinent to the various rites-of-passage associated with these age/status-groups.

The research on dress worn by traditional females derive from various sources namely: One of the most comprehensive studies of the dress of specifically engaged girls, brides and married women is Dr Max Kohler's *Marriage customs of Southern Natal* (1933) of which his photographic illustrations by Government Ethnologist N.J. van Warmelo, are held in the University of Johannesburg Archives (digitized at <https://ujdigispace.uj.ac.za> [accessed June 2011]). Secondly, that of Barbara Tyrrell, particularly for the Bhaca/Nhlangwini in her book *Suspicion is my name* (1971), and *Tribal peoples* (1968) which has a section on the Zulu (and Embo-Mkhize) of the Shongweni and Inanda areas. Later in the years 2000-2004 many of the original Tyrrel's field-sketches done in situ were acquired by the Campbell Collections, UKZN, as also by the Brenthurst Library of the Oppenheimer family in Johannesburg. There

are also studio photographs, most notably from “Kitty’s Studio’s” Retief Street, Pietermaritzburg, that show traditionalists from outlying rural Emkhambathini/Ndwedwe, acquired by the Campbell Collections, UKZN, in the mid-1980s, “Panbro Studio” of South Coast Road and Isipingo-Rail, Durban and Bobson Studios, Durban, with photographs of traditionalists from Umbumbulu/Umkomaas and Inanda/Ndwedwe also acquired in the mid-1980s and some from the people themselves in the 1990-2000s, all now held in the Campbell Collections, UKZN. Because of these holdings and particularly because of the costume-studies by Tyrrell, the Campbell Collections concentrated on collecting in the 1980s the dress and beadwork (as entire outfits for the various ages/status groupings) from the Bhaca/Nhlangwini, Embo-Mkhize and their neighbouring Zulu-Nguni clans in Emakhuzeni (Himeville), St Faiths/Ixopo and Inanda (where the Campbell family males were honorary AmaKhosi to the Qadi (Ngcobo) clan). In the period 1990-2000 with the advent of black middle-(wo)man field-collectors, traditional wedding-attire (some as whole outfits and others as isolated pieces of exceptional workmanship) were acquired from Umbumbulu/Umkomaas and Emkhambathini/Ndwedwe (as well as other areas of KwaZulu-Natal not considered in this thesis). A fair amount of the latter beadwork and dress had connotative meanings as to communication and hence forms the basis of Chapter 5. As mentioned this following chapter is dependent upon the present Chapter 4 for understanding as to the cultural context of the actual communications.

This introductory paragraph on resources leads to a discussion of specific dress for engaged girls, brides and married women in which many of the examples given derive from the Campbell Collections, UKZN.²⁷⁰ The girl (of the Mbanjwa family) in the photograph [Figure 1] is an *iganile*, and dressed in dance attire for the Khuze (Nhlangwini) engaged or betrothed girls worn during the 1980s.²⁷¹ [see Appendices.Chapter 4: Figures 1-4. Engaged girls dress of the Bhaca/Nhlangwini from Ixopo and Hela-Hela, Richmond [Figures 1]. The girl’s face is whitened with clay, plus “Maybelline” eye-liner used to make a mark between the eyes, as these ‘cosmetic features’ were in fashion for traditionalists during the year in question, namely 1983.²⁷² Clay as sun-burn protection became part of traditionalist fashion and was typical of females of this age-grade, many of whom, even now form the back-bone of the casual (*toght*²⁷³) labour-force, either agricultural or on Sappi/Mondi (‘alien’ wattle/pine) forests. The girls, along with those who are still *amaqhikiza* (senior courting-girls) who are not yet betrothed are taken to live in compounds (*izikomplazi*) of farms or forests for seasonal-work, which can be far from home, girls from Msinga district are known to go as far afield as Richmond.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ Some of these items’ isiZulu spelling may be incorrect in terms of the standardization of the language, especially of introduced words. These are as they came in from the field, so I am unsure if the explanation is that this is wrong spelling or due to regional differences. The Introduction to Doke et al., *Zulu-English Dictionary* (2008) has the following to say of isiZulu, “(t)he purest Zulu is spoken in central and southern Zululand; in northern Zululand Tonga influence is felt. Natal proper contributes largely to Zulu with certain modifications. In south Natal this is influenced by Xhosa, in the west from southern Sotho. In the north of Natal is the Lala Qwabe dialect having the peculiarities of *thefula*. From literary Zulu *tekeza* and *thefula* forms are excluded, as well as influences from Xhosa, Sotho, and Tsonga” (Doke et al., 2008:xv). The authors do not mention the difficulties of the importation of Afrikaans and English words which often appear to be assigned arbitrary noun classes, or the loss of letters (and/or elision) not common in the official isiZulu orthography.

²⁷¹ The full outfit came to the Collections and was accessioned as MM2383-2404.

²⁷² ‘Maybelline’ was a cheap range of bazaar/trading-store cosmetic on the South African market. The mark between the eyes could be a copy of the Hindu mark of marriage, but of this I am uncertain as even the wearer was unsure, saying it was “fashion.”

²⁷³ The word is as often spelt without the “h” as *togt* – “Of/or pertaining to casual or day-labour...[fr. *Afk. Togarbeider fr Du. Togt march...*](Brandford 1993:336).

²⁷⁴ Recorded by myself and Rebecca Msomi on field-trips in 1987. Also commissioned photographs taken at Greytown compounds of such girls acquired from freelance-photographer Mr Sokhela of Msinga in the 1990s. Held in the Campbell Collections, UKZN.

Essentially of importance to the status grouping of engagement are the salampore-cloth²⁷⁵ head-coil (*ukafube*) [MM2383] over hair-nets (*amahayinethi*) [MM2384]. This is because covering the head is a token of respecting (*ukuhlonipha*) the boy's family. The salampore-cloth itself is known as "Dlamini stripe"²⁷⁶, sold all over South Africa but regionally identified with those of the Khuze clan. The vest (*ivesti*) and breast-belt (*umampapheni*) [MM2400 and MM2393] are also meant to cover the shoulders/breasts as respectful insignia. The hip-belts (*isitanibushi*) [MM2394], hip-cloths (*indwangu zasesingeni*) [MM2398] over the cloth-wrap skirts (*indangu zesisasingeni*) [MM2399] are all meant to emphasise the girl's hip-area, as this and the thighs are considered central to a female's beauty (particularly if she is still a virgin), it being suggestive of potential fertility and physical strength. Apart from giving-birth her anticipated strength also indicates the ability to do the hard work of the homestead delegated to traditionalist females such as hoeing, planting, beer-brewing, child-rearing, wood and water carrying, amongst others. The beaded dance-shield (*ihawu nomgoba*) [MM2404] and accompanying beaded dance-stick (*imvumulo yengoduso*) [MM2405] are held in front of the girl to indicate to males, other than her future husband, that she is bespoken. This means she need say nothing, silence itself being a form of respect toward self and community.²⁷⁷ The very long necklace or 'tie's' (*udonsuthando*) [MM2389] communication in a sentence form (without spacing between words) is of singular significance, "*MazuluNgenzeningingaziawukozekubekubiuzilewethu* [People what have I done, I did not know how long it would take to respect]." The owner was of course talking of the rigorous laws of *ukuhlonipha* and *ukuzila* (respect and avoidance) that her culture customarily place on females, as discussed above (Sandile and Malikhona Mbanjwa 1983).

The most significant feature of this dress of an engaged girl on a visit to her future-in-laws, is the heavily beaded back-skirt, the *isibaxelozo/isibaxelo*²⁷⁸ or *ingxayi*.²⁷⁹ It is known in Emakhuzeni, Himeville to be worn by a *makoti o gubudele* (bride who covers herself) and among the Khuze of St Faiths/Ixopo by a *iganile* (girl who *gana's*, see text for more detail) [see Appendices. Chapter 4: Figures 1-4. Examples of a *iganile*/ engaged girl's dress and an *ingxayi* backskirt worn on a visit to the future in-laws [Figures 2-4]. The beading on the back-skirt is usually only in a central square on the otherwise heavy cloth, sometimes with attached leather back-apron. It is said that each layer of beading is made separately, some by the girl and others from mothers (Museum Notes of Jean Anderssen, Himeville, July 1984

²⁷⁵ Salampore "...a colored cotton cloth with woven stripe and check designs made in India and England usu. for export to Africa and So. America" (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ [accessed 7 October 2012]). And "...For instance, take salampore-cloth; there are the two kinds- the thin dark blue and gauzy, and the lighter- coloured and coarser kind with the orange stripes." From Bertram Mitford *The Luck of Gerard Ridgeley* (<http://www.instantdictionary.com/gauzy>[accessed 7 October 2012]).

²⁷⁶ The Dlamini surname is common to the Swazi and their related Nhangwini (Khuze) of southern KwaZulu-Natal. Malikhona Mbanjwa, the one cousin who collected the items, remained a traditionalist and married a Dlamini resident on "Home Farm", one of the farms bought back from white settlers in the 1970-80s by the then KwaZulu as Bantu Trust Farms.

²⁷⁷ Most African people translate 'respectful (*ukuhlonipha*),' as 'quiet', and see it as indicative of good-rearing. This I know as my first African name on coming to Natal in 1975 was the 'Quiet-one', to a white South African this seems synonymous with being timid, something I was not. The confusion was explained by a Mr Jacob Hlombe, an elderly man I worked with (who undertook to guide me on matters of African culture), who said that the name rather indicated that my parents had reared me well, as I acted with 'decorum'. Although this seems a trite commentary, it is important because respecting (*ukuhlonipha*) induces connotative spiritual 'states-of-being', the closest would be to say these behaviours were 'strengthening acts' and that this state ought to bring blessings from the spirit (ancestral) realm.

²⁷⁸ "*-bazela*. v. 1. Put a covering over the shoulders; carrying the baby on the back.(cf. *beletha*)...2. Hang clothing round the loins (as young girl from decency). [cf. *binca*]- *isibaxelo-isibazelo*- 1. Carrying-skin...2. Apron" (Doke et al., 2008:27)

²⁷⁹ It must be understood that these words are in local isiZulu dialects and transcribed by translators as they hear it written. Often they may not be recognised in their entirety by Zulu-speakers from elsewhere or one's modernised, and more often than not the word in its entirety is not to be found in the Dictionary.

[MM2519]). One such back-skirt [MM3554] from KwaMatakana (Hela-Hela) near Richmond, belonged to a Florence Zaca, who confirmed the age/status of the wearer as a *iganile* and the name *isibaxelo* for the skirt was said to refer to the ‘block’ pattern within the beading that survived unchanged because of the strong *ukuhlonipha* custom the wearing of the skirt indicated. Others in the area would hire their skirts out for the ritual period of *ukugana* but Zaca decided to let the Campbell Collections, UKZN, have hers (Florence Zaca 1990). The illustrated section [MM5237] [Figure 3] of beading on a back-skirt derived from an African Art Centre sale in 1999. Anthea Martin, the then African Art Centre Manager, commented that the motif-design of ‘blocks’ referred to ‘houses’ and if so, one could extrapolate that this may carry a deeper meaning, not only to polygamy practised in the in-law home, but refer to the tasks of a *iganile* in her in-laws’ homestead such as to cook, serve, fetch water, plaster hut (walls) and floors. I did not pursue this with the actual field-collector who sold to Martin, so cannot confirm it, but certainly Zaca’s focus on the pattern, one very distinctive and characteristic of these skirts, would lend possible credence to the statement. However, in support of this contention one can compare the photographs of an *iganile* of the Duma family at Ixopo, for whom the informant emphasised the girl’s ‘tasks’ that were considered necessary to show the bride “was coming to make the home” (MaMbanjwa Mkhize 2000). [see Appendices. Chapter 4: Figures 64-85. Gumede and Duma family *umabo* and arrival of bride at the husband’s home at Ixopo [Figures 64-85]. This young female [Figure 77-85] was termed a *makoti* (bride) but her deeply respectful (*ukuhlonipha*) stance and prescriptive westernised dress reiterated by the emphasis on her ‘tasks’, likely show her to have been in a stage of marriage proceedings of a *makoti o gubudele* (bride who covers herself). However, her being Christian (Catholic) meant not only had her dress become that for a Christian bride but she had married by Church ceremony the day before she came to perform what was required of a *makoti o gubudele* among traditionalists.

The illustrated girdle or *indelelo* [MM4674] [see Appendices. Chapter 4: Figures 5-7. Buzani and her sister Gezani Makhanya from Engolela, in engagement dress and their future husbands, the Mbanambi brothers from Thenjani, Umkomaas and Gezani’s engagement girdle or *indeleo* [MM4674] [Figures 5-7] is significant attire for an engaged girl from Umkomaas c1970-80s. This one won a local traditionalist competition for beautiful craftsmanship. The wording refers to the upcoming marriage and can be related to that cited earlier concerning the position of women and the rituals discussed above, “*Nini pho* [when]/ *Ima name* [stand with me]/ *ena thula* [you must be quiet]/ *Ngithi woza* [I said you must come]/ *Men(a) aha* [Me(?) aha]/ *Lan yepho* [?]/ *Ini hai yini* [?]/ *Lala yini* [you must keep what]/ *Aha yeni* [aha my husband]/ *Khithi konke* [you must bring everything]/ *Ala anina* [at my home (?)]”(MaMakhanya Mbonambi 1995). Without an understanding of the many prescriptions and details of required ceremonies for an engaged girl or *iganile* even those communications that can be translated would become meaningless.

Apart from indicating area and time differences in traditional engaged and married dress, the photographs of MaCele Hlambisa [see Appendices. Chapter 4: Figures 8-10. Doll-maker MaCele Hlambisa from Emaphphetweni, Ndwedwe in engaged and married dress and posing in western dress with one of her dolls [Figures 8-10] are of interest in that they show the two stages of dress status, the one for engaged girl and the other for a married woman while the last image of MaCele with a doll she made, dressed as a bride/*makoti* indicates the value she sets on the status of traditional attire. MaCele is western dressed in the last image having converted to the Nazareth Church of Isaiah Shembe (*KwaShembe*) after experiencing difficulties in conceiving. She explained “ the church has blessed me with two children” and

by 1999 she had an adult son who was married and a daughter who had a child of her own (MaCele Hlambisa 1999). Many of the dolls made by the doll-makers of Ndwedwe [see Figure 10] are self-portraits and very often these dolls are depicted in a flower-covered frame as shown in the studio photographs of such as Bobson Studio, Durban.²⁸⁰ These show the importance of the status attained by legitimate traditional customary marriage for a woman.

Unlike the beadwork from greater Ndwedwe and Emkhambathini (the latter area as indicated in Chapter 1 excised from Ndwedwe post 1994 into greater uMgungundlovu) discussed in detail in Chapter 5, the examples of married women's dress items derive from the doll-makers from Emaphephetweni, Ndwedwe.²⁸¹ These women I came in contact with via the auspices of Jo Thorpe of the African Art Centre, Durban, with photographic images from art teacher Terry-Ann Stevenson who worked at the Centre in the mid-1980s. The collection of dolls and other crafts were donated as the "Jo Thorpe Collection" housed in the Campbell Collections, UKZN, in 1998. Dress was however not a part of this collection and was sourced from the independent field-collector, Maphostoli Mzila, who was encouraged by Thorpe to become a field-collector/ trader in traditional material.

Some of the dress items had belonged to Thorpe's 'favourite' doll-maker, Sizakele Mchunu [see Figure 11 in which she poses with co-wife Celani Nojiyeza] who sadly died in childbirth around 1992. They form part of the items acquired by the Campbell Collections, UKZN. [see Appendices. Chapter 4: Figures 11-14. Doll-makers from Ndwedwe, Celani MaHlambisa and co-wife Sizakele MaMchunu Nojiyeza in traditional dress of married women. And Gemini Studio, Pietermaritzburg photograph of traditional bride, husband and attendant. And Doll "Bride and attendant" by Celani Nojiyeza [JT324][Figures 11-14]. These items of dress of Sizakele were sold because the family then converted to Zionist-Christianity and thus no longer wore their traditional regalia. This conversion could well have come about through the belief that Sizakele had violated the norms of respect (*ukuhlonipha*) and avoidance (*ukuzila*) in making many controversial dolls like ones depicting women either giving birth or mourning [JT 624-633], and the family's healing (from her death and taboo-breach) was offered by several members converting to charismatic Zionist-Christianity (Celani Nojiyeza 1999). Of interest in Dingani Mthethwa's interview with Sizakele's co-wife, Celani Nojiyeza, is her statement concerning traditionalists versus Christians. When asked if she was Christian she said she had been a 'Shembe' but upon marrying into a traditionalist home where no one went to church she stopped attending herself. When the interviewer referred to traditionalists as *Amabinca* (skin-dressed) she rebuked him saying the word was derogatory, this because Christians describe one who follows tradition as "*kuyabincwa*" and then say, "you are illiterate, a *Qaba* (non-believer), you are stupid and backward!" (Celani Nojiyeza 1999). Mthethwa explained that a non-judgemental word which is descriptive of a traditionalist is "*ngokwenabuko*" meaning one "doing things in a traditional way" (personal communication Dingani Mthethwa, Durban, July 1999). If one

²⁸⁰ Like that by Sizakele Mchunu titled "Wedding Gifts" [JT 304] held in Campbell Collections, UKZN. So distinctive are these documentary photographs that Jo Thorpe, Director of the African Art Centre, Durban, was inspired to paint a picture from a photograph of Busaphi Ngubane [JT 230].

²⁸¹ Jo Thorpe and Eleanor Preston-Whyte (then Professor of Anthropology, UN African Studies Dept.) wrote articles on these doll-makers, and Preston-Whyte described Thorpe as "the culture-broker" because of her role in promoting these dolls. A portrait-doll was made by Sizakele Mchunu [JT 301] in which Thorpe is depicted as a white woman but entirely beaded, an ornamentation reserved for dolls depicting African traditionalists. (See Bibliographic References for publications titles) Usually the more controversial dolls were sold by Thorpe to Preston-Whyte who subsequently donated them to Campbell Collections, UKZN. These were incorporated into the Jo Thorpe Collection [JT 624-633]. Kate Wells, a Design lecturer at the Durban University of Technology was called-into the African Art Centre by subsequent Director, Althea Martin, to revive the doll-making project after Thorpe's untimely death in the 1990s. These became the core of her PhD thesis and the doll- project came to be known as the 'AIDS dolls' as they were made to help rural women cope with the pandemic. (See Bibliographic References for thesis title).

recalls the argument in Chapter 1 for retaining the words ‘ traditional’ and ‘traditionalist’ (despite academics, especially historians, querying of the word as it implies unchanging conservatism), it seems from Nojiyeza’s rejoinder that the judgement derives from western introduced Christianity. Possibly the academic concern with the descriptor’s association with a non-progressive, unchanging orientation is equally prejudicial to a cherished way of life. This because many outsiders may be arguing from a western modern (and possibly subliminally de-secularized Christian) perspective, but as argued in Chapter 1, there is no suitable word to use in place of traditionalist.²⁸²

While the Campbell Collections, UKZN, do have photographs of brides (*omakoti*) and newly married women and older married women [see Appendices. Chapter 4: Figures 24-27. Nhlanguwini/Khuze married woman’s dress, and two older married women in casual work dress [Figures 24-25 and 27] it is worth comparing the field-sketches by Barbara Tyrrell [see Appendices. Chapter 4: Figures 15-16 and Figures 28-29 and Figures 24-27. Field-sketches of brides and married women from Richmond and Ndwedwe by Barbara Tyrrell. [Figures 15-16 and 28-29 and Figure 26], for their correctness of not only dress detail but posture and gesture of the sitters, this because the artist would encourage the person to take their correct customary status stance, as for instance the bride (*makoti*) [Figure 15] has her head down in respect (*ukuhlonipha*) posture while carrying a knife as carried by all brides in the main marriage ritual, (a knife interestingly of an earlier shape to those obtainable from contemporary trading stores). With the KwaZulu-Natal Bhaca/Nhlanguwini it is only at this stage that a woman wears an *isicholo/inkhehli* (built-up head-dress) which is duly ochred and in the neighbouring Ndwedwe area style [Figure 15]. The shape distinguishes their Swazi origins and their inter-relationship with their Embo-Mkhize and Zulu neighbours, while the wide hip and bottom is due to another distinctive item called an *umgunkhulu* or bustle, worn over the pleated leather skirt (*isidwaba*), which, as with the neighbouring areas of Umkomaas and Ndwedwe, is softer than any from Zululand proper and also has a cloth strip attached at the top, over which the bustle is placed. These skirts, while blackened are never as heavily blackened as in Msinga or Zululand, although women nowadays buy from skirt-makers at any of the traditional stalls, like the Dalton Road hostels in Durban (off Gale Street and Umbilo Road, Durban). As a result the skirt nowadays is more generic, it being a leather *isidwaba* rather than it being one typical of the area in earlier times that is considered important (personal communication Khuzwayo and Qwabe women, KwaZwelebombu, August 2007).

The Tyrrell sketch [Figure 16] of the woman from Ndwedwe shows a different shaped headdress (*isicholo*) equally characteristic of that area. It is often left uncoloured, is removable and made of cloth with string threaded through, this often forming a pattern on the front above the face while the strings are joined at the back to form a plait running from the centre of the head-dress to the nape of the neck (when worn). In that area it is termed an *inkhehli* rather than an *isicholo*. The reason being that this is a head-dress only worn by a bride (*makoti*) or newly married woman who has had full lobola paid for her, while the more typical area style is in the form of the *umyeko* (dread-locks) in which the hair-strands are often coiled up under the edge and running from ear to ear along the back of the neck. These of the latter type are ochred or done in red-wool or cord and were removable wigs in the 1980s but by the late 1990s they were stitched into the hair as extensions. The very earliest

²⁸² Here I am responding to respected historian Professor John Wright’s reply to my query as to what word I could use in place of ‘traditionalist’. He replied that there was no suitable word, then explained the current arguments of academia against this word. (personal communication John Wright, Durban, April 2013). (Also see arguments in Chapter 1).

versions dating from the early 20th century were the women's own hair [see Figure 29] lengthened and ochred with red-clay and fats and thereafter either built-up or left in an *umyeko* style, dependent on area preference. The two colours used, the red of the headdress and the black ash of the *isidwaba* are significant for married female dress (no matter the area the woman comes from) and the former refers to the 'colour of women being red', because a woman is thought to supply the blood that becomes the 'growing' baby in the womb (Berglund 1976), while the ash of the fire-place has ancestral reference and along with the cattle hide of the leather skirt material (Reader 1966:194) become significant colour symbols also found in beadwork as indicators of a woman's marriage status (see Chapter 5 and the earlier commentary on the rituals in this chapter 4).

Also characteristic of married women's dress from Ndwedwe/Emkhambathini are the numbers of layered back aprons worn [MM3964] [Figure 17]. These are often merely sewn strips attached to a single such cloth back-skirt, termed an *umtakelo* (stacking). Each cloth is meant to communicate one of the 'promises of marriage' as in 'getting married, having a home, having children, etc.,' and/or numbers of girlfriends/wives in a polygamous homestead (see Chapter 5 for similar concepts in beadwork). Over the period of the 1980-90s these features of dress became ever more elaborate within traditionalists enclaves.²⁸³ Also characteristic are the wire-leg-rings (*ubusengi*) for married women and the Bhaca bride's belt (*imumba*) of looped white bead-strings indicating 'joining' in union and the wearing of a cloth covering (cape) over the shoulders (tied at front or side with a knot) usually termed an *ibaye* or *utshodo*, this is vital to respecting (*ukuhlonipha*) of the in-law-family and ancestors.

In the dress of the Bhaca/Nhlangwini married woman, once again the colour symbolism (as discussed above for the Embo-Mkhize) is found, not-only in the red headdress (dread-locks or *umyeko*) crowned with a stuffed cloth and beaded top-knot (*umgongolozzi*) to which a beadwork panel (*isipaca*) (decorated with side beaded loops and finished with goat-fur) is worn over the top and side of the head [see Figures 24-27]. Also distinctive is her leather apron, this is often of two long sections (worn front and back) (*isikhakha*), of blackened goat-skin with the fur left along the edges where they overlap along the side of the wearer's legs. This apron is covered with layered back-skirts and aprons, while a cape (*ibaye*) and a breast-cloth, all beaded for ceremonial dress, are added [see Appendices. Chapter 4: Figures 19-23. Examples of Bhaca/Nhlangwini married women's dress items [Figures 19-23]. The apron being black cloth and the breast-cloth of red-cloth (the symbolism being that mentioned above) was often reflected in the beadwork communications in the form of red and black beads signaling to the future husband a request to be married (the putting of the hair into a reddened headdress and the wearing of a black leather skirt). Wire coiled around a base of horse or cow hairs (tails) form arm and leg-rings (*ubusengi*) which were worn in vast numbers and considered important to traditionalist married women's dress. In the 1980s this was adapted as wire coiled around a very long piece of string and this then would be wound around the ankles. More contemporary dress comprised the essentials, but with over-aprons or *amaphinifa* [see Appendices. Chapter 4: Figures 31[a-b] and 32-36. Examples of applique and towel capes and aprons of Bhaca/Nhlangwini [Figures 31[a-b] and 32-36] decorated with applique work and plastic beads, worn over the earlier leather skirts. While other modernised traditional dress items are the removable red-wool *umyeko* wigs (worn covering the eyes in newly married females for respecting (*ukuhlonipha*)) [see Appendices. Chapter 4: Figures 37-

²⁸³ These changes could well have been the result of several factors such as stresses relating to the lives of married women (for instance being married by abduction and not having full bride-price paid) which would cause an increase in beadwork and dress communication as discussed in chapter 5. Also this was the period of civil wars in KwaZulu-Natal when any traditional dress was associated with the Inkatha Movement and women began to increasingly hide their traditional attire under overalls and outer skirts etc..

42. Newly married women from Hela-Hela, Richmond [Figures 37-38] and Tee-shirts or vests as breast-coverings [see Figure 27] (it was a by-law in urban areas that the body had to be covered from neck to knee (Moodie 1956, 97-8).²⁸⁴ When I collected in the 1980s in Ixopo the Mbanjwa cousins would come to town dressed in wrap-skirts and beadwork but always they wore a Tee-shirt or vest, while at home this was not the dress in vogue. Querying the difference resulted in the explanation as to by-laws for towns, which were either not rescinded or had made sufficient impression upon the traditionalist mind as to have become a prescription for all rural girls visiting towns (Sandile and Malikhona Mbanjwa 1983).

Finally facial scarification (*izinhlanga*) is a custom that relates to early Nguni ideas that all humans are born with inherent 'bad-blood' that needs to be drawn out, usually in childhood. However the concept now is considered merely 'customary' and an identifier of particular clans/families, particularly among the Bhaca/Nhlangwini [see Figures 28-29].

4. Modernisation in dress and beadwork and the position of women

Modernisation is considered in its impact on changes to traditionalist's dress and beadwork for the period studied, namely 1950s to the present, in southern KwaZulu-Natal for those of the African population who were/are traditionalist and moreover identify themselves as such. Modernisation is the result of forces of socio-economic change that impacted over many years on the fundamental cultural world-view and experience of the traditionalist people (see Chapters 1 and 2). This is a continuous process in which the forces of westernization in terms of its economy and religion (Christianity) have had a major impact and it continues as a process of change as a result of modern living in a global world. These contacts are not only with the western former colonial powers but with non-western immigrant cultures, like that of the Hindu groups from India dating from the 1860s as well as the Muslim traders from Pakistan who arrived in the province around the 1890s and recently Chinese immigrants mostly entering the country post 1994. The latter groups have perhaps had less of a socio-cultural than a purely economic impact if compared to that of the European settlers whose influence could be described as more the 'colonization of the mind' of the African indigenous population, this because of the years of missionary and British imperialist control and dominance in the former Natal and Zululand during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Even in 1933 the missionary in Dr Max Kohler (1933) stated that "Christian betrothal" was no longer termed *ukugana* but rather *ukucela* (to ask for). "It is the young man who (now) takes the initiative, discusses the matter with the girl, often also with her father or guardian, and, when no objections are raised from that quarter, presently sends his representatives for the preliminary discussions..." (Kohler 1933:57). More importantly Kohler mentions the need of Christianity (in his opinion) to "dislocate and eventually shatter forever ...these customs and polygamy itself." This as *ukugana* reflected African "ideas about woman and marriage" in which the "humiliation of the (African) woman is at its deepest" (Kohler 1933:56).

Such an attitude must be seen to have pervaded not only missionary attitudes and altered the customs of Christians but can be seen at its strongest in Feminism which sees such indigenous customs as gender inequality and a human-rights issue. *Ukugana* is declared to no longer exist among Christian converts in the 1930s (Kohler 1933:57). Despite this

²⁸⁴ Lieutenant Governor Pine reasoned the proclamation was necessary to check the practice of Africans traveling about the colony in a "state of nudity" and thereby "secure, on the part of the natives, a due conformity with the usages of civilized life" (Moodie 1856: 97-8).

declaration, in truth Tyrrell in the 1950-70s illustrated the dress for engaged girls (*iganile/izingoduzo*²⁸⁵) of the Bhaca/Nhlangwini of Richmond and in 1989 the Mtolo, Mchunu and Mbhele families from Ndaleni and Hela-Hela (in Richmond area), despite having both traditionalists and converts to Roman Catholicism (worshipping at St Joseph and Keavelaar Missions) in their families still underwent the rituals for this stage. By then the heavy beaded back-aprons worn by *iganile* were hired out for the period of *ukugana* (translated as “the period of trial marriage”) (MaMtolo and MaMchunu 1989). The same applied to the amaKhuze/Nhlangwini Mbanjwa family from St Faith’s, a traditionalist cousin following the practice while a Catholic cousin did not (Sandile and Malikhona Mbanjwa 1983). That *ukugana* was practised among the Embo-Mkhize, and this up until the present, although only amongst traditional family members, was confirmed by Senzo Mkhize from Hopewell/Thala Valley (personal communication Mkhize, Durban, May 2013).

To conservative African Christians, the *umabo* is still considered vitally important and usually now-days can be eclipsed with a ‘European-style’ wedding followed by a ‘traditional wedding’ or gift-giving (essentially an *umabo*) either in the evening or the next day (personal communication Senzo Mkhize, Durban, May 2013). At this latter occasion traditional dress is worn by the *makoti* (bride) which “conforms to Zulu tradition” (Tyrrell, 1972:179), if the couple are modernised this ‘traditional wedding’ means some token traditionalist dress is worn, be it actual such or a German-print *isishweshwe* while the ‘European-style’ part of the wedding entails church service, rings, cake and wedding-dress. A colleague Bongzi MaMdlalose Mbhele who is Roman Catholic from the greater Embo-Mkhize area of Umkomaas had the *imbizo* gift-giving (from the future husband’s side to the bride’s family) in December 2002 [see Appendices. Chapter 4: Figures 39-42 and 43-47 and 48-50. Madalose and Mbhele family *umemulo* and *imbizo*, Umkomaas Figures 39-50]. For the dress she borrowed an *isidwaba* (leather skirt), *inkehli* (headdress) and beadwork from traditionalist extended family members. Under this scenario there is no longer any personalised meaning encoded in the beadwork (as to be seen in Chapter 5) but the dress and item type conform in essentials to tradition as do all aspects of the ritual (MaMdlalose Mbhele 2012).²⁸⁶

Ukuthwala or abduction is of concern to Human-rights groups and it has recently taken on less than culturally prescribed dimensions, also becoming more common in both the Eastern Province and KwaZulu-Natal with cases of the girls’ families colluding with older men to obtain virgin brides, and the families of the girl instituting heavier fines than in former times (Soucie at <http://www.genderacrossborders.com>, 2013). As will be seen in the beadwork communications discussed in Chapter 5, *ukuthwala* is a common mode of marriage among the traditionalists of especially Ndwedwe and Umkomaas districts, and another reason for it is that most men do not have the requisite labola payment to marry in the full customary style. *Ukuthwala* then becomes a deferred mode of union, the woman often having had children before the legitimizing wedding finally takes place. In this case it is often that misfortune like sickness of a child will necessitate the correcting of custom with the informing of the ancestral-spirits, so that they can offer their protection (see examples given by Ngubane in a earlier footnote).

²⁸⁵ Colleague Vusi Buthelezi says there is no plural for *iganile* and in his understanding the name for engaged girls is *in(izin)goduzo*. To him an *iganile* is already a bride or *makoti* (personal communication Buthelezi, November 2013). In light of the former text argument, taking from Kohler, Reader and the collected dress items referenced in the thesis, I have kept the word *iganile* or *ganile*. I include this data in the footnote to show that when it comes to regional differences there are many complexities and it is not possible to make categorical statements regarding customs or perfect translations of isiZulu localised words.

²⁸⁶ The African revival of ethnic dress for the ‘traditional wedding’ is to be seen in its full display in a web-site for wedding photographers in Richards Bay as posted by “Azi and Refuwe –Umabo, Tuesday Apr 23, 2013” at <http://www.grphotography.co.za>.

It is perhaps easiest to see how dress has changed due to modernisation by tracking the older names of items and comparing these with later ones, these last often indicate the derivation of an item of dress, as for instance the gala back-skirt being termed *igxaba*, this is a derivation of the word for “worn-out old-clothes (as in ragged)” (Doke and Vilakazi, 1948:287). A fair amount of the dress of Mpondo, who had come to work on cane-fields in KwaZulu-Natal, was referred to as “rags” by urban Zulu in the 1980-90s (personal communication Ephraim Ngcobo, Durban, 1990). The now popular ethnic “patch” (*umblaselo*) trousers worn by men were initially termed “Mpondo trousers” and considered unsuitable for town-wear in the 1990s, men particularly would wear neat trousers of one colour with tonal-matching neat shirts, such a man was termed an “All-over” another name referencing the attempt to do away with any “patched rags” as these were initially associated with the dress of farm-labourers given to them by their masters from their own throw-outs (Ngcobo, 1990). European employers who did this were considered lowly and abusive and a uniform, either an overall or a tunic with matching-shorts known as a ‘kitchen-suit’ (*ikishini*) was considered the correct dress for males, while females were given an apron or pinafore (*iphinifa*) as a work uniform. One surmises that this last was the origin of the later aprons and pinafores/overalls (*amaphinifa*) that have become the basis for traditionalist contemporary female dress [see Figure 31]. While Christian missionaries may have impacted the dress of the young bride (*makoti*) in her head-scarf, shawl and German-print wrap skirt [see Figure 30], traditionalists contacts with Europeans was primarily through male migrant-workers in mines or domestic service, the latter in towns for men and farms for both men and women. Females, generally unmarried senior-girls, often did house-work for a period of time in which case they would wear a pinafore/apron (*voorskoot*), or *toght* -casual-labour, like field-work in which case they continued to wear their more thread-bare cloth-wraps or European discarded clothes. When working in the forests for Sappi/Mondi they wore trousers under their wraps and gumboots and invariably covered their faces with red or white clay to protect from sun-burn. Once a female married they left service to live at the husband’s home (personal communication, Jean Anderssen, Himeville, August 1984 and Val Winters, Rosetta, 1989).

An insight into contemporary traditionalist marriage is that of colleague Bongiwe Mdlalose mentioned above, who married a Mbhele at KwaLembe, Umkomaas in 2002 [see Figures 39-50]. Of interest is that she is both modern, educated (having done a post-graduate diploma in Library and Information Studies), a Roman Catholic who yet considers herself a traditionalist. The images are of her *umemulo* (which was eclipsed with the wedding process for a betrothed female) and negotiation gift-giving (*izibizo*) from the husband’s people to those of the bride.

While lobola was paid, a legitimising traditional wedding “has still to happen” for MaMdlalose, this in spite of her being widowed in 2012. Her son of 7 years old must “stand in” for his father, this because later as an adult he will not be able to marry legitimately, his parents union not being recognised by the ancestors. The ceremony did not take place at the time her husband was alive as his uncle had died and her father-in-law needed to conduct the bereavement ritual first (personal communication Bongi MaMdlalose Mbhele Durban, June 2013). The *umemulo/izibizo* dress comprised contemporary dress and earlier traditional items amassed from borrowed items. Mbhele comes from a traditionalist family, her father being a peasant farmer who had a vision that his children be educated, hence she studied through correspondence with UNISA. The groom worked in Durban for a billboard company and died from diabetes in 2011 and his young widow was left with two children, following the custom of wearing black ‘widows-weeds’ for a year until released by his *ibuyisa* (call-back) ritual. A comment from Mbhele as to the subdued life she lived while in mourning and her mother-in-law’s confirmation of the benefit of the custom, marked by

the release rites at the end of mourning are of singular interest as to the purpose of the indigenous cultural customs. Mbhele said she could now better cope with being a single parent, work and study and she realises her mother-in-law was right in her explanation that the period of mourning and 'exclusion' from the worldly round would 'strengthen' her physically and psychologically (Personal communication Mbhele, Durban, June 2013).²⁸⁷ Of importance is that the comments of Reader in 1966 for neighbouring Umbumbulu still apply to the complexity of the number of rituals required as well as the essentials of the bride's dress, be those traditional elements or the apparently modernised elements of umbrella, blanket covering and affixed scarves. Old women wear *amaphinifa* purchased in Durban, in either Victoria Street or Prince Edward Street, these can be in any colour of choice.

Most African weddings show some regional and modernising differences as well as reponse to a family's circumstances at the time. For instance the 1989 wedding at Inanda of colleague Ephraim Ngcobo took place well into the couple's life together [see Appendices. Chapter 4: Figures 53-57 and 58-63. *Ngcobo wedding, Inanda Figures 53-63*]. They had five children at the time and the sixth child born after the legitimizing wedding was taken to indicate the manifestation of ancestral blessing. Most such late weddings are to correct problems in the family's concerns by evoking ancestral support and this wedding was no different. The couple wore Shembe Sect dress as they belonged to the Nazareth Baptist Church. The groom's father had been a traditionalist and it was his mother who had joined the church first. Like most modern traditionalist marriages there is a 'white wedding' in western style taking place after the main traditional service.

The following set of images [see Appendices. Chapter 4: Figures 64-85. *Gumede and Duma families umabo and arrival of the bride. [Figures 64-85]*] come from the Duma family, said to be Bhaca, showing a bride joining her Gumede husband's family at Ixopo, July 1996. The family are Roman Catholic and a church wedding happened on the 20 July 1996, while this ceremony comprised *umabo* or gift-giving to the groom's family and the arrival of the bride (*makoti*) to her new home, her having a goat slaughtered for her introduction to the in-law ancestors. These rituals must be considered as comprising the essentials of traditional cultural customs needing to be kept. Also of interest are the prescriptions as to the dress of a Roman Catholic *makoti*, namely "(The) *makoti* must wear *isiJalimane* (German print) and on top a pinafore and a long sleeve jearsey. (Her headscarf) must be tied in a certain way, with the knot at the front of the forehead and a 'tail' left behind the nape of the neck" (personal communication with Sandile MaMbanjwa Mkhize, Durban, June 2000).

The photographs of the Duma family²⁸⁸ show the depth of variation, in time and place, and according to which Christian sect the participant families belong. In this case, the bride does not dance with the young people, she has had the Christian ceremony and the rituals that remain are yet those of tradition, gift-giving (*umabo*) between the two families, informing the

²⁸⁷ While not directly pertinent to this chapter, I am nevertheless indebted to Jill Kelly, an American researcher who did her PhD into the conflict around the period of the *uJlame* or 'black on black' violence of the ANC/UDF and IFP/INKATHA civil wars of the 1980-90s. She concentrates on the Nyavu (Maphumulo and Mdluli) of Table Mountain (eMkhambathi). Her research highlighted the return of married women to customs perhaps last reported for the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906, in which women who had husbands fighting would reverse their leather skirts and not wear ornamentation for the period of the fighting. The other matter that concerned women was that the fighting robbed them of correct custom (including dress) normally followed by women during the period of mourning their dead, resultant upon the fighting, fleeing and hiding characterized by this civil war and more significantly this caused them emotional trauma (from not following customary mores) (personal communications via email July 2015). (See Bibliographic References for Kelly's thesis on line at etd.lib.msu.edu/islandora/object./view [accessed 20 November 2015]).

²⁸⁸ Admittedly these images are of poor quality as they were photographed on instamatic cameras by members of either the bride or grooms family, usually a brother not involved in the ceremonies. They nevertheless are of interest not only because they record ordinary people's weddings and ceremonies, but because of that which is considered important enough to record; for instance the Duma bride's sorrow at her family leaving, or the young attendant being offered gifts after helping the bride in her many tasks like having to have collected firewood.

ancestors and hospitality. The bride meanwhile must still show the willingness to be a respecting and hard-working wife to her in-laws.

Chapter 5:

Issues of female identity and cultural world-view encoded in beadwork and dress colours and motifs, with particular reference to the Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours

Introduction

This section aims to give concrete examples of individual beadwork items that ‘speak’ to a range of concerns important to traditional, particularly engaged and married females’ lives, especially those of the 1970-90s among the Embo-Mkhize and neighbouring Zulu Makhanya and Nyavu (Maphumulo and Mdluli) areas of KwaZwelibomvu, Emkhambathini, Umkomaas, Umbumbulu and Ndwedwe. I have relied upon items for which there are documented meanings for cognitive communications obtained during field-collecting, at the time of acquisition and/or documentation into the Campbell Collections MM holdings,²⁸⁹ or from recorded interviews of field-collectors and beadworkers/sellers/wearers which were later transcribed and translated. There are also cases of validating field-interviews with original sources and others who could contribute to the topic.

In this section, as far as I am aware, the information has not been handled in such a manner before, other than in my own writings, apart from the early writings of Hilgard Schoeman (1968) for Mtunzini area and that of Frank Jolles as mentioned in Chapter 2 (when discussing Orality-Literacy and IKS) for the Msinga and Umvoti/Maphumulo areas. Many of my own writings remain unpublished, being the subject of museum conference papers, exhibitions and catalogues (Winters 1996a, 1996b, 1998, 1999, 2000a-c, 2004, 2005b, 2006b, 2007a-b, 2008a, 2009a). As mentioned in Chapter 1, Thengiwe Magwaza’s doctorate²⁹⁰ dealt with the purpose and meaning of female dress within age/status groupings, this from contemporary field-work in the Camperdown and Ndwedwe areas. For these reasons I do not intend to repeat Magwaza’s comprehensive study by also dealing with entire outfits of dress and beadwork in context of women’s regalia worn for rites-of-passage. I have touched on the overall meaning of female dress and age-grades and their accompanying marriage and coming-of-age ceremonies among the Bhaca/Nhlangwini and the Embo-Mkhize (and their associated clans) in Chapters 3 and 4. This as stated, so as to give the cultural context in order to inform upon the communications encoded into the particular items of beadwork discussed in the present chapter. The intention in this chapter is thus to show the range of such ‘visual’ and non-verbal communication as regards traditional female identity, such as; a woman’s attitudes to prescribed cultural roles, be it compliance with respecting/avoidance (*ukhlonipha/ukuzila*), acceptance of polygamy and being one of a number of wives (*isithembu*) and thus not the sole focus of the husband, and hopes of having a traditional wedding with lobola payments and informing of the ancestors, expectations as to motherhood and homemaking and any dissappointments in regard to any of these issues. These concerns are also influenced by the effects of socio-economic modernisation and reflect on the

²⁸⁹ As stated elsewhere the appellation “MM” stands for Mashu Museum of Ethnology and falls under the umbrella of Campbell Collections, Sir Marshall Campbell (for whom the large black township of KwaMashu is named) having been honorary clan chieftain of the AmaQadi of Inanda and father to Dr Killie Campbell, founder of the Collections. Thus throughout the reference is to MM numbers as the access link to the item of beadwork.

²⁹⁰ Magwaza, T., *Function and meaning of female Dress: A descriptive Study of Visual Communication*. Doctoral Diceratation Orality-Literacy, UKZN. (1999).

discourse of African Feminists. As individual engaged and married women's beading, the communications are in the beadworker's/wearer's own 'visual voice' in which she uses area conventions of colours and motifs that symbolically convey her unique and individual declarations as regards her life-story, one that she shares with not only her spouse but also with the community, particularly women within either the extended family or neighbourhood. Invariably the beadworker's /wearer's intended communications encoded in the beadwork item's design elements is expressed in idiomatic and poetic isiZulu language, that is still oral or if lettering is used in the motifs, the communications still conform to Ong's postured 'oral residue' (Ong [1982] 2002) and this fact allows for the exploration of Orality-Literacy concepts via Geertzian 'thick description' of Symbolic and Interpretative Anthropology as outlined and discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. While in accessing the cultural context of ritualised ceremonies marking the age/status rites-of-passage for engaged and married women as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, I trust that the insights of Symbolic Interactionism given in Chapter 2 on theory, will come into play.

Julie Kane 'Poetry as Right-hemispheric Language' at *PsyArt :An Online Journal for the Psychological Study of the Arts* (www.psyartjournal.com/article/.../kane-poetry_as_right_hemispheric_Language. [accessed 12 November 2012]), takes from the work of Walter Ong on Orality-Literacy (Ong, [1982] 2002) and combines this with neurological research around literacy (Van Lancker, 1997 and Pinker, 1994), which indicates that the left-brain, while controlling focused literacy, does not impact poetry nearly as much as the creative, spacio-visual right-brain.²⁹¹ Along with the understanding lent by Orality-Literary Studies, I feel that an acknowledgement of the right-hemispheric orientation of poets (from both oral and literate societies), will give appreciation of some of what one is dealing with in the metaphors and meanings rendered in pictograms, motifs and colours in beadwork, as this approach gives a multi-layered insight into nuances of life that may be lost in the left-hemispheric directional focus found in those who have become primarily literate (Kane 2012). Thus in discussing specific items of beadwork I will reference examples of poetic thinking, like allusion, irony, connotation, symbol and prosody (stress, intonation, rhythm) (Kane 2011:2-14) where applicable to the understanding of the item. This not only because these are characteristic of the oral style as outlined in Chapter 2 but also because I have consistently been told by isiZulu-speakers that straight translation of beadwork messages from isiZulu to English is very hard, as most of the references are couched in situational poetic diction used by illiterate traditionalist Zulu (in other words 'oral-style') (personal communication Mthunzi Zungu and Mxolisi Mchunu, Durban June 2006). Moreover, this complexity in language used by oral preliterate societies is found in beadwork's connoted messages or cognitive communications, couched in an indigenous language, albeit here in association with a visual format, in which

²⁹¹ As there is room for misinterpretation, I must explain, how and why I have deviated into such a topic. In early November 2012 Campbell Collections, UKZN hosted a seminar on the early 1930-50s Zulu poet, journalist and writer H.I.E. Dhlomo, a friend of Dr Killie Campbell (and one who wrote on beadwork for her, drawing on the knowledge of Princess Magogo ka Dinizulu Buthelezi). The occasion had some interesting discussion on the early 'New African' writers of the period by the eminent of African Literary Studies; Prof. Tim Couzens, Prof. Bheki Petersen and a newspaper write-up by Prof. David Attwell (*Sunday Tribune* Oct 28, 2012) who mentioned their penchant for clichéd poetry influenced by the British Romantic poets whose works were taught at the Mission schools of the 1920s. As HOD, I gave the Welcome Address, for which I thought to draw on the similarities between Dhlomo's fellow Zulu poet, Benedict Villakazi's landscape poem 'KwaDedangendale' (*Valley of a Thousand Hills*) to the beadwork cape communications of MaMchunu from Ndwedwe (i.e. Valley of 1000 Hills) [(MM4990A-B) only to discard this thought after Attwell's comments. However, Dr Betty Govinden read of the period's poetry as well as Lewis Nkosi's rejoinder, this to a largely black audience including *iNkosi* Mangusothu Buthelezi (Dhlomo's friend and son of Princess Magogo) and in this received huge applause. The contrast of these two worlds troubled me and in trying to understand these cultural responses to poetry, I was coincidentally given a book on the latest research into dyslexia, where neurologists have found that dyslexics (as incedentially I myself am) are right-brain while non-dyslexics are left-brain orientated, a shift that happens in the child in the process of acquiring literacy, but for some reason dyslexics do not fully make the shift (Brock and Eide, 2011). The description of a dyslexic's multi-layered associative brain processing accorded with elements of the Orality versus Literacy theory of Ong (1982(2002) as outlined in Chapter 2, made a huge impression on me, particularly coming so close on the experience of the early 'New African' poetry reading. An equally interesting account by Adrian Koopman 'Benedict Walle Vilakazi: Poet in Exile' appears in *Natalia* 35 (2005:63-74)..

the design elements are often successfully integrated.²⁹² This gets back to a postulated metaphorical ‘bead language’, for often those cued in this ‘visual voice’ intuitively ‘read’ the message intended accurately. Within Kane’s category of “*Allusion*” falls the poetic techniques of proverbs and idioms, commonly found in both message and written form in beadwork that relies on alphabetical motifs (see interpretations of courting men’s beadwork in Chapter 3 on age-grades). W. Meider *Proverbs are never out of season: Popular wisdom in the Modern Age* (1993) defines a proverb thus:

A proverb is a short generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and which is handed from generation to generation (Meider 1993:4).

The definition covers much that is found in beadwork communications and Meider goes on to say the following of attempts to define proverbs, which could be argued to apply to the difficulties of logically analysing beadwork which paradoxically can be easily intuited:

The definition of a proverb is (often?) too difficult to repay the undertaking; and should we fortunately combine in a single definition all the essential elements and give each proper emphasis, we should not even then have a touchstone. An incommunicable quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and that one is not (Meider 1993:4).

Despite Meider’s statement one must of course attempt to decipher such idiomatic phrases, but at least the acknowledgement of the difficulties alerts to the problems in interpreting any beadwork item’s message. There are no conclusive answers as to how to know which items contain such metaphoric messages and which do not, as all depends on the seller/beadworker’s intentions and for this one must understand the socio-cultural context of her individual circumstances. Thus to get back to the argument in Chapter 1, there is no ‘bead language’ open to a fixed and agreed upon ‘reading’, only a ‘metaphorical’ one for which interpretation is dependent upon situational contexts.

Also applicable to poetic language is an understanding of African *izibongo* or praise-poems. Kresse in ‘Izibongo-the Political art of praising; poetical socio-regulative discourse in Zulu society’ in *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, (1998) discusses the use and type of *isibongo* (praises) commonly found, from herd boys praise of their cattle, hunters of their dogs, men of their children, farmers of their lead plough-ox and women of their husbands. All praises are of a poetical genre specific to the ‘art of praising’ which aims to name, identify and thus give significance to the named person or object (Kresse 1998:173). H.I.E. Dhlomo ‘Zulu folk Poetry’ in *Native Teacher’s Journal*, (Vol.6, 1947) says of *izibongo* “They were used to excite and delight, to appeal and appease, to honour and humour a person” (1947:5) thus they are an accurate record of a person’s career and character, of which “(i)n youth they told your measure of promise, your inclinations and your dormant and dominant qualities...” (Dhlomo 1947:5) and then in old age “your achievements and adventure”(Dhlomo1947: 5). Evidently though, Dhlomo does not give the whole of praises, as they contain the negative as well as the positive of a person’s life, as Noeleen Turner in ‘Contemporary Zulu *izihasho*: a satirical attempt at social control’ in Sienaert, E et al., (Eds.) *Oral Tradition and innovation: new wine in old bottles?* (1991) gives an example of personalized Zulu praises:

²⁹² See Chapter 2 under section on Aesthetics for a discussion of *Gestalt* and perception.

‘Gina is a Christian, what’s more, he is OK...However, he is not ever passed by a skirt...Also he doesn’t just drink, he is a drunkard.’... Here *Gina is exposed* as being a womanizer and a drinker, not in a particularly nasty way, but rather in a teasing tone. Furthermore, Gina, the father of a past student of mine, *is not at all ashamed* of these lines, which are not infrequently used when referring to him (Italic mine) (Turner 1991: 204).

To anyone attempting to decipher beadworks’ messages, it is easy to see some of this honouring, in line with the aesthetic ideals of Zulu artistry as discussed in Chapter 1 point 1.3. It could be described as a female form of respecting (*ukuhlonipha*) and avoidance (*ukuzila*) of the sacred and particularly of *ukuhlonipha kolwimi* (respect of tongue) as mentioned in Chapter 1 point 1.1. This does not mean there are no women who deviate and refuse to be subjected to social norms, women who can be said to appropriate the rights of males in traditional society, and moreover women who use their beadwork designs to ‘name and blame (and no doubt shame)’ husbands and lovers who have been remiss, women who then expect the man to wear the beaded item containing such admonishments or wear it themselves for all to witness. Examples of both types of praises, of honouring and of upbraiding, are to be seen in the beadwork discussed in this chapter. Moreover as seen in Turner’s example of Gina above, not all of these men are shamed by what their women ‘say’ of them in beadwork. Norma Masuku in her PhD, *Perceived oppression of women in Zulu folklore: a Feminist critique* (2005), quotes the folktale ‘*Umkhwekazi namasi*’ as depicting such a rebellious woman (2005:189), told no doubt to discourage any such tendencies in young girls. Masuku’s work also highlights the normative influences at play in traditional society, many going counter to all modern Feminist notions, thus women in folktales “were expected to get married and bear children, women who are beautiful are regarded as dangerous to a man’s position and women who are barren are seen as worthless” (Masuku 2005:21). She says the folktale ‘*uMyumba-katali*’ highlights the stigma of barrenness while ‘*umBhejane*’ and ‘*uSiwelewele*’ confirm women as unfaithful witches (Masuku 2005:188). She draws on De Bruin’s (2002) study of the depiction of children in Zulu folktales, saying “...she (De Bruin) makes an impressive analysis of what it is like to grow up as a girl and (as) a boy in Zulu culture. She concludes by mentioning that girls who disobey the norms set by society are punished, whereas those who are depicted as examples of (the ideal) *i(zi)ntombi* (girls) are rewarded” (Masuku 2005: 20). Masuku also draws attention to Zulu proverbs saying that “most Zulu proverbs pertaining to women and girls reflect on marriage...” (Masuku 2005: 103). These reflect on the inevitability of marriage but that it is most often a hardship, as one example she gives the proverb from Nyembezi (1997:186) “*indolowane yoxosha umakoti egovile* [The pain of an elbow drove the bride away]” meaning that a person (woman) can withstand pain and hardship only up to a point (before complaining and/or leaving the situation). Of this proverb Masuku says “the inevitability of marriage (in traditional African society) and its hardships (or realities) depends on a woman’s perseverance and patience as virtues that keep the marriage intact” (Masuku 2005:103-4). Yet more interesting are the praises ordinary women give themselves and are given by others who know them well. A MaCele depicted herself as unfortunate in an unhappy marriage, while a MaJele “uses praises she used as a young woman which shows that she was strong and she would not be married to a commoner. She sticks to these praises because she feels they are her identity” (Masuku 2005:181). A nurse at King Edward Hospital, Durban, on the other hand is depicted as scandalous in her praises (Masuku 2005:181). A.B. Vilakazi in *Zulu transformations* (1965) talks of the character traits of the “ideal wife”; thus a wife should possess physical robustness and diligence – the ability to work and bear children; humanness (*ubuntu*) – which ensures that she will be hospitable to her husband’s guests and will comply

with the demands made on her by her relatives-in-law; and she must show respect (*ukuhlonipha*) – which requires her to follow customary behaviour that will in turn secure the blessings of the ancestral spirits, who are believed to control fertility (Vilakazi 1965:59).

In addition to this commentary on the isiZulu poetical language of praises, folktale and proverb that women draw upon in their beadwork/dress communications, there are (to repeat that mentioned earlier) their beadwork/dress statements around; the issues of their status positions as wives within polygamous marriages, their having a male protector (be it father or husband) whom they must honour, obey and respect (including his ancestral-line), their concern with the *labola* or bride-price payments (especially if delayed) and the ‘legitimacy’ of their traditional customary marriage rites (which will impact their position as wife in a polygamous home, which in turn impacts the status and inheritance of their male-children), and finally these matters’ influence on their success in conceiving and bearing children, this as a woman’s reproductive capacities belong to her husband’s family/clan. I include the words from my essay “*Listen to me, read my beadwork...*”: *Understanding the concerns of Zulu-speaking brides, wives and co-wives from the Umbumbulu and Umkomaas district* (Winters 1996b):

Not surprisingly, the symbolic meanings ascribed to the motifs used in the beadwork worn by womendraws attention to the roles and status of these women: Fertility; the correct customary behaviour of a wife; the tasks she is required to perform; her position as a co-wife within a polygamous homestead; and the legality of traditional marriages (as in observance of ritual) (Winters 1996b).

Finally in this introduction, I need to explain the reasons for the layout of the body of text according to ‘like (or recurring) themes’ in terms of the owner/beadworker’s intended communication: This is done firstly to emphasise the various communications’ types/concerns, here mainly amongst the Embo-Mkhize, and their neighbouring Zulu clans/families in Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe, Umbumbulu and Umkomaas. While beadwork from these areas has stylistic differences, the source of the specific piece is stated in all cases, so this should not be too confusing. Also instead of discussing a number of beadwork pieces illustrative of ‘like themes’, I could have dealt with an entire outfit of pieces of beadwork that belonged to one owner, worn at one time as this would help see the range of items that are merely supporting (either in design or in repeated message), and others that are the main communication, as also what has been carried through from engagement to marriage beadwork, as too from generation to generation. However, I have not dealt with the examples this way as this was realised to some extent in Chapter 4, namely a discussion of beadwork/dress in context of a particular age/status group, namely that of engaged and married women. It also has been dealt with in this way by Magwaza (1999) as mentioned above. Thus I have not analysed all the beadwork items of one particular owner/beadworker/wearer’s outfit in the present chapter, other than when it is pertinent to understanding a theme under discussion. Nevertheless, analysed single pieces do still give an insight into the subtleties of individual life-histories while yet falling within the parameters of any like (or recurrent) themes. Such specifics, perhaps some appearing contradictory, serve to validate the meanings ascribed them by their owner/beadworker, yet giving an undertow of individuality which also invariably conforms to cultural norms prevailing in the home-region. As Magwaza says in ‘Private transgressions: the visual voice of Zulu Women’ In *Agenda/Feminist Media* (2001):

Rural and illiterate Zulu women are not passive about their situation: They employ dress in ways that not only signify their compliance with traditionally ascribed status,

but also their displeasure, as a form of non-verbal protest. In Zulu society where gender ideologies succeed women develop strategies to deal with limitations imposed on them. (Magwaza 2001: 25).

Moreover I take this orientation as discussed above as this chapter's main purpose, namely to analyse specific beadwork communications of particular localised individual women's beadwork. The communications are all as given by the owner/seller/beadworker to the field-collector, many in isiZulu, with translations and extrapolated data from analysing the cultural world-view expressed in the communication, whether it be in colour or motif (which can be geometrical shape, lettering or pictogram). These design elements are significant, not least because this dissertation concentrates on Aesthetics and the History of Art, but also because the impact and success of an item surely rests with the match of intent as regards communication (be it cultural or individual) and aesthetic design choices.²⁹³

1. Communications associated with marriage and fertility and culturally prescribed female identities

The Zulu verb *khanya* means "to be light", "to be bright" and "to shine forth" (Dent and Nyembezi 1984: 387). White is used as a synonym for light when used in ritual contexts where it refers to fortune, health and fertility (Berglund 1976:364,355). Reverend Callaway mentions 19th century thanksgiving rituals which ask, "Let the (ancestors) *Amatongo* (alternative for *amadlozi*) be bright and white, and not dark, that they may save us on another occasion" (Callaway 1869: 132-3). Misfortune is described as the ancestors turning their backs and thus "...their *Idhlozi* (Spirit) is dark" (Berglund 1976:160).

Ngubane gives an extract of a girl's nubility ceremony (*umemulo*). The father when addressing the ancestral-spirits introduces his daughter and asks of them:

Nangu umtwana wenu uMalezi [Here is child yours Malezi]
Ngiyamemulisa [I perform nubility ceremony for her]
Akube mhlophe konke [Let it be white all]
Izindlela zake zibe mhlophe [Pathways hers be white]
Akukhanye, abone [Let there be light, let her (be enabled to) see]
Kudeduke umnyana [Out of her way be darkness]
Abe nezinhlanhla [Let her be of good fortune]
Azale abantu [Let her live well]

²⁹³ I did not always believe there were meanings such as I give in this chapter, as I found myself in the 1980s concurring with the then current Museum and Anthropological assumptions as outlined in the first two chapters. Nevertheless as a young person I had studied both Fine Art and Anthropology. Structural-Functionalism was so integral to the 1970s thinking that it also dominated the Arts, as it did Anthropology. Design was all about the placing of various elements like, rhythm, harmony, discord, etc., as outlined in Chapter 2. It took some years before returning to this mode of 'seeing' objects of aesthetical interest, (say for instance the beading and cloth applique on an apron) as more than just an impressive artwork. The use of these in meaningful combinations was only made clear to me with the accidental return to Structural-Functionalist elements of design when Merisa Fick-Jordaan who ran sustainable development crafts at the BAT Centre, Durban in the 1990s+, brought international designers to help in the design of telephone-wire baskets. I recall one French designer taken up with the layered cloth back-skirt of a woman from Ndwedwe, that was on display in Campbell Collections, UKZN. I had collected the item myself and he asked if the single 'rogue' leopard-spotted layer amongst the blues, pink and black layers, (which he praised as a remarkable aesthetical element that enlivened the entire piece) had any meaning. This made me return to my collecting-notes and yes it did, it said something specific about the in-law-family of the woman. This element so appreciated in 1970s Structural-Functionalist Design had inadvertently reintroduced the 'marrying' of design to meaning and cultural 'world-view'. It was only when I 'gave ear' to the traditionalist makers' reasoning for what materials/mediums they included in any design that I fully appreciated that design is not just elements combined in the correct harmonies, contrast, etc., but rather that exceptional design, is more often a combination of intent and intuitional choice of these elements to construct motif, colour, etc, that are intentionally used to communicate meaning/message. I would even go so far as to claim this is the noumenal quality of so-called pre-literate peoples' Art, some of what is often arguably missing from much neo-African and tourist 'Airport' art.

Aphile kahle [Let her health be good]

Kube mhlophe konke empilweni yakhe [Let it be white all in life hers]

(Ngubane 1977: 114-5).

The symbolism of light and brightness is reflected in Embo-Mkhize and Zulu bridal beadwork. In the Umkomaas area this takes the form of beaded ornaments termed *izinkanyezi* (stars) [see Appendices. Chapter 5 1-4. Beaded stars (*izinkanyezi*) from Umkomaas [MM4869, MM4671A, MM4543A] [Figure 2] constructed on wire-frames and pinned to the bridal dress. Some of these ornaments are decorated with gilt buttons to emphasize the meaning. One headband (not illustrated) from Umkomaas extends this metaphor into ‘fruitfulness’ with its gilt buttons at the centre of a multicoloured field dotted with black bead-string-loops [MM4527F], made by the bride’s mother to ‘say’ “*uyisihlahla isihle* [you are a beautiful (fruit) tree]”, as such the association must be seen to be fertility (multiplying, bearing fruit), the many colours also reiterating “multiplying” as it often also indicates “*isithembu*” or polygamy, the adding to a family/clan’s numbers by bearing children (MaHlope Mkhize 1994 and MaGumede Mngoma, 1995). Brides often ‘repeat’ their father’s request at their *umemulo* (coming-of-age), for their good fortune (of which fecundity is a part) in their bridal beadwork, declaring themselves to be “like bright stars”, essentially a poetic simile/metaphor.²⁹⁴ For the bride, her wedding day is the culmination of her good fortune, for if all goes well (which it ought upon correct ritual and ceremony invoking ancestral blessing) she will in time conceive and have children. Sometimes women call these stars *uphephela* (propeller)²⁹⁵ and/or *phekepheke* (buzz like a bee). As such the association is the woman being so trained in being dutiful and industrious that she will make a good wife and this in itself will grant her the blessings she seeks. In neighbouring Umbumbulu, a similar shaped ornament is simply said to be, “part of the uniform of a *makoti* (bride)” [MM4481 A-B] (Winters 2000c). [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 1-4. MaNdimane Makhanya in wedding attire, Umbumbulu, 1975 (photographed at Bobson’s Studios, Durban) [Figure 1].

Such a star appears on a bridal apron (*iphinifa*) worn in 1970 by MaMvundlane Zulu from Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe [MM4869] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 1-4. Bridal apron (*iphinifa*) [MM4869] [Figure 3]] (Winters 2000c). The apron is of navy blue cloth and the beaded yellow star motif runs across the entire apron. The intersections formed are decorated with multi-coloured large plastic beaded triangles. The message reads, “*Ngikugobele ngamafutha omhlwehlwe njengenkanyesi emthuthu* [I am cutting the fat of a cow like the stars in a wide smoky (night) sky]” (MaVundlane Zulu 1998). The isiZulu rendition is ‘poetic’ and difficult to translate but essentially the bride claims to be so beautiful on her wedding day that she bemuses the bridegroom as if she were a star in a night sky. The star is yellow as it is

²⁹⁴ On my way to submit this thesis to my supervisor, an elderly Zulu petrol-pump attendant at Shongweni (near KwaZweleibomvu the Embo-Mkhize stronghold closest to Durban) parted with the words, “Thank you Maam, you are a star!” This probably as I needed him to check my radiator-water and gave him a sizeable tip. At the time I smiled to myself that the metaphor was ‘alive and well’ and this was like a ‘blessing’ to the thesis submission. On telling my sister her rejoinder was “but blacks don’t use such star terminology, its white phraseology isn’t it?” She also did not know that the Nguni have a fairly substantial repertoire of star-lore. I was reminded that this reference, which I had seen in beadwork I had forgotten was also found in other languages (no doubt world-wide), a fact that could be subverted as an African borrowing of European thinking. While no doubt it could be that, especially with the elderly petrol-pump attendant in his interaction with a white woman, it could equally derive from his culture (and that to which MaNdimane the beadworker belongs). The problem with metaphors is that, like all poetic speech, when used by ordinary persons it is expressed so subliminally (and as a formalic saying that has become a cliché through generations of usage) as to be hard to track in origin.

²⁹⁵ The argument for ‘stars’ being indigenous idiom discussed in the former footnote does not hold for “propellers” as this is both a western introduction and a rendering of an English word into isiZulu. Nevertheless, the fact that a bee is similarly depicted gives emphasis to the visual (and auditory?) similarity between insect and helicopter, the latter used by the old SAP/SADF to spot illicit dagga (hemp) fields, as also being used in mountain and sea rescue in the areas in question. While this is a borrowing, it has meaning only in terms of the experience of the beadworkers themselves.

further likened to the shimmering membrane of a cow's stomach-lining (*umhlwehlwe*)²⁹⁶ which Zulu ritual officiators place on the main hut's altar (*umsamo*) in honour of the ancestral-spirits during ritual sacrifice.

This complex image speaks on many levels; the correct rituals have been performed to invoke ancestral blessing and this will ensure that the bride will have the fortune which makes her a 'bright star' on her wedding day. There are further subliminal meanings which equate beauty to the compliance with correct custom and ritual which make the bride 'truly beautiful' (in Zulu perceptions) on her wedding day. Such beauty, while certainly physical (and related to all her finery, her lightening of complexion (termed *ikhompi* (from complexion), her weight gain and the application of Vaseline/fats on her body, all during her isolation in preparation for the 'big-day' (personal communication Nomusa Dube, April 1998), is above all spiritual, because she has conformed to correct custom, and hence her being likened to the cow's stomach-lining which is particularly pleasing to the ancestral spirits, not least for its indication of respect (*ukuhlonipha*) toward them. These understandings are from successive conversations with various Zulu persons, who while finding the isiZulu phraseology poetic and archaic, nevertheless could appreciate and access the communication: The smoky night-sky was described as the "Milky-way or *Umthala*" – as it seems to be visually "with its many stars" like "white smoke." An alternative simile for *umthala* (against the dark night-sky) is *uluso* which is used for the dark intestine (which is also part of the *umhlwehlwe* or stomach-lining) and once again this is a word commanding respect (*ukuhlonipha*) (personal communication Vusi Buthelezi, Durban, January 2013).

These isiZulu language associations no doubt make the piece particularly beautiful to Embo-Mkhize and Zulu traditionalists, but perplexing to the outsider who has never taken part in the culture's rituals and to whom the stomach-lining may even be somewhat repellent. Moreover, the use of deep indigo coloured cloth and chrome yellow beads (which the 'uninitiated' would suppose the maker instinctively selected), now seems more likely deliberately selected to impart this specific message (of *Umthala* or the Milky-way against the night-sky (*uluso*)). Thus, what at first seemed an ordinary beaded cloth apron or *iphinifa* proves to be quite spectacular in its true context. Still more interesting is the fact that the colour contrasts comply with supposed 'scientific' and accepted western colour theory (in that the particular blue tone stands across the colour-wheel from the particular yellow tone), making this apparently modest little item a singular visually successful artwork. It must of course also be recalled that this item of dress is worn by the bride as just one part of her finery on the wedding-day and it can be expected that the rest of her regalia will echo this communication in a more stunning way, particularly the pieces, like cape and head-dress that distinguish her as bride (personal communications Nomusa Dube, Dingani Mthethwa and Vusi Buthelezi, Durban, April 1990, October 2011, January 2013).

The normal banter of courting reflected in beadwork messages has been dealt with in Chapter 3 within the contexts of age-groups, and therefore also for particularly conventional cultural and positive sentiments which are repeated in engagement and marriage beadwork. Many field-collectors termed these "seemingly meaningless trivialities" (Stuart n.d. (KCM30929)

²⁹⁶ The *umhlwehlwe* is the name given to that part of animal's stomach that serves a particular ritual purpose. The word comes from the sound "hlwe" because fat makes that sound in fire... and here it is not called *amafuthi* or fat but rather an onomatopoeic sound, this because of respect for its part in a ritual. Thus an *ukuhlonipha* (respect) word. It is the stomach lining of either a goat or cow, whichever beast is slaughtered for ritual. Part of the beauty is this act of respect (*ukuhlonipha*) which is also respect for all creation and nature (personal communication Vusi Buthelezi, Durban, October 2011). For an image of a girl wearing the stomach-lining (*umhlwehlwe*) at her coming-of-age ceremony see Chapter 3: Figures 18-22.

the ‘promises of marriage’; for example, a cape (*isimbozo*) [MM4923] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 1-4. Cape (*isimbozo*), Ndwedwe [MM4923] [Figure 4] which belonged to MaShelembe Mdluli from Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe, which is decorated with two rows of seven open-weave beaded-pins in small glass beads, with motifs of zig-zag, diamond or diagonal bands set in a multi-coloured bead bases. MaShelembe wore the cape as a bride in 1976. Of the beaded pins, the central upper one with zig-zag in blue and white stripe beads ‘reads’ “*Wahamba njenge ntohoviyane yasehlobo* [my husband is hopping like a locust in summer].” This referred to his persistence in courting her despite rebuffs in compliance with the custom of making of herself ‘unavailable’, possibly in line with the norm for young girls (see Chapter 3). The multi-coloured bead base is termed “*isiyolovane*” (mixing)²⁹⁷ and the pattern as “*uyolovile*”, a reference to the mixed coloured pins standing for “all the things said (and promised) during courting (leading to marriage)” (MaShalembe Mdluli 1998).

Here the mixing of colours is a matter of “putting all the ‘talking colours’ together” (MaShalembe Mdluli 1998), and meant as a statement concerning the promises made by the husband during courting and on the wedding day (*wathembisa ukugana*). As such these stand in a form of a ‘document’ for all witnesses to recall these promises. So common is this patterning that when asking what promises are meant, the answer was “Oh, like we (the couple) will have a house, children, ‘and...and... (*njalo...njalo*)’²⁹⁸ ...” the last being taken as equivalent to any known conventional promises characteristic of the ritualised courting of Nguni cultures (personal communication Nomusa Dube, Durban, May 1998). No doubt, to the Orality-Literacy expert this indicates the ‘Additive’ aspects of mainly oral versus literate modes of communication (see Chapter 2).

A variation on the promises of courting are found in MaMdluli Ndlovu’s (of Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe), 1969 cape and back-skirt (*utshodo*) [MM4972A-B] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 5-7. Cape and backskirt (*utshodo*), Ndwedwe [MM4972A-B]. [Figures 5] (Winters 2000b).²⁹⁹ The series of alphabetical letters “all say I love him (husband)” while the stars ‘say’ “I am a star (on my wedding-day).” As such MaMdluli terms the motifs “*uZulumathonsi*” (Zulu mottos) taking from the many coloured star, heart and shield shaped sweets made from candy, with echoing sentiments in red writing in isiZulu (also found in English) and obtainable from trading-stores (usually a handful for a few cents) in the 1950-70s. The sentiments ‘read’ for example as “you are my star”, “you are my shield”, and “I love you” and the like.³⁰⁰ The arrow shapes refer to MaMdluli’s elation on the day of the wedding, in which she was “flying like an aeroplane (with joy)” (MaMdluli Ndlovu 1998).

The women of Umbumbulu/Umkomaas refer to courting visits so frequently that the *amazethizethi* (zig-zag or meandering) pattern forms a base pattern of many items of both courting and marriage beadwork of the 1970s. This pattern is often described metaphorically

²⁹⁷ The closest Zulu-English Dictionary word is *isiyoliyoli* –nicely cooked. From verb *yola* v.intr. 1. be well made, thoroughly done. 2. tr. bewitch, hypnotize ; *yolanisa* v.tr. 1. mix thoroughly; cook well. 2. work spell against. (Doke ,et al., 1977:333).

²⁹⁸ *Njalo* –continually, always, repeatedly (Dent and Nyembezi 1984:431).

²⁹⁹ Written-up in, Winters, Y. ‘Zulu beaded marriage cape from Ndwedwe, Kwa-Zulu Natal’ in Becker, R; and Keene, J. (Eds.), *Art Routes: a guide to South African art collections*. Witwatersrand University Galleries and Human and Rousseau (2000).

³⁰⁰ At the time of writing up the insert for Wits Galleries, I checked out this reference with a number of persons, most especially with Muslim traders, the Ishmael and Sarangs of Rosetta, KwaZulu-Natal, who all recalled them well. The sweets which were my favourite as a child appear to be no longer made but a Zulu friend who emigrated to the USA brought me a packet of ones from there with English writing on them.

as “the way of courting [*indlela yokuyokweshela*]” (MaNdimande Makhanya 1994) and derives from a man following rivers and mountains in his courting visits to his betrothed. As in MaNdimande Makhanya’s beaded heart (*inhliziy*) [MM4473] discussed in Chapter 1, point 1.3. [see Appendices. Chapter 1: Figures 11-12. Beaded heart (*inhliziy*) from Umbumbulu [MM4473] [Figure 12]], these *amazithizethi* zig-zag lines, are often combined with tree-shaped motifs in reference to the place of courting (outside the homestead under trees (indigenous euphorbia (*umhlonhlo*) in this case) in the landscape. Contained in a heart (*inhliziy*) shape,³⁰¹ this forms the most quintessential reference to courting and the happiness of the female at being in love, being proposed to, wooed and finally married. While MaNdimande’s beaded heart was discussed elsewhere in the thesis, here I want to include more background to the symbolism involved: The overall message of the wearer/beadworker is, “My heart is so happy (because today I am married) [*Inhliziy yami iyajabula (ngiyashada namuhlanje)*]” (MaNdimane Makhanya 1994). It is in the decoding of this message according to its motifs and symbols that one comes to appreciate the integration of, ‘message, text and medium’ as discussed under the section on Orality-Literacy Studies in Chapter 2. MaNdimande wore this piece along with other such ornaments in what was termed an *iveyili* (a word borrowed from the English ‘veil’ as worn by a western bride) in 1975 (see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 1-4. MaNdimande Makhanya in wedding-attire, Umbumbulu. 1975 (photographed at Bobson’s Studios, Durban) [Figure 2]).

To return to MaNdimande’s ornament, the motifs of trees refer to courting days (seated under trees) and no meaning was given for the double diamonds, but this could be because she was not asked as the pattern tends to be subsumed within the zig-zag base. One striking feature of beadwork is that negative or base patterns often carry the basic contextual message, and these zig-zags or *amazithizethi* which appear to be mere whimsical decoration, are in fact a reference to the future husband’s courting-visits. Such claims of happiness can equally describe conformity to cultural expectation and female-identity roles, this on the part of many if not most traditionalist women. This may also be the reason that nearly all women from the same area will have elements of such motifs within their beadwork, even where they describe them as ‘just decoration’ (*uhlobisa*), for the elements have become in effect, area conventions, particularly reflective of tractable traditionalist women who uphold the cultural norms for female identity.

I wish to emphasise the density of meaning in regard to this issue and thus I include a cape and back-skirt (*utshodo*) [MM4889-4890] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 5-7. Cape and backskirt (*utshodo*), Ndwedwe. [MM4889-4890] [Figures 6-7]] that I have dealt with on a number of occasions and in exhibitions: namely ‘An item of dress or a work of art?’ in "*Jabulisa 2000 : The art of KwaZulu-Natal*" (2000) (Winters 2000a). One reason I return to this piece is that it prompted my fascination with the beadwork patterning of the peoples of Ndwedwe, because what appeared to my eye as mere abstractions, and which I determined to retain as such (having even named the piece “The neo-Kandinsky cape”) was far more complex than I anticipated. However, field-collector Nomusa Dube (MaDube Sibisi) insisted upon my sharing in the cape’s meaning as told by the owner’s daughter-in-law, who she had brought to Durban to introduce to me. This meaning’s expressive layers were readily perceived by Zulu colleagues, yet I had to carefully decipher them in order

³⁰¹ The heart in Zulu thinking is the seat of human emotions, such as hope, courage, desire and appetite (Doke and Vilakazi 1948:330) and the Reverend Döhne in his 1857 Zulu-English dictionary includes the heart as the seat of will, understanding and consciousness (Döhne 1857:135-6). Zulu will generally say, “*Inhliziy yami ithi* [My heart says...]” while gesturing with the hand to the heart.

to understand: So as to help the reader follow this personally disquieting but exciting discovery, I quote from my writing on the cape and back-skirt (Winters 2000a):

MaMgwamanda Mdluli³⁰² has worked into the motifs and colours of the upper section of her cape the following communication or statement about herself: The central pink star-shape declares "*ngiyinkanyezi yomuzi* [I am the star of the home]." The two tree-shapes are to be read as one, "*ngiyisihlahla esiluhlazana* [I am a green tree]" and "*ngiyindoni yamanzi* [I am the fruit of the umdoni tree]."³⁰³

The blue cross indicates "*ungenzele isiphambano solwandle* [he (husband) is making the cross of the sea]", while the yellow cross is there merely to balance the design, a process described as "*ngigcwalisela ukhlobisa* [I am adding (a motif/ pattern or colour) for decoration]." The series of square-edged triangles are "*ucezu lwenyanga*" (half-moons). The other isolated motifs and the base pattern were not 'read' and are to be taken in their form as regional identifiers (MaMgwamanda Mdluli 1998).

For the interpretation of the lower section of her cape, the maker declared that the alphabetical patterning is meant to represent writing, "*Ohe! zenda zangishiya ezangakithi* [Oh poor me, all the girls of my age went to get married and left me (behind)]." MaMgwamanda is illiterate and uses the individual alphabetical letters to stand for whole words. Thus 'E hh E' means '*Ehe!* (Oh poor me ..)', 'Z' stands for '*zenda* (getting married)', 'K T H' stands for '*ezanga kithi* (girls of my village)'. The function of the double '8' 'H' 'P' and other shapes on the end of the cape or back-skirt was said to be "to complete the pattern" and thus "it is not important for them to be interpreted"³⁰⁴ (MaMgwamanda Mdluli, 1998).

The deeper meaning of these motifs' communications reflects a declaration of MaMgwamanda's life-story; in the upper cape section she says that she has married late in life (as indicated by the half-moons), having been jilted by a former lover (the pink colour used in the star indicating that she is no longer a virgin (if she had been it would have been rendered in white); but she has married an old man (the symbol for joining in legal union being a cross which in this case is blue, "because he still has the passions of the ever pounding sea" - presumably he is still sexually active).³⁰⁵

³⁰² The reader needs to appreciate the difficulty faced by a researcher who straddles the disciplines of Social Anthropology and Art. I have a consistent dilemma – do I give the name of a beadworker/wearer, where there may be negative connotations to her life-history, where the names are a vital insight into the communities and their history and impact the data interpretation and more-over the maker is an artist. This in a world in which African artists and women have been un-acknowledged, in accord with Social Anthropology's ethical methodologies. If a maker does not request to remain anonymous and moreover has sold her items along with their documentation to a museum, what decision does one take? I have not resolved this, other than to leave out details in many cases of more negative communications. What I have done is exclude the personal name of the husband but not the surname, as there are very many persons with that clan name in the particular area of origin and giving the area just as much gives the likely clan/family/surname, and moreover it is often that a surname and praise name will be in the beadwork itself, but details as to position of the husband and his first name I have withheld. I also keep out the woman's personal name (unless she specifically gives it), only using her family/clan's name (as equally common to an area) appending the "Ma" as indicative of marriage. None of this precludes any person from the area seeing the piece and saying "Oh but that is Ma (So and so's)... piece, I remember it at the beer-drink, etc." The names are of course also on the museum record but kept from all but *bona fide* researchers. A further argument for it not being as unethical to give a name if one considers the cultural realities of what in the west maybe considered negative character assassination very often being acceptable 'praise-poetry' (as outlined in this chapter's introduction) then it is a moot point.

³⁰³ 'Waterboom' or umdoni are common names for the *Syzygium cordatum* tree. It is found near water and bears edible berries. (Branford 1996) (Winters 2000a).

³⁰⁴ This isiZulu (phrases and words used not alphabetical design) is said to be "old fashioned and regional, not that used in urban areas" (personal communication Lindi Mthembu Durban, April 2000) (Winters 2000a).

³⁰⁵ In Afrikaans there is a saying, "*Hy is oud maar nie koud nie* (He may be old but he is not cold (yet)!", this innuendo is about the closest in meaning to that expressed in MaMgwamanda's symbolism (personal communication Zandile Gumede (daughter-in-law to MaMgwamanda), Durban, 1998) (Winters 2000a).

Finally she refers to herself as a dark complexioned beauty who is also fertile (as indicated by the green and mauve tree-shapes). It is a Zulu convention to describe a dark complexioned girl as "dark and³⁰⁶ lovely as a ripe fruit of the *umdoni* tree" (hence the two colours go together in this simile³⁰⁷) and rendered as two balancing tree-shapes, they are meant to be understood as a single statement.³⁰⁸ The context of the lower section's message, lies in the fact that while her age-mates were being courted, betrothed and married, MaMgwamanda grew older waiting for a proposal of marriage. This lower section dates from her pre-engagement days. This may also give an idea as to why the two sections are crafted in disparate styles, the upper one depending upon motifs and colours and the lower one consisting of 'writing'.

Whatever the dating of the two sections, together they serve to complete MaMgwamanda's life-story. The upper section is particularly celebratory at her having found a husband and being in the process of getting married, while the lower section invites an insight into her vulnerability and hurt at the heavy hand of fate which had delayed this process. Couched in the language of poetic simile the hidden reference is to fecundity, sexual powers and the rhythm of life, all important to a Zulu woman who measures her worth against her capacity to bear children: the basis of her story was the threat that she may never have found a husband which could only have been a travesty to her, in her role as female within a traditionalist milieu.

In summary, these capes are both ceremonial and celebratory, serving to cover the bride as a sign of her respecting (*ukuhlonipha*) of her in-laws, while the colours/motifs communicate the bride's story for public witness. Although the style, technique, bead size, colours/motifs and associated ideas are shared by the community, each woman expresses her individuality and indeed life-story in her choice of these elements. The concurrence found in the upper section between decisive communication and differentiated balanced image makes MaMgwamanda's cape a singularly successful work of art. The lower section's message, encoded in single letters standing for words, shows a period in the history of beadwork when symbolism and motif were devised, developed and retained in the memory of persons in a traditionally oral society (Winters 2000a).

³⁰⁶ Here and there the text of the original article has been corrected, clarified and changed, particularly the reference structure, so as to conform to the dissertation. One word I changed is placing an "and" instead of the original "but" in this translation of an isiZulu idiom, this because of the subtleties of translating the original. My mind assumed there to be a "but" and not an "and", however since I originally wrote the article, I am relaxed enough with Zulu friends to ask the 'politically incorrect' question, if this description for the girl implies a "never mind... you are dark, *but* still lovely and fertile", this is not the isiZulu meaning of this commonly found idiom, for generally a dark complexioned girl *is* lovely and thought to be fertile. My excuse is that MaMgwamanda's life-story, of delayed marriage, despite being the leader of the dance-group (and no longer a virgin at marriage, and then becoming third wife to an old man), lead me to assume this "but" instead of an "and" which is not to be found in the isiZulu idiomatic meaning; yet there could still well have been elements of this "but" in this complex communication, for I had asked the field-collector and the daughter-in-law, if the maker was indeed so dark and got a shared joke between them as answer, namely that when the maker was photographed she became 'invisible' (as she was so dark). Even this that I took as dislike for the woman, I have subsequently learnt is a common enough 'teasing' among Zulu, who are generally ruthlessly honest in interactions. This is not perceived as cruel the way it would be in, for instance, English South African society and as such it is typical of the oral style (personal communication Mxolisi Mchunu Cape Town, August 2004 and Vusi Buthelezi, Durban, January 2013).

³⁰⁷ To make matters really complex is that the same mauve (but a different green (lighter) are to be found in a MaHlope Dladla's apron [MM4926] where the imagery then refers to rival co-wives. This is discussed under the section on 'Rivalries' below.

³⁰⁸ When a Zulu girl is of dark complexion she will be described as "*umyama kodwa muhle*" (she is dark and (but) beautiful) and as "*umdoni yamanzi*" (she is a (dark ripe) fruit of the umdoni tree). This is a single image, beauty and fertility being one and the same. A light complexioned Zulu beauty has another description (personal communication Dingani Mthethwa, Durban, 1999)(Winters 2000a).

I have noted³⁰⁹ the disparity of the under back-apron to the top part or cape, separated in time and in status position of the owner by the act of marriage itself, yet worn together at the wedding. I was intrigued at MaMgwamunda's "*Ehhe!*" translating to a visual alphabetical image of "E,E -H,H -E,E", that can be described as a double '*Ehhe!* (Oh poor me!)'. So too, I tried to figure out the illiterate MaMgwamunda's "K (backwards) H T" standing for "*Kethi*" and "K (backwards) O, Z (backwards)" for "*Zenda*." I made my best effort to decipher it, as did the person who helped me (personal communication Lindi Mthembu, Durban, October, 2000), but neither of us were successful and the illiterate maker herself would have no doubt been flustered if pressed to answer, for possibly, to her own mind, the way she depicts it using stray elements of alphabetical letters found in the isiZulu words she intended, is enough to prime her recall in an oral society. This however does not take away from the maker's ingenuity in using these alphabetical pictograms, as with the double '*Ehhe!*' an emphasis on her sigh at her allotment. Her subsequent cape (upper section) then completes the communication with her changed status after marriage and its colours and motifs capture her joy and triumph at this culturally desired accomplishment.

This last brings me to similar communications of women from neighbouring Umbumbulu and Umkomaas who also use apparently random motifs to indicate joy, happiness, luck and blessings (almost always associated with marriage). One of the more uncomplicated communications as to happiness at getting married is to be seen in the random motifs depicting 'V', 'X' and 'W' and diamond shapes set against multi-coloured dotted with black on a belt (*ibhande*)³¹⁰ of MaCwabe Makhanya of Umkomaas marrying at Umbumbulu in 1976 [MM4492] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 8-10. Belt (*ibhande*), Umbumbulu [MM4492] [Figure 8]]. The motif is to 'say' "*Ngiyajabula* [I am happy (to be getting married)]" (MaCwabe Makhanya 1994).

The next set of aprons or girdles (*indelelo*) [MM4475-6] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 8-10. Aprons (*indelelo*), Umbumbulu [MM4475-6] [Figure 9]] date from the early 1970s, and consist of many joined beadwork strips with writing and/or motifs, that belonged to MaNdimande Makhanya of Umbumbulu. They are perhaps most characteristic of that area's marriage beadwork, whereas the cape and back-skirt (*utshodo*) is characteristic of Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe area's marriage beadwork/dress. The upper girdle [MM4475] 'reads' from right to left; "*Fida* [support me (my husband)]/ *Esazabla* [I am better than others (as I am a virgin on marriage)]/ *Yini (Nkinga?)* [What is the problem?]/ *Kubi+Dali* [Is there something wrong Darling [?] (to husband)]/ *Elema+i(n)dab(a)* + flower motif [You must listen to the nice news!]"'. While the lower apron [MM4476] 'reads' from right to left; "*B(h)ekesela+thulabol(a)* [keep quiet and wait (for lobola to be paid)]/ *Hawayna* [?]/

³⁰⁹ Some of my notes when writing up this interpretation indicate the complexity of the design in relation to the isiZulu language: It was suggested that the two trees were to be read as one, as "dark and beautiful and fruitful (Italics mine)"; that a simile was termed an *isisho* in isiZulu, while a metaphor was an *izaka*, evidently this imagery can be classified as both; if someone was dark and beautiful "she *is* (then) a berry of the water (*umyama kodwa muhle*)."(Italics mine). The cross symbol *is* "the knot of truth, that does not change" (hence used to swear an oath, here of a marriage union) in this it presupposes that one cannot change a metaphor that has become aphorism/saying/proverb. (Italics mine) (personal communication Dingani Mthethwa, Durban, 3 December 1999). To balance a design "*Ngigcwalisela ukuhlobisa* [I am adding these for decoration – I balance the design]" follows upon the maker's statement "*The talk is finished* – but here (pointing to the element in the beadwork item) I am balancing – adding (to balance the design)" (MaMgwamanda Mdluli 1989). Of course a woman would be pointing to the actual colours and motifs when making her claims as to her intended meaning, this would no doubt simplify the confusion for someone reading a written text as to meaning.

³¹⁰ Note that sometimes I have an 'h' inserted in a word, while at other's not. This is not bad spelling but the fact that the people (like those studied in this thesis) who come from closer to the borders of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape have a 'softer' language use than do the Zulu of the north. However standardised isiZulu requires the 'h' (personal communication Mxolisi Mchunu, Durban, 2003). It is also true that older Zulu persons as well as whites like Tyrrell and Anderssen (referenced in this thesis) use the 'softer' isiZulu. In this one must recall that the language even now remains heavily oral.

Ungezabi (plus the next beaded strip) *hleka* + small hearts, ‘clouds’, diamonds, dots [tell your first wife not to worry about me, she must be happy!]” (MaNdimande Makhanya 1994).

Not only is writing a deviation from former geometric and colour motifs but the last beaded strips (of both upper and lower sections of MM4475-6) contain a combination of the earlier style of motif as image (here flowers taken to mean “nice” and ‘floating heart/‘cloud’/diamond/ dot shapes) along with words (*Elema* + *i(n)daba* and *Ungezabi* + *hleka*) that together complete the messages. The pieces also include incorrect spelling as the maker described herself as home-taught and longing to learn to read and write, saying “*Ngifunda ngelampi* [I wish to use the lamp (to read/write (at night)³¹¹].” Another significant feature worth pointing out is the ‘Zulu-ised’ version of the English word of endearment “Darling” and the combination of colours set against a multi-coloured base. The same woman said that the beadwork changed during this period from multi-coloured bead geometric shapes in black surrounds set in a white base to multi-coloured beads dotted with black as the base itself (combining colours with black indicates a ‘lighter’ tone to complete black which has a traditionally negative connotation) and that this change was so that Christian Africans (identified one may surmise as dressed in white possibly for church and weddings) needed to be differentiated from *Amabinca* (Skin-wearers) or *Amahedini* (Heathens), as she called herself as a traditionalist African. This beading change is a positive as regards self-image and not negative as one may think (despite the descriptive names for traditionalists, both of which derive from comparison with Christian and Mission Zulu), for it derives from the traditionalists themselves who wished to differentiate themselves from their Christian neighbours (MaNdimande Makhanya 1994).

One cannot overemphasise the role of women in terms of home-building; this as more than just being nurturer, but literally in adding to the numbers of a husband’s family/clan in the number of children they bear. Historian Jeff Guy ‘Gender oppression in Southern Africa’s pre-colonial societies’ in *Workshop on Regionalism and Restructuring in Natal* ([1988] 1990) speaks in terms of the “reproductive power” of traditionalist Zulu women, this in the light of the past when a man’s wealth was measured in terms of his cattle and wives. Guy also talks of the female role in agricultural labour and what this brought to the economy (Guy [1988] 1990:28-31). Guy’s commentary can be extrapolated to beadwork communications in which it could be argued that women know that their fertility is a powerful ‘negotiatary tool’, for invariably this is couched in terms of their own parents’ ‘good name’ (it is a disgrace to fall pregnant before marriage in strictly traditional homes, as mentioned under Chapter 3 on age-sets) and a virgin bride is of great value to the husband’s family. Harriette Ngubane in *Body and mind in Zulu Medicine* (1977) considers the symbolic liminal position of women in Nguni society, as one possessing “reproductive power” while yet being outsiders to the family/clan they bear children to, hence their so often being suspected of witchcraft (Ngubane 1977:114). While discussed in Chapter 4, here I wish merely to point out these understandings’ importance in any interpretation of beadwork communications found in the field. In the *indelelo* girdle [MM4521] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 8-10. Section of girdle (*indelelo*), Umkomaas [MM4521] [Figure 10] of MaNcalane Mkhize from Englelela, Umkomaas c1970s, the bride is ‘saying’ in effect; “*Mkhize* [husband’s surname]/ *Gubhela* [husband’s praisename]/ *Lihle* [is beautiful]/ *Nakimi* [to me]/ *Lalela* [you can listen]/ *Ulele* [you must not sleep³¹²]/ *Luyle* [?]/ *Zula* [?]”³¹³ / a rectangular motif (a house plan) said

³¹¹ The ‘at night’ is a reference to the work-ethic of traditionalists where even school going children (particularly girls) must first see to making food, feeding chickens, etc., before setting off for school (personal communication Bongzi Mdlalose, Durban, April 2013).

³¹² The explanation for an incorrect translation (it should be “you are sleeping”) is given in text although the translator made a corrective comment which I rejected, because of the text explanation having come from the field-collector, so I assume this was the maker’s intended

to mean “*Ngikwakhele indlu* [I am making this house for you]”/ *He(!)* (exclamation)/ *Ulele* [you are sleeping]/ *Uyka* [?]” (the last three beaded strips are missing from the photograph image) (MaNcalane Mkhize 1994). The two translations of the same isiZulu word ‘ulele’ is as indicated in the footnote but the maker possibly intended an indictment against ‘laziness’ abhorred in traditionalist culture, which would also explain the exclamation of indignation “*He (!)*”. This repetition would conform to that known of an oral society’s communications. In this case the owner/beadworker would be claiming something of the moral ‘high-ground’ and signaling to her in-laws that she has the correct attitude for a wife. Spelling errors derive from MaNcalane being illiterate, she described herself as wishing to “say” rather than “write” ‘such and such’ and would get a literate person to write the word she wanted and copy in her beading (MaNcalane Mkhize 1994).

Not all houses are in the form of an outline-plan like that in MaNcalane’s *indelelo* discussed above, some are in the form of v-shapes. I include the accompanying rather unprepossessing *indelelo* girdle [MM4518] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 11-13. Girdle (*indelelo*), *Umkomaas* [MM4518][Figure 11] because of the owner’s rejoinder as to how she came by the v-shapes to depict a home. The owner/maker MaMthethwa Mkhize from Engolela, Umkomaas, claimed she had wondered “how to make a house” (this in the 1970s), and then looked at the roof of a rondavel, it was this shape she copied (that is, the v-shape). She has in fact also copied the v- shapes for “*Ngizokwakhela umuzi* [I will make you this house/home]”, on a co-wife MaNcalane’s beaded ornament [MM4529] [see Figure 23].³¹⁴ The word “*Ohe(!)*” means “Oh dear, poor me!” and is very often found in beadwork in the period of the 1970-80s, as expressive of the psychological anguish of a bride (*makoti*) having to move to the husband’s patrilocal homestead (MaMthethwa and MaNcalane Mkhize 1994).

I have selected some imagery from Umbumbulu/Umkomaas that helps one realise that particularly obscure imagery may well have a meaning and that often the most ‘strange’ motifs are actual attempts at pictographic communications between a woman and her future husband and/or for public witness of her circumstances, changed status, expectations and/or any disappointments experienced. The photographic detail of sections of beadwork of joined strips of an *indelelo* girdle [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 11-13. Entire and sections of girdle (*indelelo*)[MM4598] [Figures 12-13] of MaMkhize Nyadi of Engolela, Umkomaas, c1970, communicates the following: All the bases are in the multi-coloured dotted with black beads characteristic of the area’s conventions, the first square has seven blocks in blue-and-white-stripe beads, royal blue, yellow and sky-blue beads meaning “*Ngokukhanya kwalumuzi* [I am the light of this house].” The next square with red-and-white-stripe beads in a square above a line with double triangles on the lower edge, underscored by a similar such line only in yellow, ‘reads’ “*Ngizovula amasango isibaya* [I am coming to open the gates of the cattle-kraal (speaking of bearing children which will bring the in-laws labola (that is, cattle) payments)].” The next beaded square with a motif of a yellow cross ‘reads’ “*Ngihlangana nomdeni waka Nyadi* [I am coming to join the Nyadi family (in marriage)].” This is followed

meaning. This, even although a negative in isiZulu should be ‘*awulele*’. This is fairly characteristic of translating these girdles writing-motifs which are both the product of illiterate makers and very cryptic, possibly also because of design space constraints.

³¹³ I include the translators comment “ not clear and I don’t even know what to suggest because these two words, especially the first one ‘*luyile*’ means nothing. It isn’t even a Zulu word “(Mchunu 2013) as it is indicative of much beadwork writing, the reason being that women are often illiterate but they may well have given their intended meaning to the field-collector. This is an interesting aspect of writing in beadwork on which more research needs to be done.

³¹⁴ I am unsure if this indicates jealousy as to who came with the first idea or respect for the co-wife, as MaNcalane is a more senior wife, but then one would expect her to have mentioned her indebtedness to MaMthethwa. It is these dynamics that offer a possibility of return validation visits although other factors would then be at play, time passing, choosing to forget, etc. What it does indicate is the complexity of the subject.

by a beaded square with a motif in blue and white stripe beads in a cross-shaped 'outline' with a yellow/green [?] stripe at the centre, communicating "Ngizokwakha indlukulu [I am coming to make a big house (as the first wife (of two)).]" These four beaded squares' motifs were the only ones discussed by the owner (MaMkhize Nyadi 1995). While I cannot say why some motif-images are discussed while others are not, nor why the item is in a bad condition or why some of the base patterns are in line-form while others are stippled, I surmise (from numerous discussions with field-collectors) that one or more of the following explanations may apply: There was no meaning and the motifs were just decoration or repetitions to balance the design, or meant to emphasise a communication, but this fact has been consistently ignored in the recall to the point of forgetting the reason it was originally inserted. The meaning is thus forgotten for whatever reason (it may also be that the memory is unpleasant, no longer relevant or the item was made by another or even as in the case of more modern pieces, hired for an occasion as merely 'respect of custom (*amasiko*)'). Further, this could result in later recall proving too lengthy for the field-collector and beadworker/seller to discuss in the time allowed them (personal communication Nomusa Dube, Gertrude Dube and Nesta Zondi, Durban, 1990-2009). The comment as to the item being left un-interpreted, because it was made by another woman, may apply to this girdle [MM5498] of MaMkhize, which would certainly explain the two joined yet distinctly different patterned and constructed sections. Furthermore, as other women from the area claim mothers and aunts to have made strips for their *indelelo* girdles, one could surmise this as a reason for the disparate elements, in addition to the reluctance to attempt recall and interpretation of meanings for all the motifs within the girdle. In support of this contention is the fact that the un-interpreted second half of the girdle has area conventions like "*hehe*" and "*eheh(he)*" which are often explained in other women's girdles as being female supportive ululating (*ukukikiza*) at a wedding and/or other ritual celebration in the wearer's honour. If the maker/wearer fails to give her understanding as in this case, one has to deduce by context, I would be inclined (in the light of the other communications) to assume this is congratulatory ululating and the item was possibly beaded (as suggested) by an aunt or grandmother.

A comment needs to be inserted here regarding the references to making a house or home. While Guy (1988) suggests "reproductive power" on the part of women, Magwaza in *Orality and its cultural expression in some Zulu traditional ceremonies* (1993) gives a more culturally relative insight, namely that the chants at the *umabo* ceremony (gift-giving) between the bride and groom's families "incorporates the concept of "building the homestead" and it is recited out of joy that the family's name will not die, thus each wedding is referred to as "homestead re-building" i.e. *ukwakhiwa komuzi/ukuvuka komuzi*" (Magwaza 1993:89). She gives the chant of the leader of the groom's songs "*Wabuya umakoti* [The bride comes home] and the audience respond "*Siyabonga ndodana, siyabonga ngomakoti* [Thank you, son, thank you for the bride]" and in a second song the leader chants "*Uyavuka umuzi* [The homestead is resurrected] and the audience respond "*Sewakhiwe umuzi* [the homestead is now built]" (Magwaza 1993:89).

Thus not all commonly depicted motifs (as in trees, alphabetical shapes, *ukukikiza* (ululating), sighing or exclaiming) found in either the Umbumbulu/Umkomaas or greater Ndwedwe /Emkhambathini areas are interpreted in exactly the same way by all women in any of these communities, despite sharing a regional convention as to beadwork motifs, colours or styles. Nevertheless there are similarities and whatever meanings are given, these do invariably concur with Nguni cultural values/thinking or world-view and these will therefore enlighten the viewer as to possible and likely interpretations. Having said this, one must nevertheless allow for idiosyncrasies that relate to the maker's own life-story. To indicate the realities of

this I refer to MaHlope Dlodla's cape and back-skirt [MM4924-5][Figure 27] placed under section 3. Disappointments.... And her apron [MM4926][Figure 37] placed under section 5. Rivalries.... Further, I note that all these women who use similar motifs, colours and/or base patterns, unique life-stories should be considered in any attempts to interpret their beadwork, even when and where they may appear to be only conforming to area conventions. This can of course only be done where the information/documentation was collected.

Incidences of synchronism between beadwork pattern/motif and culturally significant meaning (linked to female tasks and identity), are found in both Ndwedwe and Umkomaas/Umbumbulu. An example is the cultural reference to the importance of corn (mealies), however the motif conventions in the two areas differ vastly from one another. This can be seen in the comparison of the cape (*isikhafu/utshodo*) of MaDlamini Mdluli from Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe [MM4951] with those in the neighbouring Umbumbulu/Umkomaas area of MaNdimande Makhanya's apron (*incwayo*) [MM 4479] and the girdle (*indelelo*) of MaLembethe Mkhize [MM4578]. [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 14-16. Cape (*utshodo*), Ndwedwe [MM4951] [Figure 14]. And top to bottom: Part of headband [MM5414]; Section of apron [MM4479]; two necklaces (*izibebe*) from Umbumbulu/Umkomaas [MM4548A-B] [Figure 15]. And section of girdle (*indelelo*), Umkomaas [MM4578][Figure 16].

Both the cape of MaDlamini [MM4951] and a beaded front apron of MaNdimande [MM 4479] date from the mid-1970s, and refer obliquely to the role of married women in agriculture and the planting of maize and millet, an activity important within early Nguni life-style where each wife had her own hut and fields, from which she feed her children on home-ground corn and/or millet (*ummbila*), and moreover brewed beer for important occasions. MaDlamini termed the yellow plant motif at the top centre of her cape [MM4951] "*ummbila wehlobo*" (mealies of summer) and used it to communicate "*Ngiyothala ummbila ohlobo* [I am coming to grind the mealies in summer]" (MaDlamini Mdluli 1998). Her other motifs 'read' as conventions discussed in other women's beadwork from the area. The owner came from Mapumalanga (KwaZwelibomvu), an Embo-Mkhize chiefdom that falls between Ndwedwe and Umkomaas, which may account for this mention of corn-grinding (also beer-brewing) which is more commonly found in the beadwork motifs in the neighbouring Embo-Mkhize strongholds of Umkomaas and Umbumbulu (as seen in the other images [Figures 14-16]).

The predominance of a blue-and-white-stripe bead is characteristic of the Umbumbulu/Umkomaas areas and is termed "*Totoviyane*"(or *Izintotoviyane*)³¹⁵ or "Locust(s)". The headband (*unqwazo*) [MM4514] with both such beads and green beads surrounding gilt buttons is meant to communicate that the woman is coming to her new home in summer (the time in which locusts emerge) so as to grow mealies (the task of a wife, hence she indicates with her respect (*ukuhlonipha*) headband that she is marrying). The apron section (*incwayo*) [MM4479] is interesting in that it is termed the "pattern of the grandmothers", which the father of the maker requested her to retain for "respect of custom [*ukuhlonipha amasiko*]." (MaNdimande Makhanya 1994). The two beadwork patch necklaces (*izibebe*) [MM4548D-F] with blocks of blue-and-white-stripe beads alternating with black beads are said to mean the maker is now to put on the black leather-skirt (*isidwaba*) of marriage and to "grind mealies for her husband (in her new home)", again the reference is to the tasks of a wife upon marriage (MaNdimande Makhanya 1994 and MaDube Mkhize 1994).

³¹⁵ "*In(izin) totoviyane* (From to, throw, *tovi*, a dialectic difference from *utavi*, stench, and *ane*, a little thing....) A species of locust without wings, and so called from being overcast with blackish, stinking matter" (J. Döhne 1857:354).

MaLembethe Mkhize's (from Engolela, Umkomaas) *indelelo* girdle [MM4578] has the most obvious rendition of maize plants (*ummbila*), in a pictographic form which is also in blue and white stripe *totoviyane* (locust) beads. The motif is set against a base of multi-coloured dotted with black beads in a pattern termed *isiyolovane* (mixing) (MaLembethe Mkhize 1995).

2. Honouring the home, in-laws and ancestors. Regionalism and conventions in area design

The concept of respecting/avoidance (*ukuhlonipha/ukuzila*) as it reflects on indigenous Nguni design has been dealt with in Chapter 1, point 1.3., Patterning and decorating and their cultural significance. I need to point out that these behaviours or moral codes are important to the concepts to be discussed in the present section. Honouring is another name for respecting the ancestors and their living decedents and the the Nguni home is not a home if there are no ancestors (one with the married woman's in-law-family in a patrilineal kinship-system) and ancestors are in turn linked to regionalism and area design conventions in two fundamental ways: Firstly dress and beadwork of a certain design is identifiable with a certain local area and secondly this area is invariably the homeland of a particular family or clan (and hence group of ancestors (*amadlozi*)). Women, upon whom the onus of such respect and avoidance mores fall, come from other areas (and families/clans) and marry into those of their husbands (and their ancestors), so marriage dress and beadwork itself must pay homage to these persons/entities who have blessed the woman's entry amongst them via lobola marriage payment with respective ritual ceremonies and introductions discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Much beadwork 'speaks' on the new bride's (*makoti*) behalf, often as a declaration of her new status, greetings (to the new home) and/or obedience to the roles/behaviours expected for her in this home. The obvious consequence would be that a new wife to the patrilineal home is also signalling the degree of traditionalist cultural conservatism or 'good breeding/rearing' reflective of her own home, this by her compliant and hospitable hard-working character. Further, her real worth will not only be measured against these traits but by her fecundity, which is not a matter of 'mere accident' (as in modern western thought), but dependent upon the rewards for correct ritual, obedience and respect of both the living and deceased (hence sacred) domain. On entry to her new home it is her beadwork and dress's 'tacit communications' that signal much of this, hence one could say that a 'bride's beadwork speaks for her'. One striking element in such attire is the subtleties of overlap between a bride's individual character and her pride in her own customary retentions, where western notions of 'ego' are arguably but the obverse of 'rightful' pride in traditionalist enculturation.

Of the communications in the joined beadwork strips, making up the *indelelo* girdle of marriage of MaDube Mkhize from Engolela, Umkomaas in the late 1960s [MM4553] [see [Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 17-20. Girdle \(*indelelo*\), Umkomaas \[MM4553\]\[Figure 17\]](#)], I wish to concentrate on just the central broad panel with the royal blue words "*Lunga hala(h a)la* [You must be quiet (and) have a nice wedding!]." This was given by the owner's mother and it is an injunction to the bride to be respectful (the translation used commonly is "quiet") so as not to disgrace the Dube family back home at KwaZwelebomvu (MaDube Mkhize 1994). Even a "nice wedding" could be said to be a translation for an euphemism for a respectful marriage in which good behaviour, which conforms to that of a respectful wife in customary thinking, will of itself bring blessings to the new home. Of interest is MaDube's reluctance to 'read' these messages in her beadwork. Once again this was because she herself was seldom the author thereof and moreover she was illiterate so told the field-collector "You read them, you are educated!" (personal communication Nomusa Dube, December 1994). She had also unpicked beadwork for her daughter's trousseau (*umabo*) and her items were in a general state of disrepair (MaDube Mkhize 1994).

It is against the above commentary that one can appreciate the importance of regional identifiers or style in beadwork and dress and most women will keep to criteria of combinations of colours, sizes of bead as well as motifs and base pattern as an area convention. Ndwedwe area doll-maker Celani Nojiyeza and a group of fellow beadworkers insisted on 'correct' such criteria for their home area (Nojiyeza 1999). The separation of different colours is always juxtaposed with a black, be it in bead or motif shape, this she claimed as "proper design", but in fact it is an area convention. Nojiyeza showed some beading she was in process of making for the tourist trade, saying that the colours preferred by westerners were termed "cross-eyed (*yimpendu*)" (a yellow next a white bead-string row for instance) and she laughed along with her companions over this 'peculiar and foreign taste', one she was prepared to adapt to in order to sell her craft for income (personal communication Ndwedwe doll-makers, Durban, August 1999).

One spectacular cape and back-skirt (*utshodo*) came with interesting information concerning regionalism and the meaning of colours for Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe c1965. It belonged to MaMchunu Sibisi. [MM4990A-B] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 17-20. Cape and backskirt (*utshodo*), Ndwedwe [MM4990A-B] [Figure 18]. Her overall "story" (as she described it) 'reads' "I was betting for you (husband) with my whole heart, with my white love, wishing you good-luck and success in our marriage after (your) having waited so long. At the end I am marrying with a shining wedding because you have paid bride-price (lobola)" (MaMchunu Sibisi 1998). She also claims to be "beautiful and light in complexion" (she mentions the word "*qhuthwana*" which translates to "powdering" in order to gain a lighter complexion termed "*umpofana*" (pink)" (personal communication Dingani Mthethwa, Durban, August 1999). More enlightening is that the base of multi-coloured beads dotted with black beads is termed the "style of Emkhambathini and KwaSwayimani (her neighbouring home area)" and worn to show that women dressed in such beadwork are the "Ladies of *Umkhambathi*" (Emkhambathini or Camperdown in English). The reference is to the "rich soil" of the region and by implication, the fertility of the areas' women (MaMchunu Sibisi 1998), hence women and landscape are one, and if extrapolated to the ancestors (as discussed in the introduction to this section), "human-kind and nature are linked or one" (MaMchunu Sibisi 1998). Of the colours and motifs, white is that of luck and love, shining (light) being a transparent white (bead). Red means "I am betting (as in gambling on horse-race) and I will win (and I will be married)!" The emphasis in this last statement is placed upon the the qualifier 'will' or intent to win. Pink means beauty (referring to light complexion (possibly attained by staying out of the sun in seclusion in preparation for the wedding) and it may also refer to spiritual beauty deriving from being "quite (as of respectful behaviour).") Mauve also refers to beauty, as in a dark complexioned beauty who is fertile and possibly the reference is to the fruit of the *umdoni* tree which can be 'read' along with green as MaMgwamunda did (see [MM4889-4890] [Figures 6-7] for her beadwork cape discussed earlier). Green means longing (and may mean getting thin (as a blade of grass) waiting for marriage); black refers to marriage (possibly as in the *isidwaba* or leather apron) and yellow to bride-price (maybe as wealth, hence 'ripe-pumpkins') (MaMchunu Sibisi 1998 and personal communication Bongani Mthethwa, Durban, 1988). To MaMchunu it is the colours that talk and not the motifs. This in itself is an interesting personal deviation on the maker's part as most other women from Ndwedwe regard the motifs as 'talking' (see examples in text).

The marriage apron (*iphinifa*) of MaSithole Shange from KwaSwayimane, Ndwedwe dates from 1972 [MM4868] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 17-20. Apron (*iphinifa*), Ndwedwe [MM4868][Figure 19]. It is of dark green cloth, decorated with a series of squares

in large white beads. Red wool pom-poms are added in the centre of each square. The bride's communication was: "*Inhliziyo yami ibamhlophe uma ngikubona ibenjengobesi lwezinkomo zamalobolo ngosuku lomkhehlo. Ngikuthanda kakhulu suku lomshado.* [When I see you (my husband) my heart goes white like the milk of the lobola cattle, I love you (my husband) so much on our wedding day]" (MaSithole Shange 1998) (Winters 2000c). The bride evidently equates white to her love, the bride-wealth (lobola) and the wedding itself, further indicated by the red wool standing for the headdress (*isicholo*) of marriage, red being the colour of married women.³¹⁶ In Zulu thinking white is always positive in meaning and is also known as the "colour of the ancestors" who reward good conduct with the blessing of children (Berglund 1976: 47, 355, 371). Diviner MaKhomu Luthuli, described white as a "healing colour", and that one does not want dark colours as one wants "lightness" (of the ancestral-spirits) to ensure good things (personal communication Mrs Luthuli, Ndwedwe, June 2000) (Winters 2000c). The lobola cattle are linked to the ancestors in that they are part of family/clan herds and thus the custom of bride-wealth legitimizes the marriage. Lobola further 'elevates' the bride by placing a value on her, moreover, to quote Berglund "Tyler states that cattle in the underworld (home of the ancestors in early Zulu thinking) were thought to be white. Evidence from Zulu of today indicates that this thought-pattern is still prevalent among traditionalists. Shades (ancestral-spirits), like cattle of the underworld, are thought of as white" (Berglund 1976: 370-371). What is interesting about MaSithole Shange's apron symbolism is that it is couched in the language of personal feeling and communication, while yet referring to entirely conventional Nguni customary values and thinking. The greatest of blessings from the ancestral-spirits is that of children, in other words fertility and pregnancy.

In earlier times a pregnant woman wore a buck-skin apron known as either *isiphunzi* (grey duiker) or *imbeleko* (carrying sling)[see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 21-24. Woman dressed in earlier buckskin pregnancy apron (*imbeleko*), Ndwedwe, c1970s. Courtesy of Mr Jithoo Maharaj. Photographed at Kitty's Studios, Pietermaritzburg. [Figure 21]. Once the child is born he/she is carried on the back of the mother in this skin. A used apron of this kind is almost impossible to acquire, as it is feared that witchcraft can be worked against the child should it fall into the wrong hands (personal communication field-collector Mphostoli Mzila, Durban, 1988). The decoration is distinctive, the fur was not cut but shaved into a pattern upon which beadwork and brass buttons were stitched and the buck legs and hooves are left on the skin. The symbolism of these aprons was commonly believed to be that the baby would 'kick in the womb like a buck' showing all was well with the pregnancy (personal communication Rebecca Msomi, Durban, 1982), while Tyrrell recorded that a buck-skin was used, "to impart to the unborn child the beauty and grace of a buck."³¹⁷ It is the brass buttons and large brass beads (manufactured by Zulu smiths and passed on in families) which are of most interest. The association to these is once more to brightness and fortune and as such the mother is requesting protection for herself and her unborn child (Winters

³¹⁶ "It is because the women carry the blood (Nguni idea of conception is the father carries seed/semen/spirit while the mother nurtures the unborn via blood/ body) The blood is red. So the colour of women is red. It is like *ihlule* (a blood-clot which is believed to develop into the child). ..." "You are associating the blood with menstruation and of fertility?" "You see it clearly..."(Berglund 1976:160-1).

³¹⁷ [MM 3991 and WCP 469] It must be noted that not all information attached to museum artefacts comes as specific to actual pieces, there is much associative information coming from other sources. Information on the baby kicking like a buck in the womb derived from a Zulu colleague recalling older generations of women speaking about the item and her own intrigue that it was 'confirmed' on a popular Zulu radio cultural program (personal communication Rebecca Msomi, Durban, January 1992).

2000c).³¹⁸ A modern cloth format of this pregnancy apron, decorated with large plastic beads or brass rings rather than buttons, is found in the Ndwedwe area north of Durban. Locally termed *isicwayo* or *isibodiya*, this type has almost superseded the earlier skin variety (as shown in a c1970s Kitty's Studio, Pietermaritzburg photograph). The example belonged to MaHlope Dlodla of Emkhambathini [MM4927][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 17-20. Pregnancy apron (*isicwayo*), Ndwedwe [MM4927] [Figure 20] and the maker said she made it while "waiting to find (conceive) a child": "*Ngakha lebayi eliyisicwayo ngisalinde ukuthola umntwana ukuqala ngathingeng ngisalindile uNkulunkulu emikhulu ngiphankosana* [The most important thing ("the 1st matter") is the marriage and then one must wait for God to give one a boy child]" (MaHlope Dlodla 1998). At the time of cataloguing this apron the translator of the interview described this as equivalent of a "prayer" to God for the blessing of a child after blessing her with a husband/wedding. Of interest then is that the cloth apron is worn by a newly married woman possibly even before pregnancy is confirmed and as such it is classified as a pregnancy apron. It was explained that the period before the *makoti* (bride/newly married woman) falls pregnant is stressful, for if she does not conceive her husband could find another wife. A son is preferred as he will give his mother economic/political status as the next homestead head, if it were another wife who had the first son she would then be the one with this assured position in time (personal communication Dingani Mthethwa, Durban, February 1999).³¹⁹

Most women interpret their aprons according to the area's accepted conventions. However 'area-outsider' MaNgcobo Mdluli (coming from neighbouring Inanda) used this pattern (of brass buttons and large beads) on a cape (*isimbozo/utshodo*)[MM4888] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 21-24. Cape (*isimbozo*) with brass-buttons from Ndwedwe, 1970s [MM4888][Figure 22] (Winters 2000c), rather than on a pregnancy apron, and wore it in order to "respect everybody in the home (of husband) including the *amadlozi*" and she interpreted the brass buttons on her cape as (*u*)*robhothi* (robots) and the flanking beaded lines as *ujantshi* (train-lines) (MaNgcobo Mdluli 1998). This referred to the railway-line to Pietermaritzburg, where her "heart follows her husband" to his work (personal communication Nomusa Dube, March, 1998). With imagination, robots are in themselves 'lights', while love (which will surely beget children in time) is indeed 'luck'. When asked why she interpreted this pattern thus, the maker said that a woman could make either the pattern of the area or make a pattern "for oneself" in which case one makes whatever item "causes one to be happy"(MaNgcobo Mdluli 1998). This explanation recalls that beadwork is celebratory and as such is a form of thanks-giving to the ancestral-spirits as guardians of one's good fortune while a cape serves to respect (*hlonipha*) homestead and ancestors ensuring such 'luck'. With extrapolation then dress enables in this regimen and could be said to be magical in this function (Winters 2000c).

One characteristic of traditional Zulu female dress is the number of aprons (*amaphinifa*) and capes (*isimbozo/utshodo*) worn. They allow for an increase in the amount of finery worn, a surface to act as a 'canvas' to communicate tacit meanings and most importantly, to act as cover for the body and thus conform to the Zulu custom of respect and avoidance (*ukuhlonipha/ukuzila*) which is incumbent upon Zulu women in the presence of their in-law family (both living and ancestors) (Winters 2000c). An interesting development, are marriage

³¹⁸ In the Msinga district such brass beads are worn singly to protect the wearer during faction fighting. To buy such a bead costs the purchaser a goat, as this is slaughtered to inform the ancestral-spirits of the transaction. One example which belonged to a Mrs Dube and came from her mother. Of unknown date. Emachunwini, Msinga[MM3649].

³¹⁹ See MM4924-6 for aspects of this woman's life-story as reflected in beadwork [Figure 27].

capas from Umkomaas, south of Durban. The original 1950s version was a black salampore-cloth cape worn covering the shoulders to which wire-frame beaded ornaments in the shape of shields (*ihawu*), full and half-moons (*umdingi*) and hearts (*inhliziyi*) were stitched [MM 4522A-D, 4629] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 21-24. Beaded pin moons, shields (*umdingi/ihawu*) ornaments from Umkomaas [MM4529][Figure 23]. Alternatively the ornaments are worn pinned to wrap skirts and Tee-shirts as in the photograph of MaNdimande Makhanya in her wedding attire, from Umbumbulu 1975, photographed at Panbro Studios, South Coast Rd., Durban [Figure 2].³²⁰ Later the cloth was dispensed with and the ornaments were sewn together to form a ‘transparent’ cape in imitation of the Christian bride’s veil. Singularly, these ornaments are known by the Zulu names for their shapes, while grouped together they are known as *isimbozo* (from the verb ‘to cover’) and/or *iveyili* (a Zulu rendition of the English word ‘veil’). As mentioned, covering is part of respecting the in-law family (including the ancestors)(Winters 2000c).

So important is this piece of bridal beadwork, that a bride’s father is said to sell a cow to come by the money for the quantity of beads (MaNdimande Makhanya 1994). Many of the ornaments are made by grandmothers, age-mates and even the in-laws who give the bride a beaded shield (*ihawu*) as ‘protection’ for when she enters those parts of the husband’s homestead (like the cattle kraal) sacred to the ancestors. The moons refer to auspicious times for the wedding but generally such larger issues fall into the domain of the creator god *uMvelinqangi*, rather than the ancestors (Winters 2000c). No doubt there are further issues of female fertility referred to but informants have not come forth with such data.

3. Disappointments in expectation. Rejection, divorce and delayed marriage

The most culturally circumscribed expression of a disappointment is the length of time to have a ‘legitimizing’ wedding that expresses both happiness (at the final event) and acknowledgment of sadness at the time it took and presumably the many years of humiliation at ‘teasing’ for this. It is seen in beadwork shoulder-bands or *amadavathi* [MM4584A-D] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 21-24. Shoulder-bands (*amadavathi*), Umkomaas [MM4584A-D][Figure 24] that belonged to MaLembethe Mkhize of Umkomaas in the 1970s. It says in effect “*Noma khunjama kodwa ngizokhanyisa* [Even if it is black, I make it light].” This light is possibly the same as referred to in the girl’s nubility rites mentioned by Ngubane (1977) as well as that mentioned in MaMkhize Nyathi’s girdle [Figures 12-13] in section 2 above. The woman as wife and mother is also to be acknowledged as the ‘light of the home’.

The effects of political , socio-economic changes on traditional African customary life-style makes this category or theme one of the largest in terms of communications in beadwork and dress. Often such pieces are the hardest for an outsider to ‘read’. A case in point is what one could easily have thought to be an apron, but it is a cape (*ibayi*) [MM 4956] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 25-27.Cape (*ibayi*), Ndwedwe [MM4956] [Figure 25], designed by the man’s sisters to cover an abducted (*ukuthwala*) girl. It belonged to MaZondo Mdluli from Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe c1979. This is a common form of marriage in Ndwedwe and is supposedly meant to initiate negotiations. The owner recalled some trauma in being stoned, dragged into her abducting groom’s homestead by his male-friends but despite the obvious

³²⁰ Some photographs derive from the makers/owners of beadwork as did this one of MaNdimande. She and fellow females would travel to Durban’s South Coast Road Panbro Studio’s for a record of events. This was an Indian owned Studio, but with the advent of colour photography and instamatic cameras, Panbro continued as a wedding photographer under the name of Panday’s. (Ishwar Bindha, Interview with Mr Panday’s daughter, Durban, 1995).

kindness of his sisters she preferred not to dwell on the imagery (the meaning of which she obtained from her sisters-in-law). Apparently the bride arrived at night and the motif of the sisters-in-law consists of clusters of three large plastic beads in multicolours dotted with black meant to be “stars (*inkanyezi*)”, against a black cloth, this divided by apple-green horizontal beaded rows with an ‘A’ in apple-green on the centre of the lowest row. Both the ‘stars at night’ and the apple-green beads most likely mean fertility if one were to extrapolate from other beadwork motifs of the area. The cluster beads are the stars against a night-sky and the ‘A’ refers to the girl being potentially the 1st abducted ‘bride’. The cape itself is for covering or respecting (*ukuhlonipha*) the groom’s home (MaZondo Mdluli 1998).

As mentioned under the discussion of MaMgwamunda’s communications in Section 1., above [MM4880-90][Figure 6-7], one wearer can use a regional motif one way to tell her life-story, while another woman from the area will use the same motif to mean something different and personal to her life-story. Here I wish to discuss similar regional patterning and motifs, but ones which reflect more of MaHlope’s (see her pregnancy apron above [MM4927] [Figure 20]) individual circumstance. The cape and back-skirt(*utshodo* and *isiphika*) [MM4924-5] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 25-27.Cape and back-skirt (*utshodo* and *isiphika*), Ndwedwe [MM4924-5][Figure 27] belonged to MaHlope Dlodla from KwaSwayimane (Table Mountain) who married at Ebebhuzi village, Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe ,in 1970. Although not as visually spectacular as that of MaMgwamunda’s cape (*utshodo*) ,the craftsmanship and the communication via alphabetical ‘pictograms’ is equally profound. The cape (visible in photograph as lower section with royal blue attached cloth), has motifs of trees in white/pink/mauve/red said to be “*isihlahla sikakhisimusi*” (Christmas trees)³²¹ in which the owner compares her wedding to a joyful Christmas celebration. The green H shape stands for “*uphawu*” (a mark) and as such indicates her family surname of “Hlope,” while the yellow and mid-blue triangles cut at the centre by a line (nearer to a ‘B’ than a ‘D’ as intended) stand for the surname of the husband and in-laws, namely “Dlodla”, thus indicating the family she is marrying into. Both symbols can be considered respecting (*ukuhlonipha*) motifs (MaHlope Dlodla 1998). On the lower section [MM4925] [Figure 27] (but depicted in the photograph as a wide band of beadwork across the top of the cape’s cloth), the central orange and green ‘hooked’ lines are called a tree (*isihlahla*) and the maker claimed she made a “thin green tree” to indicate the length of time she waited for a traditional (African customary-law) wedding³²², while the orange is meant to indicate “*Ngilulazekile* [I am ashamed (or humiliated?)]” because those were bad times in which co-wives³²³ said she was alienating the then common-law husband³²⁴ by her “looking at/for [?] another man.”³²⁵ The single letters ‘K’ stands for “*Kuluma* [Speak]”, ‘Z’ for “*Kwaziyo* [what

³²¹ Christmas – termed *Ukhisimuzi* is known to not only Christian Africans but also traditionalists – here even although the name of the celebration has the isiZulu rendition of the English, men coming home at year end would celebrate. The *umnumzane* (headman) would slaughter an ox for the family and thank the Ancestors for a good year just passed. As such it could be termed a giving –thanks (*ukubonga*). Way back in time December would have been the summer solstice in the southern hemisphere so it is possible that this concept is earlier than the introduction of western thinking, but the tree of course is that – here white, to be seen in City store windows, as is the shape that of a fir (personal communication Vusi Buthelezi, February 2013). *Ukhisimuzi* is spelt without an r as in the old isiZulu phonetics.

³²² Such a wedding is according to African customary law and entails all of lobola payments and correct ritual introduction of a bride to the ancestors.

³²³ The field-collector termed them co-wives, I assume that some have been married according to African custom or may also be married by abduction (*ukuthwala*) or as seems to happen and indicated in beadwork communication, maybe another such wife has finally been married by African customary law, say because she or her child has had misfortune enough to have it corrected by ritual, such a wife then will claim jubilantly over fellow common-law wives that she is now the first wife.

³²⁴ I am using this description of a ‘common-law’ husband, as I assume the woman was married by abduction or *ukuthwala*, in which case she may have to wait for decades before the traditional marriage by African customary law.

³²⁵ This is obviously reflective of slander against her person by her co-wives.

you know]” and an ‘A’ for “*Ayimanga* [don’t talk lies].” This completes the maker’s response to the co-wives which is, “Speak what you know (about me), and don’t tell lies (about me)” (MaHlope Dlodla 1998). Additional recorded information on MaHlope is worth noting.³²⁶ She is illiterate, as her father (and other elders in area) “don’t send ladies to school because they marry”, but she regarded herself ‘lucky’ as her brothers taught her to write (hence the H element standing for the family name of Hlope). Design-wise, even more enlightening, is that MaHlope said she was not going to “complete the writing (of the words, as in “Hlope”, etc.) as this would “dirty her cape (*utshodo*),” in other words, make the pattern too messy in her own eyes, but nevertheless she wanted people to say “Look at that lady, she is writing!”³²⁷ (personal communication Nomusa Dube, July 1998). MaHlope also gave her cape an alternative name of “*isiphika*”, a word deriving from *phika* (to deny) and refers to a concept like “*ukuphika nelanga* [to attempt something beyond one’s ability]” (Dent and Nyembezi 1984:455). What may well be the reference is to the difficulties with the time it took to legitimise the marriage (meaning a ritually conducted traditional wedding) requiring the woman ‘stand her ground’ as to her rights to such a wedding, while the word for shame “*ngilusizi*” translates to “I (am) emotionally affected by darkness” (personal communication Nomusa Dube, Durban, July 1998), and as darkness generally is linked to misfortune in Zulu thinking, then MaHlope is equating her experience of delayed marriage with the stigma of bad-luck or *umnyama*³²⁸ (Berglund 1976:364).

The reason for inserting the above message of MaHlope is that it indicates how messages are pertinent to individual’s ‘life-scripts’, yet the motifs, style, bead-type, base pattern and the like will invariably be that of the area convention. This means that one cannot claim that beadwork is in any way a standardized ‘visual language’ as the individual use of these conventional elements will not always coincide across a number of women’s beadwork messages and to assume that they do will misinform on the true nature of beadwork. This understanding accords with that which was claimed in Chapters 1 point 1.1., about there being no ‘bead language’ (as in a dictionary commonly agreed meanings ascribed bead colour or motif-shape), but that it nevertheless conforms to the oral style and as such its metaphors, similes and elusive ambiguities can only be accessed via Geertzian ‘thick description’ used in Symbolic Interpretative Anthropology, while the cultural scenario referred to conforms to local meaningful interactions (seen from) within the cultural situation and circumstances of the woman beadworker/wearer.

More serious negative marriage communications are to be found in the beadwork [MM4913A-B-4916] that ‘common-law’ wife³²⁹ MaMkhize Mdluli made for her husband at

³²⁶ Sharing the interpretations of MaHlope with colleague Vusi Buthelezi on 26th February 2013, he remarked on the typical IKS response of persons who are rural and traditionalist as to the altercation noted between field-collector Nomusa Dube when hurrying MaHlope onto the next item’s [MM4925] meaning, this especially as she had asked for the story behind the communications. As an outsider MaDube should have normally taken time to broach such a personal subject.

³²⁷ This is consistent with general local understandings as to the value of education among African families.

³²⁸ “...there are the opposites related to ethical values. Evil, and associated things, are generally related to dark and the left side, while good things are spoken of *ezimhlophe*, the white ones.” (Berglund 1976, 364).

³²⁹ I can find no English equivalent for a Zulu/Embo-Mkhize/Bhaca/Nhlangwini woman who is ‘married’, even having children, but having no legal recognition of such status. This legal status is important in regard to understanding a woman’s beadwork. The cultural ideal is for a man to pay lobola (bride-price) for his wife, both to legitimize future children born to the union and in order to introduce his bride to the ancestors. Because Zulu are allowed more than one wife, a man could marry again, and if a commoner, his first wife generally becomes head wife, a status accorded more privileges than other ‘lesser’ wives. However, in rural Ndwedwe, the reality of poverty means that a man who cannot afford the lobola payment will marry by abduction or *ukuthwala*. His friends will abduct the girl to his home and thereafter marriage negotiations are entered into. In such cases the payment of lobola is deferred, sometimes for decades, meanwhile the woman can bear many children and the man may fall in love with another girl and abduct her similarly. This impasse is often only resolved when there is a family misfortune (such as a child’s sickness) and an *isangoma* (diviner) has indicated that the Ancestors are angry and require the

Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe c1969. [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 25-27. Beadwork necklaces and beadwork patch (*isithokothela*) (*amadavathi*), Ndwedwe. [MM4916,4914,4913A-B] [Figure 26]. These items are reflective of the couples courting and subsequent marriage appearing to have been in serious jeopardy [see Figure 43 for photograph of Mr Mdluli and both ‘wives’, when engaged]. Only two of these items are discussed (namely the 2nd and the 4th in the photograph [Figure 26]), as the others, while appearing to have meaning, were not referred to by the maker. Perhaps she had placed all her disappointment in regards to the relationship in the two pieces discussed here or perhaps the other pieces not discussed were made at a happier time in the relationship. The 2nd item [MM4914 the 2nd from top][Figure 26], is a necklace with a beadwork v-shaped tab at centre in black, with a lavender blue neckband in three layers; the latter is termed *isithokothela* or “layering”, a phrase which refers to the husband taking more than one wife (in other words he is “layering his wives”). The blue of these neckbands is termed “*ubumpangele*” (guinea-fowl) and is taken to mean “*Angazi ukuthi ngisahhlalele bani ngoba ngisuka ngindize njeke pangele?* [Why are you layering (taking wives) when I am still waiting to be married, do you want me to fly away (like a guinea-fowl)?].” The central black tab ‘says’ “*Indlela yenhliziyoyami imnyama* [The way of my heart is black (discouraged)]” (MaMkhize Mdluli 1998) (Winters 2008). The maker assured the field-collector that her husband did know the meaning at the time of being given the piece. There is speculation regarding the exact meaning of the guinea-fowl as a bird that would “fly away”; while yet having the capacity to fly, the bird is more readily associated with its ability “to run away very quickly and therefore be hard to catch.” Zulu people describe a good runner as an *impangele* - not always a positive trait, as for instance a bride or young wife who is unreliable and always away from the homestead is described as “*uhambisa okwempangele*” (personal communication Mxolisi Mchunu, Durban, June 2007).³³⁰ It may thus be that the maker experienced difficulty in articulating her exact meanings and she is suggesting that her husband’s behaviour drives her to become a less than ideal wife. Generally mixed metaphors and poor similes appear to be common in traditional beadwork communication, but this is evident only in the translation into English, where in fact it is often the idiomatic isiZulu language that cannot be translated word for word that gives rise to ambiguity in translation. Appropos of this is that my translator says he thinks in images (an image of a guinea-fowl running) and hence finds no clashing similes or metaphors in the piece at all (Mchunu, 2007). Often it is a ‘rogue’ or deviating element in the design that alerts to a beadwork item possibly carrying a message; in this case it is the lavender colour taken to indicate a guinea-fowl, and the pervasive black of the ‘heart-shaped’ tab.³³¹ While the use of multi-coloured beads dotted with black is an area convention,³³² a complete black signals disappointment and even misfortune while the lavender is not found on the usual “Natal Card” of bead colours used in the province’s

union’s legitimization (through a wedding and lobola settlement). Jealousy between wives and accusations of witchcraft between them, is a possibility under such circumstances, especially because the woman who succeeds in having her marriage legitimized first then becomes the head wife (personal communication Nomusa MaDube Sibisi, Wilfred Ncube and Dingani Mthethwa, Durban, July 1998).

³³⁰ For these deliberations on meaning, I must thank the field-collector, Nomusa MaDube Sibisi, my colleague at the time of acquisition, Dingani Mthethwa and more especially my present colleague and translator Mxolisi Mchunu, who when reading the communications did not see the degree of confused similes that I had presupposed, this because of the idiomatic isiZulu language context concerning the nature of the guinea-fowl.

³³¹ Which, as with MaHlope Dlodla’s cape (discussed earlier) concerns delayed marriage and is clearly indicative of misfortune in local thinking.

³³² A convention such as this, where the maker did not mention any meaning, must be taken to indicate that she comes from a particular region. However other women from the area have specifically used this convention to indicate fertility of both area and women and it is commonly called by the area name “*Ukhambathi*.” (MaMchunu Sibisi 1995).

‘African Truck Trade’,³³³ hence it can be taken to have been selected with purpose to communicate a message. Further, this in itself indicates that the maker possibly journeyed to one or other of the bigger centres, either ‘downtown’ Pietermaritzburg or Durban, to come by the beads she required, thereby showing intent in regard to the expression of her discouragement with her ‘common law’ husband’s practice of the old Zulu custom of *isithembu* or polygamy (Winters 2008).

The 4th item in Figure 26 [MM4913B], a beaded pin or *amadavathi*, is a rectangular patch with a motif of four vertical bands of red-and-white-stripe beads in an ‘X’ (cross) shape set against a base of multi-coloured dotted with black beads and the item was given by MaNala Mdluli to her future common-law husband when engaged. The red and white stripe beads are termed “*izintotoviyane*” (locusts) and the message is, “*Sengizwili ukuthi uhamba uthi ngiya nuka ngengintoviyane* [I hear that you said I smell like a locust!]”. The reference is to the ‘husband’ not marrying her properly (by customary rites) despite their having two children and his then simultaneously courting a second woman. The intension is to give this beadwork to him (he will recognise the meaning, it is said) and hopefully he will start negotiating over this situation (presumably this will involve some ritual, like marriage negotiations) (MaNala Mdluli 1998). Both Father Mayr (1907) and Barbara Tyrrell (1983) have mentioned such an item given by a woman to a man to start negotiating because of a problem or concern in their relationship.

This example echoes some of what Masuku (2005: 153) gives of Liz Gunner’s recording of the “Praises” of MaCele from Zenzela, Melmoth recorded when she was in hospital with TB (tuberculosis):

Kunukani KwaZenzela, Upeklele³³⁴ ngmgami ahlaboyo. Aphethe imikhonto nemicibisholo, kunuka yselepele. Ahlaba ehlizweni yomkhwenyane. Aye ahlab nasebukhweni lakhe.[What is smelling at Zenzele? The pepper is smelling. The pepper is words that stab, they carry spears and arrows, they stab the husband’s heart. And they stab at his in-laws home as well](Gunner (1979:241-5) cited by Masuku 2005:153).

The word ‘praises’ is deceptive as is that of ‘courting beadwork’ in regard to MaNala’s beadwork as well as MaCele’s ‘Praises’, as these are examples that are expressive of the hardships and disappointments of women, for whatever reason, severely hurt by life and yet bearing it courageously. As such the ‘Praises’ act as a form of catharsis, even a ‘prayer’, much like the motto of Karl Niebuhr’s Serenity Prayer is used by the AA (Alcoholics Anonymous); “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change. . . . Courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” (<http://www.aa.org>).

³³³ The “African Truck” trade refers to an area of trade between mainly white and Indian traders and the more rural African communities. In the 19th century it comprised the exchange of beads, brass, cloth and other trinkets for hides, ivory and the like. During the 20th century the trade developed but never reached the sophistication found in the country’s mainline economy. Beads were manufactured in various countries, however Italy (centred in Venice) and Czechoslovakia (the best known manufacturer being Jablonex and Co) perfected the standardization of glass bead colours and sizes. This enabled Africans to produce quality beadwork. Certain bead colours and sizes were only traded with certain regions, hence the “Trade Cards” that were put together by wholesalers like W. G. Brown of Durban (which went out of the bead trade in the 1980s), Randals Brothers and Hudson, Durban (which became an exclusive jewellers in the mid 1960s) and J. W. Jagger & Co which had branches in major South African cities. In recent years Muslim and Gujarati families have taken over the wholesale bead trade, Hoosen and Patel of Grey Street, Durban being the best known. During the 1970s a local KwaZulu-Natal manufacturer by name of Fouché and Coke with factories in Pinetown and Port Shepstone produced plastic beads. These copied the former glass beads in size (taking the former size 2 and the large ‘Basuto bead’ as prototype) and colours, and being cheaper, they proved very popular in certain of the regions of KwaZulu-Natal, most notably those of Ndwedwe and Richmond. [MM2311, 2107,2253-4,2445. Bead Trade Cards. Campbell Collections UKZN].

³³⁴ Translator Mxolisi Mchunu indicates this word as well as “*yselepele*” ought to be spelt “*upelepele*” but I have not altered it as it is from a published quote of Gunner cited by Masuku. I surmise that it may be a regional variation.

sandersweb.net /ed/ OriginalSerenityPrayer.html[accessed 10 September 2013]). Biblical texts were once oral and prayers are remembered in times of stress. So too is the use of beadwork in serious communications, which may be the only mode of ‘speaking’ tacitly of one’s anxieties. Such beadwork (as MaNala’s necklaces) no doubt serve much the same purpose for her, a chance to indicate her distress knowing that Nguni customary norms dictate the disappointing male must wear it publicly, so all (who likely know the meaning of the design) will look at him askance and so veto his ‘bad’ actions. What strikes one about the beadwork’s design in this case is the choice of inharmonious colours and disturbing motifs, the reddish-pink striped bead in the cross form, likely signals a ‘sick, broken trustful heart’ (remembering the cross as an oath of fidelity (see above) while pink as a ‘poor’ rendition of red (Mthethwa, 1988), thus showing a form of broken trust. What is interesting to museum/gallery collections compiled of choice items is that this damaged and incomplete item in its inharmonious colours may have never been acquired but for the documentation that went with it and a field-collector with the stamina, patience and empathy to collect such data.

5. Conservatism and individualism, self-image and rivalry

Conservatism can be described as conforming in some way with cultural norms and expectations while individualism can range anywhere from outright defiance of such norms, the latter unlikely within a traditional society. Even an *isangoma* diviner follows a cultural route to being called and total non-conformity would be considered insanity in need of healing (See Berglund 1976 for such concepts). This section needs to take into account that mentioned under 3 namely the concept of honouring, as conservatism invariably expresses an element of the retention of custom for the important mores of respecting (*ukuhlonipha*) and avoidance (*ukuzila*). However, within the range of cultural expression, there are permissible opportunities for women to express their individual character. Such conservatism can be equally expressive of a woman’s temperament but more especially the individualism considered here is the allowance for individual character, as reflected in the ‘praises’ of women discussed in the introduction above. Beadwork especially allows for the woman to make such statements about herself, one example being MaMajola Dungwa who married at Umkomaas in the late 1960s. Her engagement/bridal beadwork discussed in Chapter 1, point 1.1., includes among many messages one to her groom/husband to tell all the girls at his home area that they must forget about him, as she “*Umahlehlisa* (Miss Pushy)” is coming! This is MaMajola’s nickname of which she is proud (MaMajola Dungwa 1995) (Winters 1996a). Self-image comprises all of individual character and cultural conformity and role-play as a female. Rivalry takes the form of interactions with rival claimants to a man’s affections, including those antagonistic ones as well as some placatory customary behaviours of respect (*ukuhlonipha*) toward co-wives. The following examples reflect various culturally conventional views of women toward their roles as wives and co-wives as well as any individual successes/failures for whatever reason to conform to these perceptions of female character.

One married woman’s belt [MM4546] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 28-31. Belt (*utshodo*), Umkomaas [MM4546] [Figure 28] is perhaps one of the most ordered of visual imagery expressive of the maker’s status within a polygamous home, a status which is accepted fully by her and her community. The belt belonged to second (and hence incoming wife) MaDladla Mkhize of Engolela, Umkomaas, in the early 1970s. The belt, termed an *utshodo* (the same name as given a cape in Ndwedwe, north of Durban) along with the *indelelo* girdle and *izibebe* (necklaces) [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 28-31. Necklaces

(*izibebe*), Umkomaas [MM4548 D and F] [Figure 29-30] are considered the items of beadwork that allow for communication regarding the newly acquired married status. The motifs on the belt (starting with the outer ones and moving to the centre) indicated by a series of horizontal lines are meant to be the gates of a homestead (they could also refer to the main gate and cattle-kraal ³³⁵), as what is important is the traditional positioning of wives within the homestead layout (even if this has changed from earlier times the language has the earlier positioning encoded in it, as for example left (*inkhohlo*) refers to the ‘left-hand side’). The in-turned v-shapes flanked by two rectangular blocks are the two wives (herself on the left as second wife and her co-wife on the right as first wife). The central square is the joining in one homestead of the polygamous extended family (MaDladla Mkhize 1994). The overall meaning could be then explained as the two wives have come to one homestead to increase its size (not only as in ‘huts and fields’ but more importantly through bearing children, who in turn will bring lobola for girls and these cattle will bring wives (lobola) in turn for the sons of the family). It is likely that at the time the mother-in-law occupied the position of great-wife and hence MaDladla places herself parallel to the first wife, but the position at left (*inkhohlo*) is correct for the *isibayi esincane* (junior house). Having commented that MaDladla’s *izibebe* [MM4548D and F] [Figures 29-30] also ‘talk’ of her position, I include images of two of her necklaces, the one with two x-shapes refers to the first wife on the right-hand as indicating “*isibaya esikhulu*”, and that on the left as herself, hence as “*isibaya esincane*”, while the crosses (*isiphambano* or joining) further refer to marriage (*hlanganisa ifindo lomshado*), she explaining the motif as “the two of us (herself and her co-wife) are joined in marriage to (this) husband (and homestead)” (MaDladla Mkhize 1994). The husband can be said to be imaged as a ‘shield’ at centre, this is implied but not dwelt upon and thus one assumes it appears as the negative shape in the overall pattern with the crosses (as wives and marriage) dominating the shaped motifs. One of MaDladla’s other necklaces image her as a “tree (of the homestead)” but she specifically informed the field-collector that here she is a “small tree” [*ngiyisihlahla esincane salomuzi*], ³³⁶ this image derived from her mother (who may well have made the necklace) in her role of guiding her daughter in her culturally prescribed position and duties as a wife (personal communication Nomusa Dube, December 1994). A tree carries two possible connotations, the first is as shade and hence hospitality, the task of a dutiful wife (here within her own largely self-contained left-hand hut or unit) (personal communication Nomusa Dube, Durban, December 1994), while the design within the arrow-shaped ‘tree’ comprised of different coloured diamonds and triangles could refer to a secondary connotation as to the owner’s potential fertility. This is however my assumption ³³⁷ deduced from rural women’s close association with nature where all trees seasonally bear flowers and fruit (as in the *umdoni* or water-berry that is so often imaged as fertility) (See MaMgwamunda’s [MM4889-4890] [Figures 6-7] beadwork cape discussed earlier in this chapter).

³³⁵ This is my own commentary as the owner only referred to them as “gates” or *amasango*. Unfortunately the field-collector did not give any but English meanings. (*Ama*)-*isango* is the common isiZulu for a gate while *intuba* is a deeply rural word and the cattle-kraal gate is an *umgoqo* (personal communication Senzo Mkhize and Thabile Xulu, Durban, November 2013).

³³⁶ As I appear to have not written-down the isiZulu at time of collecting, this is the rendering into isiZulu in the sentence “I am the small tree of the homestead” by colleague Senzo Mkhize (personal communication Mkhize, Durban, November 2013).

³³⁷ Usually when the field-collector brought an item she would firstly give the area of homeland, name, age, status, (also whether still traditional) number of children of an owner/seller. She would then give the name of a piece, meaning as given by the owner/seller, this could be in English or when written down by the field-collector in isiZulu. All of which I recorded, where after I would interrogate the item from my outsider’s position. Hence I would have queried “why a tree?” but I may not have got to the query as to the colours inside the motif as in this item [MM4548F], as these questions often come only in the later cataloguing of the item into a museum holding, and even if I had questioned I may have posed it as a ‘leading question.’ which would have received a confirming response. I have therefore credited only the affirmed statements while letting others be my own suppositions, but trying to give my reasonings for these.

The most deeply ingrained of self-identities remain those where the woman conforms in essentials with cultural expectation, such women while experiencing delays and being one of many wives will not generally be as conflicted as a woman who is from a more modernised background. Such a woman is MaMthembu Sibisi from Embhava village married at KwaSwayimane. She became wife number three, MaMchunu being a co-wife [MM4990A-B] [Figure 18], and “liked” being in a polygamous homestead as she felt she could talk to her co-wives about problems to do with the children. She declared “it is better to be a third wife and have a husband than no husband and be an unmarried mother... Even if other wives treat one badly one will think twice before leaving because one thinks of the security of the children”³³⁸ (MaMthembu Sibisi 1999).

What is of interest is that MaMthembu has put tremendous effort into her beaded cape (*ibayi* or *isiphika*) [MM5004A-B][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 28-31.Cape (*ibayi*) or (*isiphika*), Ndwedwe [MM5004A-B][Figure 31] and consequently communicates specific messages.³³⁹ In ‘reading’ these meanings she shifts from one part of three stars (standing for three wives) on the back-skirt to another; the attached cloth is royal blue, this being the colour of “*isithembu*”, or the practice of polygamy,³⁴⁰ the husband having three wives, her stating such a blue (very common to traditionalist capes in Ndwedwe) always indicates a homestead with many wives. MaMthembu describes herself as “writing” (she has no schooling at all) in her motifs and has a specific order for their interpretation,³⁴¹ signalled by pointing to the motif: Thus she pointed to the first star at left (half blue and half mauve) only referring to the mauve (or “grape” (*umdoni* water-berry) half and claimed it was a continuous sentence that she was ‘writing’, namely, “*Ngangindonya ecwatile* [I was a beautiful smooth grape before (when young)]”; she then pointed to the last star (half green and half pink) on right-side, but only referred to the green half “*kodwa ngenxa yokulinda isikhathi eside* [but I have waited a long time].”

MaThembu then turned to the middle star’s part yellow part lavender (termed grey or smoke) and continued her communication in reference to the lavender half “*Ngaze ngaba ndoni emthuthu* [So that now I am old and grey].³⁴²” She then reverses her reading to the pink half of the right-hand star saying “*Noma wawungenazo izikomo ezanele kodwa uyakanya kuwe* [I could have left you as you did not have enough cows for lobola (bride-price) but you had luck and I stayed because I realised that I was waiting].” She goes then to the blue of the left-hand star and says “*Inkankane hamba kankane lami uyongikhonzela kulezontaba*

³³⁸ In 1999 at the date of collecting the beadwork MaThembu was 50 years old and still traditional in dress (leather *isidwaba* skirt with *umtakelo* cloth wrap-covers, red-wig (*uthando*) and cape or *ibayi* (mid green). That which she sold to the museum, against her husband’s knowledge (as she needed money for her children) was her 1972 marriage beadwork, she had been married by abduction (*ukuthwala*) and had four children by this time.

³³⁹ I assume that this is also perhaps the quality standard for beadwork amongst traditionalists in the area, modernised persons seldom attain such a regularity of tension in technique and order in design. I do not know if this reflects the lack of doubt of the maker in regard to what she intends to communicate, but suspect it may well do, meaning that beadwork for traditionalist illiterate women is indeed a form of ‘writing’ as stating what to them are ‘truths’ of their circumstances.

³⁴⁰ The coincidence to the surname is probably just a coincidence. Although both Zulu Mthembu family and those of the eastern Cape (Nelson Mandela’s people) are acknowledged to have enormous clans that could only have arisen by polygamous marriages.

³⁴¹ I assume in this MaMthembu is taking from what she sees as an illiterate woman of persons reading a document or a letter, she knows of reading from left to right and has made it more complicated by a number of such movements of the eyes in the process of deciphering her ‘visual document’.

³⁴² There is an element of ‘balancing’ of her imagery that goes along with the contrasting colours of each star, and these design elements give insight into the communications; thus although it seems the maker has not dealt with the yellow, it’s meaning is probably subsumed in the imagery of the husband’s ‘luck’ (co-wife MaMchunu [MM4990][Figure 18] talks of yellow as bride-price) while the lavender (grey) is the balanced image of herself ‘now grown ‘old’ with waiting for the husband ‘s ‘luck’ to turn (by finally affording the labola so he can marry his wives ‘legitimately (in an African ritual)’.

zomkhambathi engiyakushadela kuzo...[the Hadeda-Ibis birds can go and say ‘Hello’ to the mountains of Emkhambathini when I am marrying you, I am so happy to be marrying today].” She then deals with all three stars as a single motif, saying “*Sizoba amakhosikazi amathatu aqhakazile* [We are the three wives that are the shining stars]” (MaMthembu Sibisi 1999).

MaThembu confirms many other women’s beadwork messages, for instance three beaded belts came along with her cape, these dated from her days as a courting-girl and she termed them “*izincu* (promises)” – each colour standing for a promise that must then be brought into one’s marriage beadwork, this to remind the groom “I am saying ‘this and this’, because you promised (this to me) before (marriage!)” (MaMthembu Sibisi 1999). The top section to the cape [MM5004A] [Figure 31] has many arrows (again in rows indicating writing) which ‘read’ “*Noma izinto zibhekeleni nalena mina ngizogana* [Whatever happens (even when) things go ‘this way and that’ (awry), I will still be married!].” Three central diamonds ‘say’ “*Ngizazi ukuthi sizobathu kodwa lokhu akusho lutho komina* [I know you (husband) are going to have three wives but this does not mean anything to me, I do not care (that I am number three [?]).” She then specifically points to the orange diamond (at the centre) as proclaiming “*Mina ngalinda yazewabuya kosebenza usamaPutukezi*”³⁴³ [I was waiting for you to come back from working for the Portuguese].” Mr Sibisi worked in Pietermaritzburg, and was on pension in 1999 when the items were acquired, when asked who the Portuguese were MaThembu said “They are the *Abelungu* (whites)”, asked what group of whites she meant she claimed they were “those that come from afar!” and when challenged that Pietermaritzburg was not far from Ndwedwe, MaThembe’s rejoinder was “(The) *Abelungu* were not born (originally [?]) in Pietermaritzburg but come from very far away”³⁴⁴ (MaMthembu Sibisi 1999).

Having spoken of female rivalry and MaThembu not caring about her number as wife, I wish to draw attention to a MaNdimande Njokwe (her name from a second marriage) of Umkomaas, who when married in the 1970s to a Mkhize man, found she could not handle polygamy. It seems that this was exacerbated as her then groom married another woman at the very time he courted her and promised her the position of then fifth wife. She has possibly reinterpreted her *indelelo* girdle [MM4571-2] to conform to her later disappointment [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 32-34. Girdles (indelelo) and necklace (isibebe), Umkomaas [MM4571, 4573, 4575 and 4477C] [Figures 32-34]. The pattern in the third girdle [MM4575] [Figure 33] of tree and zig-zag shapes against multi-coloured dotted with black beads set in zig-zag lines, is said to mean “*Isihlahla sezikotiviyane* [The tree of locusts]”; what she is actually saying is that the husband has too many women/wives “Mixing them by visiting on alternative nights” (MaNdimande Njokwe 1994). The “visits at night” must be an allusion to sexual cohabitation. In one beadwork necklace (*isibebe*) with a series of zig-zag lines surrounding a central diamond [MM4577C][Figure 34], MaNdimande accuses her former husband of “*Uhamba uqwiciza* [You are visiting too many girlfriends!]” (MaNdimande

³⁴³ Zulu speakers have always dropped the ‘r’ – if this indicates the length of time historically that this community have stood as a symbol for Europeans, I am not sure and no one can tell me. Vusi Buthelezi says isiZulu still does not have an ‘r’ and usually an ‘l’ was substituted.

³⁴⁴ Note the beadwork of MaMajola Dungwa (1995) mentioned in Chapter 1. The colour and reference appears in quite a fair amount of Ndwedwe beadwork, always ‘translated’ as Portuguese. I have never fathomed if this has anything to do with Mozambique (former Portuguese East Africa) or the original ships rounding Africa having been Portuguese. There is an ancient Zulu belief that the Europeans harvested beads in the sea from whence they came, the term Portuguese in some women’s beadwork from Ndwedwe refers to hard work, so it could also be assumed that this trait was synonymous with early European settlers, the era of the Portuguese café owners of the 1960s does not quite fit some of the communications. The presence of trade routes from Mozambique through KwaZulu-Natal are mentioned as far back as the 1750s. (Thompson 1988).

Njokwe 1994) (Winters 1996b). The word “*gwinciza*” means either a meandering road, to carve a chevron pattern, or to ‘indulge in immorality (as in behaviour)’ (Doke and Vilakazi 1948: 288). An interesting aside is that MaNdimande had a high-regard for her own physical beauty, itself not valued in the Nguni culture and even considered to cause misfortune (see Chapter 3 on age-sets) because in yet another rather unimpressively crafted girdle [MM 4571] [Figure 32 upper girdle] she asks “*Hleka* [laugh]/ *MaN*...[her own name (unsure if first name or surname)]/ *uthini* [what do you say?]/ *Mkhize* [the clan name of her first husband who she later divorced]” this is followed by a row of trees meant to ask “Am I not beautiful (like the trees of summer)?” (MaNdimande Njokwe 1994). The other item of a shoulder-band [MM4573][Figure 32 lower item] with the words “*Imanje* [now]/ *izolo* [yesterday]/ *bona* [look]/ *inono* [clean people]” is explained as her talking to her then husband with an injunction “One must always look neat and clean!” (MaNdimande Njokwe 1994). Perhaps this ‘high-handed’ commentary was meant to point to herself as beautiful in comparison to others, one cannot say without a validating follow-up interview, but what is certain, is that MaNdimande was not prepared to brook her co-wives and saw them as rivals to herself, more specifically the one who her former husband courted simultaneously to herself and married before her (MaNdimande Njokwe 1994). And as this trait is labelled ‘jealousy’ and the female is seen as tempted to witchcraft in Nguni thinking (Berglund 1976), it is discouraged in women. So saying, women do have the right to divorce from men who are abusive (and no doubt this includes psychological abuse), for a father or marriage negotiator (*umkhongi*) will plead with a groom to treat a bride well, otherwise the lobola payments may be forfeited if she runs home (Krige 1936). (See Chapter 4 on issues of marriage).

The following apron (*iphinifa*), from KwaSwayimane, Ndwedwe, 1979 belonging to MaHlope Zulu [MM4867][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 35-38. Apron (*iphinifa*), from Ndwedwe [MM4867][Figure 35] has a pattern that while being simple, yet shows the borrowing of metaphors from the landscape of the times, in this case neighbouring white owned farms fencing and paddocks, which has been taken as a metaphor for excluding rival attentions of the husband/lover. The pattern is termed “*isikokelo*” which refers to a square (four corners, a somewhat alien shape to the traditional round shape favoured by the Nguni) and means to “to fence around (as in a squared field)”; here it is applied to ‘fencing in the husband as this bride’s property’ while the green colour tells him to recall “*Akesihlala pansi kwalo muti* [Remember the day we sat courting under the shady tree].” The maroon cloth is termed “*ukubende*” (a mix of brown and red) in fashion at the time, while the small plastic beads are “*ubuhlalu beplastic*” (plastic beads) that had then been newly incorporated in beading by traditionalist women. It is said the husband could either ask the meaning at the time, or later, or perhaps not at all (MaHlope Zulu 1998).

Not every apron with a block pattern necessarily ‘talks’ the same message as that of MaHlope above, that of yet another MaHlope ‘married’ to a Dlodla of Emkhambathini c1970s, has an apparently similar apron, but this contains a very different message, one that speaks to rivalries of co-wives [MM4926] [Figure 36]. Her cape [MM4924-5][Figure 27] was discussed under 3 above. This Apron was made in anger after a conflict with a co-wife, when she returned, after being at her parents’ home. So when the co-wife looks at the apron she will know it is her to whom the sarcasm is addressed. The owner/maker will not need to say anything as her “beads will be talking thus”; “*Ngisize ungichazele ngalokhu kuthi yini ndaba wakhe ngemibala emibile eyahlukeni entweni eyadwa? Njengoba ngisho nje ukuthi unakwethu* [Please clarify for me why you have two colours in one thing? I say it is because it was difficult in those days, it is me who is the green colour of the *umdoni* fruit (actually the mauve colour in this apron) and you who are the green that stands for waiting (for marriage

and thus becoming thin like a grass stalk with disappointment!)]”(MaHlope Dlodla 1999). It seems that the first part of the message is addressed to the husband and challenges him to settle the argument by deciding which wife he wants and then to marry her accordingly (it would appear that both women were ‘married’ by *ukuthwala* (abduction), and the rejoinder takes into account the marriage cape MM 4924-5 [Figure 27] discussed above under section 3. In terms of design elements the emphasis is on the clear division of the colours and not on the ‘fence’ or block -pattern formed in the first apron discussed [MM4867][Figure 35], interestingly the mauve is termed ‘green (of *umdoni* fruit)’³⁴⁵ the green here is a lime (yellow hue) -green, it is then questionable if this is not seen as a “weak -green” in the way that pink is often described as a “weak(or poor)-red” indicative of poverty (Mthethwa 1988), hence the connotation to thin and worrying, this is also perhaps an earlier memory of preliterate use of green as indicating “as thin as a reed (or grass stalk) (from worrying)” (Princess Magogo ka Dinizulu: MS KCAL Beadwork File). Whatever, worrying and waiting and growing thin are evidently equated in the maker’s mind.

The same MaHlope Dlodla (see MM4924-5[Figure 27] for other items) appears to be ever complex in her expression of her insecurities in terms of her role as a wife and co-wife. The next simple looking apron [MM4928][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 35-38. Apron (*iphinifa*), from Ndwedwe [MM4928] [Figure 37] of MaHlope once again conveys a meaning. Here the block motif in multi-coloured large plastic beads is termed “*amasango*” (gates). The motif is meant to indicate that now that she has a second child she has done all expected of her as a “good wife”, so she has “closed the gate(s)” as the husband can no longer divorce her or send her home, for she is fully married and conformed to expectation. The base red cloth is termed “*ubeja*” (win) and proclaims her triumph³⁴⁶ (MaHlope Dlodla 1998). Part of the reason for including this apron is to show the intensifying ‘talking’ that traditional women’s attire shows, which may correlate with a form of healing for personal problems, as to an indigenous group-therapy as the communications surely occasion comment in the neighbourhood of women. Any item may have meaning, even one that looks as if it were merely *isimodeni*, indicating the importance of the older ethnographic museum collecting guidelines where everything was collected. When applying the principal of a ‘rogue’ element signalling a communication, one would say (and this only in retrospect from knowing there to indeed be a message) that the erratic colourings of the beads and the ‘shock-red’ of the cloth are the cues to the emotive nature of the communication.

The traditional ideal is for women to respect one another and some beadwork indicates the best of attempts to do just this, in the beaded belt with the lettering motifs, “*Aha Mashez(i) weh(n)a.....(endlunkulu)* [Aha (Greetings) MaShezi, (you of the 1st house!)]” [MM4474] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 35-38. Belt (*ibhande*), Umbumbulu [MM4474][Figure 38]]. The owner, MaNdimande Makhanya of Umbumbulu, acknowledges the pre-existing head wife, namely MaShezi in 1975. The lettering is back to front and inverted and the greeting incomplete as the maker was unschooled, however she was very conservative as can be seen by other beadwork included in this chapter. However, apparently her co-wife MaShezi was westernized and could not take the strict regimens of her in-law’s home and she left after two years of marriage (MaNdimande Makhanya 1994).

³⁴⁵ Often translated as a ‘water-berry’- the term for green and blue both being *luhlaza* – these colours need qualifiers. (personal communication Vusi Buthelezi, Durban, February 2013).

³⁴⁶ When mentioning this red colour as a ‘win’ to colleague Vusi Buthelezi, he reminded me that young men term the red-flag hoisted on a pole indicating the girl’s acceptance of the man’s suit similarly.

The *indelelo* girdle³⁴⁷ of incoming second wife MaDladla Mkhize from Engolela, Umkomaas, [MM4535-4536] [No illustration] in the 1970s, tell of her own preparation for joining a polygamous homestead; she goes to great lengths to recall her meaning, this despite her having incomplete words of which the letters are often upside down (owing to either minimal schooling or design space constraints); “*Konake Kugala /uhaba uhaba /double row diamonds (hearts or inhliziyo) /tree-shapes (an Umhlonhlo or Euphorbia) /repeat diamond-shapes (hearts or inhliziyo) /aha /Ukeo /vuka /fika /iputh(a) iyp z (libi) /ola (uxola) /liyp /inki nga* [First/ to go/ to heart /Ha! /[/?] /wake-up /come /Mistake is not good /Peace /? /is the problem].” This communication to the husband can be rendered as “Peace (between your wives) will be a problem (my husband), with two wives (now) in the homestead, but you must try to give me love (be fair in giving your attentions to both of us)” (MaDladla Mkhize 1994).

Many communications that are solid strips of writing are serious attempts to put an end to gossip that derive from rivalry and jealousy between co-wives. This is one of the most pervasive elements found in beadwork. Berglund discussed evil anger as being tied to the throat as *unkanka*, an “obstinate talk” and slander which stands against the morality of the heart or *inhliziyo* (Berglund 1976: 256,260). The healing by confessing bad feeling may be seen in beadwork as women ‘talk’ back and forth, as seen in MaHlope’s beadwork discussed above [MM4928] [Figure 37]. To this end actual writing has been incorporated to get such communication across, and in Umkomaas/Umbumbulu this is particularly indicated in the marriage beadwork consisting of *indelelo* girdles and belts (*ibhande*). In the belt [MM4592][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 43-46. Belt (*utshodo*), Umkomaas [MM4592] [Figure 44] of Malembethe Mkhize of Engolela, Umkomaas, c1976, the owner ‘says’ to the community’s gossips “*Khulumani maxoki ngoba ninomona nizodumala kodwa....*” [You can talk about me because you are jealous, as after this (wedding) you will be cross!]” (MaLembethe Mkhize 1995). The reference is to the very long wait the owner had before she had her marriage by abduction ‘ratified’ by a traditional ‘legal’ wedding. Perhaps those who gossiped had come to expect that MaLembethe Mkhize would forever be ‘common-law-wife’ who they could speak disrespectfully about.

I include two necklaces (*izibebe*) [MM4588A-B] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 43-46. Necklaces (*izibebe*), Umkomaas [MM4588A-B] [Figure 46] of the typical beadwork patch sort (those earlier termed “lover-letters”), usually these are described as “what a betrothed girl wears” and often no meanings are given for the motifs, this can be partly explained by the fact that they are often given by others to the bride and in this case the two necklaces are gifts to the late marrying MaLembethe Mkhize of Umkomaas, in 1976. The one on the left has two inverted red v-shapes in a white surround set against black, but for two small white diamonds flanking top and bottom of the main motif. The necklace was given by a daughter-in-law and communicates “My mother, when the mountains of Umkomaas are already red (as the cold season of winter is long past) it is only then that you are getting your home wedding.” While the other necklace with a black “A” set against a green base is also from a son’s wife and means that at long last MaLembethe can be recognised as the ‘legitimate’ first wife (by having a traditionalist ritual wedding) (MaLembethe Mkhize 1995) .

Most female rivalry is however harmless, permissible and integral to marriage beadwork, it carries triumph of now possessing married status and is indicative of a ‘meaningful’ life for a traditionalist female, for marriage presages children, a home and other values. One can

³⁴⁷ There is no plural for the word *indelelo*, it derives from the act of taboo breach, in this case women wearing a girdle in which they are indicating their victory in obtaining a husband. Normally the word is indicative of an “act of disrespect” (personal communication Vusi Buthelezi, Durban, November 2013).

recall the understandings as regards interaction (here between co-wives) which enables their living and co-operating in a culturally meaningful (to them) context posited by Symbolic Interactionism discussed in Chapter 2. Such rivalry does not necessarily impact on the husband taking a second wife, but most women however naturally wish the status of “Number 1” or the first wife. I include a belt [MM4881] [see Appendices. Figures 43-46. Belts (*amabande*) from Ndwedwe] [MM4895, 4881][Figure 45 lower belt] that belonged to MaNxele Mzolo of Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe c1975. Here words are used “*EHE*” [Yes (or Aha!), an exclamation of triumph] meaning when completed “*Ehhe! ngibhejile* [Yes! I am the winner (as first wife)]” (MaNxele Mzolo 1998). What is visually intriguing is that the full sentence is not spelled out, rather the word for winning is depicted in large plastic beads, so that the exclamation is visible from afar, like a shout or ‘visual shout’ if needs be. This is the often surprising success of beadwork design, for in this case it is quite clearly an exclamation of triumph but only rendered visually, the belt is worn with the beadwork section and motif at the very centre of the woman’s stomach, in other words, economy of impact/statement dictated that only this ‘centre of centre’ be beaded. This brings to mind the claim of Orality-Literacy Studies that “message, text and metaphor are indivisible” in oral societies (Winters 2009:40). The other belt [MM4895] [see Appendices. Figures 43-46. Belts (*amabande*) from Ndwedwe] [MM4895, 4881] [Figure 45 upper belt] depicted, is a more modest but equally celebratory one, as the motif of a star (already discussed) indicates. The overall image then is of a woman who is secure in herself and her marriage.

The belt [MM4904][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 29-42. Belt (*isibamba*), beaded, Ndwedwe [MM4904] [Figure 39] I include so as to show more paradoxes of design, the owner MaMkhize Mdluli from Emkhambathini, c1970’s, indicates some of the unavoidable rivalry of common-law co-wives whose men can be irresponsible in their promises and marriages via *ukuthwala* or abduction. What I wish to show by placing the belt here however, is the visual contrast between a happy piece and a troubled piece of the same item, and from the same area and period. That which is distinct in this belt [MM4904] as against the two belts analysed above [MM4895, 4881][Figure 45], are the heavy colours and busy patterning, all despite the same area conventions having been used (in type of belt, alphabetical motif and multi-coloured dotted with black bead base). This belt’s pattern is termed “*izindaba zethu*” (private news). The alphabetical motifs are used to indicate ‘news’ as in the form of a written letter. The owner had no schooling but learnt to read ‘after a fashion’ being taught by her own child. Such home learning as mentioned before is termed “*ungafunda ngelampi*” (learning by lamp-light) and thus learning at night (home). A cross motif in orange/pink is termed “*ungcawu*” (Zulu-beer) and the message is “*Izindaba eziyemfihlo zethu uhamba uzikhuluma ematshwaleni* [You (‘common-law’ husband) take our private news of the (need for?)](a) wedding (the cross stands for “join in marriage”) and talk it at the beer-drinks!]” (MaMkhize Mdluli 1998). The intended communication is that news of the wedding must not be spread before an actual date is set, otherwise it is a humiliation to the woman, everyone saying “your husband said you were going to be married, now look at you, what has happened (that this has come to nothing?), you still are not married” (personal communication Nomusa Dube, Durban, May 1998).

Rivalry between co-wives is a complex issue, there should be respect (*ukuhlonipha*) rules and some women’s bridal beadwork indicates their attempts to conform, not to alienate the existing wife. MaMkhize Mdluli’s bridal cape (*isiphika*) [MM4962] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 29-42. Cape (*isiphika*), Ndwedwe. [MM4962][Figure 40] has some conventional motifs, like the dominating stars which ‘stand for a wedding’ to say “My wedding is light (and lucky?) like a star! [*Umshado wame ukhanya njenge khanyesi*]”

(MaMkhize Mdluli 1998). The alphabetical shapes are used “to write” (she has no schooling, hence her motifs are her own rendition of her ‘letter’) to her co-wife MaZondo to tell her that she is marrying (their mutual husband) today. A first wife is potentially dangerous because of jealousy and anger, and the central ‘in-pointing triangles’ are said to be shields “*Imichiyo ihawu*”, which stand for the husband who must protect the incoming wife against the first and co-wife’s possible anger (MaMkhize Mdluli 1998). One can compare the designs on a belt and on a necklet both of which were discussed earlier [MM4546 and MM4548D] [Figures 28 and 29] where the motifs of double in-pointing triangles and a double ‘x-shape’ are similarly ‘requests’ of the husband to assuage and protect his wives from rivalry and promote co-operation by his own fair treatment of them (of which he is usually instructed to do, in wedding speeches by elders as discussed in Chapter 4). Of some interest is that the message on MaMkhize’s belt occasioned a conversation between field-collector and owner/seller about co-wives’ interactions. Jealousy is acknowledged as natural but it remains dangerous as it threatens the ‘luck’ of a marriage, but a husband ought to always stand between his wives as a shield (hence no doubt the various design motifs to depict this cultural prescription in co-wives beadwork). When questioned if MaZondo knew the meaning of her co-wife’s bridal beadwork it was declared she was a traditionalist *Amabinca* (Skin-wearer) and “knew that beads talk (i.e. they contain a meaning)”. MaZondo said she was angry at the time, but that MaMkhize is “not a bad (person) because she is quite (respectful)” (MaMkhize Mdluli 1998). These women’s husband evidently did his best to be fair (as custom and the elders advise) toward both wives and hence the double ‘shield’ is a worthy symbol of his role as traditionalist husband.

4. God and the ancestors, crosses and ‘the Cross’, maturity and acceptance

Two anklets [MM4929A-B] [see Appendices. Chapter5. Figures 39-42. Anklets (*amadavathi*), Ndwedwe [MM4929A-B][Figure 41], that belonged to MaHlope Dlodla (see her cape and back-skirt [MM4924-5] [Figure 27] above) are of interest. Reading the field collecting notes around this woman’s beadwork, she considered these anklets as “nice” (or beautifully crafted) explaining that she refused to use one plain colour (rather than the multi-coloured block patterns [?]) as that would “dirty the design”, for essentially they are meant as “*hlobisa*”(decoration). However, deeper enquiry leads one to realise that even those items declared as merely decorative possess stray elements of the maker’s story, hence the green based anklet was to indicate to other women or ‘common-law co-wives’ to let her husband alone as he is now married ‘legally’ to her. The white base shows a contradictory maturity as it advises “One must make peace in one’s heart” (MaHlope Dlodla 1998). It is unclear if this is aimed at women who claim the husband as one of many wives or if it is the beadworker herself talking of her own earlier rivalries in her former ‘common-law’ marriage status. It seems it may be the former, as only one stray cross (said to be pink but appears to the eye as a red), appearing in the bottom of the white based anklet declares to other women (and co-wives married by *ukuthwala* (abduction)) to, “Go and find yourself another husband, not my husband!” (MaHlope Dlodla 1998).

Also of interest is that MaHlope declared that others wanted to borrow this piece for their own weddings and she knew she would not get it back, so she said the item was burnt (a ‘white-lie’ aimed at not creating animosity/jealousy) and that it was better the field-collector take it for the museum (MaHlope Dlodla 1998). Of some interest is how the maker balances her “nice” decorative piece with a communication, as for instance where she visually exiles the co-wife/wives with only one cross on the edge of the white based anklet, all the other cross-shapes being ignored and explained as decorative. The same rivals (and possibly the

woman herself) are told to make peace with this situation. Arguably this could be a process of gaining maturity, even the tale of how the item was sold to the museum, so as not to draw jealousy, for this is a reaction of the present concerning the later recall of a beadwork message dating from the 1970s. Such a toned down maturity on the part of the now older and wiser woman effectively declaring 'let bygones be bygones' does beggar the question if collecting of beadwork and dress documentation at a later date results in data 'true' to the original intent of a piece and one can only reiterate that the processes of memory, and traumatic such memory will inevitably influence the veracity of all messages. Thus it is possible to postulate that beadwork messages, unless they comply with positive conventions like happiness and joy, may well be subject to altering interpretations and forgetting over time. This conforms to Ong's ([1982] 2002) theory that oral cultures are "homeostatic", meaning that memories that do not accord with relevance (to the preliterate person of an oral culture) will be forgotten (see Chapter 2).

An interesting and vitally important symbol in beadwork is that of a cross. Within Zulu traditional thinking it refers to bringing a matter to a close, Berglund gives his informants exclamation of a traditional cross made in a court-case:

The first stick (used to form the cross) said, 'here is an accusation. We shall see how it goes.'.... Then the defender would argue, calling witnesses, finally showing that there was nothing he had done. Then the judge closed the issue (*ukuvala icala*), saying, 'Cross the stick!' (*Nqamula uthi!*)... The second stick said, 'Now the thing is complete. It is finished, not to be argued anymore!' (Berglund 1976: 171).

Traditionalist women take the cross to mean that the marriage is finalized, all who are involved are informed and the correct rituals (especially those involving the ancestral-spirits) have taken place. One reality of traditional life is economic hardship, which means that bride-price is delayed in payment and women live in a state of 'ritual incompleteness' taking up the role of wife and child-bearer with the understanding that the marriage will be finalized in time. It is during such periods that any serious misfortune befalling a couple and/or their children will be thought to be because of a failure to inform the ancestral-spirits.³⁴⁸

There are some interesting instances of syncretism, in which a cross means both a traditional completed case (marriage) and contains elements of Christian meaning. Many crosses in beadwork are interpreted as an oath, expressed as, "we swear to be true (to one another)" (personal communication Patrick Ngubane, Durban, January 1995). It is difficult to unravel where traditional concepts of 'swearing an oath' coincide with Christian notions of truth. An example of such complex meaning is contained in a black pregnancy apron, heavily beaded with a central cross motif in large pink plastic beads with the negative spaces decorated with multicoloured beads [MM4961] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 39-42. Apron (*ibodiya*), *Ndwedwe* [MM4961][Figure 42]. The apron belonged to MaMkhize Mdluli from Emkhambathini circa 1970. The beadwork communicates, "*Ziya khomba khombane ngoba sengithole ingane yesibeli, kodwa ngizoqhubeka nawe noma ngabe awunalutho* [Even although you are poor I still continue to love you as I am getting my second child]" (MaMkhize Mdluli 1998). The owner said that the pink stood for "*Umkhombosi*" which may derive from "*khomba*" (to point or indicate). Translator Dingani Mthethwa gave the

³⁴⁸ This is very often the reason for a couple finally marrying. There are many cases in which the woman has as many as five or more children by the man before the final wedding ceremony (personal communication Ephraim Ngcobo, Inanda, March 1989).

following interpretation “The cross shape itself is a form of an oath or declaring of a truth. As I understand the isiZulu sentence, the owner is not yet fully married to the man, in an affair (or marriage by ‘abduction’) a relationship can be broken off,³⁴⁹ but in this case the owner having conceived a second child, indicates (points) to the fact that now they as a couple are meant to be together, thus the sentence could be translated as, “By my getting another child, this shows ‘the truth’ that I must continue with you, even if there are problems of no money (for lobola)”” (personal communication Mthethwa, Durban, May 1999). It is a matter of semantics that the ancestral-spirits are not mentioned explicitly, as most Zulu will assume their role in the woman’s circumstances, particularly in conceiving a child. Hence, the pointing to the sign of the truth (the conceiving of child) as indicative of the ‘the Truth’ (Mthethwa 1999).

A second example is that of an apron (*iphinifa*) from MaMchunu Sibisi of Emkhambathini Ndwedwe [MM4995] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 47-50. Apron (*iphinifa*), Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe [MM4995][Figure 47] and contains a reference to the original Zulu creator god, *uMvelinqangi* (The Lord of the Sky). Berglund gives the following attempt to understand the relationship between the creator, the ancestral-spirits and creation, I quote:

I understand the relationship between the water of men (semen) and conception in that the shades (ancestral-spirits) mould in the womb. This is one thing. I also see that water (as in water itself) brings clarity to the diviner, the man of the shades. That is another thing. But what is the connection between them?...You have said it yourself. You said that the shades mould the child. That is so. But where does the child come from? (Silence. Then the diviner lifted his eyebrows.) That is where they come from. Where does the water come from? In rain. Not so? From above? Is the rainbow not the daughter there, putting the arch (*uthingo*) into the earth at the pool?...So the connection is the sky? (No reply. The diviner nods his head. Apparent satisfaction. Quite for a while) (Berglund 1976: 178).

In this extract one must be aware that the creator or high-god of the Zulu people is associated with the heavens, firmament and sky, hence all rain, thunder and the like are associated with him. *uMvelinqangi* is normally only contacted through the ancestral-spirits, but in times of dire need (like drought and barrenness (of land and women) the creator may be approached in supplication (usually on mountains (closer to the sky). It is difficult to assess the impact of the Judeo-Christian god, as ‘God the Father’ has become synonymous with *uMvelinqangi*. The cross used as a symbol referring to God is to be seen in the apron of MaMchunu Sibisi from Emkhambathini, c1965 [MM4995]. This apron’s symbolism makes one wonder to what extent the concept of ‘God’ has become synonymous with Christianity and ‘The Cross’. The apron consists of a square of black cloth beaded in a series of lilac blue blocks with crosses in the centre of each. Along the sides of the apron are red wool pom-poms. The owner explained her symbolism as “Even although it is dark and I cannot see the way forward (black cloth) I still believe that I will win (red wool) because I placed my trust in *uMvelinqangi* (the crosses in the blue outlines or "in a blue sky."). When the field collector asked of which god Sibisi speaks, she replied "You know God....we (traditionalist Zulu) do not know God, but we knew *uMvelinqangi*. He was the one who we trusted" (MaMchunu

³⁴⁹ Mthethwa was perhaps speaking of the realities of modern life but reading Chapter 4 on the various possibilities as regards that which can prevent a ‘legitimised’ traditional wedding, there are other possibilities, perhaps *ukuthwala* was the issue. Despite this I have often heard this view that begetting of a child indicates a steadfast relationship (even Tyrrell’s informant’s name ‘Banukile’ has this reference (see Chapter 1 footnotes), something clearly not so, as many young Africans (especially in the modern era) have children by a number of partners. What I do note is the old Nguni belief that no conception of a child is without the ancestral-spirits intent /blessing.

Sibisi 1998). The maker has however eclipsed the Zulu ‘Lord of the Sky’ with the ‘Christian Cross’ and the Zulu traditionalist cross as an ‘oath’ with the Christian concept of ‘Truth’. It is possible that these notions of ‘truth’ are native to Nguni religion but the terminology and the prevalence of Christians within most homesteads, even the most traditional ones, lead one to assume a certain degree of syncretism of the two religious world-views. Red, MaMchunu describes as *ubeja*, a word used for the concept of ‘I will win’ (the association is to red being a colour associated with emotion and the will). As such she is reiterating the swearing of an oath, that with faith in God she will overcome her difficulties. It is not stated the exact nature of MaMchunu’s difficulties but no doubt, as with so many traditionalist women it concerns the realities of poverty’s (lack of bride-price) impact on the delay in ‘legitimizing’ her marriage. In MaMchunu’s case it was not the ‘dire’ circumstance of childlessness referred to by Berglund’s informants, that caused her to approach the ‘High-God’ as she is recorded as having six children at the time of field-collecting in 1998 (unless off-course she conceived after her ‘legal’ marriage around 1965 [see also MM4990A-B. Figure 18]). My comments indicate the importance for back-up interviews, for while there is a translated tape interview with her, later attempts in 2011 to return into the field were unsuccessful (for various logistical reasons). This is a problem with museum collecting, even if there is an attempt at documentation at the time of collecting, invariably one is dealing with items worn and made some 30 plus years before, while validating interviews can take another length of time (14 years in this case) to happen only to be thwarted for a variety of reasons. Persons can have died or their life-circumstances can change (even through aging their memories may not be as they once were).

6. Modernisation; innovation, writing and culture-change and beadwork

The apron [MM4490][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 47-50. Apron (*iphinifa*), Umbumbulu [MM4490] [Figure 48] of MaCwabe Makhanya from Umbumbulu c1975-6 is arguably what was termed in the writings on arts and crafts of the 1980-90s a ‘transitional piece’ (Levinsohn 1984). As such it indicates the fact of beadwork and dress having been in a constant process of modernisation, where the beadworker/wearer’s life was impacted by education, wage-earning and other circumstances. MaCwabe’s apron is an amalgam of influences deriving from changing times over the course of the 1970s-80s. A red cloth apron of the old sort has a then modern beaded pin with the word “*Thokoza*” (Be happy) followed by two beadwork pins in the grandmothers’ generational style of blue and white stripe beads termed “*Totoviyane*” (Locusts).

In imitation of earlier pregnancy aprons, large multi-coloured plastic beads with gilt button centres and/or brass rings are attached. To these are pinned two beadwork patches, the one at right depicting an image of a man while the one at left is comprised of; two ‘v-shapes’ (said to be the woman herself and her husband), four ‘globular-shapes’ (said to be the mountains the couple must “jump over” to be together in marriage), and a central diamond shape (said to indicate this union). Along the bottom of the apron are a series of joined beadwork rectangular patches which echo the later date *indelelo* girdles of this area. The written and image motifs from right to left ‘read’: A series of ‘dots’ in multi-coloured base “*unga/ fane/ kiseli/ bhula/ gugu/* ‘v-shapes’ flanked by rectangular and triangular shapes [Don’t risk, make sure and fall down on your knees]” which can be further explained as in “Don’t be surprised MaNdimande (addressing the first wife), it is me coming, accept me and respect me.” MaCwabe came as a bride a year after MaNdimande and from the same home area hence this is a personal message from both an age-mate and now co-wife (MaCwabe Makhanya 1994). One can say this apron stands as a transitional piece which yet reflects the owner’s

traditionalist customary values and her respect thereof, as well as her level of education and personal circumstances. Without the owner's input there is likelihood that the communication would be missed by the museum collector, although it may still be understood by a co-wife coming from the same home-area.

Even where there seems to be an apparent frivolity of imaginative modern importations into beadwork, as in the two sets of cup and saucer of Mkhize co-wives from Engolela, Umkomaas in the late 1960s to early 1970s [MM4563A-B and MM4539A-B][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 47-50. Beaded ornaments, Umkomaas [MM4563A-B and MM4539A-B] [Figure 49], there remains conformation to traditionalist norms of thought. The cup and saucer indicate "You are the saucer and I am the cup in my heart [*uyisosa ngiyingilazi inhlizweniyimi*]" (MaDube and MaDludla Mkhize 1994). This is a somewhat mixed metaphor but one which is clearly an indication of a man and wife belonging together in a supportive partnership of marriage. Yet more pertinent is that apparently MaDube Mkhize sang those words in her wedding song (MaDube and MaDludla Mkhize 1994). Her beaded ornaments would then have been pinned to her wedding attire, thus repeating the verbal refrain visually and conforming to Ong's ([1982]2002) [see Chapter 2] characteristic of orality as "Redundant and Copious", in other words repetitive so as to make the audience focus and help in the recall or documentation of the occasion in the absence of a written record.

Similar sentiments are to be found on a beaded man's waistcoat [MM4304] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 47-50. Waistcoat (*indolibantshi*), Emtshezi (Estcourt) c1940s [MM4304] [Figures 50A-B] in the Estcourt area of KZN,³⁵⁰ only here the sentiment is written in beads "*Uyisoso ngiyigilazi* [You are my saucer and I am the glass]" (MaMazibuko Mchunu 1993). This echoes the notion expressed in the Introduction, Chapter 1 of this thesis, that the area design conventions operative in beadwork certainly differ but the cultural thinking and wording is often the same, and in this case both borrow from English (saucer and glass) as well as being 'borrowed' western items of crockery (it is not referenced as any traditional drinking vessel like an *ukhamba* or beer-drinking pot and the emphasis is upon the sections that go together). Moreover, these actual items are a regular part of *umabo* (gift giving during marriage negotiations between the two families).

From examples already given, it can be seen the number of borrowings from western sources, particularly from the alphabet and writing and these have been taken up and fully integrated into traditional beadwork. If one were to take the example of a beaded cape (*isikhafu*) from Emkhambathini 1969, the property of a MaMdluli Gumede [MM4892][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 51-53. Cape (*isiskafu*) from Ndwedwe [MM4892][Figure 51] one would find a number of modern elements. This cape is completely woven of large plastic beads on string thread. Not only is the alphabetical imagery modernised but also the bead type in use, as these plastic beads were based upon the earlier glass such bead commonly recorded on trade-cards as "Basuto Beads" [MM2245], presumably because used by these peoples, but so too by the Embo-Mkhize and their Zulu neighbours in KwaZulu-Natal. The latter used them in the 1930-40s on relatively wide bead edging to capes and aprons, as depicted in Barbara Tyrrell's painting of a traditional married woman in the 1940s[WCP459][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 51-53. Barbara Tyrrell "Sivoto Nene, Inanda 1945" watercolour [WCP 459][Figure 52]. Such early cape-edges from glass "Basuto Beads" were heavy and dipped if not affixed to a tough poplin rather than salem-pore-cloth as was more common. Modern large plastic beads as that used by MaMdluli allow for a wider and lighter span of beading

³⁵⁰ The surnames indicate the maker is a Hlubi, a people more closely related to the Swazi (as with the Bhaca/Nlhangwini and Embo-Mkhize) than the Zulu, but all classified as north Nguni (see Chapter 1 on the history of peoples' of KwaZulu-Natal.

and thus more area for ‘communication’: in MaMdluli’s cape edge the ‘E’ shapes are said to stand for “*kikiza*” [ululating – the shrill cry of women at parties or in this case weddings]. The ‘K’ shapes are said to stand for “*Kwakule kwet(u)* [It is nice to be in new homestead (referring to the new patrilocal residence of bride]”. The arrow shape joining a cross-bar are “*Inkosikazi isihlahla somuzi* [The wife is the tree of the home (hospitable)]”. The single arrow-shapes are “*isambulela*” (umbrellas) and in the last the bride states that she is “the umbrella of the home” (MaMdluli Gumede 1998), no doubt in reference to the same shade as offered by trees formerly and thus by implication comfort and hospitality. Thus this does not then indicate the protection of home (in breadwinning and warrior-ship) associated with Nguni male roles.

What is of interest is that these alphabetical symbols are often found on beadwork from the period and while not necessarily always indicating the same message, there are enough coinciding interpretations to deduce that these have become pictograms in their own right, ones that do not always stand for a word but also for an image of the associated object (an umbrella standing for hospitality in this case). The image takes from the earlier one that uses the symbol of a tree supplying shade within the homestead, but here a westernised item is used, one totally integrated into traditional societies (see Chapter 4 for marriage ceremonies in which the bride carries an umbrella).

A commonly found motif that is yet purely traditional in terms of thinking is that of the use of an alphabetical ‘A’ indicative of first wife status [MM4588 D and MM4903][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 43-46. Necklaces (*izibebe*) [MM4588A-B, one on right] [Figure 46] and Figures 51-53. Apron (*isikafu*), Ndwedwe [MM4903][Figure 53]. This could as equally be subsumed under the section of rivalry as of modernisation, but is placed here because often the two go together, a woman who is triumphant may well show her value through indicators of her ability to read, or to be current or ‘modern’ in some way, this also speaks to self-image, for very often women with education can command as high a lobola as can a virgin. This fact stands even among westernised Christian Zulu (personal communication Mxolisi Mchunu Durban, September, 2006). However, the apron’s ‘A’ [MM4903] [Figure 53] is more complex in its connotations, as will be seen when reading the transcript of the original communication. Despite which it is meant to be highly visible so as to be witnessed by the community, as any traditional wedding assumes that all are invited (personal communication Patrick Ngubane, Durban 1995). The apron [MM4903] [Figure 53] belonged to MaMkhize Mdluli, first wife from Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe c1970. The pattern is termed “*ihlanganezela*” (upside-down) and refers (in the mixing of colours) to the fact that the maker’s life did not follow the ideal customary norm as she already had children, her husband having taken a second wife before he married her (it is assumed that both she and the second wife were ‘married’ by abduction (*ukuthwala*)). The ‘A’ however means “*Imina owakuqala* [It is *me* who am *number one* (wife)! (Italics mine)]”, this is to show “the people” (community) that “she was there (at husband’s home) first!” The lilac beads are said to be there to stand out against the black cloth and is therefore a design ploy to focus attention on her communication (MaMkhize Mdluli 1998). This apron also conveys the owner’s life-story, although wife “Number 1” (the first or number ‘1’ is substituted by ‘A’ as first letter of alphabet) her tale is not one of total triumph, for she still had to experience the rivalry with a co-wife as to which of them married ‘legally’ first. In some ways the item can have been placed under the subheading of disappointments or rivalries, but was

not because in the end she triumphs or is redeemed to her ‘deserved’ status as first wife, something of a ‘moral tale’³⁵¹ and one that is also a sub-text to much beadwork and dress.

The most obviously ‘modern’ pieces from the Embo-Mkhize of KwaZwelibomvu in the 1980-90s, make use of pictographs, but it is easy to misconstrue the meanings if these were not collected at time of acquisition. The first example of this modernisation using pictographs is a circa 1980s apron’s [MM5409][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 54-57. Aprons (*isibhacelo*), from KwaZwelebomvu [MM5409][Figure 54] with motif or design consisting of large plastic bead-clusters with gilt button centres placed in tight fitting rows of chrome yellow large plastic beads, the edging of blue and yellow ending in bell-attachments. The maker, MaMshawa Mkhize termed the design “*idolobha*” or town, a word deriving from the Afrikaans “*dorp* (town)”, saying “there is a lot of ‘stuff’ found there (in town) – cars, people, trees. All is very busy there” (MaShawa Mkhize 2009). This is not a shack-land as I first thought, but the big metropolis itself, and this is to be seen by the ordered rows of yellow squares, depicting roads typical of these formerly European urban areas and possibly black urban townships, while the homes with lights are the gilt buttons set in their multi-coloured beaded homesteads. Yellow is itself a colour of wealth and comfort, hence the city is wealthy and its people are called “*Abantu basemadolobheni* (urban-dwellers).” Although MaMshawa did not say as much, the blue edging when found in other women’s beadwork of the period and location is often referred to as the sea, so in all probability the city in question is Durban, the black township is Umlazi, and the bell-attachments (with their capacity to jingle) extends the imagery of the noisy metropolis or black township (personal communication Siya Mkhize, June 2009).

The next apron [MM5412] [see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 54-57. Apron (*isibhacelo*), from KwaZwelebomvu [MM5412][Figure 55], is the most like a pictogram. It belonged to MaZwane Sithole of KwaZwelibomvu in the 1980s. The motifs on the first orange square on the left (of image), is of a man, a ‘stick-figure’ of the husband next an image of a tree, for shade in a homestead, with a modern square-shaped house (which could also be a large rondaval as found in the area), said to be his sleeping-hut below. While on the second square on the right (of image) is an apparently similar or mirror-image scene, only a female form, said to be the woman herself standing next a tree with a modern house below, said to be her cooking-hut. No meaning was given for the multicolored bead squares above the pictograms, and the overall meaning according to MaZwane was that this was “The Sithole couple’s homestead.”(MaZwane Sithole 2009).

The apron [MM5411][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 54-57. Apron (*isibhacelo*), from KwaZwelebomvu [MM5411] [Figure 56] that belonged to MaNgcobo Hlela contains double motif or design images that refer to her own position versus that of her mother-in-law (termed *Khulu* rather than *Gogo* in this area). The latter has the bigger huts on the top of the duplicated imagery, “*Indlu yakwa Khulu*” (The main hut of the mother-in-law) while the bottom two huts are MaNgcobo’s own (this thus within the extended homestead of her in-laws). The emphasis has been placed on the position of the grandmother as mother-in-law in this homestead rather than the head wife as often happens in more rural areas in which polygamy is still the norm.³⁵² The figures that appear between the huts of two women

³⁵¹ Here I am thinking of the First National Bank (FNB) sponsored series “Heartlines” aimed at moral regeneration in South Africa. Great tear-jerker films that each have a ‘moral’, like “faith”, “love” “forgiveness” “responsibility” etc. Aired on SABC 3 on Wednesday evenings in months of January 2013.

³⁵² This could also be due to socio-economic changes and hence modernisation. On a field-trip to neighbouring KwaXimba now elderly widows dictated the traditional attire and insisted upon their daughters-in-law joining the dance troupe, which supported traditional

(looking much like standard signage for female-forms), are said to be MaNgcobo herself (it was not said that one figure was her mother-in-law, so presumably both are herself 'caught' as it were between her mother-in-law's hut and her own huts), dressed in the leather *isidwaba* (nowadays covered with an *iphinifa* (pinafore), as well as the *ibayi* or *utshodo* cape, both essential to married women's attire and worn to respect the in-laws including their ancestral-line). Small details are important to the cultural context of these pictograms, thus the green lines in the hut roofs indicate grass or thatch, generally explained as "respecting the ancestral-spirits" (MaNgcobo Hlela 2009). In this area the main hut roof (being the hut of the head-wife or mother-in-law in this case is also the hut of the ancestors) can be partly tin and partly thatch as respect (*ukuhlonipha*) to the ancestors as this is the roofing type they knew in earlier times (an example to be seen in the background in a photograph of the Khuzwayo women of KwaZwelebomvu posing see Appendices. Chapter 1: Figure 11) (personal communication Siya Mkhize, KwaZwelibomvu August 2008).

The final apron (*isibhacelo*) [MM5410][see Appendices. Chapter 5: Figures 54-57. Apron (*isibhacelo*) from KwaZwelebomvu [MM5410][Figure 57] with pictograms or "modern talking beadwork"(personal communication Nesta Zondi, KwaZwelibomvu August 2008), also belonged to MaMshawa Mkhize of KwaZwelibomvu. It shows pictograms of cars above trees. The small coloured squares above are described as robots (an urban feature and hence indicative of modernised life-style) on roads (to control traffic). The image refers to courting, where a modern man of status comes to court in a car, and parks under a tree, itself an older reference to the courting place. The green likewise refers to the same image of courting under shady trees as of old (MaShawa Mkhize 2009).

Clearly the status of owning a car has become absorbed into the contemporary value system. The field-collector commented that her parents would regard such a possession as "you will be something better – a big man, if you have a car" (Zondi 2009). Hence a potential future husband with such a possession would be 'quite a catch' to phrase it colloquially. Clearly then these modern images, even with their apparent triteness (when compared to the intensity and complexity of older generations' beadwork communications) are as described by Frank Jolles in his discussion of orality as indicative of the use of "intensifying ideophones" (as in the 'greenness' of courting under trees, or the 'yellowness' of wealth), as they are of "associations (that) are anchored in idiomatic expressions" (Jolles 1991: 265-6). MaShawa's pictograms of robots and cars are not for mere decoration, but have associations to a lover or husband who is not only a car-owner, and hence one of status, but he is a 'Man of the world' who may well have a 'blue-collar' supervisor's job in a factory or a 'white-collar' clerical job in a factory-stores in an urban environment. Unfortunately I failed to find out if her late husband Mr Mkhize was such a man (although her apron appears to identify him as such), and while generally men who marry traditionalist females are themselves traditionalist, it is possible that such a man could be employed as suggested or even be a business-owner like having a 'tuck(or *spaza*)-shop' or be a taxi-owner (although a profession like a doctor or teacher usually indicates that the person comes from Christian and mission stock). Also the Mkhize themselves are considered progressive as a clan/family and even Indian owned businesses were known in previous generations as "Kwa Mkhize (the place of the Mkhize)" because members of this clan/family were among the first to have 'tuck (spaza) shops' and other small-businesses in the black urban (as well as rural) areas (personal communication Siya Mkhize, Durban, June 2006).

Summary and conclusion

functions in the area. In the absence of men (either deceased or migrant-workers) the mother-in-law takes on a greater status as backbone of tradition (*isiSiko*) and homestead life (Mrs Gumede 2009).

This chapter drawing as it does upon a museum collection of beadwork and dress (that of the MM holdings of the Campbell Collections, UKZN) may have something of a ‘piece-meal’ effect but this in itself points out the nature of many museum collections (not only of the Campbell Collections) which comprise masses of beadwork with varying amounts of attached documentation; from minimal data like “Zulu beaded belt” (and maybe “worn by a married woman. From Ixopo...”) typical of many earlier holdings, to some later acquisitions with fuller documentation, but most museum collections have associated data that falls between the two extremes. The pieces analysed in this chapter were acquired either as single pieces or as entire outfits that belonged to engaged or married women. What makes them worthy of analysis is the amount of field-documentation that was recorded by the collectors. Associated documentation is invariably in the beadworker/wearer’s own isiZulu words. This allows for an insight into those items that contain messages and those that simply complete an outfit worn for a particular age/status-position, this either to repeat (emphasise) the communications contained in the main pieces’ symbolism or supply the copious content of ceremonial regalia. All beadwork items, no matter their associated documentation will conform to notions of respect and avoidance (*ukuhlonipha/ukuzila*) behaviors incumbent on women in traditional Zulu (Embo-Mkhize and Bhaca/Nhlangwini) groups. Respect of tongue/speech (*ukuhlonipha kolwimi*) however particularly applies to women in their relationship to their husbands and in-laws (and those of their ancestral-line) and is therefore the main reason that beadwork can be described as a metaphorical ‘bead language’, this because of the injunction of not saying verbally what they wish to communicate, making them dependent upon beadwork colour and motifs to encode symbolic and non-verbal messages to husbands, in-laws and their wider society for witness as to their circumstances. These patterns used in beadwork (even where more modernised lettering and pictographic motifs are used), while communicating the woman’s life-story, nevertheless conform to regional colour and motif conventions so as to identify and honour the homestead of the wearer. Messages would have been verbally mediated by the woman’s age-mates especially in earlier times, but here it is often women communicating not only with spouses but also with other women, either in work-groups (which can comprise co-wives and neighbours) that can be agricultural, *stokvel* (community ‘banks’) or sustainable-developments of crafters (run by NGOs) wherein they share their life-stories (and beadwork messages), coming to terms with their problems with delayed marriages, poverty, disappointments, etc. Moreover such women’s groups often sing and pray together. Even for traditionalists the wider neighbourhood and extended families will have Zionist and/or Christian members who, being better educated often are voted as supervisors within these women’s groups.

Those pieces pertinent to communication, containing culturally significant declarations communicated via idiomatic isiZulu with its ramifying associations is invariably found in items that belong to persons undergoing transition in status (engagement and marriage beadwork and dress) and declare a range of culturally approved sentiments as regards the person’s change of status. Beadwork and dress also allows for a woman to declare her circumstances, expectations and disappointments (and the emotions these evoke in her) in a culturally permissible way, that is tacitly via the oral genre of poetic language with its allusions, similes and metaphor. Beadwork also conforms to other characteristics of orality (Ong [1982] 2002), like repetitive designs so as to ‘get the message across’ and copious displays of items comprising the outfit. Beadwork communication even conforms to what is known of oral preliterate persons’ memory-recall, for (as some of the beadwork examples given show) that which is unimportant or traumatic recorded in any piece’s design-elements can be ‘forgotten’, while it can yet be accessed by reason that it stands encoded within the

item as a 'document' as it were, for public witness and recall via later interrogation of owner or family-members, or even by supposition referencing other items with similar design-elements. The interpretation of beadwork and dress allows for Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology's 'thick description' as proposed by Geertz (1973a) while such analysis draws upon the Symbolic Interactionist approach to meaningful interpersonal relationships of persons who find themselves living in context of a traditional Nguni culture no doubt subject to continuous modernisation necessitating reinterpretation or integration of new ideas and experiences. In terms of a woman's cultural role, the meaningful interpersonal relationships are with certain persons or groupings that are in association with her, in terms of her status-position, like in-laws, husbands, co-wives and those neighbours and work-groups mentioned above. More interesting and less expected are the cases of where women's individual characters are expressed via beadwork and dress communications, inclusive of their rebellion against the strictures of their society, particularly when they feel 'wronged' in some way and here they often refer back to the elders' warnings and guidance as given in ceremonies, like weddings and coming-of-age (*umemulo*). Compliance with these cultural rites often resolves problem areas of a woman's life and acts to heal those involved in the situation. Thus nearly all the examples given of beadwork communication where women claim that 'legitimising' African customary marriages have 'redeemed' them from the predicament of the common marriages by abduction (*ukuthwala*).

In this Chapter 5, I have limited the beadwork to that from two areas, namely the Umbumbulu/Umkomaas area and that of the Emkhambathini/KwaSwayimane in Ndwedwe. Both areas have stretches falling under one or other of the original Embo-Mkhize chiefdoms, but so too are resident those Zulu clans (like the Nyavu (Mapumulo and Mdluli), linked historically to the AbaMbo and/or those ascribed territory under the 'Shepstone Location System' (ones recognised by former governments (both colonial and Nationalist) as independent of the AbaMbo) and in possession of their homeland by the laws of the times, and only later (around 1975 with the establishment of KwaZulu as a 'Homeland') subject to the Zulu monarchy and Legislature situated in Ulundi, Zululand. Subsequent to the first democratic elections in 1994 when the former KwaZulu 'Homeland' was integrated into the province of KwaZulu-Natal, there have been cases of ethnic revivalism within the former AbaMbo areas, as the peoples and their leaders become interested in their historical claims to ethnic independence from the Zulu. This revival of ethnicity is no doubt of consequence to any study of beadwork and dress as a regional and nationalistic identifier, but this thesis, while mentioning such as a factor has rather concentrated upon the cognitive communications associated with certain motifs, colours and item type as relates to the female traditionalist wearer's status position and life-story.

One can compare beadwork from the two areas, namely Ndwedwe (Emkhambathini/KwaSwayimane) and Umkomaas/Umbumbulu and KwaZwelibomvu as an area of over-lap as it falls between the other two areas. Each area has its distinctive style established as area conventions (and identifiers) which date roughly from the similar period of the 1970s-1990s, but within these many of the same female concerns are expressed (and moreover expressing through early regional oral isiZulu metaphoric language) but each area nevertheless used its preferred motifs and bead colour choices to accomplish this. In terms of a metaphorical and visual 'bead language' these could be then described as regional 'dialects' if one wills. The females of each area will select the focus pieces of beadwork and/or dress to contain especially meaningful motif/colours/pictograms to communicate. Thus Umkomaas/Umbumbulu emphasise the *indelelo* girdle for married women's communications and the beads are small glass size 2, and their choice of writing and pictographic motifs will extend

over a number of joined beadwork strips. Women from Ndwedwe however, tend to emphasise the importance of capes (*utshodo*) for brides (*makoti*) or newly married women. Often the area design conventions as regards motif, colour and bead type are seen to express not only the conventional sentiments for married women but in some cases the same design, by means of a change in one or more elements (like the addition of some 'rogue' colour or motif or positioning of these on the item) so as to narrate the beadworker/wearer's personal life-story. In this the outsider is dependent upon the meaning being confirmed by the owner or someone who knows her intentions. Patterning not only conforms to orality's notions of repetition and exclamations but also contains the moralizations and injunctions inherited as the cultural wisdom of the elders.

Women are continuously 'modernising' in choice of beadwork colour and motif changes, including the introduction of writing or pictograms and the concerns these designs express; these are often reflective of urbanisation and the changes of values and world-view that this may entail, like the male archetype altering from the earlier warrior-image (with protective shield motifs and reference to polygamy and cattle) to the roles of breadwinner at work in the big city (with status possessions like cars or the use of trains in the cities). A greater value is also set on female education and/or ingeniousness as to design, this inclusive of beadwork technique and quality workmanship (which may have been influenced by the many NGOs with beadwork projects aimed at self-sustainability). In some ways this can relate to women's pride in their own praises (as stated in the introduction to this chapter); many illiterate women express the desire to learn particularly to read and write, a value that could well relate to the older concept of a 'bead language' as a way for women who still conform to the cultural value of respect/avoidance (*ukuhlonipha/ukuzila*) to communicate non-verbally, as much as it must be seen to be a mode of negotiating their way within a continuously changing and modernising world, while their security of marriage being (at least partly) ensured by the 'writing-up' (*ukubhala*) a 'legalised' African customary marriage at the magistrate's court (or home-affairs office in more recent times).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis has possibly been a case of attempting to discuss too vast a topic, that of beadwork and dress from southern KwaZulu-Natal's Bhaca/Nhlangwini (Khuze) and Embo-Mkhize and their associated Zulu clans (many are neighbours and interrelated so there is inter-cultural borrowing), this for the period 1950s up to the present (focusing particularly on items of the 1960s-1990s) and moreover this for the MM (Mashu Museum of Ethnology) holdings of the Campbell Collections, UKZN. The introductory Chapter 1 attempts to place the topic of beadwork and dress communications within context of sex/age/status groupings and its regional nature as to colour and motif design choices. The beadworkers/wearers of beadwork and dress rely on these colour and design-motifs in order to communicate non-verbally and this is linked to the Nguni prescriptions imposed upon particularly women of respect/avoidance (*ukuhlonipha/ukuzila*) regimens toward husbands and the latter's male-ancestral line in patriarchal cultures. In this regard, of special significance is *ukuhlonipha kolwimi* or respect of tongue or speech, which is incumbent upon betrothed and married women. The chapter further gives a literature-study, reason for choosing the topic with a brief history of the Collections, chosen methodology and a history of the particular ethnic clan-groupings studied.

The thesis privileges two theoretical approaches, namely Orality-Literacy (Ong 1982 [2002] (among others) and Symbolic and Interpretative Anthropology, particularly as it applies to 'thick description' (Geertz 1973) and its derivative Symbolic Interactionism that considers meaningful human interactions within societies (Denzin 1992). I have nevertheless discussed these privileged orientations, which are applied throughout the thesis, within context of general theory on issues applicable to a more inclusive and multi-disciplinary approach to the subject, feeling it was necessary for insight into both the topic of beadwork and dress, as well as the nature of the eclectic Campbell Collections, UKZN. Thus in Chapter 2, not only are the main theories discussed in detail but the wider issues of; Aesthetics, Museology and the 'other' (important to Eurocentric museum/art collecting and tourism), African Feminism (and concepts of self-identity) and modernisation and culture-change are considered.

This more inclusive approach also contextualizes the history of the Collections having been a private holdings of Dr Killie Campbell, one of the founders and promoters of 'Africana' and Oral Histories in the country, a woman who collected in the tradition of the 19th century 'traveller-artists-authors', some of whom took a new look (or indeed the first look) at much that was to be found in the 'colonies' they travelled and/or settled in. While these persons were understandably subject to the thinking of their times, representing all of the Enlightenment, Modernism, Capitalism, Colonialism and Imperialism, in other ways they were at the forefront of Postmodernism which gave a 'voice' to those cultures they had the experience of living amongst or near to, namely the indigenous peoples whose histories and cultures they recorded. An example would be artist-recorder of African costume and a protégé of Campbell, Dr Barbara Tyrrell. To dismiss such persons as merely imperialist/colonials imposing their European culture (and religion via the missionaries) would fail to do them justice, for in fact they often mediated two worlds; that of (South) Africa and that of Europe. Thus for instance Killie Campbell's father and brother were both fluent isiZulu linguists and councillors to the AmaQadi (Ngcobo) of Inanda, from whom their immigrant Scottish forefather had obtained land for sugar-cane farming while yet

following the ‘Protestant work ethic’³⁵³ within their *Natal Estates Limited* (Sugar-company head-quartered at Mt Edgecombe and floated in 1897) and were amongst those who promoted and founded education in KwaZulu-Natal.

However the same colonialists no doubt exhibited the European Modernist obsession with the ‘myth’ of the African ‘other’ in which the African was perceived to be, as propounded by the philosopher Jean Rousseau, a less ‘spoilt’ human-being, namely a ‘Nobel Savage’. This last must be seen to have made its imprint on the interest that beadwork (and dress) continuously draws from Europeans (and is played to in the tourist industry), making it imperative in such a study as this to interrogate earlier notions of a ‘bead language’ and warn that this can never be declared a language (in the sense of a dictionary list of agreed meanings) but nevertheless remains a useful concept if understood as a metaphorical and hence ‘so-called’ ‘bead language’, for the poetic diction of the pre-literate and oral nature of the isiZulu language is invariably expressed in a visual (albeit non-verbal) form of colours and motifs that carry associative meaning, used to communicate traditionalist African women’s concerns. As such beadwork and dress symbolism draws upon the early pre-literate isiZulu language’s orality, much as the praise-poets did and as contemporary derived musical forms like *maskanda*, *isichathimiya* and *mbaqanga* do today. In order to understand why this is a visual rendition one needs to know the cultural position of Nguni women in their roles as fertile females, as daughters, mothers and wives subject to the patriarchal control of their fathers’ and husbands (inclusive of the latter’s ancestors in their sacred realm). A position that carries potential danger of trespass, requiring the female follow a quiet, hard-working, obedient regimen that is indicative of respect and avoidance (*ukuhlonipha* and *ukuzila*) of especially her husband and his ancestral-line as they are the source of the woman’s blessings of well-being and ensured fertility. Beadwork and dress ‘speaks’ to this cultural role (not only of the female’s behaviour and position within this society as to status/ age-grade, but also the necessary rituals and rites-of passage pertaining to them), and within its genre it allows for a certain latitude as regards the woman beadmaker’s personal expectations and disappointments in her life and circumstances. Therefore one could state that it is not possible to fully understand the communications contained in beadwork and dress (encoded into regional design conventions) without knowing this cultural context. Thus in many ways beadwork and dress is a non-verbal metaphorical ‘bead language’ or alternatively *ukuhlonipha kolwimi* (respect of tongue, speech or language) of women, drawing upon the oral roots of the isiZulu language and idiom to give females a ‘voice’ albeit a visual and non-verbal one. This cultural context to beadwork and dress and the impact of modernisation (as in globalization) due to Christianization, economic and political change is discussed in Chapter 4. While in Chapter 5 an analysis of traditionalist womens’ individual beadwork and dress items’ communications is undertaken, this using their own isiZulu words and phrases so as to support the contentions as to the purpose and function of such symbolic expression within these southern African communities. As beadwork and dress are worn to show age and status groupings and the important rites-of-passage that go with these, the content of Chapter 3 focuses on such male and female such age-grades inclusive of the important role of beadwork communications in courting. The expression of regionalism as to design of such beadwork and dress is also fully discussed; some of the local material is not readily known or recorded by those from outside of the culture itself and is here discussed in their historical and cultural context for the first

³⁵³ Protestant work ethic – “the view that a person’s duty is to achieve success through hard work and thrift, such success being a sign that one is saved.” “Origin: translating German *die protestantische Ethik*, coined (1904) by the economist Max Weber in his thesis on the relationship between the teachings of Calvin and the rise of capitalism..” (http://oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/Protestant-ethic [accessed 7 October 2013]).

time. Throughout images are supplied in Appendices arranged at the end according to chapter with 'see references' in the text.

A further consideration in regard to the Campbell Collections, UKZN's holdings is that Dr Killie Campbell, having bequeathed her collections to the University of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal with the administration taken over upon her death in 1965), drew into the collecting orientation the debates of academic schools of thought operative in the mid-20th century, particularly in the disciplines of Social Anthropology and History, these affecting the library/museum's approach to its collecting, display and use of its holdings. Perhaps the greatest impact in this regard was the exclusion of a 'Material Culture' component in the British dominated Social Anthropology practiced in the then English-language University of Natal (now UKZN), a fact that side-lined the museum holdings in favour of the library's holdings as a documentary repository for the History Faculty's research students. Only with the advent of Postmodernism and the introduction into the University of African-art to the Fine Arts/History of Art Faculty and an Orality-Literacy course introduced by European-languages' Professor Edgard Sienaert (later combined under the designation of "The Campbell Collections and Centre for Oral Studies") in the 1980-1990s, did the subject of beadwork and dress as representative of an 'oral-genre or style' find a new perspective. Thus the argument in the thesis is for the methodology to be that of the "triangulated" use of a number of multi-disciplinary orientations, prioritizing Orality-Literacy (which argues for a knowledge of indigenous language in its original oral format transcribed into the interpretation of the metaphoric and poetic communications in beadwork/dress), Symbolic Anthropology's Interpretativism via 'thick description' of the Hermeneuts like Clifford Geertz, which allows in its derived Symbolic Interactionist theory an in-depth viewing of the cultural intent of the communications, setting them within the culture's value-systems/world-view and ritual practices. These theories are the content of Chapters 1 and 2. Here, such an interpretation takes the form of extrapolation (an example given in Chapter 1) that perforce means the student accepts the possibility of a cognitive and communicative purpose behind beadwork and dress's design rather than the purely visual and/or aesthetical one of mere decoration that was the earlier norm for western 'High Art'. In this the thesis approach supports the multi-disciplinary views of Postmodernism; the use of anthropological studies (not only Interpretivism but that of Structural and Symbolic fields of Anthropology), Orality-literacy Studies and Art-history approaches.

Perforce the nature of the topic concerns African Feminism which is divergent from western Feminism, being more pragmatic and aligned to subsistence and sustainability. Beadwork communications in themselves particularly 'speak' to the position of females within the indigenous Nguni cultures and an attempt was made to use the recorded communications of beadwork from the field in Chapter 5 where it is shown that while such women's lives are circumscribed by cultural conditioning, nevertheless women use such beadwork as an ingenious means of self-expression and catharsis, declaring their life-stories and moreover, while most often confirming cultural perceptions of 'femaleness' as found in patriarchal societies, these women as often declare their purpose and position as individuals and thus empower themselves in as far as their circumstances allow them. Mention is made in terms of this of the role of female work-groups (which comprise not only co-wives but neighbours) that can be agricultural but more often are NGO supported initiatives for craft-making so as to supply incomes, where the group helps a traditionalist woman toward personal expression while yet conforming to older cultural mores as to her role as mother, wife and home-maker.

Finally one cannot ignore the impact of modernisation and change on the culture itself and how this influenced the expression of beadwork and dress in regard to its design, technique and the nature of the communications themselves. In this last the concern is with the traditional and still mainly rural section of the community, rather than with the westernised and urbanised African who most likely supports the main fashion-trends within the global economy. It is hoped that sufficient evidence is given to show that modernisation (and particularly that found among traditionalists) has been continuous and not always a case of the western supplanting the African, but just as often the reinterpretation of borrowings from the western and global world. Thus throughout the appellation of “traditionalist” has been kept, for want of a better English word, those available in isiZulu and deriving from the missionaries are too derogatory to use, while alternative English terms like ‘ethnic’ carry their own connotative ‘baggage’ and merely confound, making argument singularly difficult.

Only the peoples of southern KwaZulu-Natal (of what was formerly the province of Natal as against Zululand and northern Natal) are considered in the thesis; namely the Bhaca and their almost indistinguishable neighbours and related Nhangwini clans of the midlands to far south-west and into East Griqualand and the Embo-Mkhize (or AbaMbo) and their neighbouring and/or tribute Zulu clans (particularly the Makhanya, Qadi, Ngcolosi and Nyavu (Maphumulo, Mdluli), and this for the period of the 1950-90s, with some rare exceptions deriving from the 2000s. These peoples have long been in contact with both the European settlers and Indian immigrants in large metropolises (Durban and Pietermaritzburg in particular) and are characteristically more innovative (no-doubt because of the longer period of exposure) in terms of borrowed ideas and concepts as well as modernised life-style than those resident in the more remote former Zululand. This contention is open to challenge, but I have found that often the people themselves make remarks in support of this, such as suggestions that the student study African custom in Zululand rather than their own midland homeland if wishing clarity on any Nguni cultural detail.³⁵⁴ The major culture-studies on the particular groups of southern KwaZulu-Natal that form a benchmark for the study of beadwork and dress in their ritual and social purpose, which also indicate modernising trends are Kohler’s *The Marriage customs of southern Natal* (1933), Tyrrell’s, *Suspicion is my name* (1971), Vilakazi’s *Zulu transformations* (1965), Ngubane’s *Body and mind in Zulu medicine* (1977) and Reader’s, *Zulu tribe in transition* (1966). These works have had to be supplemented by field-collecting of actual items of beadwork and dress and photographic images with brief life-histories of the makers and wearers to form a comprehensive study of the topic in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. Not only is this understanding of cultural context and ritual vital to an understanding of the nature of age-grade/status dress and beadwork communications, but it helps in understanding the modernised renditions of such ritual. Ones that seem at odds with the purist traditional ones, as in the photographic images from the Mdlalose, Ngcobo and Gumede families in Chapter 4, and while these show change, many are surface adaptations to modern realities rather than changes affecting the purpose of the rituals themselves. So saying, modernisation other than in economics and education cannot be readily equated as one with westernization where this concerns belief or values that adhere to traditional thought and the important place of the ancestral-spirits in the lives of their descendants. It is rather Christianization which alters world-views as regards these earlier cultural concerns, but as Christian blacks are western dressed and mostly urban-dwellers they are not a part of this thesis as such. Traditional beadwork and dress remains very regional in terms of design, one can often identify a person’s home country from their

³⁵⁴ So common is this statement that it is hard to choose one single informant to cite, but perhaps the interviews of research-assistants Dingani Mthethwa and Ndaba Dube as well as the input of several migrant workers from traditionalist backgrounds (employed as either cleaning, gardening or security staff at the Campbell Collections during the period of 2000-2) can be mentioned.

dress and thus even when the same metaphorical and idiomatic isiZulu is used to communicate concepts in beadwork and dress communications these will likely be rendered in uniquely regional conventions as to design motifs and colours, depending on the maker/wearers home country.

This last statement leads me to a major area of study that warrants further research, which is not only the validation and a deeper consideration of the costume-studies by such artist-recorders' as Barbara Tyrrell, but the photographic images deriving from photographers like Lynn Acutt, Mrs Fred Clarke or Jean Morris (all represented in Campbell Collections, if only in published accounts) who expand upon the medium of Tyrrell's mentor, Alfred Duggan-Cronin. Some are images of traditionalist persons arguably posed by the photographer and conforming to some perception of 'Zuluness' or 'ethnicity', while others (more importantly for this thesis) are those self-posed studio photographs of traditionalists, which are essentially documents or records of certain status/age-grades marking their sitters/posers' rites-of-passage. These were taken at various, mainly Indian owned studios in downtown Pietermaritzburg and Durban, the likes of "Paramount Studios", "Gemini Studios", "New Arts Studios" and "Kitty's Studios" of Pietermaritzburg, and "Panbro's Studios" and "Bobson's Studios" of Durban. Quite apart from collecting these from the proprietors of the studios myself in the mid-1980s, rural women often provide these same studio images of themselves and their men to accompany their sold beadwork and dress via field-collectors. It is heartening to know that the poser/sitter retains copyright of these commissioned photographic images by South African Copyright Law (1978, with amendments) unless unclaimed and unpaid for in which case the copyright reverts to the photographer. These photographs often contain supplementary 'life-histories' which inform on a variety of issues, not only illustrative of age-grades or of beadwork styles, but speak of self-concepts, notions of personhood and document the modernisation process in terms of dress. Hopefully I have included sufficient examples in the thesis to support my contention as to the need for further research and the value of including such material in museum holdings.

The other issue is one of ethics with the question; do I have the right to repeat these family stories, this despite the wives having obtained permission from the husband to bothsell their beadwork, give their photograph and tell their stories? The families know the material is meant for a museum and it is an act of choice for them to sell, particularly where their younger members did not wish to keep the material. This dilemma may have no right or wrong answer and is reminiscent of those in anthropological debate discussed in Chapter 2 as to the 'voice' of Postmodernism. All that one can conclude is that we as collectors (both museum and private) need a certain integrity in our approach, but what constitutes the parameters of this remain with us personally (with due consideration of prevailing norms in socio-cultural thinking), for if one were to argue the ethics of if, when and who can collect beadwork (and support documentation) there could well be no museum holdings or collectors remaining and no research done on the topic.

Hopefully my closing observations also give rise to queries as to how best to incorporate this 'additional' material (like images, life-histories and questions of ethics) into museum displays and it seems some combination of images, interviews, beadwork and dress and follow-up validation interviews would be most suited, much like a display on Charles Darwin's Evolutionary theory at the Natural History Museum, London in 2008³⁵⁵ (where journals, stuffed birds, newspaper outrage at his theory, correspondence with his spouse, and the like

³⁵⁵ Which I visited in December 2008 on a research-visit to the United Kingdom.

were included). Such an inclusive display can often address the issues of ethics in a way that a more popular one can only exacerbate.

Finally these concluding remarks indicate the need for further field-research, before it is too late, and although this thesis appears to be so broad for the reasons initially cited, it nevertheless points to the need for yet more intensive work on a constantly changing life-style and art-form (beadwork and dress) with its collateral histories that need to be recorded and researched to bring forward the full-cultural expression of South Africa and its lesser known national heritage. In this we will surely find our ethical considerations and priorities, for we will have the input of the people themselves, although in this no doubt ethics may collide with monetary gain, but hopefully the people themselves can be made aware of the value of heritage and so not sell their creativity and narratives too eagerly, rather settling for local museums and galleries that will do their cultural expression and lives full justice.

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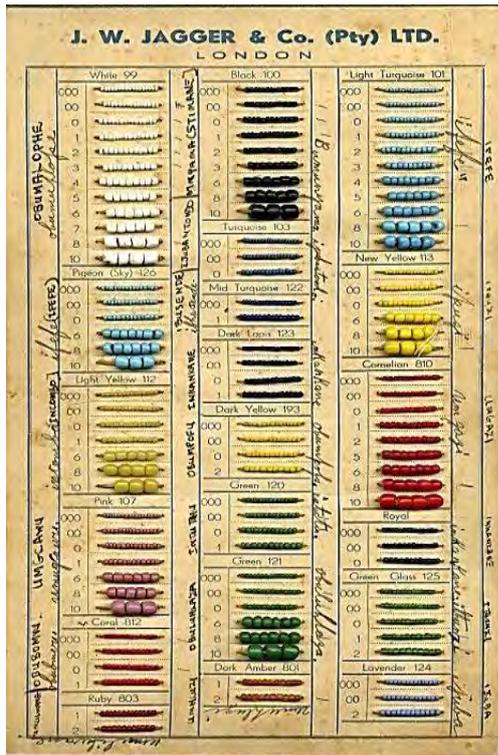
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Mkhize, S.M., Interview with his mother MaSitole Mkhize, March 2011.

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Appendices

Figures illustrating PhD (History of Art) dissertation **A social and cultural theoretical appraisal and contextualisation of the visual and symbolic language of beadwork and dress from southern KwaZulu-Natal, held in the Campbell Collections, UKZN**. By Yvonne Elizabeth Winters, School of Arts, UKZN, Pietermaritzburg, 2013.



Chapter 1: Figures 1-3.

Figure 1. Example of wholesale bead trade catalogue for Natal from *J.W. Jagger & Co (Pty) Ltd, London*. [MM2445].

Figure 2. Image of Ethiopian Hadeda-Ibis in flight from Warwick Tarboton's web-site (<http://www.warwicktarboton.co.za/birdpgs/094Hibis.html> [accessed 14 December 2012]).

Figure 3. So iconic a symbol of the KZN Province is the Hadeda that it is used in adverts, here in the Natal Witness, Pietermaritzburg, 2012 competition for short stories. (http://www.witness.co.za/index.php?true_story [accessed 14 December 2012]).



Chapter 1: Figures 4-7.

Figures 4-6. Bhaca/Nhlangwini necklace (*isiphaqa*) [MM3788] and detail from Barbara Tyrrell watercolour of Bhaca back-belts worn by Bhaca diviner from Richmond c1950-60s [WCP 476]. (Courtesy of Barbara Tyrrell).

Figure 7. Sibusiso Duma *Uthole isoka elisha* [She has found herself a new boyfriend], 2012. Oil on Canvas, 76 x 101 cm. (Courtesy of Sibusiso Duma).



Chapter 1: Figures 8-10.

Figures 8. Zulu painted mat-racks (*izibhaxa*) from Nongoma c1960s (from author's collection).

Figure 9. Tito Zungu's 'Cityscape' Koki-pen on cardboard. c1965, Jo Thorpe Collection housed in Campbell Collections, UKZN [JT526].

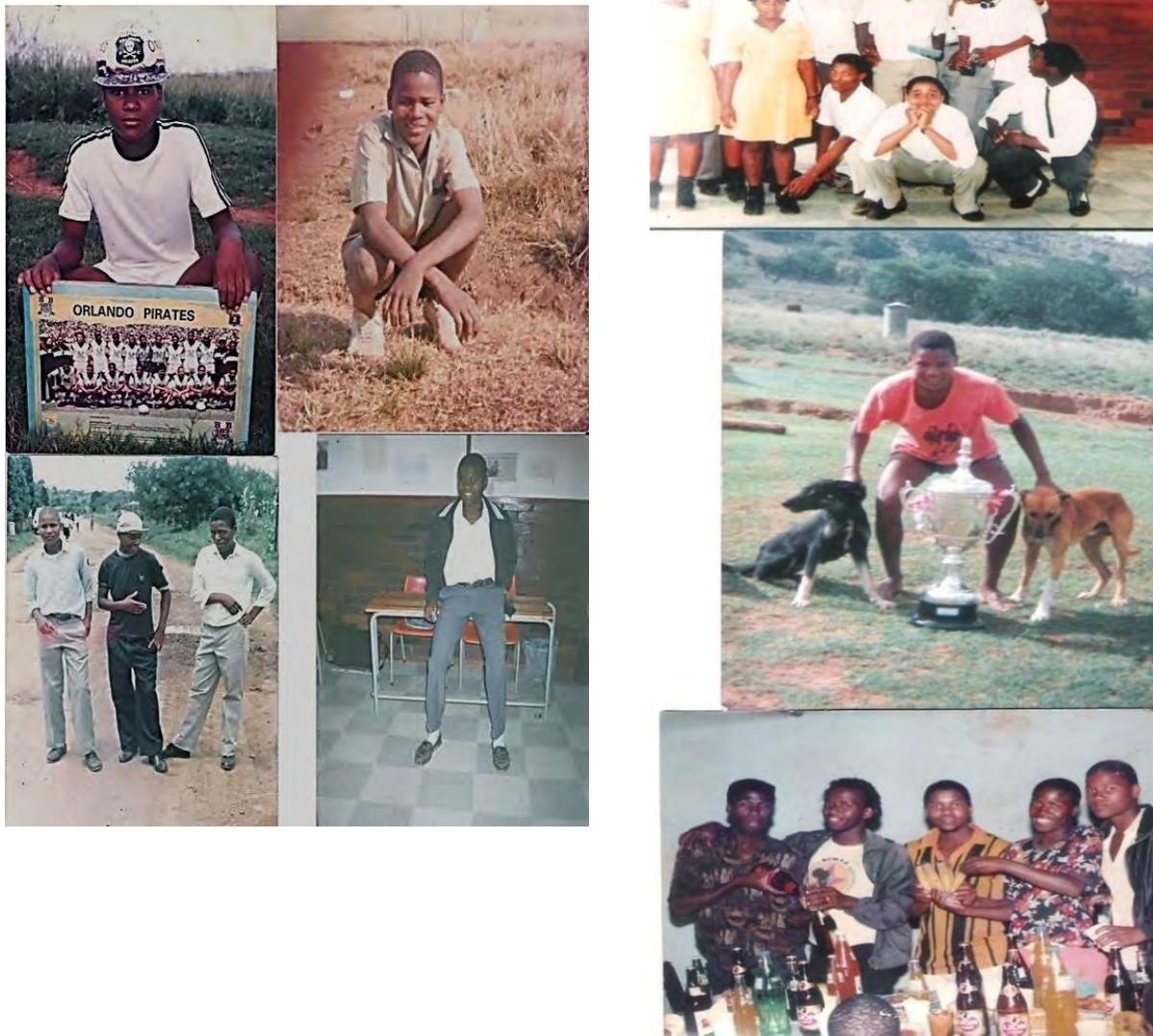
Figures 10. MaNtini and MaMeyiwa Khuzwayo in their gala dress, KwaZwelebomvu, August 2008 (photographed by author).



Chapter 1: Figures 11-12.

Figures 11. MaNtini and MaMeyiwa Khuzwayo in their gala dress, KwaZwelebomvu, August 2008 (photographed by author).

Figure 12. Beaded heart (*inhliziyi*) from Umbumbulu [MM4473].



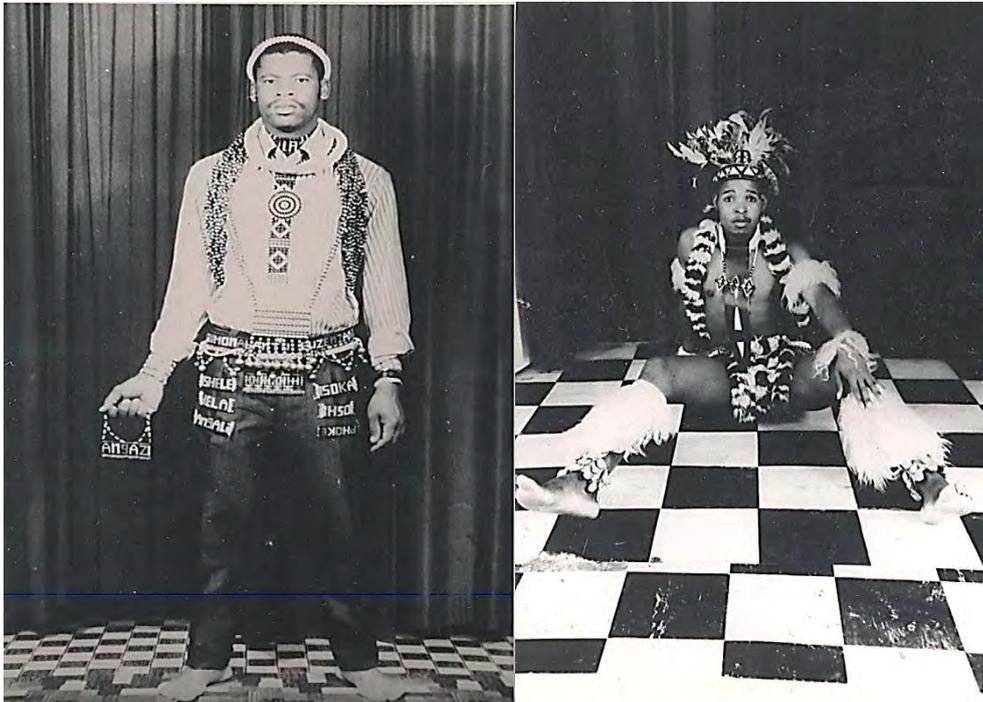
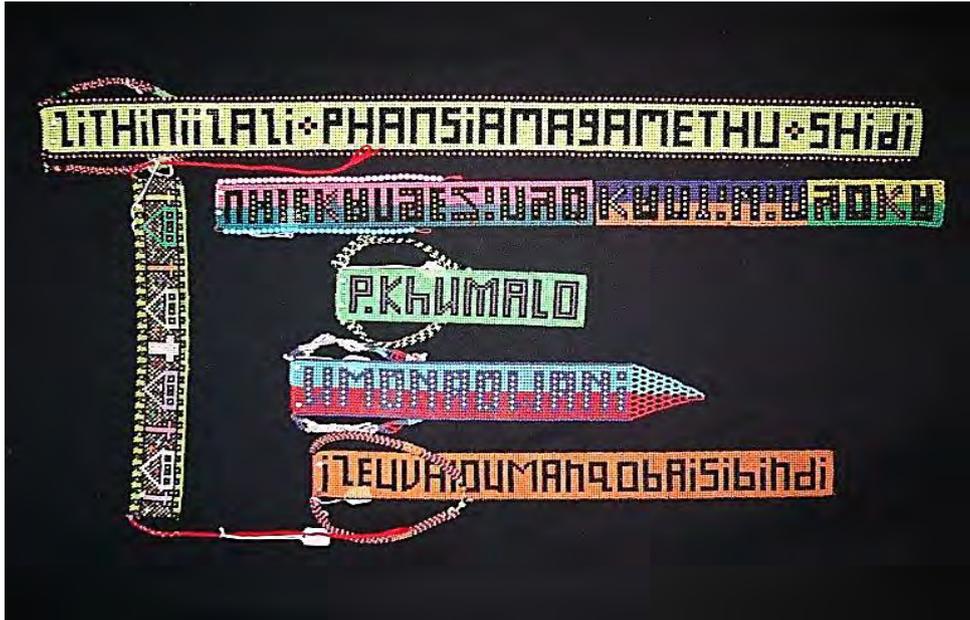
Chapter 3: Figure 1 (composite 1-7). Figure 1 (composite images 1-7). Photographs of a young Sensosenkosi Mkhize in the 1980-90s, as soccer supporter, school-child, with school mates and post violence era matriculant, with fellow matriculants, with his (*Africanus*) dogs and at a party with his Comrade (*Amaqabane*) ‘cousin-brothers’ circa 1990s (Courtesy of Senzo Mkhize).



Chapter 3: Figures 2-6.

Figures 2- 4.Traditionalist males from Ndwedwe and Emkhambathini, wearing *uthela* and *mshosho* in 1970s. In Figure 3 the youth is accompanied by two senior girls or *amaqhikiza*. Photographed at Kitty's Studio, Pietermaritzburg. (Courtesy of Jithoo Maharaj).

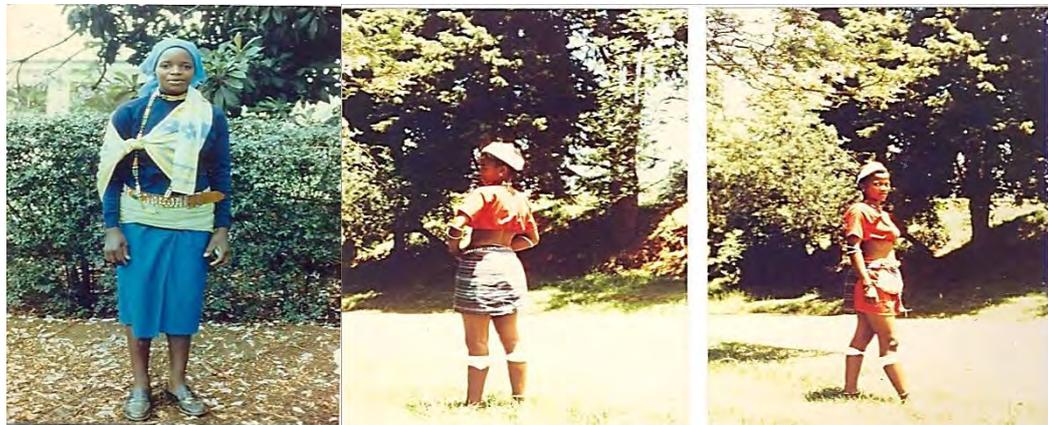
Figures 5-6. Examples of men wearing *mshosho* and *uthela*, photographed at Panbro Studio, Durban and Kitty's Studio, Pietermartizburg. (Courtesy of the Mbonambi family of Umkomaas and Jithoo Maharaj).



Chapter 3: Figures 7-9.

Figures 7. Male courting beadwork from Ndwedwe, Emaphephetweni c1980s ([MM3980-4]held in the Campbell Collections, UKZN).

Figures 8-9. Young men of the Mbanjwa family from Highflats/St Faith's in the 1980s, the man (*isoka*) at left wears courting dress [MM2406-23] while the man at right wears southern KwaZulu-Natal dance dress. (Courtesy of the Mbanjwa family and photographed at Bobson Studios, Durban, c1983).



Chapter 3: Figures 10-17.

Figures 10-12. Three junior girls (*amajongosi*) and a single senior girl (*iqhikiza*) from Hela-Hela, Richmond 1989. (Photographed by author as they were in process of embarking on an *imibondo* (gift-giving) visit to one girl's future mother-in-law at Taylor's Halt).

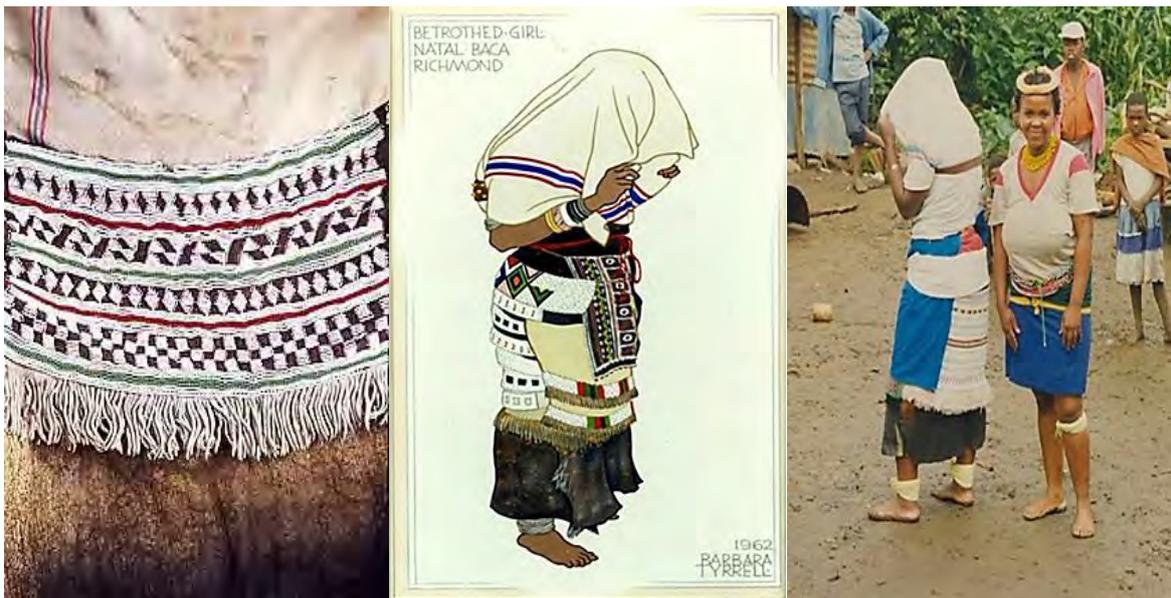
Figures 13-14. Barbara Tyrrell original field-sketches of female age-grades from the Bhaca/Nhlangwini of Richmond c1950s-1970s. The image at right is the original of one which appears in *Suspician is my name* (1972) and depicts a senior girl (*iqhikiza*) while the other is of a junior girl (*ijongosi*). (Courtesy Barbara Tyrrell).

Figures 15-17. Malikhona Mbanjwa as a senior girl (*iqhikiza*) in town/travel dress Ixopo, 1982 and a young junior girl of the *itshutshi/intombi ezivundile* age-set, Highflats/St Faith's 1983 (photographed by author).



Chapter 3: Figures 18-22.

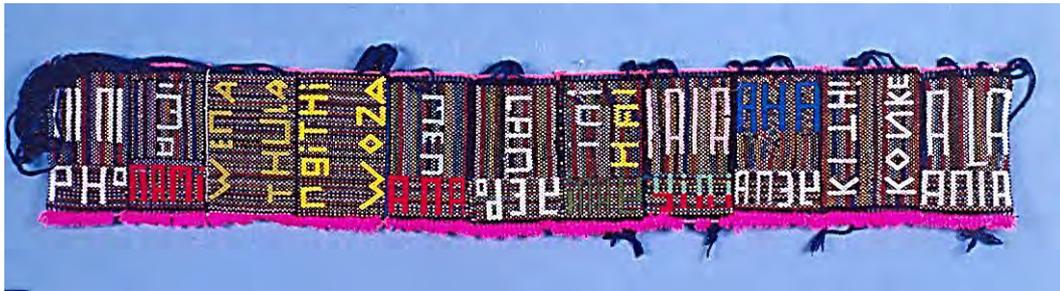
Figures 18-22. Girl of the Mbanjwa family in full regalia at her *umemulo* (coming-of-age) ceremony, the same girl dancing and wearing the stomach-lining of the ritual slaughtered beast and men from her family dancing in her honour, in Hammarsdale township, 2000. (Photographed by author).



Chapter 3 : Figures 1-4.

Figure 1. Engaged girl from the Khuze (Nhangwini) of Ixopo in 1983, photographed at Bobson Studio, Durban. (Courtesy of Sandile MaMbanjwa Mkhize).

Figures 2-4. Two girls of the Mtolo family of Hela-Hela, demonstrating engaged girl's dress and an *uganile* (girl on an *ukugana* visit), 1989. (Photographed by author). A section of engaged girl's back-skirt (*ingxayi*) showing heavy beading [MM5237] (Photographed by Paul Weinberg). Barbara Tyrrell watercolour of an Engaged girl of the Bhaca/Nhangwini dressed in *ukugana* (visiting the in-laws) dress [WCP 779]. (Courtesy of the artist Barbara Tyrrell).



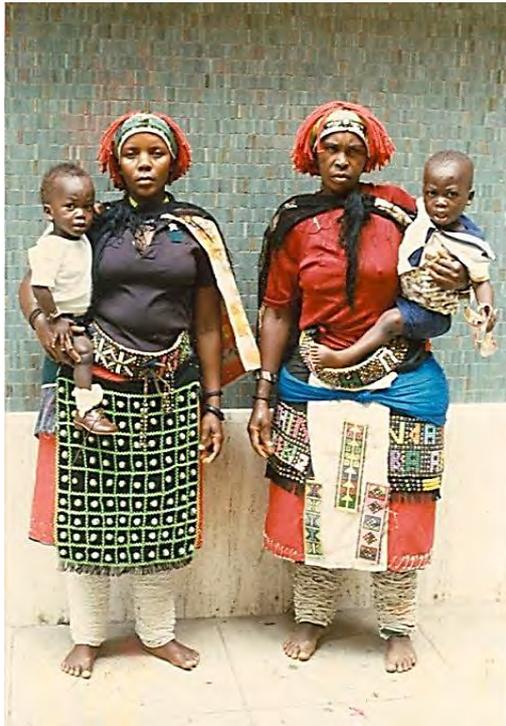
Chapter 4: Figures 5-7.

Figures 5-7. Buzani (left) and her sister Gezani Makhanya from Engolela, in engagement dress and their then future husbands, the Mbonambi brothers from Thenjani, Umkomaas, the couples married in 1977 (the first photographed at Panbro Studio, Isipingo Rail October 1977 and second at Bobson Studio Extension, Durban). (Courtesy of MaMkhanya sisters). Gezani's engagement girdle or *indelelo* [MM4674].



Chapter 4: Figures 8-10.

Figures 8-10. Khulelaphi MaCele Hlambisa from Emaphephetweni, Ndwedwe in betrothed senior girl's dress (*iqhikiza*) (on left) and as married bride (*makoti*) posing with her husband (on right), c1960's. She is one of the doll-makers from Ndwedwe and poses with a doll dressed as a bride c1988. (Courtesy of Jo Thorpe, African Art Centre, Durban).



Chapter 4: Figures 11-14.

Figures 11-12. Doll-makers Celani MaHlambisa (left) and Sizakele MaMchunu (right), co-wives married into the Nojiyeza family, photographed by Terry-Ann Stevenson at African Art Centre, Durban c1986. Celani MaHlambisa Nojiyeza photographed at her Emaphphetweni home in Ndwedwe by Coleen Wafer of Durban Art Gallery. (Courtesy of Jo Thorpe, African Art Centre, Durban).

Figure 13. An example of an essentially documentary Studio photograph of a c1970 Ndwedwe area rural bride (*makoti*) with her migrant and hence urban-dressed husband, posing shaking hands (note Reader's commentary on the bride's gesture of agreement stated in the text) with the woman's engaged girl attendant as witness (Courtesy of Jithoo Maharaj, photographed at "Gemini Studio" Pietermaritzburg).



Chapter 4: Figures 15-18.

Figures 15-16, Original field-sketches done in situ by artist-recorder Barbara Tyrrell. A Bhaca/Nhlangwini bride from Richmond c1960s [WCP3437] and a newly married pregnant woman from Ndwedwe c1970s [WCP 3436]. (Courtesy of the artist Barbara Tyrrell).

Figure 17. *Umthakelo* layered under back-skirt that belonged to doll-maker Sizakele MaMchunu Nojiyeza c1984 [MM 3964].

Figure 18. A 'classic' beaded cape and back-skirt from Ndwedwe, Emaphphetweni. This one belonged to Intombi Hlambisa c1984 [MM3476-7].



Chapter 4: Figures 19-23.

Figures 19-21. Bhaca/Nhlangwini beaded red-cloth breast-cover (*isicwayo*) [MM1867] and beaded black-cloth apron (*umshashalazi*) [MM219C], cloth beaded back-skirt (*umgudhlo*) [MM219D] all date from the 1950s and are from Richmond acquired by the Campbell Collections, UKZN via artist-recorder Barbara Tyrrell.

Figures 22-23. Bhaca/Nhlangwini married woman's cape (*ibayi*) of striped salampore cloth [MM219A] deriving from Barbara Tyrrell's collecting for Dr Killie Campbell c1952 and heavily beaded three sectioned gala back-skirt (*isiZulu* name unknown) [MM2681] from Highflats, c1950-60s. This latter was bought from Ivy's Curio's, Smith St, Durban. Of the proprietors, the first was Margaret Ford who was Dr Killie Campbell's companion and Ford's successor Bronwyn Smith would collect for her shop on field-trips along with Barbara Tyrrell (personal communication Ford and Smith, Botha's Hill and Pilgrim's Rest, 1982).



Chapter 4: Figures 24-27.

Figures 24-25. Khuze/Nhlangwini married women's gala dress, St Faith's 1983, front and back views. The entire outfit is held in Campbell Collections, UKZN as MM2318-2337A-B and modelled by Sandile MaMbanjwa Mkhize. (Photographed by author).

Figures 26-27. Watercolour study of a Bhaca married woman in gala dress, Richmond, c1950s by Barbara Tyrrell [WCP777]. (Courtesy of the artist Barbara Tyrrell) and daily dress worn with covering cloth-wraps worn by older married women from Hela-Hela, Richmond 1990. (Photographed by author).



Chapter 4: Figures 30-31.

Figures 30 [a-b]. Christian bride (*makoti*) in black head-scarf, long-sleeve silk-shirt, lace-shawl and brown German-print wrap-skirt with her marriage Kist/Chest posing with a woman in traditional *makoti -o -gubudele* attire, from Bhaca of Emakhuzeni, Himeville 1984. The latter outfit is in Campbell Collections, UKZN [MM2514-2524]. And a side-view of the same Christian bride. (Photographed by author).

Figures 31[a-b]. Records of the realities of continuous modernisation taking place within traditional dress, a beaded apron (*isibacelo*) from Ndwedwe c1980s [MM4057] and a cloth applique apron (*iphinifa*) [MM3960], from Ndwedwe, c1990s, this one from doll-maker Sizakele MaMchunu Nojiyeza. Both are worn over the leather apron, bustle and back-skirts and can be described as traditional attire. Campbell Collections, UKZN.



Chapter 4: Figures 32-36.

Figures 32-34. More contemporary items of Bhaca/Nhlangwini married woman's dress; Apron and matching breast-cover (*umblesa and isicwayo*) [MM2534-5], capes of towel, striped salampore-cloth and green cloth (*umgudhlo nestawula, nesbali itshali*) [MM2536-8] and layered cloth back-skirt (*umtago*) [MM2539] all from Emakhuzeni, Himeville, 1984. Campbell Collections, UKZN.

Figure 35-36. Applique cape (*umtshweka*) [MM2756] and back-skirt (*igxaba*) [MM2756] from Bhaca of Umzimkhulu, 1984. Both worn to the First-fruit (*umkhosi wokweshwana*) ceremony. Campbell Collections, UKZN.



Figures 37-38. Three newly married and pregnant women dressed in the style in vogue in Hela-Hela, Richmond 1989. (Photographed by author).



Chapter 4: Figures 37-42.

Mdlalose and Mbhele families' *umemulo* and *imbizo*, Umkomaas, December 2002.

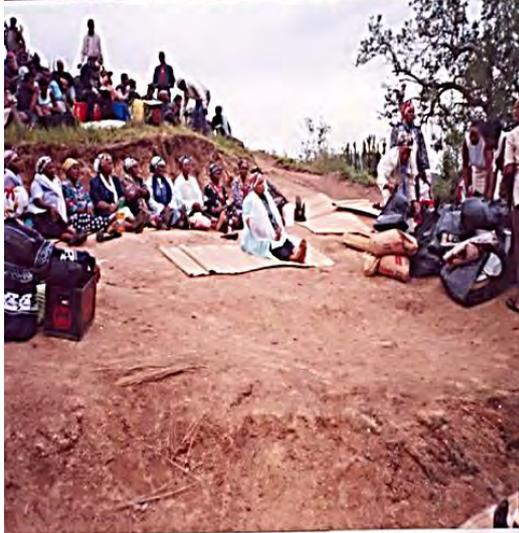
Figures 39-42. The groom's family bring goats and *imbizo* gifts and the negotiator's (*umkhongi*) wife acts as 'master' of ceremonies. The bride arrives in full traditional dress covered by plaid rug and under umbrella (both the latter for *ukuhlonipha* (respecting)). (Courtesy of Bongiwe MaMdlalose Mbhele).



Chapter 4: Figures 43-47.

Mdlalose and Mbhele families' *umemulo* and *imbizo*, Umkomaas, December 2002.

Figures 43-47. The bride (*makoti*) in her *umemulo* dress bends in respect (*ukuhlonipha*) posture while her father and uncle speak for her. Girls' dance group wearing large plastic beads or *amaqhosa*, which can be borrowed for occasion. The bride (hidden by umbrella) with her attendant or *umakojane* in respect (*ukuhlonipha*) posture. The bride dancing in front of her group. (Courtesy of Bongwiwe MaMdlalose Mbhele).



Chapter 4: Figures 48-50.

Mdlalose and Mbhele families' *umemulo* and *imbizo*, Umkomaas, December 2002.

Figures 48-50. Older women cooking in 3-legged iron pots or *amabodwe*, also known as "Zulu pots". The giving of *izibizo* gifts ceremony. *Umkhongi* or negotiator's wife takes the lead in giving to significant persons, like mother of bride (gets checked blanket-rug) and the father of the bride (gets leopard spotted blanket). Others of the bride's family get blankets, *amaphinifa* (pinafores), sugar, a pot (big pan), stove (paraffin), bread and tea-set among other items. All old women from bride's neighbourhood receive a cup of sugar and loaf of bread as they helped with beer-brewing and cooking. (Courtesy of Bongwe MaMdlalose Mbhele).

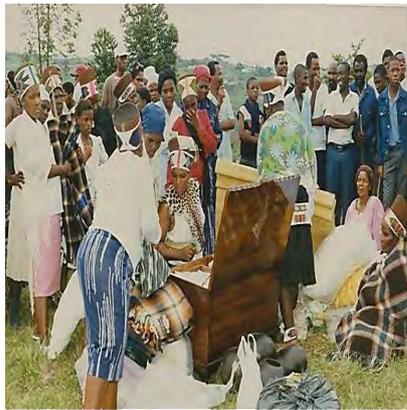
Figures 51-52. The men's group and women's group eating at alternate ends of the table late into the night (the clock on the wall reads 10.15 pm and a paraffin lamp standing on a shelf confirms the time as evening).



Chapter 4 : Figures 53-57.

Ngcobo wedding, Inanda 12 December 1989.

Figures 53-57. Brides group and groom's group arrive at dance-ground. The bride has money pinned to her headdress. Bride and groom in dance. (Photographed by Ishwar Bindha 1989).



Chapter 4: Figures 58-63.

Ngcobo wedding, Inanda Ngcobo wedding, Inanda 12 December 1989.

Figures 58-63. An elderly Busisiwe Ngcobo speaking on behalf of groom's family and bride's three male family members speak for her family. The bride's brothers bring her dowry kist with *umabo* (lobola gifts), the couple's younger children are part of audience and the "white wedding" takes place in a tent late in the day. (Photographed by Ishwar Bindha 1989).



Chapter 4: Figures 64-69.

Gumede – Duma families' *umabo* and arrival of bride at Ixopo July 1996.

Figures 64-69. Members of Duma family arrive for *umabo* (gift-giving), comprising blankets, pinafores, trays, bowls (with lids), dishes, mugs, sugar-basin and Brandy (the latter for head of home). The whole Gumede family are given gifts including the children. The father-in-law Mr G.A. Gumede thanks the Duma family. MaMbanjwa Mkhize speaks for the bride (her niece) on behalf of the Duma family. (Courtesy of MaMbanjwa Mkhize).



Chapter 4: Figures 70-76.

Gumede – Duma families' *umabo* and arrival of bride at Ixopo July 1996.

Figures 70-76. The in-laws, mother and father are seated on the ground, while the best-man and groom wearing blue jacket) are seated on chairs, the latter served beer by the bride in respectful (*ukuhlonipha*) posture.

The attendant (*umakojane*) stays for three weeks and is younger than the bride. She sits on a wood-bundle (symbolic of the wood, water and food she will help the bride cut, fetch and cook) and will not come down until given money and gifts. The mother-in-

law in the distinctive *iphinafa* of the time, worn by Christian traditionalists is photographed taking the *umakojane*'s gifts down from the wood-pile.

After the *umabo* gift-giving the groom's father leads the people to his cattle-kraal where he singles out a beast for slaughter for food for the dancing on the Sunday. As a good host he is expected by guests that he supplies food for the party. (Courtesy of MaMbanjwa Mkhize).



Chapter 4: Figures 77-82.

Gumede – Duma families' *umabo* and arrival of bride at Ixopo July 1996.

Figures 77-82. The bride and groom's parties dancing. The selection of and slaughter of the beast for feasting. Two views of the bride (*makoti*) in respectful (*ukuhlonipha*) pose with her attendants. (Courtesy of MaMbanjwa Mkhize).



Chapter 4: Figures 83-85.

Gumede – Duma families’ *umabo* and arrival of bride at Ixopo July 1996.

Figures 83-85. The bride’s (*makoti*) sister holds the dedicated goat (*indlakudla*) to be slaughtered so that the bride “may eat meat and milk in her new home”, the goat must cry for the ancestors or it is not auspicious, the gall (*njongo*) is sprinkled on the bride while the groom’s brother makes an armband of the skin-fur for the bride, this to show the “*amadlozi* (ancestors) are now inside the *makoti*’s body”(personal communication Sandile MaMbanjwa Mkhize, Durban, July 2000). The bride’s demeanour on the final day when her family leave her is withdrawn, the man behind her is a brother, not the groom. (Courtesy MaMbanjwa Mkhize).



Chapter 5: Figures 1-4.

Figure 1. MaNdimande Makhanya in wedding-attire, Umbumbulu, 1975 (photographed at Bobson's Studios, Durban).

Figure 2. Beaded stars (*izinkanyezi*) from Umkomaas, c1970s [MM4869, MM 4671A, MM4543A].

Figure 3. Bridal apron (*iphinifa*), Ndwedwe [MM4869].

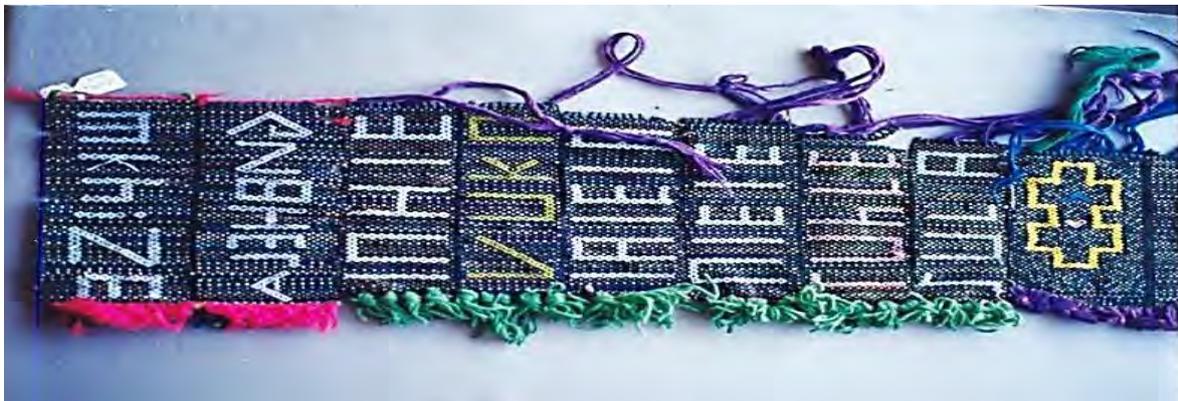
Figure 4. Cape (*isimbozo*), Ndwedwe [MM4923].



Chapter 5: Figures 5-7.

Figure 5. Cape and back-skirt (*utshodo*), Ndwedwe [MM4972A-B].

Figure 6-7. Cape and back-skirt (*utshodo*), Ndwedwe [MM4889-4890].

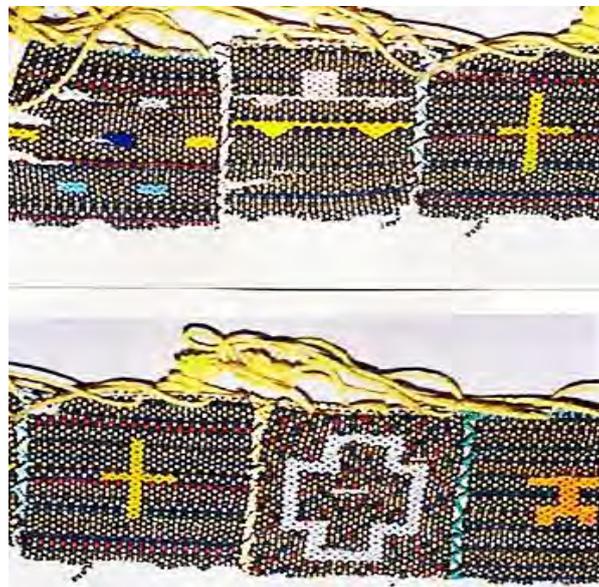
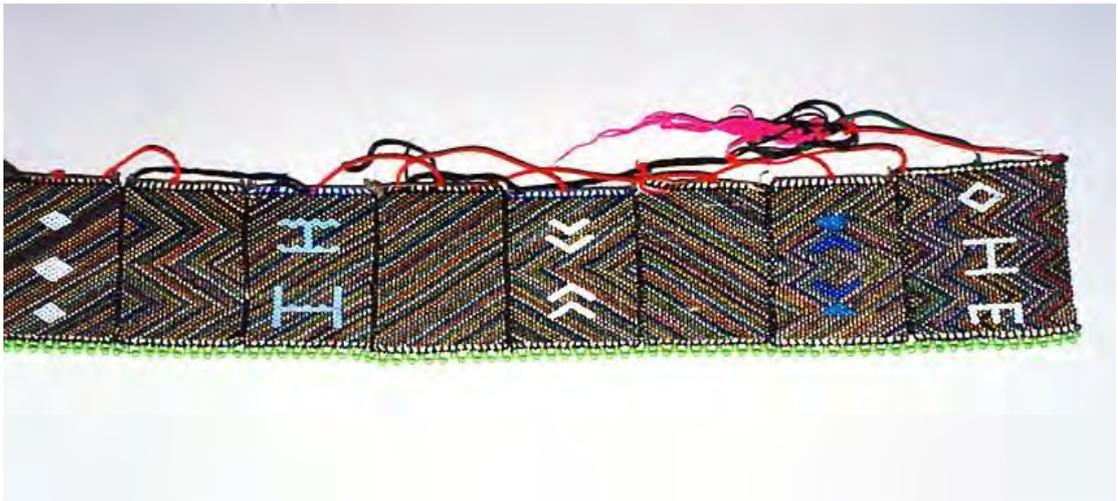


Chapter 5: Figures 8-10.

Figure 8. Belt (*ibhande*), Umbumbulu [MM4492].

Figure 9. Aprons (*indelelo*), Umbumbulu [MM4475-6].

Figure 10. Section of girdle (*indelelo*), Umkomaas [MM4521].



Chapter 5: Figures 11-13.

Figure 11. Girdle (*indelelo*), Umkomaas [MM4518].

Figures 12-13. Entire and sections of girdle (*indelelo*), Umkomaas [MM4598].

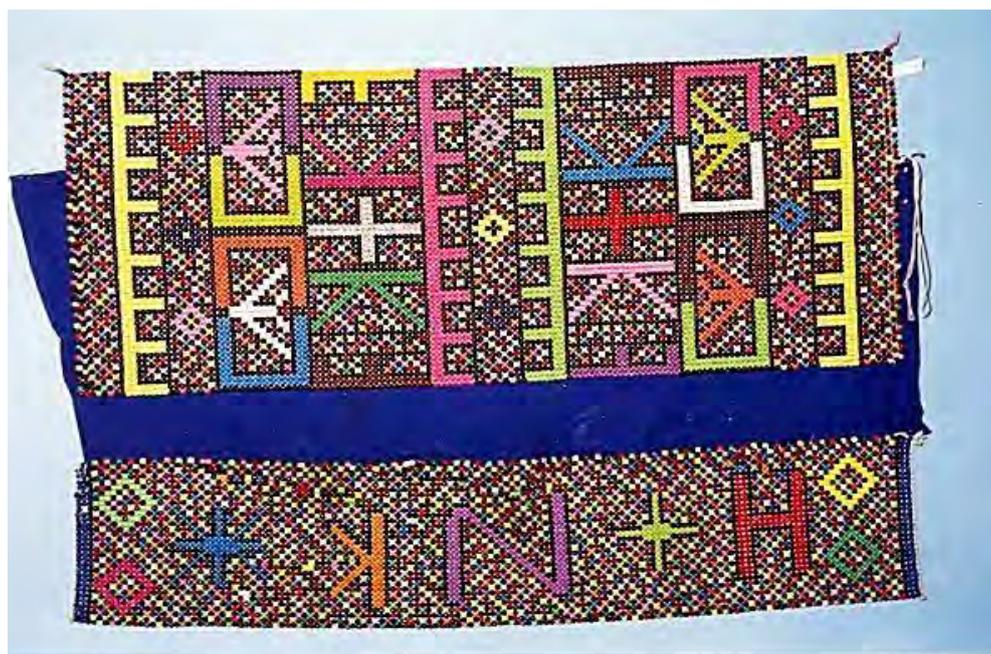
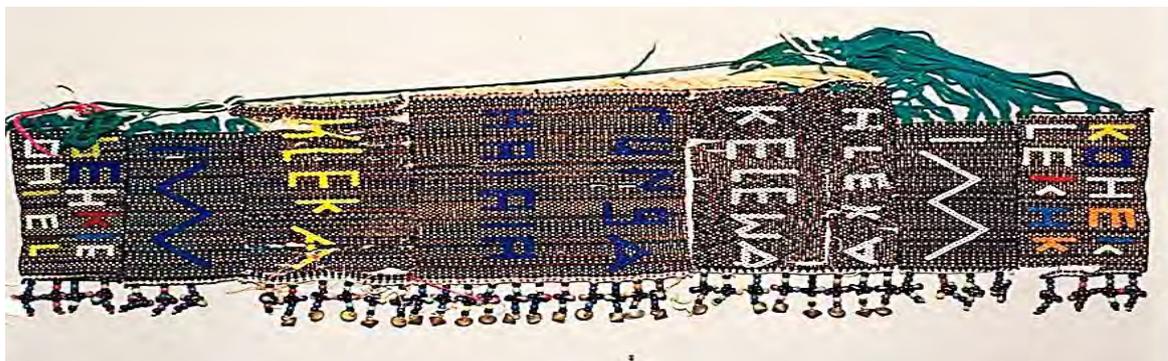


Chapter 5: Figures 14-16.

Figures 14. Cape (*utshodo*), Ndwedwe [MM4951].

Figure 15. Top to bottom: Part of headband [MM4514]; Section of apron [MM4479]; two necklaces (*izibebe*) [MM4548A-B] from Umbumbulu/Umkomaas c1970s.

Figure 16. Section of girdle (*indelelo*), Umkomaas [MM4578].



Chapter 5: Figures 17-20.

Figure 17. Girdle (*indelelo*), Umkomaas [MM4553].

Figure 18. Cape and back-skirt (*utshodo*), Ndwedwe [MM4990A-B].

Figure 19. Apron (*iphinifa*), Ndwedwe [MM4868].

Figure 20. Pregnancy apron (*isicwayo*), Ndwedwe [MM4927].



Chapter 5: Figures 21-24.

Figure 21. Woman dressed in earlier buckskin pregnancy apron (*imbeleko*), Ndwedwe c1970s. Courtesy of Mr Jithoo Maharaj. Photographed at Kitty's Studios, Pietermaritzburg.

Figure 22. Cape (*isimbozo*) with brass-buttons from Ndwedwe, 1970s [MM4888].

Figure 23. Beaded pin moons, shields (*umdingi/ihawu*) ornaments from Umkomaas [MM4522A-D, MM4529].

Figure 24. Shoulder-bands (*amadavathi*), Umkomaas [MM4584A-D].

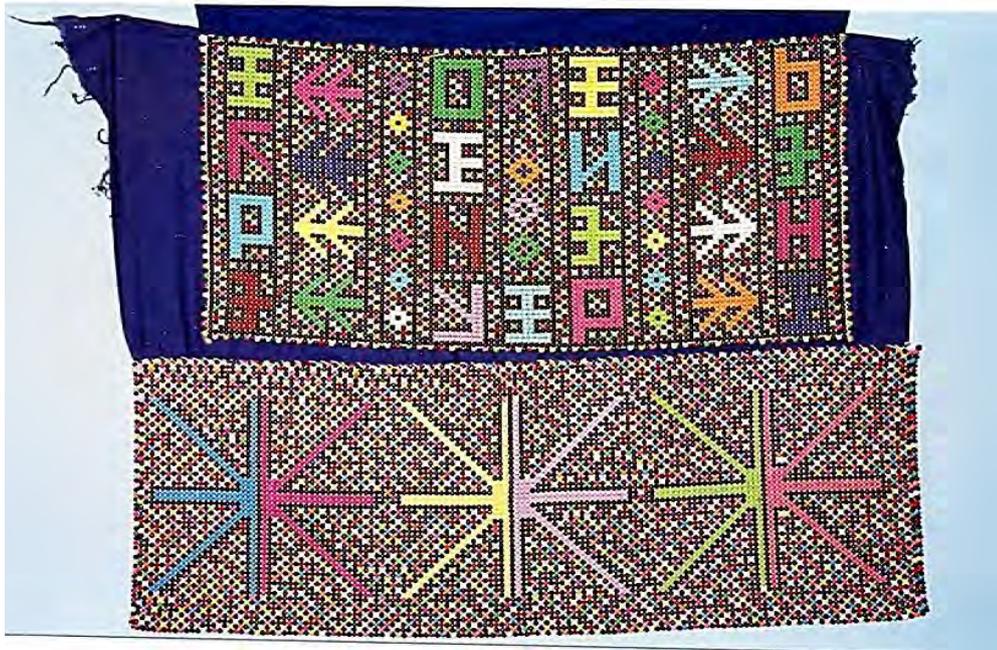
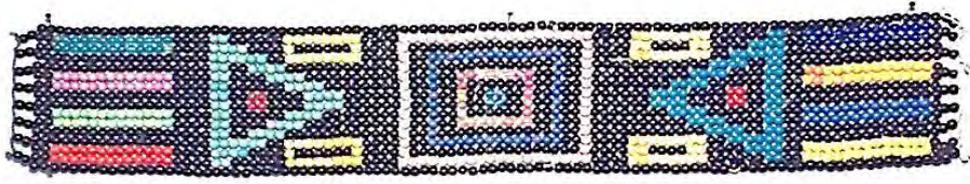


Chapter 5: Figures 25-27.

Figure 25. Cape (*ibayi*), Ndwedwe [MM4956].

Figure 26. Beadwork necklaces and beaded patch (*isithokothela*) (*amadavathi*), Ndwedwe [MM4916, 4914, 4912 and 4913].

Figure 27. Cape and back-skirt (*utshodo* and *isiphika*), Ndwedwe [MM4924-5].

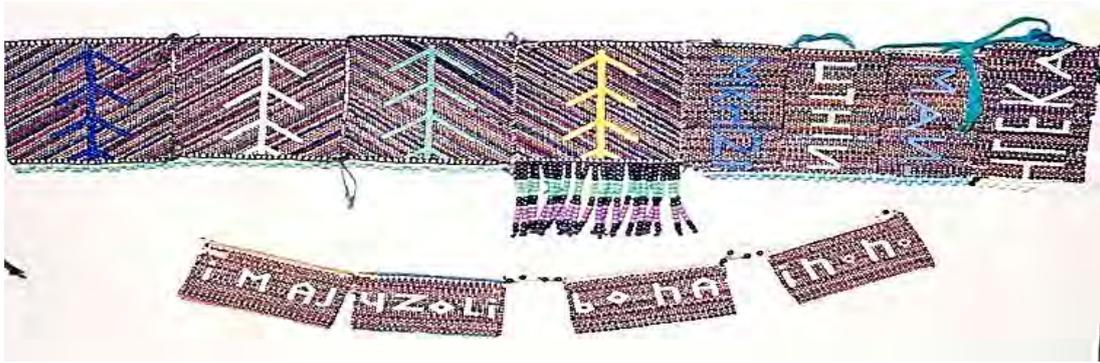


Chapter 5: Figures 28-31.

Figure 28. Belt (*utshodo*), Umkomaas [MM4546].

Figures 29-30. Necklaces (*izibebe*), Umkomaas [MM4548D and F].

Figure 31. Cape (*ibayi* or *isiphika*), Ndwedwe [MM5004A-B].



Chapter 5: Figures 32-34.

Figures 32-34. Girdles (*indelelo*) and necklace (*isibebe*), Umkomaas [MM4571,4573,4575 and 4477C].



Chapter 5: Figures 35-38.

Figure 35. Apron (*iphinifa*), from Ndwedwe [MM4867].

Figure 36. Apron (*iphinifa*), from Ndwedwe [MM4926].

Figure 37. Apron (*iphinifa*), from Ndwedwe [MM4928].

Figure 38. Belt (*ibhande*), Umbumbulu [MM4474].



Chapter 5: Figures 39-42.

Figure 39. Belt (*isibhamba*), beaded, Ndwedwe [MM4904].

Figure 40. Cape (*isiphika*), Ndwedwe [MM4962].

Figure 41. Anklets (*amadavathi*), Ndwedwe [MM4929 A-B].

Figure 42. Apron (*ibodiya*), Ndwedwe [MM4961].



Chapter 5: Figures 43-46.

Figure 43. Mr Mdluli of Emkhambathini and his two *makoti* (brides) as *Inkheli*, MaMkhize (1st wife) on left and MaNala (2nd wife) on right, photographed 5 August 1962 (name of Studio illegible).

Figure 44. Belt (*utshodo*), Umkomaas, 1970s [MM4592].

Figure 45. Belts (*amabhande*) from Ndwedwe [MM4895 and MM4881].

Figure 46. Necklaces (*izibebe*), Umkomaas [MM4588A-D].



Chapter 5: Figures 47-50.

Figure 47. Apron (*iphinifa*), Emkhambathini, Ndwedwe [MM4995].

Figure 48. Apron (*iphinifa*), Umbumbulu [MM4490].

Figure 49. Beaded ornaments, Umkomaas [MM4563A-B and MM4539A-B].

Figures 50. Waistcoat (*indolibantshi*), Emtshezi (Estcourt) 1940s [MM4304].



Chapter 5: Figures 51-53.

Figure 51. Cape edge (*isikhafu*) from Ndwedwe [MM4892].

Figure 52. Barbara Tyrrell “Sivoto Nene, Inanda 1945” watercolour [WCP459] (Courtesy of Barbara Tyrrell).

Figure 53. Apron (*isikhafu*), Ndwedwe [MM4903].



Chapter 5: Figures 54-57.

Figures 54. Apron (*isibhacelo*), from KwaZwelibomvu [MM5409].

Figure 55. Apron (*isibhacelo*), from KwaZwelibomvu [MM5412].

Figure 56. Apron (*isibhacelo*) from KwaZwelibomvu [MM5411].

Figure 57. Apron (*isibhacelo*) from KwaZwelebomvu [MM5410].

