

**Colour Coding and its Meaning in Zulu Womens'
Beadwork: A study of Zulu Women's Beadwork
in Fashion Design and Decoration**

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this thesis to my husband, Prof Musa Khulekani Xulu, for being so ever supportive, and to my children Sakhile, Nontuthuko, Ndumiso and Sibahle, who I love very much.

Not to be left out are my mother, my brothers and sisters, and my in-laws who will always appreciate my achievements.

Lastly, I wish to honour all the hard-working crafters, who have seen the light by unleashing the talent that almighty God gave them.

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Lastly, but not least, my gratitude goes to Ms Nokulunga Zulu, who set time aside amidst a tight schedule to type my work for me.

DECLARATION

I Clerah Buyisiwe Simangele Xulu, neè Nene, hereby declare that this is my original piece of work. Where the supporting ideas of other scholars have been used by me, I have indicated in a normal standard way.

To the best of my knowledge, I have not committed any plagiarism or deliberate omission in the acknowledgement of original works by others.

.....(STUDENT)

C. B. S. Xulu

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

1.1 Introduction

The topic of this thesis is informed by the writer's observation of the trend wherein modernist and traditionalist Zulu women tend to wear, as style, colourfully beaded outfits to decorate their fashion and wear. The colourful regalia is found in ceremonial dress, like isidwaba (cow-hide skirt) and other forms of dress made of cloth and textile, and decorated in beads. The decoration, as observed, is often designed to fit in a particular mode of interpretation, thus promoting the notion of fashion as form of communication interaction and definition of status. It is the hypothesis of the present writer that beads, designed and patterned in a specific way tend not only to communicate certain literal and figurative or poetic meanings, but also to declare fashion as a medium of communication, very much like ordinary speech does. In the context of this thesis Zulu womens' beadwork is a form of colour coding, literary and poetic speech communication and a declaration of fashion as a medium of social interaction, status, and social display. Thus, wearing their colourfully designed beadwork and fashion, Zulu women are always highly visible and recognisable.

The thesis is thus confined to introducing the angle of fashion as statement and medium of literary and poetic communication in the creation of the modern and traditional status of a Zulu woman through beadwork. Colour-coding is key because the power of beadwork to communicate meaningfully very much depends on the design and patterning of colours.

The focus on Zulu Women is for the sake of creating a focus group of study and more so due to the observation by the present writer that in the context of modernist and traditionalist Zulu society, real or imaginary, it is women who wear more beads compared, to any other social group.

1.2 Aim of Study

The study intends to unfold and unpack various meanings in Zulu beaded fashion wear through the following:

- 1.2.1 Looking at literary and figurative or poetic meaning of Zulu beads through the study of various basic colours used in fashion decoration.

To achieve this various examples will be cited and studied in order to give meaning to the approach and arrive at concrete evidence of the relations between fashion colour coding as represented by beads literary and figurative or poetic meaning design and communication as contained in the overall pattern of issues in the thesis.

- 1.2.2 Looking at the historical and cultural context of Zulu Women's Beadwork

Fashion design and the use of beadwork in the decoration of fashion for reasons of communicating particular statements, is not new in Zulu society. Remarking about the possible past long term impact of beads L.D. Sciama (1998:7) says:

"Beads along with textiles, are among the foremost items of long-distance trade. Moved from continent since very early times, they were often used in conjunction with or in place of cowries which were brought to the east coast of Africa...".

Further, as seen in the photos contained in Chapter 3, evidence prevails that, at least in the nineteenth century, Zulu women wore beads as part of their fashion.

The historical and cultural context, will therefore, be created through observation of the literature on the topic and interviewing of historically knowledgeable practitioners on the field.

- 1.2.3 Unpacking the Gender Issues and statements surrounding Zulu beadwork as a form of traditional and modern fashion decoration. Preliminary research has indicated that through wearing fashion decorated with bead designs women are able to put themselves on social display. While on display women often receive accolades and messages of appreciation from admirers, often men and older women. It is some of these statements which define the gender issues related to beads and fashion design in modernist and traditionalist Zulu society.

Referring to the issue of gender in beadwork, Margaret Carey (1998:87) says:

"In most of eastern Southern Africa, beadworking is done by women and is, with few exceptions, very much defined by gender. In

Southern Africa, for instance among the Zulu, if a young man wants to give a beaded message to his fiancée, he has to get a sister or other female relative to make it for him, as the rule is so strong that women do beadwork”.

In the chapters to follow this statement will be unpacked and related to the live statements of some field interviews, in order to unpack and contextualise the issue of gender in beadwork, even further.

1.2.4 Drawing Conclusions as guided by the topic

In a subject as diverse as involving such concepts as fashion, beadwork, design, decoration, and others, it is difficult to draw any streamline conclusions on any matter. The conclusions drawn will, therefore, be aligned with the title and direction of the topic of the thesis in order to contribute to a specific body of knowledge.

1.3 **Research Methodology**

For the purpose of creating meaning in this thesis, the present writer is conducting research in the following forms:

1.3.1 Book Method (desk research)

Research shows that there has been some writing done on the topics of beadwork, fashion, Zulu Women, gender, decoration and others that form the core around which the topic revolves. The researcher will focus on such books and literature to extract information for the purpose of this study.

The book method and literature review will be combined with fieldwork and interviews in which three beads projects, one at Mandeni, one at KwaGingindlovu and one at Mthonjaneni, will be observed, analysed and reviewed with a view to extracting Zulu Womens' thoughts, modernist and traditionalist on the key issues of Colour Coding, beadwork, literary meanings, figurative meanings, poetic meanings, communication, decoration and design, which are central to this thesis.

The projects will be presented as case studies and evidence of beads in modernist and traditionalist Zulu Women and society. The statements by the project practitioners are treated as key to the presentation of the meaning and context of the thesis.

The two methods will thus be combined, and such research tools as camera, video recording, tape-recording and live interviews will be utilised by the present author as researcher.

1.4 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarifying and contextualising the thesis, some key terms will need to be defined.

1.4.1 Beads

Beads are defined by Lois Sher Dubin (1987:17) as follows:

Beads are small, colourful, symmetrical. They are frequently standardized, inexpensive units that can be arranged in almost endless configurations. They can be seen not only in the familiar forms of necklaces and bracelets but also on anklets, headbands and headdresses.

Later, Lois Sher Dubin states that "beads are an integral part of a multilayered communication system in all African societies".

This contextual definition of beads serves to create a framework for this thesis. The framework itself is a vehicle for focusing the thesis in a specific direction.

1.4.2 Beadwork

Margaret Carey (1998) argues that beadwork needs to be defined. The definition offered is both static and functional in the sense that it creates a sense of a straight forward definition of beadwork, more or less like in the style of a dictionary while at the same creating the impression of beadworkers at work, as Carey (1998:83) states

In its simplest form, it may be no more than a string of beads, even a single bead, worn on almost any part of the body added to a carved figure as decoration or as an offering. Beadwork can be more elaborate, with beads strung into complex ropes, sewn into fabric-like panels, applied as covering to figures, clothing and masks, or used to embellish everyday items, to make them more special. Beadworking is the art of making such beadwork ...

From the foregoing definition, it is clear that beadwork takes a variety of forms and context, while it has specialty and meaning as its focus.

1.4.3 Colour Coding

Colour Coding refers to the use of various colours to convey meaning in a coded meaning Colour Coding assumes that in a given context various basic colours have a static meaning, literal or figurative. A combination of those static meanings can therefore be seen as a statement communicating to a target audience.

Jean Morris and Eleanor Preston - Whyte (1994:55) give context to the issue of Colour in beads and beadwork.

Regional styles speak largely to the outside. What of the meanings that colours and design may convey to the recipients of beaded ornaments, and to the audience for which costumes are designed and chosen? Zulu beadwork has long thought to constitute a system of non-verbal communication.

The authors go on to discuss the "four colour schemes" of the old style of Umsinga defined as (1994:44):

Isishunka seven colours - white, light blue, dark green, pale yellow, pink, red and black. Isithembu five colours - light blue, grass green, bright yellow, red and black. Umzansi four colours - white, dark blue, grass green and red. Isinyolovane combination of any colours not consistent with other schemes.

These colour schemes are part of fashion and dress and are intended to communicate specific meanings.

1.4.4 Zulu Women

The term Zulu women is often used loosely to refer to women of Zulu decent. The Zulu are generally accepted to be the descendants of the inhabitants and citizens of the 19th century Zulu Kingdom whose famous kings were Shaka, Dingane, Mpande and Cetshwayo. The Zulu Kingdom is generally accepted to have been destroyed after the battle of Isandlwana in 1879. This being so, King Cetshwayo who was the King of the Zulus at the time is accepted to be the last King of the Zulu Kingdom. The Zulu culture and way of life however, continues to live on, even today.

Morris and Preston-Whyte (1994:6-7) remarks that:

Zulu-speaking South Africans live in all major urban centres of the country, to which they have been drawn in search of work and the benefit of modern life.

Thus any reference to the Zulu and Zulu women in this thesis is not a reference to a static society, but it is a reference to descendants of a nation that was once distinctly recognisable in terms of culture, heritage and geographic boundaries, under a socio-political system at the helm of which was King.

1.4.5 Fashion and Fashion Decoration

Fashion is widely recognized encompassing dress and its stylization to suite the aesthetic desires of the dressed and their admirers. In fashion, dress plays a role which is more that just covering the body.

In the context of this thesis fashion will refer to deliberately designed, patterned and decorated form of dress which is dominated by beadwork, and is mostly worn by women.

1.5 Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter the present writer has attempted to outline the thesis and the context within which it is being presented.

Under introduction, the focus was on delimitation and delineating the context of the thesis. This is aimed at eliminating confusion between this work and any other similar one, while at the same time creating a clear focus summed as beads and beadwork in fashion as from communicating literary and figurative meanings.

Under aim of study the present writer has achieved a synthesis of focus by outlining the key issues of unpacking the meaning of Zulu beaded fashion wear, the historical and cultural context as well as literature review.

Some relevant literature has been summated in order to create synergies between what exists and what is about to be created in terms of the body of literature. This was for definitive purposes. A detailed review of relevant literature will follow in Chapter two of this thesis.

The research methodology to be applied by this author consists of both literature analysis or book method or desk research and field work by case study.

Some key terms have been defined in order to give meaning to the title of the thesis and the scope of this study. Throughout the entirety of chapter one, the scope of this study has been defined by a focused concentration on beads and fashion for modernist and traditionalist Zulu Women. Zulu women themselves have scoped and defined within the confines of history.

To conclude, this chapter has positioned this thesis in its own class, while relating it to the existing body of knowledge on beads, fashion, dress, decoration, beadwork, Zulu women and gender.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

It is the intention of the researcher to use this chapter to review the series of literature which relates to the trends in the exposition of beadwork. A historical overview concentrating on literature trends will be looked into. This will lead to the review of modern literature about the various uses of beads, especially with regards to its feature in fashion.

Lidia D Sciama and Joanne B Eicher (1998) have edited the book titled "Beads and Bead Makers: Gender, Material Culture and Meaning", with papers presented by a variety of highly esteemed authors, who look at the issues from different angles. This is an invaluable source of meaningful research.

Judith Perani and Norma H Wolff (1999) have also edited an invaluable source in the form of a book titled: "Cloth, Dress and Art Patronage in Africa: Dress, Body, Culture". This book also consists of contributions by various highly esteemed authors, who go through the relevant issues, step by step to expose the relations between dress and culture.

Jean Morris (1994) has published a book titled, "Speaking with Beads: Zulu Arts from Southern Africa", which inter alia looks at the historical and modern context of Zulu beadwork, while studying such sub-cultures as the Nazareth Baptist Church and its dress code.

Dawn Costello (1990), published a book titled: "Not Only For Its Beauty: Beadwork and Its Cultural Significance Among the Xhosa - Speaking People".

This work, while concentrating on the Xhosa traditions is relevant due to the fact that Zulus and Xhosa are related as members of the *abaNguni* family.

David Hammond-Tooke and Anita Nettleton (1989) published a book titled: "Catalogue: Ten Years of Collecting (1979-1989)". The catalogue is sponsored by the private sector in the form of Standard Bank Investment Corporation Limited. Various authors have contributed to the catalogue, and the papers are illustrious, while giving context and meaning to this thesis.

Barbara La Vini (1989) have edited a book titled: "Treasures In Transition: Art and Craft of Southern Africa", an invaluable source which looks at the even larger world of beadworks in the context of craft, dress and design.

Lois Sherr Dubin (1987) has published a book titled: "The History of Beads: From 30 000 BC to the Present" with original photography by Togashi. This book stretches the history of beads to even further in the past, but concentrates on the African continent.

2.2 History of beads

Beads are seen as "durable ornaments humans possessed" (Dubin, 1987). It is also clear from this expose that beads have a history of at least 30 000 years in terms of their relationship with human beings. We can therefore deduce that the study of beads as done in terms of this dissertation and others is a study of a relationship that has been around for a long time between human beings and artifacts. To intimate is the relationship between humans and beads that Dubin [1987: 97] remarks about as follows:

When one looks at a bead, it is hard not to think about who previously owned it and how far through time and distance it has traveled to reach its current destination.

The literature which looks at beads from a historical perspective tends to take cognisance of time, and to look at beads as artifacts that tend to move from one generation to the next, as a valuable asset, perhaps within a family.

2.3 Beads as knowledge

Literature tends also to reveal beads as being associated with knowledge or more specifically sacred knowledge, and used in "ritual and prayer (Duvan; 1987:17). Thus, when Morris and Preston-Whyte write a book titled "Speaking with Beads" (1999) and refer to 'voices from the past (1994: 10-12), they are referring to the notion that beads do form a linkage between the past and the present.

It can thus be argued that the wearer of beads is making a statement of linkage; linking the past with the present. This is based on the historical role of the beads as well as their role in the modern context.

2.4 Beads in Africa

The role of beads in Africa is often portrayed as being unique and special. Duvan [1987: 119] states that:

The story of Africa beads – perhaps more than the beads of any part of the world – is also the story of many contrasting life-styles that have developed in Africa. Bead making has been influenced by environmental factors, the availability and distribution of raw materials, and exposure to Islamic and European culture and technology during the past fourteen hundred years. ... To understand the beads of Africa it is crucial to appreciate the influence of geography on African societies.

Thus, the study of beads in Africa tends to take a more geographical, regional and cultural dimension. It can thus be concluded that Africa beads is a statement about the geographical, regional and cultural origins of the wearer of the beads.

2.5 Beads as Communication

There is also a trend in literature to project beads as a form of communication, as Duvan [1987: 122] states:

Adornment, particularly with beads, communicates cultural values in a symbolic language that expresses rank, religion, politics, and artistic attitudes. Beads are central to the lives of all Africans – from hunting –

and – gathering peoples of the southern Kalahari Desert to wealthy Nigerian and Ghanaian Villages and their ability to reflect their cultural heritage is still more pronounced in Africa than in any other part of the world.

This pronouncement by Duvan, is a guide both to African beads and to the literature about it. It is also a reflection of the trends in the structuring of the world which informs the beads and beadwork in Africa thought. It is also a statement that reflects the unity of African beads as Duvan (1987: 149) states:

Although each African Culture has evolved distinctive patterns of bead use, several unifying themes apply throughout the continent. Basic to the animism that pervades life in Sub-Saharan Africa is the spiritual energy a fine bead necklace or beadwork piece imparts. Although both Islam and Christianity are practiced in Africa, they have been shaped to accommodate animistic belief in inanimate objects that, whether created by nature or man, have spiritual force. This is why African artifacts often have such a strong aesthetic presence, even if they are met technically sophisticated. It is also why we often respond strongly to an African necklace, independently of any knowledge about its origins, use or imported meaning.

The aesthetic power of African beads as well as its reception in the West also extendable to other form of African aesthetic enterprises. The same can also be extended to music, dance, drama and theatre, where because of extended knowledge and mysticism, Africans tend to get a warm reception from the West, and the rest of the world, and as Dubin (1987: 147) African beadwork is meant to be noticed.

Lois Sher Dubin's (1987) expose of the history of beads is a standard and highly recommended work in the academic field of the study of beads. Thus it is a recommended text by, inter alia, Drewal and Mason and Soul, as stated (1997: 10):

Since beads have been a constant and primary part of jewelry throughout history, those with an interest in personal adornment will find Lois Dubin's book rewarding, not only for her history of tribal and ancients, but also for her coverage of the exciting renaissance of beads in contemporary jewelry. Today, beads are being combined and shaped into aesthetically dynamic jewelry and are being made of materials and techniques that are in themselves expressing new artistic and technological dimensions ...the ordinary is again being used in extraordinary ways by artists and craftsmen.

Thus, our current study of the use of beads in modern fashion, forms part of a study of the trend in the multi-faceted nature of beads and its intractability with the issues of decoration, fashion, and human aesthetics.

Drewal and Mason's (1997) book itself is a litany of initiatives defined as (1997:10)

...a five – year labour of love and frustration for the author, who existed the co-operation of over thirty five museums and numerous, individuals, (and) covers the cultures of the world in which beads proliferated.

2.6 The economic value of beads

Levinsohn [1984: 82] introduces the dimension of the combination of economics, society and ritual as she states:

The bead-work tradition is common to the black peoples of Southern Africa, and has ritual, economic and social significance.

This statement is important because it shows the dynamic nature of beads and bead-products in the world in the market place, inter alia. As shall be seen in the ensuing chapters, it is clear that some modern bead projects found, especially, in KwaZulu Natal are commercial in nature and rake in huge revenue for either the bead makers and mostly the "middle – man". What can be argued, is whether beads, once commercialized continue to retain their ritual and social significance.

Literature on the commercial and or economic significance of beads, especially among the Zulus, tend to be attuned to the taste of the tourists and thus have very little value for an academic study of beads and beadwork, such as this one.

2.7 The social value of beads

On the social front Levinsohn (1984: 82) remarks about Zulu and bead decoration:

Zulu dress, then is culturally stimulated, so that one's status may be readily determined. Attaching particular meaning to colour, unlike the other tribes, for example, only a girl who has not reached puberty may wear a white cloth around her body since it symbolizes purity.

Levinsohn introduces a very important dimension of dress, decoration, colour and symbolism. In the nature of their context of use, beads lend themselves quite easily within these issues. Literature on the messages communicated by beads tend to be around the who issue of colour-coding, colour patterns, colour matching, rules of arrangement and type selection.

2.8 Beads in a changing socio-cultural environment

Levinsohn (1984: 84) continues to state that the rapid socio-cultural changes that are currently taking place among the Zulus may threaten the long-time established traditions of using beads and bead-patterns to communicate messages, when she says:

While Zulu bead-work consists of a number of types including simple strings of beads, largely flat constrictions with multiple strands of beads attached at the corners, single or multiple beaded ropes used as girdles, beadwork – covered objects like sticks, gourds and dolls, and clothing like skirts and shawls typically of leather, it is their love-letter, ubhala abuyise, meaning 'one writes in order that the other should reply', the existence of which is unique to them that is threatened by change. This most symbolic Zulu beadwork is a private and public communication of the status of one's love life.

It can thus be argued that in the context of the continuity of traditional Zulu culture, elaborate and decorative beadwork tends to be used by young people of a courting age, mostly girls, as a form of interaction with their male counterparts. In this case beads are a medium of communication and expression of one's sentiments.

2.9 Zulu beads and Colour Coding

Literature on the communication aspects of Zulu beads tend to be elaborate on the issues of colour-coding, as Levinsohn (1984: 84) states:

To the Zulu the white bead means love and purity, black is darkness, difficulty and misfortune; green signifies sickness; yellow symbolizes wealth; blue means happiness; and red is the red from sore eyes which have looked in vain for their lover.

Thus in "writing" or encoding a message used patterns of bead a person is able to tell a complete story by combining various colours.

It should be noted, however, as Levinsohn (1984: 84) state that, except for the white colour, beads colours are not always static:

White beads ...always convey a positive message; love, purity, goodness, happiness, virginity or good luck. For black, green, pink, yellow, blue and redbeads, there are several interpretations, which generally fall into two categories, those of either positive or negative content. For instance black beads, isitimane, most frequently mean darkness, gloom, disappointment, or sorrow, but they are also used to represent a very dark-skinned person or the kaross, the symbol of marriage.

This ambiguity in interpretation means that the interpreter of beadwork should always try to understand the context of the beadwork, since there may be a variety of messages or no message at all.

Morris and Preston-Whyte's (1994) outline of Zulu beads and its meaning is an elaborate piece of work. Although it does not cover the entire of the diversity of styles in Zulu beadwork the work does give some light in as far as Zulu beads are concerned.

Central to the theme of beads what has been described in the book is the context of wearing the beads, as Morris and Preston-Whyte (1994: 6) state:

Accordingly they pay as much attention to bead workers and to the wearers of beads as to items of beadwork themselves. The title Speaking with Beads captures this intention for it is the communication, first between the designer and the wearer, and second between wearer audience, that is of interest to them.

The most important contribution that the Morris and Preston-Whyte work does is to be definite of the beadwork research method. The authors have combined the book method, fieldwork, interviews, photography, illustration and interpretation as derived from the culture bearers in order to come up with a work which is definitely a deep, systematic contribution to the study of beads as a linguistic and cultural discipline. In it one is also able to come across a demonstrated linkage between language and culture.

2.10 The History of Zulu Beads

The history of Zulu beads is traced, through the documentation of such travelers as Fynn and Farewell who had arrived in what was called Port Natal (Modern eThekweni or Durban) around 1824, and met with King Shaka. Importantly it is noted that [1994: 15]:

It is important to emphasize that at the height of the Zulu Empire beads had considerable economic value. Their possession in large quantities was certainly a function of power and political influence but, because they were an important medium of exchange, it also distinguished the rich from the poor rich.

The attempt by the present author to establish the economic significance of the uses of beads as used in modern fashion design, therefore, not anomaly, because beads have always been of some considerable economic importance.

Thus beads could be worn in a variety of ceremonies such as weddings and major community events where people met and anticipated that they will be on display.

The point that needs unpacking is the extent to which the deliberate wearing of beads by people who know that they are on display is not a calculated attempt by the wearer to make a statement of his or her idea of him or herself, which is both a language of communication and cultural manifestation.

2.11 Beads and the missionary culture

The onslaught on Zulu cultural artifacts that was carried out by the missionaries had a very negative effect on the continued existence of the culture of beads. Thus, it is important that in the 1970's Morris and Preston-Whyte [1994: 27] remarked thus:

The effects of missionary activity are epitomized in the distribution made in most Black South African rural areas between 'school' people, that is the descendants of Christian converts who attended school and who embraced Western Culture, and those conservatives who rejected the new faith and often the schooling which, on mission stations, went with conversion. ...beadwork is only one element in Amabhinca dress. It is combined with distinctive garments made of, for instance, locally cured cowhide, as well as modern materials like coloured cloths, sand shoes and plastic baubles bought from the trading stores. The overall effect is very different to that of Western dress.

This text illustrates firstly that the social divisions brought about by the missionisation of the Zulu countryside, led to the distinction of dress and dress styles between the educated Zulu Christians, and the non-western schooled 'pagans' known as amabhinca. Secondly it is an indication that beads are an important element of dress in traditional Zulu dress. Zulu women use beads to express themselves to their lovers and husbands as Morris and Preston [1994: 58] say:

As they mature, boys attract the attention of girls and receive beaded gifts and, in particular, strands of beads from which small squares of intricate and multicoloured beadwork often hang. These are referred to as ucu, a Zulu term that has been widely translated as 'love letter'. Women wear similar decorations. They are popular because they are small and a number can be worn at once, making a colourful display. ...Often, however, the letters do not form words, or words 'sense': they are merely part of a decorative design.

Interestingly is the emerging fact, from the preceding text that beads do not always convey messages, as they may merely be decorations, to add colour to the dress display.

2.12 The Zulu Origins of Modern Beads

Modern Zulu bead products have a clear linkage with traditional art forms that have been worn for centuries by the Zulu. This is also evident in the relevant and original terminology which define various designs. Following over some of the most original Zulu designs that became modernized in such projects as the Mathonsi Womens' Club. It is noted that while Colour Coding is a major factor in the original Zulu designs, it is often interwoven into aesthetic patterns that define taste and arouse the senses of appreciation to the on-lookers, in line with any principles of fashion design and decoration. In this context to understand and interpret Zulu beadwork is done in the same way as understanding language, that is through mastering grammar and vocabulary. Beads talk, through imagery, proverbs, artistic and linguistic logic.

2.12.1 The Triangle – Ibheqe

This is possibly the most coded of all traditional Zulu beads products. The triangle is called ibheqe in Zulu, which depicts its international display. Symbolically it is said that the three angles represent the ultimate family union of father, mother and child in a traditional Zulu society. The positioning of each angle could tell a story about socio-cultural status of the wearer. Examples are, if the apex points down, the wearer is unmarried, or incomplete, since unmarried Zulu adults are said to be incomplete, or not yet adult. Ibheqe is sometimes called Zulu love letter.

2.12.2 Ucu

Ucu is often a metre or so long, and is intended as an expression of Love. When a young woman publicly falls in love with a young man, she designs an ucu, the ultimate crown to the bean, and give it to him in a function where this occasion is celebrated by their peers. A girl cannot give ucu to anyone, since when it is given it symbolizes commitment to love. Another forms of ucu is injiza which takes the love to a formal engagement level.

2.12.3 Umbhama or Isibhama

This is a beaded band worn on isicholo worn by married women in the forehead. Should a married woman fail to wear an isibhama in public, this may communicate her availability. It is usually beaded through large beads, amaqanda, and is a symbol of respect from the in-laws.

2.12.4 Umgexo or Necklace

Large beads which make a Zulu necklace are called amaqanda, that is, eggs. The necklace can be a single line or several lines. Umgexo is often worn, almost strictly by married women with children. Reference to the eggs is symbolic reference also to proven fertility. Other types of imigexo include umampapheni, umginqo and amabheqe. Imigexo, one umgexo, many imigexo can be presented in various designs, for aesthetic reasons.

2.12.5 Ineba

This is a beaded pedant, often worn around the neck to rest on the chest. It is often worn by married women for reasons of decoration while attending a public function.

2.12.6 Umutsha - beaded belt

This is a decorative beaded apron, which may be a decoration of a male isinene or female isigege. It is worn in front of the private parts.

2.13 Beads in the Nazareth Baptist-Shembe-Church

The Nazareth Baptist Church – uShembe, uses a lot of beads in its church regalia, especially those worn by women. The emergence of this religious church of more than two million members, mostly Zulus, has helped in the sustainance of the culture of beads as Morris and Preston-Whyte [1994: 66] state:

A distinctive feature of Shembe beadwork is a predominance of white beads forming the ground for ornate and exquisitely coloured geometric patterns. The symbolism of the white ground is drawn from Christians notions of purity; as well as from the positive associations that white has in traditional Zulu cosmology.

Thus, the Shembe Church uses beads and bead design to mix Zulu with Christian symbolism, and thus emerging with a new style of religious manifestation which is neither purely Zulu traditionalist nor purely Western Christian.

Morris and Preston-Whyte also note that the curio shop and tourist markets have derived a literature market trading with beads. Holiday makers and other forms of tourists often become attracted to Zulu beadwork for historical and culturally aesthetic reasons. Women form projects, like for example, the Mathonsi Simunye Club at Mandeni and the Nyoni Development Co-operative near Mthunzini, whereby they come together to design and sew beadwork under some form of management. This assures them of regular income.

A number of real Zulu experience tourists initiatives like Shakaland and Bekithunga near Eshowe, Ncome near Vryheid, Simunye near Melmoth, and the soon to be revived èNdondakusuka on the banks of the uThukela river, all have strong themes of Zulu beads. These are usually in the form of either curio shops, arts and craft centres, or even bead projects where tourists may buy bead products or even interact with beadworkers as they go through their creations.

These initiatives are unique in the sense that they revitalize the culture of beadwork and create a new context for beads.

2.14 Beads in the Context of Modern fashion and jewelry

Remarking about the re-emergence of beads in the modern contexts of fashion and jewellery Morris and Preston-Whyte [1994: 81] state:

While there is always money to be made peddling relatively inexpensive bead curios, more substantial profits come from supplying the demand for, on the one hand, upmarket costume or fashion jewelry and on the other, beadwork that qualifies as contemporary Africa Art.

Thus, this text shows that new avenues have opened up for the bead workers to express themselves while becoming economically active as producers of bead products. Morris and Preston-Whyte (ibid) remark about the "middle-men":

... it is seldom individual Black who are the entrepreneurs: rather it is, as at Bhekithunga and Shakaland, white business people who have the capital, economic experience and established commercial networks to organize and carry through large-scale marketing strategies. Some of these are in the business it brings them, but others are the representatives of philanthropic and development organizations whose objective is to fight the country's widespread poverty.

Thus, there is a whole world out there of design, production and marketing involving beads, whose aim it is to either derive income for the sake of income, as in real business or to fight poverty.

In the chapters to follow the present writer will cite project examples where beads are used as a form of medium either to communicate or as means of earning a living, where fashion and decoration are the norm.

A similarity and difference in the use of beads between Zulus and Xhosa is drawn by Castello (1990) as the author [1990:13] remarks:

While there is no extensive bead language among the Xhosa such as that found among the Zulu and the Swazi beadwork, in addition to being decorative also serves as a means of communication between the sexes. ...Beadwork is concerned with the organization of Xhosa society in which there is a series of clearly defined levels through which each member of the society passes.

It is clear from the above text that, like among the Zulus, beadwork among the Xhosas is progressively dynamic and influences life at various levels.

2.15 Beads in a nationalist Zulu context

Klopper (1989) gives a historical account of beads, beadmaking and beadwearing in the context of Zulu nationalism and ascribes this to Inkatha kaZulu started by King Solomon in the (1920s and Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe, (later transformed into political party called Inkatha Freedom Party, which uses the original green, yellow and black colours of the original green, yellow and black colours of the original African National Congress, but add red and white to the array of colours). Klopper sites a plethora of initiatives by the Inkatha of the 1920s and that of modern times, wherein Zulu women have been encouraged to design, produce and market beaded products in order to make a living and to promote the economy through nationalism.

3. Summary and Conclusions

In the preceding text the present writer has attempted to go through some selected texts, in order to review the literature relevant to the issues surrounding bead design, bead products, and bead marketing.

Attempts were also made to go through the various uses of beads and the contexts within which beads are used today, in fashion, in jewelry, in dress, in religion and to define the social status of individuals.

Analysis of Literature that has been published on the topic

Through research, the present writer has been able to uncover and review some literature which deals with beadwork in general, beadwork as an issue in fashion design, as well as beadwork as a mediator in Zulu women's

decoration of fashion. The literature also reveals various interpretations and meaning in beadwork and fashion.

The conclusion reached is that, as will be seen in the chapter to follow, beads and the culture of beads is alive and it is expressing itself in the new contexts.

The chapters to follow will demonstrate the various dynamics in which beads design, and products manifest themselves, as language, as culture and as marketable artifacts in the market place.

CHAPTER 3

MODERN BEADWORK AND FASHION DESIGN IN ZULU CULTURE: EXAMPLES, CASE STUDIES AND INTERPRETATION

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the present writer is going to give an outline of the structure and functioning of some of the beadwork projects that I have worked with as part of my research. The present writer is going to make reference to the project of Mandeni women called KwaMathonsi Simunye Womens Club, in the tribal area of Inkosi Mathonsi, the Nyoni Development Co-operative in Wangu, in the tribal area of Inkosi Mathaba and the Ilangwe Development Committee at Mfanefile, near Nomgabhi (where King Shaka is reported to have spent his early childhood years).

The rationale for choosing these three projects as case studies is based on the diversity of their focus, style and emphasis.

3.2 Background

The KwaMathonsi Simunye Womens Club which was established in the early 1990s operates from a place called eZakheni, near Sundumbili Township, in the tribal area of Inkosi Mathonsi. Mandeni, which is the urban centre where this project is situated, is an urban industrial town, harbouring one of the biggest industrial areas in KwaZulu Natal, fourth only to Durban – Pietermaritzburg corridor and Richards Bay. So, this Zulu beadwork organization finds it operating in an industrial area which is a growingly urban and modern environment. The project focuses on the identity re-generation market.

Inyoni Development Co-operative is based in rural Wangu, a rural area which is attempting to develop culture-based tourism.

The facilitators are white and come from out of the area. The project focuses on export markets.

On the other hand Ilangwe Development Committee is a rural-based development structure which is attempting to mobilize rural people around any skills that they may possess on their own, beadwork being one of them, and has no visible market base.

In each of the three cases, there is a clear distinction in terms of the products produced in the name of Zulu beadwork and Zulu culture.

The present writer shall now turn to the brief details of each project and relate them to the focus of our topic of the thesis. At the end I will relate my field findings to some of the literature in order to establish a basis for concluding remarks.

3.3 KwaMathonsi Simunye Womes' Club

The KwaMathonsi Simunye Womens' Club is identifiable as a community-based club involving women beadworkers and decorators only. It has a constitution, records the minutes of its meetings and tries very hard to involve itself with governmental matters through the local government of eNdondakusuka. Recently it has won an attempt to display its work at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

Talking about their products, Jabu Khomo, one of the leaders emphasizes that the club does *imvunulo yesiZulu* that is traditional Zulu fashion, with a clear and definite emphasis on beadwork, apparel, and decoration.

Jabu further emphasizes that they do beadwork for people, especially young people to look good, as they add such items as jewellery, HIV/Aids awareness pins, and others.

The women make beaded fashions to sell or to hire. Among these they make

- (1) beaded skirts
- (2) beaded sandals
- (3) beaded ties
- (4) beaded head dress,
- (5) many other products, including jackets

They buy beads from Durban, which is reported to be expensive, and possibly constitute their major capital costs, apart from garments and apparel.

Possibly the most important three statements to come from Jabu and 19 other women who work with her are (1) “senza imvunulo yesiZulu” meaning we make traditional Zulu fashion; “senzela abantu, ikakhulu abasebasha ukuthi babukeke kahle” meaning we make traditional Zulu fashion, for people especially young people to look good; and, “ubuhlalu sibenzela ubuhle babo,” meaning, we use beads and make beadwork for its own beauty.

The statements are important because they show the aim and purpose for which fashion is universally made, while disputing some of the stereotypes demonstrated in earlier literature about Zulu beadwork, which tended to emphasise the colour stereotypes typical of lifestyles, for example, migrant labour system, and its effects, of the time. The implications are also grave, and have been echoed at the Wangu project, although with lesser focus on dress. To me, this means that in interpreting modern Zulu beadwork and bead products we should be weary of emphasizing stereotypes that ignore change and the effects of globalization.

The twenty or so women who work on the project treat the project as a normal work engagement. They assemble everyday, from 8 o'clock in the morning, and start working on various products until 4 o'clock in the afternoon when they disperse. This, of course is an influence from the industrial culture of the Mandeni/Sithebe area. The women are adamant that this gives them discipline to work with focus.

Jabu and other women are passionate and believe that beadwork is a thriving industry that needs support and motivation. She emphasizes that even without much support and motivation the women are still able to make enough money to support their families and send their children to school. This is another very important point since in this project, unlike in the rural Msinga of the '70s as observed by Morris and Preston-Whyte (1994), inter alia, the emphasis is to make money in the market place, also an influence of modernization and industrialization. Thus, the KwaMathonsi Simunye Womens' Club has displayed and sold works at such international conferences as the World Aids Conference and the International Conference against Racism, both in Durban, where they reported huge success, in terms of sales.

3.4 The Inyoni Development Co-operation

The Inyoni Development Co-operation operates differently. It is a registered co-operative with over 200 members, male and female of mostly adult ages. The co-operative operates its project from Wangu Police Station, en route to Matigulu Nature Reserve, a strategic site to attract the tourist market.

The co-ordinators and facilitators from EnvironDev in Pietermaritzburg are not locals and are white non-Zulus. Twice every month on alternative Wednesdays members of the co-operative meet to do bead patterns and bead-products as ordered, mainly in the overseas markets. The members are also adamant that they make enough money to feed their families and, 'send their children to school,' as they like to say.

In this case the freedom of expression is guarded by the specifications of the orders, which although not elaborate tend to be based on the stereotypes of Zulu culture as seen by a typical Western tourist. The economies of scale also play a major role, since it would take large orders to satisfy the monetary needs of some 200 people. All work is beaded and produced by hand, although volumes are massive.

3.5 The Ilangwe Development Committee Project

Situated on the banks of Umhlathuze River near the border of the eMthonjaneni and Umlalazi Municipal areas, this project focuses on getting people to live and support themselves on anything that is an inborn skill, beadwork being one of them. I played a role in facilitating the work of this committee, after being approached by its leader, Mr Sithole.

The participants, about 50, come with a variety of skills, like traditional music, dance, community gardening, and beadwork. The beadworkers have not really produced much work for outside markets only do most beadwork to sell among themselves, and among the locals who are not in the Committee.

The beadwork done in this context is virilocal and emphasizes on the functional role of the products within the whole body of Zulu cultural and ritual realization. This in turn influences the style and focus of the bead products. Culture and ritual play a major role in determining the nature of the product. The colours chosen tend to be dull and pale, while product variety is limited.

The Ilangwe Development Committee project participants meet once a month, and mostly bring their works with them, which they, on the whole do at home.

3.6 Some Visual Examples

Following are some visual examples of work I have witnessed in these projects during my fieldwork. Visual examples are, in their nature a powerful and capturing record of enquiry which, in no uncertain terms, tell the story. The examples I have included are by no means exhaustive. They are, however, a sample of the existing body of knowledge and practice about the modern appearances of beadwork and bead products. This is enough to back our claims and to give evidence of my engagement with fieldwork. It should be recorded that fieldwork is one of the most authentic methods of putting research.

Figure 1



Another beaded skirt on display. Nonhlanhla of the Simunye Womens' Club is wearing a head-dress, a necklace, a tie a jacket and sandals, all beaded. These products are often manufactured for both economic and cultural reasons. The consumers buy the products, which makes it possible for the producers to make a living, while at the same time the consumers often have a reason to make a cultural statement on wearing these products.

Figure 2



A Mathonsi Womens' Club member displays a beaded skirt and necklace.

Although black is the main colour, red, brown and white also feature, for aesthetic reasons.

Producers of these products combine various colours to produce authentic and aesthetically sound products. The products are, therefore, often colourful.

Figure 3



Beaded necklaces, bangles and belts on display. These are some of the products made by the Mathonsi Simunye Womens' Club for commercial reasons.

Necklaces, bangles and belts are some of the oldest bead products on the African continent. They have been influenced by a confluence of cultures and materials.

Figure 4



Beaded sandals, are another feature of male and female fashion wear. Various colour combinations are used to decorate the sandals. Practitioners, like Jabu Khomo of Mathonsi Simunye Womens' Club argue that bead colours as used to decorate fashion and jewelry, often have no specific symbolic meaning, as it is a question of 'taste and style' (Interview 20 June, 2002). Men also wear the beaded sandals, mainly for ceremonial reasons, but also as a statement of being part of the Zulu traditions.

With the more modern products, symbolism as in colour-coding is not the primary factor in the production. It is rather aesthetics, more than any other, which determine the combination of colours.

Figure 5



Queen Pretorious, a white woman, displaying a beaded skirt, head-dress and face cover, supposed to be worn by brides in weddings. There is a non-ethnic interest in Zulu beaded products, such as the ones at Inyoni Development Co-operative. It is also important to note that even though there is no large-scale purchase of bead products by white South Africans for reasons wearing, the post 1994 era has seen a rather more encouraging picture Emerging. To claim a South Africa identity, more whites buy South African beads than was the case before as per Simunye Womens Club accounts.

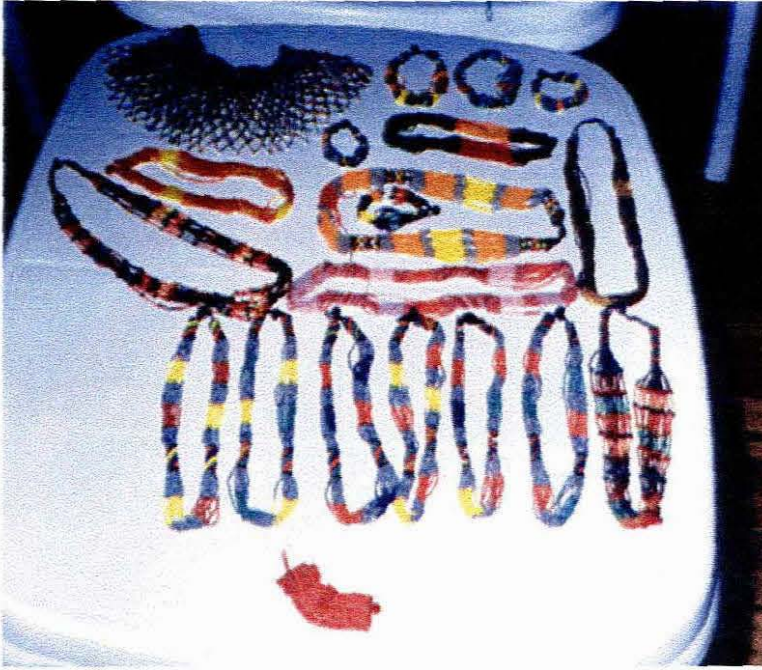
Figure 6



Head dress (inhloko) and belt (umchilo) also decorated with beads. A combination of colours are used, just for taste and style. In the more Modern designs, colours are chosen to enhance the looks and style. Colour patterning is determined more by harmony of colours. Producers often want to make sure that the colours harmonise.

Products like these are often displayed in the arts and craft centres like the one in Empangeni, as well as in various outlets in the tourist attractions of KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng provinces. This packaging and marketing of culture appeals to both the local and foreign markets.

Figure 7



Various types of beaded necklaces and jewelry. The necklaces are worn mainly by women, mainly for decoration purposes, that is, as an additional item to a complete fashion outfit.

Beaded Zulu necklaces are now widely available in the markets, in the national and international scenes.

It is usually the educated, sophisticated and 'patriotic' who tend to wear these necklaces.

The necklaces, as jewelry can be worn practically with any type of garment.

The advantages of the necklace and jewelry is that they are affordable to the ordinary heritage enthusiasts.

Figure 8



Displays of women beaded products done by the Mathonsi Simunye Womens Club. Various types of necklaces and waist decorations are on display.

Weddings, public holidays like Freedom Day, Heritage Day and King Shaka Day celebrations are perfect days for the Zulu women make a cultural and heritage statement by wearing these artifacts.

Figure 9



A beaded hand-bag. Bead decorations are found in literary every item that can be decorated. Most of the decorated items are accessories to the fashion trends whose target market is the educated Zulu neo-traditionalists.

Decoration by beadwork comes in handy, and yet adds cultural value to any item so decorated.

Figure 10



A head dress decoration with beads. Beaded head-dresses are very popular with neo-traditionalists of the educated Zulu Women.

Head dresses differ in various parts of Zulu territory of KwaZulu Natal. The differences are in shape and style. Decorations follow suit. It is for example, not uncommon to see a Msinga woman wearing a head-dress much bigger, more decorated and more elaborative than, say a Nongoma woman.

Figure 11



A waist coat, a skirt and hats, all decorated with beads. The biggest challenge facing the producers of these products is pricing.

Pricing is, at the moment, largely based on thumb-suck and speculation. My observation was also that buyers who appear sophisticated and affluent tend to be charged exorbitantly by the producers. This matter needs procedure and business standards.

Figure 12



Another plethora of bead decorated items.

Producers often create many different types of produces, many of them handy and ready for use as part of clothing and fashion.

Figure 13



A complete beaded female outfit. Duvan (1987) notes the power of adornment with beads in communicating through symbolic language.

Figure 14



A more modern dress. Dresses like these do feature even in modern weddings as part of the bride or groom outfit.

Figure 15



Various beaded items including a calabash, a tie and a waist belt. This further demonstrates the diversity of usages of bead decorations.

One informant at the Ilangwe project, noted that whatever beads gets laid on becomes perfect.

3.7 Some comparisons with published trends

The changes and different patterns, colour combinations and other uses of beads as demonstrated in the three projects, are not unique to the issues of fashion and modernity.

Joanne B Eicher and Barbara Sumberg (1995:296) remark as follows about dress in the twentieth century:

...ethnic dress in the twentieth century cannot be analysed without acknowledging the phenomenon of world fashion, for ethnic dress and world fashion are inter-related. Factors encouraging rapid change in the dress of many people, including the adoption of non-indigenous items, occur along with factors encouraging continued adherence to indigenous forms and style of dress.

The ambiguity is evident in the case of the products of the KwaMathonsi Simunye Club, who while they make statements of making traditional Zulu fashion, as if it is unchanged from the pre-colonial era, are actually producing fashion which is aimed at making young people look beautiful.

Now, it is common trend that in an area which is urban industrial, like Mandeni, young people would be reluctant to wear fashion which is described in such narrow ethnic terms. However, the act of wearing beaded products may also quite easily be seen as the re-introduction of indigenous forms, in an effort to negotiate modernity with tradition.

It is also quite possible that both the projects namely the KwaMathonsi Womens' Club and the project at Wangu, which is Inyoni Development Co-operative are projects in transition as beadwork products negotiate their

way to a new world of modern fashion, characterized by nostalgic productivity in the decoration of beadwork.

Horn and Genrel [1981:341] note that:

Fashionable dress is more than a journal that records events after they occur. Clothing as an art image registers emotion, meanings and social criticism, which in turn become value models for the members of society as a whole.

It is thus arguable whether the rural Zulu society who embrace bead products as designed at Ilangwe Development Committee, would be comfortable with the more modern products of the KwaMathonsi Simunye Club or Inyoni Development Co-operative.

The interpretation of the colour patterns, although important, is not a fundamental aspect of the production process either at KwaMathonsi Simunye Womens Club or at the Inyoni Development Co-operative. In the case of Ilangwe Development Committee project I found that colours tend to be interpreted more or less as described by Morris and Preston-Whyte (1974) in chapter one of this dissertation:

Alison Lurie [1981:131] remarks that:

Although colour often indicates mood it is by no means an infallible guide. For one thing, convention may prescribe certain hues... Convention also alters the meaning of colours according to the place and time at which they are worn... In addition some fashionable types may select certain hues merely because they are "in" that year.

It is thus through that the issue of choice of colours in order to communicate messages in Zulu beadwork has no universality outside of a limited rural enclave, because, firstly in the case of the KwaMathonsi Simunye Womens Club who decorate beaded fashion for cosmopolitan buyers, it is not possible to be prescriptive about the meaning of colours; and, secondly in the case of the Inyoni Development Co-operative, which produces beaded products for the Western tourist market, colour-coding becomes universalized.

Lurie (1981) goes on to interpret western colours like the different shades of white, black, grey, red, yellow, blue, green, purple brown as: white (p 184): "purity, innocence, and status", black (p 187): as gloom, guilt and sophistication; grey (p 103): modesty and mystery, red (195): "love and anger; yellow (p 197): youth, hope and cheer"; blue (p198): "harmony, honesty and faith; green: (p 200): "outlaws, fairies and Irishmen", purple (p 201) as "royalty and vulgarity and brown (p 203) as "stability, economy, fraternity" and continues to warn that some interpretations are not fixed or do not even have a long history and heritage in Western cultural thinking and practice.

It should thus be noted that while colour-coding is important for purposes of designing patterns, designers also choose colours because they agree with each other, sometimes without an inch of thought about the traditional meaning of colours. The fact also that there is no mass productions of beaded products at the moment means that there must be more caution when interpreting their meaning as represented by their colour patterns and coding.

3.8. Summary and Conclusions

In this Chapter we have seen the diversity that exists in modern Zulu fashion decorated with beads. I have compared the products of the three projects which I am working with, which are the KwaMathonsi Simunye Womens Club at Mandeni, the Inyoni Development Co-operative at Wangu, near Gingindlovu and the Ilangwe Development Committee project, at Mfanefile in the Mthonjaneni Municipal area.

My work in these projects constitute my evidence of fieldwork which has shaped my thinking around beads, fashion and beaded fashion products.

I have also produced practical visuals with description of the works to make it easy for the reader to understand the parameters of my work.

CHAPTER 4

REVIEWING GOVERNMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK AND OTHER RELATED ISSUES SUPPORTING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF BEADWORK AND BEAD PRODUCTS.

4.1 Introduction

Government policy, that is, at national, provincial and local levels plays pivotal role in determining the sustainability of beadwork and bead products among the practitioners. This is more so because, although the bead industry is one of the oldest in the world, in the case of South Africa, which forms the social, political and cultural context of Zulu womens' productivity in bead issues, this industry is new.

The time zone that is often used to scale the issues of development in South Africa is the post-1994 era, because of the freeing of society that happened after the 27 April, 1994 national and provincial elections, often hailed as being democratic. Therefore, for purposes of this chapter I am going to review the post 1994 government policies, legislations, practices and strategies.

It should be noted that although there has been numerous beadworkers in the pre-1994 era, there is no known direct government interventions which would have promoted Zulu beadwork and bead products in a deliberately integrated manner.

4.2 The Constitution

It is, Sections 30 and 31 of Act 108 of 1996, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which bears some relevance to the issues surrounding beadwork and bead products, as cultural issues:

Everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights.

Persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community-

- (a) to enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language; and*
- (b) to form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society.*

The rights in subsection (1) may not be exercised in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights.

It should be noted that in the context of this study, beadwork and bead products are looked at as both cultural and economic developmental issues.

In as far as the economic development aspects of beadwork and bead products, Section 24 is possibly the most important part in the Bill of Rights:

Everyone has the right-

- (a) to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being; and*
- (b) to have the environment protected, for the benefit of*

present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that-

- (i) prevent pollution and ecological degradation;*
- (ii) promote conservation; and*
- (iii) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.*

The Constitution has a couple of other sections which give a constitutional mandate to both the cultural and developmental framework of beadwork and bead products. Perhaps the most important of these sections, although not direct is Section 152 of the Constitution:

The objects of local government are-

- (a) to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;*
- (b) to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;*
- (c) to promote social and economic development;*
- (d) to promote a safe and healthy environment; and*
- (e) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government.*

A municipality must strive, within its financial and administrative capacity, to achieve the objects set out in subsection (1).

This section is important because the larger socio-economic issues of local tourism, within which beadwork and bead products are often placed, have been put by the Constitution as "local government matters" (p144). Equally cultural matters, regional planning and development as well as urban and rural development, which are issue contexts of beadwork and bead products are well-placed as shared issues between the provincial and national spheres of government.

These are the Constitutional contexts and imperatives which often inform any government legislation, policy, planning and framework involving beadworks and bead products.

4.3 The 1996 Arts, Culture and Heritage Policy

In 1996 the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, a government department where the issues of beadwork and bead products would be located in the light of them being cultural matters, published a national policy framework for Arts, Culture and Heritage, the broad issues within which beadwork and bead products often get located.

A vague, broad-based document, the policy was aimed at creating a new framework for the post-apartheid arts, culture and heritage. This would be a framework to break away from the apartheid view of arts, culture and heritage matters and render them relevant to the new South Africa.

Unfortunately, this policy framework does not seem to have been implemented at all, at least no known effort is evident by the time of writing this thesis, because of reasons including the pre-occupation of that department with politics and the former Performing Arts Councils (interviews with various arts and culture activists 2002).

It would again, seem to me rather like the policy had no meaningful African grounding since it failed completely to articulate on the African perspectives of culture, which would have given a more balanced entry to the issues of beadwork and bead products.

4.4 Culture, Tourism and the Spatial Development Initiatives

After the declaration of various Spatial Development Initiatives by government, which included the Maputo Corridor, the Lubombo SDI and the Wild Coast SDI, the then Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology started engaging in a study to identify opportunities for job creation in the culture and tourism sphere along these SDIs.

A report titled: "Culture, Tourism and the Spatial Development Initiatives: Opportunities to Promote Investment, Jobs and Peoples' Livelihoods" and sub-titled "Key Issues And possible Projects", was prepared and published by a company called Caps Mafisa on behalf of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology in April, 1999. In the introduction the report locates culture and tourism as strategic issues in dealing with joblessness. It further has the following to say about its contents:

The contents of the main report include discussion and assessment of

- *Definitions of culture tourism.*
- *International, national and provincial demand for culture tourism.*
- *International benchmarking: problems and potentials associated with various forms of cultural tourism around the world.*
- *Cultural villages in South Africa: problems, lessons, strengths and guidelines from a scan of 16 case studies.*

Potential for job creation through cultural tourism in 31 SDIs: Maputo Corridor; Lubombo and Wild Coast.

The study further says about international benchmarks:

International literature from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States indicates that indigenous peoples can benefit from increased tourist demand for cultural experience. Case studies from these countries indicate three important principles:

- *When the private sector appropriates popular/local cultural activities for commercial and tourism purposes the integrity of these cultural forms is likely to be undermined.*
- *State owned and funded cultural facilities tend to be inefficient and a drain on public funds.*

Control and appropriate (ownership) by local communities is the best way to guard these dangers.

A definition of cultural heritage is given:

Cultural heritage is an accumulation of daily details and large traditional, social, racial and religious. Built up from time and memory it may involve one-time, one-of-a-kind, never-to-be-repeated, impossible-to-duplicate buildings, shrines, sites and artifacts. But more than structures, more than things, we experience an array, sometimes a disarray, of feelings, moods, colours, smells and street sounds. It is an accumulation of ethics, foods, medicines and manners; the way people greet each other, love, hate, marry and bury each other. It is markets and their market goods. It is money and how they earn it, count it and spend it. It is the way people dress, drive, drink, dance, die, weave, weep, worship and go to war.

It is their curses in the street, their prayers in the temple and their songs in the field. It is plays, players and playgrounds. It is how they sail and read and write. It is instruments, tools, fabrics, dolls, doorways, music, metals, masks, boxes, beads, coffins, bottles, weapons, charms, utensils, posters, veils, skirts, hats and handshakes. It is trees, rocks, caves, mountains tops, architecture, archives and archaeology. It is the story of creation." (Robertson Colleens of the Pacific Asian Travel Association).

In a jobs summit organized jointly by Government in the late 1990s, the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology indicated that cultural industries have an international tendency to create jobs, as this extract shows:

- In Canada in 1994, direct and indirect employment in the cultural industries totaled 1.1 million jobs.
- Some 2% of the workforce in Scotland work in the cultural industries or had cultural occupations in 1995.
- The cultural industries in South Carolina supported 17 631 jobs in 1992.
- Employment in the entertainment industry in Los Angeles in the United States alone has grown from 112 000 in 1995 to 262 000 in 1998.
- The craft industry in Kenya, Ghana and morocco has had significant impact on the viability of these economies.

The report gives an overview of Shakaland, Simunye, Dumazulu, Mchunu Bed and Breakfast and the Shezi family Cultural Facilities, all in the "Zululand" part of KwaZulu Natal and therefore relevant to this study.

These cultural projects in the form of commercial cultural village's projects or less accommodate much of Zulu Cultural traditions, including beadwork and bead product, by putting them on display (pp64 – 69).

The study continues to cite the involvement of women in the crafts, a context within which beads and bead products become closely discussed:

- *Women are the most oppressed sector in South African society, but research shows they dominate the craft industry.*
- *Crafts can be worked on between other activities, such as child caring, agricultural production and household work.*
- *Crafts are one of the few alternatives that rural people without formal skills have to earn money.*

From this study, generic as it is, it is clear that beadwork and bead products have a niche in the craft strategy of government. Beadworkers can derive solace in the fact that, at least a study like this, which goes to the extent of identifying possible projects, exists. It should be noted, however, that the Mafisa study is neither policy nor legislation. It is, therefore, not binding on anyone.

4.5 Trade Faires, Festivals, Exhibitions and International Summits

The South African government has featured crafts and bead products in a number of national and international trade faires, cultural festivals, craft exhibitions and international summits. These include the Lisbon Trade Faire in Lisbon, the Macufe Music Festival in Bloemfontein, the various craft exhibitions organized by the South African embassies in such countries as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, China, Japan

as well as in such international summits as the Non-aligned Movement Summit in 1998, the Commonwealth Summit in 1999, the International Aids Summit in 2000, the launch of the African Union in 2002 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, also in 2002.

The trend in these events is to allow crafters often selected by government officials who are not crafters themselves, to display, market and sell their wares. Beads and bead products often feature very strongly and quite successfully.

4.6 Sustainable Local Development

The recent World Summit on Sustainable Development created a window of opportunity for local crafters and beadworkers to put their works on display. It also equally created an opportunity for local Municipal planning to take the issues of culture and heritage seriously into their planning processes. Through their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), be the municipalities will be able to locate culture and heritage within their development plans, as the most viable form of kick starting their local economic development strategies.

A good example of this plan is being achieved through Durban's Local Agenda 21 strategy, wherein in KwaMashu an innovative approach is being put in place to promote culture in local economic development and urban renewal. It should be noted that the issues of culture and cultural awareness often get placed very lowly in the development projects (Durban's Local Agenda 21 Programme, p123) – Whereas in the light of low startup costs, I am of the view that once the issue of opening up the

markets have been attended to, municipalities should invest in the craft markets.

4.7 Conclusions

Government efforts at promoting beads and beadwork products often get placed within the larger issues of arts, culture and heritage. They have thus, practically not displayed any cohesion or even ability to be sustainable over time. It is imperative that the issues of beadwork should receive specific attention, especially in relation to the poverty alleviation programmes.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I am going to give an outline of the issue that have been discussed in the thesis. I will highlight the issues relating to beadwork in the context of this study as a way of summation. This is intended to give the reader a recapitulation of the focus of the study with a view to drawing the parameters and context within which this study has been produced.

I will further draw on some conclusions based on my own field experiences, the research that was done in the various readings and the context of fashion in a socio-economic context dominated by such items as sustainability, poverty alleviation and the role of women in local economic development. My conclusions will also be based on the issues that have been raised in each chapter of the dissertation.

Lastly, I will make some recommendations, based on my own observations and experiences with regards to the issues raised in the main body of the dissertation. The recommendations will be focused on the views of the sustainability of fashion and bead decoration in a policy and practical environment which packages culture and heritage as global issues.

5.2 Summary

The dissertation has concentrated on the observable trend whereby Zulu women, especially those who regard themselves as modernists or modernize, namely, the educated and urban have, especially in the 1990's

and early 2000's tended to use bead and beaded fashion wear as a statement of their worldview.

Such fashion trends are observable in most ceremonies like the reed dance ceremony (umhlanga), the King Shaka's Memorial Day, Heritage Day and other national day celebrations, as well as clan ceremonies such as the various rites of passage including puberty rites (umemulo) and weddings (traditional and modern). In all the attempts to incorporate traditional dress code in the fashionisation of modern wear, beadwork and bead decoration of dress stands out as a statement of cultural linkages between modern and traditional ways of looking at Zulu womanhood.

Beadwork has been researched and extensively written about in current literature. However, this dissertation is unique in that it views beadwork as a statement of fashion and fashionable wear, which mediates between tradition, change and modernity. Fashion designers and fashion enthusiasts, have, over the past few years, observably tended to seek the incorporation of beads and colour-coding whenever the statement of modern traditional fashion crops up. Therefore, this dissertation highlights the fact that Zulu beads are not static, but are bold and forward looking as they are incorporated into various fashion trends, purely as fashion, and as a form of figurative and literary communication.

Literature was reviewed and various definitions of beads and beadwork, both from a contextual and historical point of view were looked at. The historical context of Zulu beadwork points a picture of a static art form, which hardly moves, but at the same time mediates in a complex world of relationships. Unspoken, beadwork as we observed from Margaret Carey

(1998), beads convey powerful messages of love and hate, and of various moods related to gender and gender equity in a traditionalist society.

Schoeman (1996) who conducted extensive studies of Zulu beadwork in the years 1964 to 1968 observed that there is a big difference between the role of beads, both aesthetic and functional, in a traditionalist setting as against the more modern usages of beads, which can literally decorate almost anything.

Some of the most prolific writers on the subject have, in terms of this dissertation included, *inter-alia*, Lidia D Sciama and Joanne B Eicher (1998) who edited a book with various themes, Jean Morris, who reveals the contrasts of the modernists and traditionalists contexts of the bead and David Hammond-Tooke and Anitra Nettleton (1989) whose publication have informed the intricate world of economics, class and aesthetics which informs the life and sustainability of beads and beadwork.

One of the most significant issues in any discussion involving beads is colour-coding. Colour-coding, which gives literal and poetic meaning to colours, if taken in context, may determine the order and pattern of colours to be juxtaposed in the design of a beaded piece of fashion wear. While not static and universal in its approach, colour coding is a fundamental aspect which determines the artistry of a beaded product. It is clear however, that in more modern products, bead colours are arranged for merely aesthetic purposes, in whatever form.

In that case, the market relations between the designer and the customer play a decisive role. Thus, the issue of the economic value of beads, a factor which is currently sustaining bead products, has been highlighted.

Levinsohn ((1984) confirms the fact. Beads also have a social value, and a life of its own in a changing socio-cultural environment in which modern Zulu users of bead products find themselves.

The various users of beads were highlighted in chapter three, through both text and visuals. The choice of the visuals was clearly a strategic choice from a scholarly view, because visuals, more than any, communicate more efficiently, effectively and clearly, while emphasizing whatever needs to be emphasized on the point. The visuals have introduced live evidence of the currency of beadwork and bead products in that we have seen that beads are alive. Enormous opportunities are presenting themselves through a variety of national, international, regional and local initiatives where beads and bead products have featured in every topic on such items as sustainable development, local economic development, small to medium enterprises and home-based industries, because of their power to sustain and empower women who may not be all that skilled, other than their ability to use their hands in design and manufacture of bead products.

The most outstanding issue of course is that of marketing of the completed products. While international conferences like the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Earth Summit) held in Johannesburg in 2002, seem to demonstrate the existence of a craft and bead product market internationally, in reality locally it is not clear what comprehensive strategy is in place to market South African craft and especially Zulu beadwork internationally and nationally.

The government policies and legislations which were reviewed in chapter four of the dissertation did highlight the issues of development of an industrial base for crafts in general, with beadwork forming an aspect of

that. However, this is definitely not adequate, seeing that the rate of production far exceeds the rate of marketing.

This means that in places like the Durban beach front, there are more craft, especially beaded products on any given time than there are buyers. This research reveals the ultimate dilemma of any craft and bead product producer, which is: to continue producing without much sales or to stop until the issue of markets is sorted out.

5.3 Recommendations

The scholarly study of Zulu beads in the context of literary communication has been conducted inter-alia, by Mathenjwa (1999), Maphumulo (1993) and Mthethwa (1988). The recent studies have been done by Zulu cultural insiders, which makes the interpretation of the text and context to be that of culture bearers. What is significant in the expose by Mathenjwa (ibid) is the emphasis in the symbolic nature of beads. Beads, according to Mathenjwa are one of the "materials that are used as tokens or symbols to represent the real idea" (p 186). When something represents something else, its own meaning can only be expanded in the context of what is being represented. Therefore, in the context of literary and figurative communication, beads and bead products should not be accepted or read at face value.

This line of thinking is fundamental to the interpretation of beads and bead products in the traditional Zulu context, where colour-coding is something static, and meaning shifts only in relation to the patterns of design. In this context, the most important basic messages of hate, love, life, death and so on can quite easily be pieced together in any bead product by

interpreting the pattern of the design and its undersigned context. In other words the interpreter needs to know the story behind the designed bead product in order to understand the product itself.

The various Zulu terms for the different messages that can be thus communicated are well-articulated in Mathenjwa (1999) *inter-alia*, and need no further rehearsal here.

As a way of making the first recommendation, therefore, I would like to move that the scholarly approach as espoused by, *inter-alia*, the writers cited above need to be identified as an important branch of the study of beads. This approach assumes that beads have a cultural and heritage basis in Zulu society which relates to the colonial, missionisation and modern periods. In terms of their economics beads are often marketed as ordinary commercial products, like any other artifact on the market shelf. From this scholarly approach can be deducted other issues like the cultural and heritage basis for the bead statements that symbolize tradition and change. Where change occurs, it must always be clear what is being changed. The scholarly approach as espoused by these scholars, *inter-alia*, represent the opportunity to understand the traditional basis for modern Zulu beads and bead product.

The second recommendation that I wish to make is around the recognition of the transitional socio-cultural and economic situation in the design, study, production and utility of beads and bead products is based. Schoeman (1996) alludes to this when referring to the 1964 to 1968 study of Zulu beads as against the modern uses of beads in the Zulu context. It is clear from the above that a lot of transition has taken place over the past ten to fifty years. Such changes have been brought by such issues as rapid urbanization of Zulu people, the dismantling of apartheid, the failures of the

missionisation system as well as the resurfacing of Zulu cultural pride in the form of ubuZulu of the 1980s' and 1990s'.

The latter especially brought with it a spirit and practice wherein the search for anything that can link one with the past, while highlighting one's modernity, especially among the educated, has been quite observable.

This practice also emphasizes continuity of ideas in a changing world of Zuluness. The approach to the study of beads and bead products which emphasizes the issues of continuity, tradition and change is indeed bound to enrich the scholarly approach to the study of beads and bead products.

A third recommendation is based on my observation that beads have a clear social, cultural and economic value. The approach to the study of beads and bead products which seriously considers any or all of the above values is bound to enrich the study of beads and bead product and help to streamline the contexts for their understanding. Beads create a Zulu consciousness which is universal, being both traditionalistic and modernistic. Thus, the issues of self-image and behaviour of the users of the bead products would be highlighted. Issues of gender, class, social status, education and economic status among the users of beads would be highlighted and analysed, thus giving beads and bead product a context more relevant to other branches of knowledge generation.

A fourth recommendation is based on my observation of the inadequacies of the government policy framework to relate to the issues of beads, beadwork, beadwork products, the marketing of the bead products, as well as the striking of the balance between the issues of supply and demand.

At the moment it looks like there is no clear plan, policy or strategy from the side of government to show the way on how to treat beads and bead products as any other products on the market place who must be considered according to the rules of the market. Thus, beads for example are able to be considered for reasons of the development of small businesses to alleviate poverty and create jobs, especially in the rural areas.

It is clear, for example, that bead products form a major part of modern fashion design whose main market is the modern Zulu women who are educated and would like continuity and change in their lives. This integration of tradition and modernity is possibly one of the key fundamentals that ensures the sustainability of beads. It, however at the same time streamlines the market and introduces limitations as to who buys. For expansion, international markets need to be opened.

The fifth and last recommendation is that action research should be the approach that is used in the study of beads and bead products. Thus, it would be possible for scholarly research, which I alluded to earlier, and which by the way can be conducted with regards to any of the four preceding recommendations to be integrated with more practical approaches of local economic development. Local economic development, which is now the major focus of Municipal activities, is an opportunity for beads and bead products to be promoted by local government and thus giving focus and practically to and some of the policy structures discussed in chapter four of this thesis.

Such an approach as alluded to in the fifth recommendation would see beads and bead products featuring on the issues of tourism, heritage revival, African Renaissance and others which would ensure the sustainability of beads and products in the modern socio-political and economic set up.

The five recommendations that have been brought about above are a strategy to integrate scholarly academic activity with the practical imperatives which need precise action into to sustain the beads and bead products within the modern context of local development.

5.4 Conclusions

The discussions in each chapter above have highlighted the fact that beads, beadwork and bead products can be viewed, reviewed and studied from many angles. Clothing and fashion are the most important angles that have been highlighted in this dissertation. The title of the dissertation itself highlights even further the intricate issues of Zulu womanhood, colour-coding and design as they are related to clothed products which are decorated with beads and bead finishes to highlight one or the other statement.

From the afore going it is also clear that a lot of alignment needs to be done in relation to the drafting of the policies of government in such a way that they are relevant to local development as a context for the sustainability of beads and bead products. This is more the case with the departments dealing with arts, culture, local economic development and heritage at national, provincial and local spheres of government.

Scholarly research into beads can take many shapes and forms. In the context of this thesis Zulu culture and heritage, Zulu womanhood and colour-coding are the issues of design that have been highlighted in order to create a context for fashion design and marketing involving Zulu beadwork.

Lastly, this work is by no means exhaustive. It is rather to be seen as an introduction to the integration of Zulu beads and beadwork as an attraction to the issues of modern fashion design, a statement of tradition, community and change. Supporting text is enormously endless. However, new texts continue to be generated everyday on the related subjects, which will enrich future expansions of this topic.

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