Scars, beads, bodies: *pointure* and *punctum* in nineteenth-century "Zulu" beadwork and its photographic imaging

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ABSTRACT

In the nineteenth century, two imports to South Africa, beadwork and photography, were to impact on the ways in which people presented themselves to the gaze of others. Both required some forms of pointing and stitching, both within the things they constructed, and between the things they constructed and the bodies of those they made visible. Both were imported via colonial intrusion and were used to control the local population by visibly binding them to particular identities. At the same time local populations used these imports to reinforce their own identities and to speak back to the power of the colonists.

The first import, of glass beads to the east coast, resulted in a tradition of beadwork in a multitude of styles. I examine the ways in which beadwork can to be linked to isiZulu-speakers' scarification in the way it is tied to the body, worn and sometimes even stitched into the hair. I argue that these praxes talk of beadwork as a creation of a second level of skin and of a combined, layered set of meanings and identities.

The second import, photography, allowed the different manners of scarring and of wearing beadwork to be recorded over a long time span. By bringing together the indexical function of photography (via Barthes) to record identities, the pointing of the camera at the object to be fixed, the bodies, the scars and the beadwork and, I argue, following Jacques Derrida's (2009 [1978]) notion of "*pointure*", that the photographs have been laced onto, and entangle irretrievably with, that which they supposedly "represent".

Keywords: beadwork; photographs; *pointure*; *punctum*; scarification; stitching; pointing; Zulu.

In the nineteenth century, two imports to South Africa were to impact on the ways in which people presented themselves to the gaze of others.[1] Both imports were brought to Africa by European colonial powers and were used to varying degrees as a means of controlling the local population by binding them to particular ethnic identities. At the same time these imports were turned by local populations to make their own identities and to speak back to the power of the colonists. The two imports in question here both required different and complex forms of "pointing" and "stitching" – both within the things they constructed, and between these and the cultural bodies they made visible.

The first of these imports, chronologically, were glass beads, acquired from Asia and the Mediterranean, via trade along the African East Coast, over many centuries, and sometimes picked up off shipwrecks off the coast, but in very small quantities. Some of these trade beads were considered particularly valuable among different peoples in Southern Africa.[2] Larger numbers of, generally smaller, so-called seed beads started to arrive in the latter half of the eighteenth century and were acquired by isiZulu, isiXhosa and Khoisan speakers in the coastal regions, in larger quantities than before, but with specific preferences for white, red and blue/black beads.[3] The glass beads were of a size and type that enabled forms of assemblage very different from those available to workers using older, indigenous materials such as shells and seeds. The peoples of the region found these glass seed beads increasingly desirable as they were consistent in size, texture and shine, enabled more variety in form and pattern and potentially more colours, although initially white, red and dark blue/black were preferred. The colonial masters, as importers of the beads, responded to this desire by trying to satisfy the market both in quantity and in its swings in colour preference, and as masters of the colony, attempted to control the use of the things indigenous peoples made with the beads.[4]

Nguni-speaking peoples in particular, to varying degrees, adopted, adapted and developed numerous beadwork techniques, inventing some along the way. The simplest technique was that of stringing beads together in a line, often using gut as the thread, in colour sequences that repeat or reverse, or, when they are multiplied in fringes, make up horizontal stripes or chevrons. Simple stringing extends into winding – turning strings of beads round a core of another material, with patterns that emerge as the different colours meet around the core.[5] Imported needles and long, durable threads essential to the techniques of stitching involved in more complex forms of beadwork were also obtained by trade with European travellers, missionaries and merchants. Further expertise or skill is evident in a number of different techniques for making bead fabric; stitching that doubles back upon itself in so-called brick stitch, net-stitches that have lace-like qualities, and single-thread weave stitches that

1. The research for this paper was funded in part by the National Research Foundation of South Africa (NRF).

2. Among these are the so-called "beads of the water" owned by the Kings of the Venda-speakers (Stayt 1932), and North Sotho rulers (Mőnnig 1967). These were larger tube beads, quite different from the later small glass seed-beads. Interestingly, these larger trade beads appear to have greater spiritual importance than the later smaller beads.

3. See Saitowitz (1994) and Kaufmann (1994) for some of this history among Southern Nguni groups.

4. Histories of beadworks for specific groups from South Africa have been attempted, for example, Kaufmann (1994); Klopper (2000); Preston-Whyte (1994), and Wood (1996) on the "Zulu". While these have contributed to understandings of beadwork in South Africa, they have had a somewhat different focus from that which I adopt here. Frank Jolles (2004) makes some reference to the ways in which traders helped to stabilise "traditions" of colour by limiting choice in their bead socks, but the nineteenth-century records are more likely to point out how fickle local tastes for colour could be. This would suggest that traditions only hardened well into the twentieth century.

5. The complexity of these designs increased rapidly over 50 years, resulting in some very complex patterns by the late nineteenth century. Papini (1994) has traced some of the more complex designs to a source in Pashmina shawls imported into Natal.

join rows of beads parallel to each other. There are other techniques for stitching beads to fabric or leather, and for sewing them at right angles to one another, or in tightly sewn strings coiled around each other so that the resultant surfaces are three-dimensional in texture.[6] The ways in which the beads, thus sewn into works, were tied to, or around the body, worn or sometimes stitched into the hair and looped through earlobes, talk to beadwork as creating a second level of marking the skin, and of its extended layering and suturing of meanings and identities. The beads that were introduced by outsiders, along with other sewing skills, became embedded in indigenous lifestyles as part of bodies, as integral to identities when they were placed on parade, as they were in the photographs which I explore in this article.

The second import, which allowed both the variety of forms and the different manners of wearing beadwork to be recorded over a long time span, was photography. European visitors, traders, settlers and missionaries to southern Africa introduced photographic processes in the mid-nineteenth century, with a number of early studios established in towns such as Durban, Cape Town and Grahamstown.[7] These studios, run by European settlers, produced images of settlers, land- and seascapes, early townscapes and many pictures of indigenous peoples dressed in a variety of exotic items. Most of the early (mid-nineteenth century) photographs of black Africans were made in studios, with the subjects fastened, or pinned, into place by the clamps commonly used at the time to keep sitters still. Somewhat later photographs showed African subjects posed against a background of landscape painting, and leaning against a studio prop, after the 1860s often wearing copious amounts of beadwork. Real "field" photographs of indigenous peoples in their own rural contexts were rarely attempted before then, and these were carefully constructed and posed to illustrate particular aspects of "tribal" life.

Most images of indigenous peoples were, initially, largely consumed by outsiders, visitors and colonial officials to show the otherness of the "other", although indigenous people increasingly acquired studio photographs of themselves as the century progressed. It is difficult to tell which studio portraits of Africans wearing beaded finery were exclusively aimed at a foreign audience – many could equally have been treasured by their sitters/subjects as records of their own appearance, had they been given, or bought, copies. Photography has the power to fix historically grounded identities for outsiders and to bestow modernity on its sitters, depending on how its images were both executed and viewed. In either case, however, such images have become part of the genre of photograph as document, as archiving an existent "fact", something that needs some attention in relation to the issues at hand. Roland Barthes's (pre-digital) understanding of the photograph suggests that what was present in the photograph actually existed: 'Every photograph is a certificate of

6. Information on the stitching techniques of beadwork is to be found in Labelle (2006), Costello (1990) and Carey (1986) *inter alia*.

7. Bensusan (1996) provides a useful but sketchy overview of the early photographers. Webb (1992) and more recently, Stevenson and Graham-Stewart (2001) identify a number of others. Much of the information provided by Stevenson and Graham-Stewart is repeated in the re-publication of the same images in Garb's (2013) edited volume of the Walther collection.

presence' (Barthes 2000:87). '… [T]he photograph', he continues, 'possesses an evidential force' and its 'power of authentication exceeds the power of representation' (Barthes 2000:88-89). Using this understanding, I bring together the photographic "record" provided by the images made by settler photographers, and beadwork of the kind it recorded.

Punctum and *pointure*

Here I follow a chain from bodily scarification to dressing the body in beads. I posit that scarification and its analogous extension, beadwork, act not only as "*punctum*" (Barthes 2000) within nineteenth-century photographs of indigenous peoples, but also as mechanisms of *pointure* (Derrida 2009 [1978]). The merit in binding these ideas in relation to an investigation of beadwork, bodies and photographs is that it brings into focus a number of questions about histories of bodies and their representation/construction in photographs. Barthes (2000:26-27) suggests that a *punctum* in a photograph serves to punctuate an image and to pierce/wound the spectator; he says that a photograph may be '... speckled with these sensitive points' (Barthes 2000:27), in effect offering multiple piercings. These piercings within the "ethnography" or "*studium*" that is the ostensible subject of the photograph he suggests, constitute a 'kind of subtle beyond' (Barthes 2000:59). Although Barthes suggests that the *punctum* is in essence unintended, and many of the elements that I examine below are intentionally included in the photographs by the photographers or the sitters, his argument, that it is the detail that 'changes my reading. … The detail is the *punctum*', allows one to follow such detail more closely and it is the detail which explains the different levels at which the gaze is instrumental in fixing identity, in the process of pointing/*pointure*.

In the colonial context, the production of images which purport to "record" the appearance and customs of Africans was largely in the hands of white settlers who had access to the technology and the equipment. Africans were photographed, often at the behest of the photographer who made images for sale to Europeans in the form of *cartes de visite* and postcards. These photographs are ethnographic in their recording of the appearance of the individual, they present her (or him) dressed in particular ways and understood as already "other", because they prickle with intentional *punctum*s for the outside viewer. For most Europeans, these images functioned as records of what was perceived of as the "strange" and "primitive" habits of the colonised subjects they represented, and the beadwork was one of the elements that produced the effect of "piercing" the viewers. I suggest, however, following

Deborah Poole (1997) that the fixity implied by the notion of the photograph as document is at odds with Barthes's own notion of the unsettling function of the *punctum*. The photograph of the person in beaded finery offers to the "outside" viewer a *studium* that is pierced and thus perforated and destabilised by the *punctum*s, but for indigenous viewers, who would recognise the types and use of beads in particular ways in relation to the modernity of the photographs and the beads themselves, the same visual elements do a different kind of indexing. In this sense, the photograph and the beadwork become linked as contradictory signs laced together in complementary conjunction.

Jacques Derrida's (2009) notion of "*pointure*" is useful here. Initially outlined in relation to a lace being passed through the eyelets of a shoe (in response to the debate between Martin Heidegger (1998 [1950, 1957, 1960]) and Meyer Schapiro (1994) over the boots in a painting by Vincent van Gogh), it was extended through an analogy between the way an 'invisible lace … pierces the canvas', and the *pointure* 'pierces the paper' (Derrida 2009:440). He invokes puncturing, pointing and particularity of reference, as well as the process of stitching or lacing different layers together[8] in a manner which closely parallels Barthes's tracing of the *punctum*. For Barthes, the *punctum* is the element, wound or mark within the wider studium (the whole photographic context), which allows particularity of the photograph to be established, and relates to Derrida's account of *pointure* as the piercing; the detailed eyelet hole that allows the detail to be laced into, tied and enmeshed within a contextual framework extending beyond the painting/photograph as a whole, beyond Barthes's *studium*.

The investigation of the relationship between the body image of isiZulu-speakers in Natal in the late nineteenth century and the photographic images that point to particularised identities in this article, follows some of these threads and pierced apertures. I first examine the evidence of the scarred body among isiZulu-speakers, understanding it both as a form of pointing and punctuating, but also in terms of the ways in which the (here metaphorical) lace moves through the punctured hole, bringing the inside out and, through confusing the boundary between the body and that which lies on its surface, redefining the frame (Derrida 2009:437) and rendering the body more graspable, possibly more erotically appealing.[9] The raised scars (*izinhlanga/izimpimpila*) on the surface of the skin brought the interior of the body into a three-dimensional interaction with the enveloping world, and made it tangible, refusing the smoothness of the skin as an envelope.

In what follows from there, I explore the ways in which the *punctum* as a mark of particularity and *pointure* as a method of both sewing together and lacing/unlacing helps to establish a particular relation between photographic re-presentations of

8. Michael Payne's (1993) reading of Derrida's notion of "*pointure*" expands it quite considerably beyond its initial framework.

9. The possible erotic appeal of scarification among the Luba is discussed by Nooter (1992:86) and Nettleton (2007:362ff).

isiZulu-speaking people from Natal and the Zulu Kingdom, the scars and the beadwork in the photographs, and the actual stitched pieces of beadwork from the same region. Using examples of photographs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, I unpack the ways in which they invoke and thus "fix" particular, but often constructed, identities through their re-presentation of beadwork/stitching.

Scarring the body: the physical *punctum*

In 1907 Father Mayr, a German missionary at Marianhill (near Durban) in Natal, published an account of female scarification procedures among isiZulu-speaking women. In making these patterns young women (largely) punctured their skins with incisions, inserting foreign matter (usually dung) under the skin flaps and applying heat to cause scarring (Mayr 1907b:644). Mayr's article was illustrated with photographs, some by his fellow Trappist monk Father Müller, a photographer of some ability, and others drawn from the already large archive of photographs of "Zulu" subjects (Webb 1992). At the time that these articles appeared in the ethnographic journal *Anthropos*, raised keloid scars were still part of some women's body praxis in the regions inhabited by isiZulu-speakers,[10] but it was no longer very common. Mayr (1907b:644-645) claimed that scarring was more often executed on girls with lighter skins, and that it was confined to cheeks, upper arms and hips. While scarified bodies are presented in a number of European-authored photographs of peoples from Natal, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the majority of women shown in the wider corpus of images of isiZulu speakers do not have scars. The praxis is still evident on the bodies of some women in Müller's images taken at the turn of the century.

For scarification to be visible and noted, of course, required that the subjects of the photographs were unclothed, at least in the western sense. I make a distinction here between the "naked" body, or even the "nude" as an ideal form,[11] and the body which is not covered by western clothing, but is in some sense nevertheless "dressed". This unclothed, dressed presentation of body is the predominant mode in many of the photographs of isiZulu-speakers in the nineteenth century where scars and/or beadwork circumscribed both men's and women's heads, faces, torsos and limbs and punctuated their exposed skins. Scars and beadwork would have played a significant role in establishing identity, possibly not "ethnic" in the pan-"Zulu" sense,[12] but definitely related to group, status and gender. This identity was represented in the photograph – as Barthes (2000:28) says '... it immediately yields up those "details" which constitute the very material of ethnological knowledge'. For Barthes (2000:5)

10. Photos taken by Mrs Jaques in the 1930s (housed in the Wits Art Museum) and Katesa Schlosser (Schlosser 2004, 2006) in the 1950s of tshiTsonga-speaking women from northern Natal, the Transvaal and Mozambique, show that women's abdominal scarification was still practised well into the twentieth century by peoples other than isizulu speakers.

11. The most famous and controversial definition was offered by the aesthete and arch formalist Kenneth Clark (1956) in which it was put forward as a western idea, and as part of western art history.

12. Issues of "Zulu" identity have come under increasing scrutiny in the past few years. See for example, the essays in the tome edited by Carton *et al.* (2008).

FIGURE **Nº 1**

Seated “Zulu” woman with chest scarification, 1860-1880. *Carte de visite* photograph. Silver gelatin print.

Iziko Museums, Cape Town.

a photograph is primarily that which always and inevitably 'points' to 'certain *vis-à-vis*', in this case, constructions of corporeal identity.

Two mid-nineteenth century photographs of the same woman with scars on her chest, show her sitting (Figure 1) and standing[13] in the same studio setting. In both images, the young woman confronts the camera dead-pan, her head encircled by a white band. Sustained looking at both images reveals details such as a snuff-spoon tucked beneath the headband over her right ear and into the hair, pointing to and puncturing/punctuating the boundary between face and hair that is enforced by the headband. Each of these details stands, alongside the scars, a just-visible beaded belt and a rather odd tube pendant from her left ear,[14] as an ethnographic *punctum* within the photograph. They "represent", or rather offer evidence of, body dressing practices that were particular to isiZulu-speaking women in the nineteenth century. They pierce the viewer's attention with their particularity, moving the female nude from the generic to the particular. Another photograph of similar date[15] has a similar effect. It captures another woman, posed kneeling; she is, eternally, wearing a necklace and belt composed of cowrie-shells attached to straps, a white bead necklace of multiple strings and two small gourds and other natural objects attached to the ends of the thongs that tie her belt. She has a beaded strap tied around her head and prominent keloid scars on her upper arms. All these elements stand on the skin, punctuating her body's smooth uninterrupted circumference, marking significant parts of the body or transitions from one part of the body to another. In all these photographic records the body scarring is limited to, and isolated on, particular bodily sites that apparently were not prescribed: Mayr (1907:646) suggests that there were no rules as to the number of rows, nor as to the numbers of scars in each row, and I have found no record of the praxis being ritually prescribed.

That, in the past, some isiZulu-speaking women scarred their bodies more extensively is evident in two further photographs. One, in the Marianhill mission archive[16] shows similar scars on the back of a woman in a reclining pose, back to the camera/observer. The scars are confined to one side of her spine in an asymmetrical fashion not normally associated with traditional practice, but visible in some of the other images of scarification as well.[17] This figure is in a pose that recalls the image-type made famous by Diego Velazquez's *The Toilet of Venus* (1647-1651).[18] There can be little doubt, though, that the pose was chosen for the photographs of "natives", not only because it enables one to see the scarification marks on the body, but also for its ability to titillate the (assumedly male) viewer.[19] The tradition of the female nude in western art history has been unpacked over the past 50 years as being essentially oriented towards consumption by the "male" gaze, where the female is present as a sexual object. The male gaze is that which then "owns" the image. As is usual in

13. This image can be accessed online at the British Museum collections search site. [O]. Available:http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=1409039&partid=1 .

14. This is only present in the photograph reproduced here, and not in the one that is in the British Museum collection.

15. This image is also in the British Museum. [O]. Available: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=3151778&partid=1

16. This image was illustrated by Armstrong and Whitelaw (2008; see also Nettleton (2012)) in relation to the tradition of lumps on pottery called *amasumpa* that have been associated with women's scarification. That these photographs circulated widely is clear from the fact that they pitch up in different museums with quite different notations about authorship and provenance. A fragment of this image which was taken by the clergy at Marianhill (Müller) is in the British Museum collections. The image of the seated woman in the Iziko Museum is clearly by the same photographer from the same photo-shoot as the image of the standing woman in the British Museum collection. Some of the people who appear in more than one photograph are given different ethnic appellations in the different album locations. This makes attribution of authorship to these images very problematic.

17. These include a studio photo of a young woman decked out in beads (British Museum Af, A3.72) with a row of scars running from her left upper arm across the left upper part of her chest; the semi reclining figure (British Museum Af, A5.17) with scars on the right side of her lower back; an image of two women, seated against a backdrop (British Museum Af, A5.2), of whom the younger has prominent scars on her chest. Two photographs by John E Middlebrook from before 1895, preserved in the Pitt Rivers Museum (1998.210.6.4 & 1998.210.6.1), show young women with scars on abdomen and shoulders.

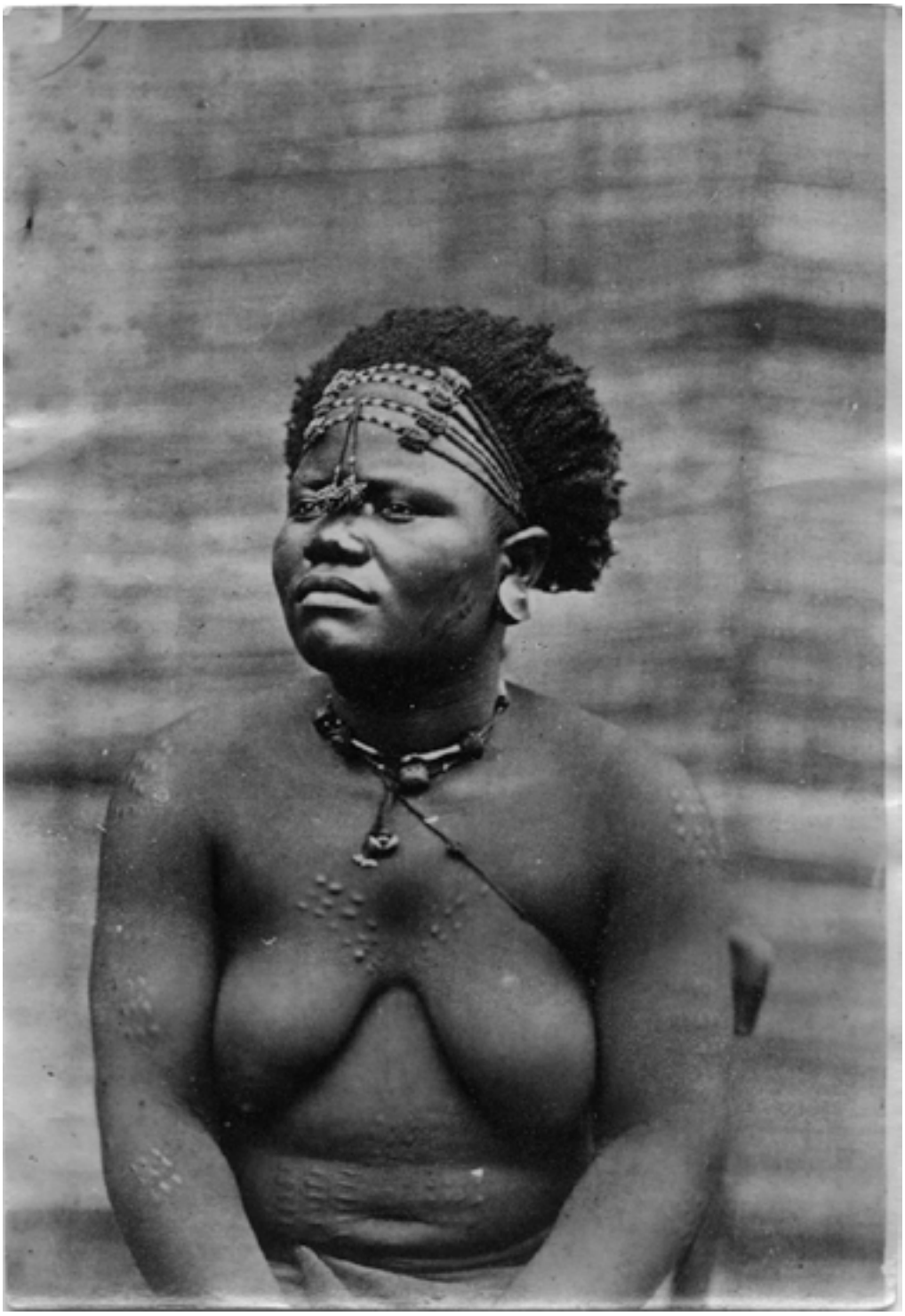

FIGURE **Nº 2**

Scarified “Zulu” woman with headgear, 1860-1880. *Carte de visite* photograph. Silver gelatin print. Iziko Museums, Cape Town.

18. Painted between 1647 and 1651, during the nineteenth century the work hung in Rokeby Hall/Rokeby Park and was thus nicknamed the “Rokeby Venus”, a name that has stuck with it since. It was acquired by the National Gallery in London in 1906 as part of the Morritt Collection, but was well known before that via engraved reproductions.

19. Two earlier iterations of this pose are seen in photographs in the British Museum (Af, A5.10 & Af, A5.17) from an album collated by Captain Parish between 1860 and 1880. The first has a woman in the Rokeby Venus pose, mirror in hand, but the second pose is reversed, with the woman leaning on her right arm. Only the latter has scarification, and this is on the right side of her body only. She wears a headband, a very long tubular ear plug and two belts.

these somewhat prurient images made for the outsider, male and undoubtedly colonial master's gaze, the woman in Figure 2 has only a beaded belt to further dress her un-clothed body.This belt plays off against the scars in pointing to difference. The second photograph, another of the kind made as *cartes de visite*, shows a woman seated on a chair against a background of grass mats (Figure 2). Her lower body is clothed in a wrap-skirt, but she has extensive scarification on her stomach around her torso, above her breasts, on her lower and upper arms and on her cheeks, again making a definitive statement about identities that would draw different responses from differently positioned viewers.

Mayr's (1907b) account of the scarification process suggests that it was followed as a matter of choice, mostly by teenaged girls between the ages of 13 and 16, and without any attendant ritual. However, if this account is correct, given that girls of this age group would have been going through puberty, it is possible that continued scarification in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reflected the survival of a need to mark one's status on entry into the stage of child-bearing potential. Among the isiZulu-speakers of the Zulu Kingdom, older rites of passage, which initiated boys into manhood and girls to womanhood, were supplanted by their drafting into *amabutho* (age grade regiments) in which bodily modifications such as scarification and circumcision were no longer required or allowed.[20] Female scarification, if it was voluntary, could thus possibly have been a remnant of an older praxis in the sense that it was still done by younger women, at their own behest.

However the photographic evidence suggests that Mayr might have been mistaken about the age at which women acquired their scars; the women with scarification in the images that I have found, in a search that has covered a number of archives and publications, were all beyond puberty. As they were captured on film from 1860 through to the early 1900s, it is unlikely that these women could have been subjected to scarification as part of puberty rites, which had been abandoned (in the Zulu Kingdom at least) in the first decade of the nineteenth century: they are all clearly young women rather than adolescent girls – some of them appear to have suckled children. Furthermore, images of pubescent girls from these archives do not show any with such scars. In a pair of photographs from an album of *cartes de visite* assembled by Arthur Spring Natal (1865), and preserved in the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford (1998.67.1-51) there are two photographs which bear this out. One (Pitt Rivers Museum 1998.67.46) that purports, according to the annotations in the album, to represent 'girls from 12 to 16 years of age', formed the basis for one of the illustrations in Gustav Theodor Fritsch's (1872) compendium on the native "races" of southern Africa (Nettleton 2011:232, fig 15; Dietrich 2008) (Figure 3).

20. This structural organisation of young people appears to have been followed across all isiZulu-speaking splinter groups beyond the Kingdom and Natal, such as the SeSwati speakers of the Swazi Kingdom, Ndebele speakers of Zimbabwe and Ngoni speakers of Malawi/Zambia. There was a corresponding similarity in many other aspects of material and other cultures among these groups.

FIGURE **Nº 3**

"Zulu maidens", 1860-1880. *Carte de visite* photograph. Silver gelatin print.

Iziko Museums, Cape Town.

It shows no scarification on the bodies of the young women. The second (Pitt Rivers Museum 1998.67.48) shows 'full grown … girls about 18-20 years of age',[21] both of whom, perhaps significantly, do have scars on their chests above their breasts. It has been suggested[22] that the scarification of the reclining woman in the Marianhill photograph discussed earlier, is not complete, because when complete it should be asymmetrically placed on the body. Accepting this for the moment, and noting that the woman in this photograph is certainly older than 12 or 13, calls into question Mayr's assertion about the ages at which scarification was completed. There is a possibility that scarification might have been acquired slowly around the time a woman entered, and then during, her child-bearing phase, so that the asymmetry seen in these photographs is the result of a process which could be stopped and re-started at various stages. This process is similar to the paths followed by individuals in accumulating beadwork items as they moved from childhood through courtship and marriage in isiZulu-speaking societies.

While scant attention has been paid to any form of scarification amongst South African Bantu-speaking peoples in general,[23] and there is no mention of men's scarification as such among isiZulu-speakers, there is some evidence that medical forms of scarification were practised by men. One photograph of a young man bedecked with a number of beadwork items, which I examine later (Figure 4) has keloid scars on his upper left arm arranged in a pattern that is almost identical to that on the women in the other photographs I have discussed.

Interestingly, while there is, in fact, no real evidence that this young man was indeed a speaker of isiZulu, or that he was born in the region of Natal or the Zulu Kingdom, he has a very close "cousin" in an almost identical photograph (of a different young man without visible scars) against the same background, identified as being made by the Caney studio in Durban in the 1880s (Webb 1992:51). The presence of scars on this young man is enough to disturb the notion that scarification was a specifically female body modification practised in accordance with a strict gender code. Men probably acquired scars mostly as part of a process of acquiring medical protection: Joseph Shooter (1857:349) quotes informants' claims that, in his preparations for battle with 'Pagatwayo', 'Tshaka' had '… cuttings made into various parts of his body … ' into which 'medicines' were placed by a 'doctor'. The powers which would thus be associated with such scarring may well have been more serious than being simply for decoration. Such scars were simply by-products of medical procedures such as this one.[24] Whereas medical scars stand as a poignant *punctum*, permanent reminders of particular embodied action, lacing the individual to a wider context of belief, they do not account for the ordered and systematic scarification of young men as in this photograph.

21. The elision here refers to the ubiquitous use of the term "Kaffir" as the descriptor of isiZulu- and isiXhosa-speaking peoples that was in common use throughout the western European and American museums in cataloguing their holdings of Southern African materials.

22. This idea is one which has been attached as a caption to the photograph by the curators of the collection at the Killie Campbell Museum, KwaZulu Natal (see Nettleton (2012); Armstrong & Whitelaw (2008)).

23. See Nettleton (2007) for some of these in relation to headrest decoration and Armstrong and Whitelaw (2008) for the question of the *amasumpa* motif in "Zulu" material culture.

24. Mayr (1907a) records such processes of cutting for the sake of healing, not for the sake of marking.

FIGURE **Nº 4**

"Zulu warrior", 1883-1893. Photograph probably from the Caney Studio, Durban. Silver gelatin print.

Iziko Museums, Cape Town.

The scars on these bodies were, however, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, increasingly augmented with, and ultimately arguably, replaced by beadwork as a means of dressing the un-clothed body.

Moving from scars to beads

Beadwork was deployed around the body by many isiZulu speakers in ways that paralleled the use of scars, marking chests/breasts, torsos (back and front) shoulders, necks, limbs and heads, sitting on the skin, but also standing up off the skin. While beadwork can be seen to have replicated some aspects of the, probably older, tradition of scarification, I do not argue that emergence of the former was dependent on, a cause of, or a result of, the other's demise, nor do I suggest that there was a strong symbolic or ritual equivalence between the two. But the wearing of multiple beadworks on the body would have masked the visibility of keloid scars, and thus rendered them less significant. Beadwork implicated its wearers in a new tradition, whose exponential growth happened as imported glass beads became more easily available and in larger quantities to people living in the Eastern Cape, Natal and the Zulu Kingdom (Klopper 2000). Traditions of beadwork were invented and elaborated in these areas from the late 1700s onwards. By the late nineteenth century it was *de rigeur* for men in their late teens and early twenties (at least those who could afford it) to wear loads of beaded necklaces, panels, aprons and head rings for ceremonial occasions and dances.Among isiZulu-speakers, beadwork was largely worn by younger people, both men and women, and was associated with bodies, which were largely un-dressed in other ways. Beadwork can thus, like scarification, be seen to be one of the means through which bodies were bound within a social structure understood, following Tim Ingold (2011) as a set of embodied experiences. The sewing of the beads was a metaphor for, and thus a means of, sewing experienced identity into place.

The wearing of beadwork also constituted a move towards modernity; not only were the materials acquired from outside the group, they were also a reflection of an increasing inclusion of their users and wearers into a cash economy and wage labour. Because, unlike scarification, beadwork was not permanently fixed to the body, it could be removed when the wearer moved into different contexts. It thus had (and still has) the advantage that it would not draw attention to a particular identity associated with the "primitive" in the way that scarring would. Significantly, however, both beadwork and scarification depended on processes of pointing and puncturing in rendering the body visible and legible. They also constituted a process of binding the traditional and the modern into a heavily seamed coexistence.

The woman with extensive scarification in Figure 3 wears a minimum of beadwork – the strings around her neck have large wood or seed elements attached to them, and beads only appear on her elaborately constructed headband of four separate strands,

with two strings that hang between her eyes, covering her forehead and separating it from, and thus containing, her hair. Both the necklaces and the headband complement the scars as parts of a continuous body surface punctuated at significant points. In her ear-lobe she wears one of the pointed stud-like plugs associated with "Zulu" ear-lobe stretching. The sum total of these elements, the *studium* of the photograph, constructs an image, an identity, and a person. They are "sutured" into a whole.

The physical *pointure* – beadwork items and techniques

The physical praxis of beadworking – bead-sewing in the case of Southern African peoples[25] – is of a type that Ingold (2011) has argued as embodied, as not being conceived in a mind's eye and then executed to plan, but rather as growing through the bodily movements that bring it into being. He draws a distinction between the apparently ineluctable process of stringing beads, where beads follow each other with little variation, and the much more variable motion constituted by the strokes of a saw cutting wood. Yet I would argue that a bodily integration of sight, movement, pattern, design and structure is equally evident in the threading of cotton, or gut, using needles or not, through holes in the beads, and around or through other supports such as cloth, grass or skin, to produce objects of extraordinary variety. The movements involved, the pointing, puncturing, suturing and selecting, lacing and making lace, developing pattern texts within bead textiles, all fall into the finely nuanced non-repetition of making that Ingold discusses. But they also have both material and ideological effects in that their products enable both a particular way of wearing, of binding and of marking the body and a context of reading the body within a discourse of desire and control.

One of the most common techniques used by isiZulu-speaking bead artists is called *umbijo* (pl *izimbijo*) (roll/s), which involves the winding of strings of beads around a core of grass or sedge stalks.[26] Patterns were created through alternation of colours, to create stripes of varying width, or panels of alternating colour, sometimes by the employment of different size beads in single rows. Later examples include complex patterns of interlocking triangles and chevrons. The strings of beads may be stitched to the core at intervals in the process of winding or after all are wound, and in multiple-roll works, such as her waist belt, the rolls are bound to one another by stitches placed at regular intervals perpendicular to the length of the roll as shown in Figures 5a and 5b, a late nineteenth century example with a beaded panel pendant at one end. While such long multiple-roll pieces are generally classified in the literature as belts for wear around the torso,[27] they served other purposes as well.

25. Southern African beadwork is typically sewn, laced or threaded in complex ways. Unlike much Native American beadwork, it is not woven on a loom (Labelle 2006; Berlo & Phillips 1998; Costello 1996).

26. In some instances, the core is covered with imported cloth before the beads are sewn round it. In later examples, rolls of cloth sometimes replace the grass core altogether. Furthermore, in some of the later examples, only the outer, visible side of the roll is beaded, presumably increasing the comfort with which it could be worn, and reducing the weight and the cost of each item considerably.

27. See for example, the items listed in the catalogue *Zulu treasures: of kings and commoners/amagugu kaZulu: amakhosi nabantukazana* (1996) where no's B54-B68 are all called *umutsha* (waistband). Some of these have the small panel at one end. Wood (1996) offers an historico-archaeological account of Zulu beadwork in this volume.

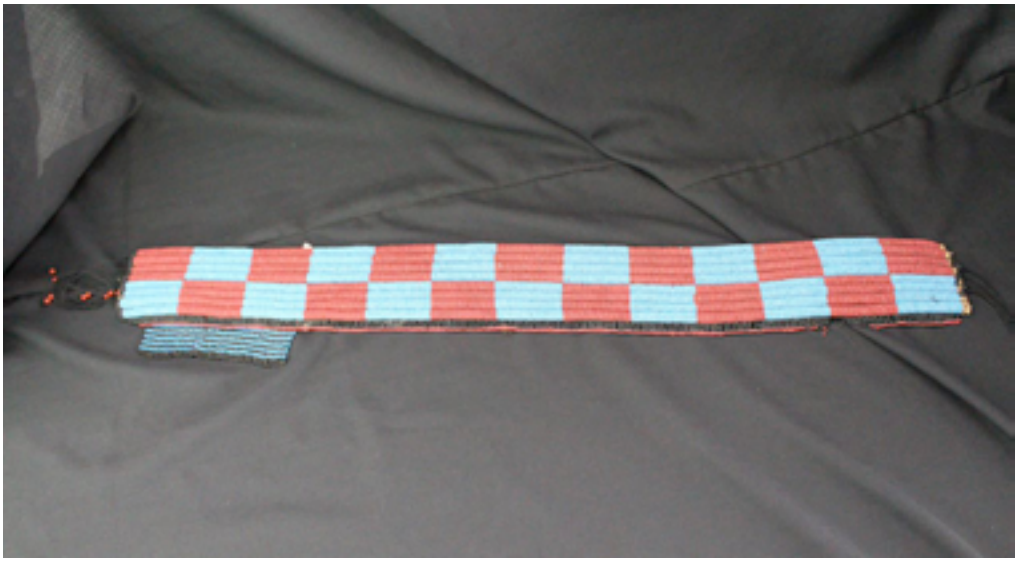

FIGURE **Nº 5a**

Umutsha (waistband) made of *izimbijo* beaded rolls (front detail), Zulu artist (name unrecorded), late nineteenth century. Glass beads, cloth, spun thread, grass/sedge.

Wits Art Museum, Wits Museum of Ethnology Collection. WME 069.

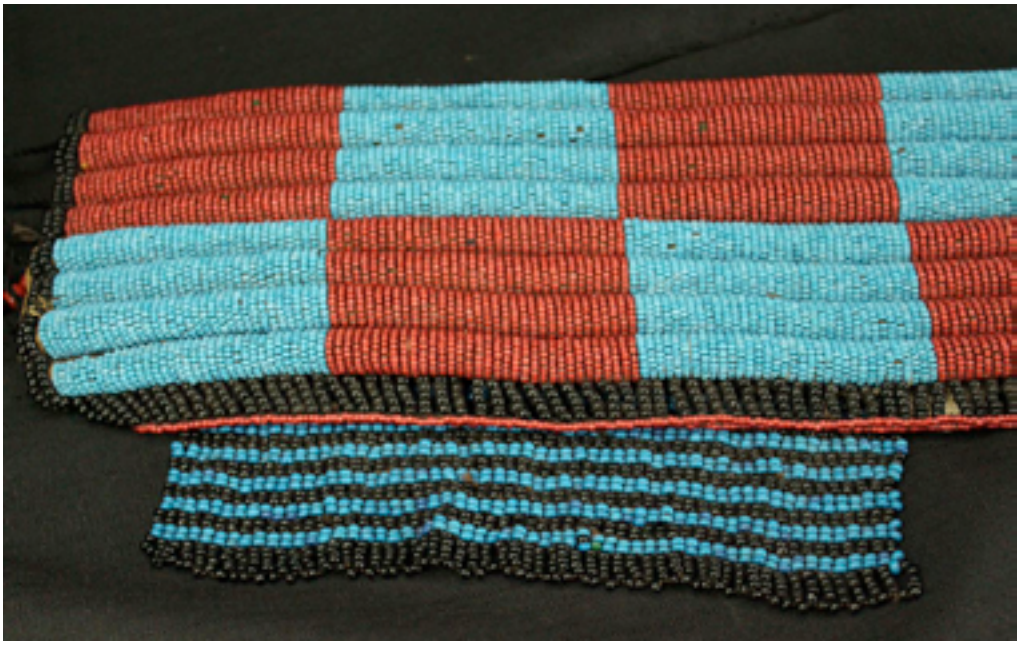

FIGURE **Nº 5b**

Umutsha (waistband) made of *izimbijo* beaded rolls (back detail), Zulu artist (name unrecorded), late nineteenth century. Glass beads, cloth, spun thread, grass/sedge.

Wits Art Museum, Wits Museum of Ethnology Collection. WME 069.

FIGURE **Nº 6**

A Zulu woman with her best jewellery on, inscribed JEM on left = John Middlebrook, photographer in Durban active in 1870s. Silver gelatin print.

Iziko Museums, Cape Town.

Panels could also be made using a variety of stitches to enmesh the beads within a complex web; a bead fabric. These included short strings of three or four beads laid parallel and sewn to each other to form long stripes or check patterns, a technique seen in some of the earliest pieces of beadwork documented as collected in Natal (Nettleton 2012). The panels around the neck of the young woman in Figure 6 rest on the skin, move with the body, crumple and unfold (see the panels at her neck) in ways that creates a dynamic interplay between different elements. In almost all instances,

FIGURE **Nº 7**

Ulimi (Neckpiece), Zulu artist (name unrecorded), late nineteenth century. Glass beads, spun thread, brass buttons.

Wits Art Museum: Standard Bank Collection of African Art: 1996.52.01 2.

FIGURE **Nº 8**

Isheshe/Isigege (Girdle), Zulu artist (name unrecorded), late nineteenth century. Glass beads, spun thread, brass buttons.

Wits Art Museum: Standard Bank Collection of African Art: 1992 09 037.

such fabric-ated beadwork pieces are given edges which have a greater degree of three-dimensional substance to them (Figures 7 & 8), making them stand up from the surface on which they rest, preventing them from melding into the surface of the skin.

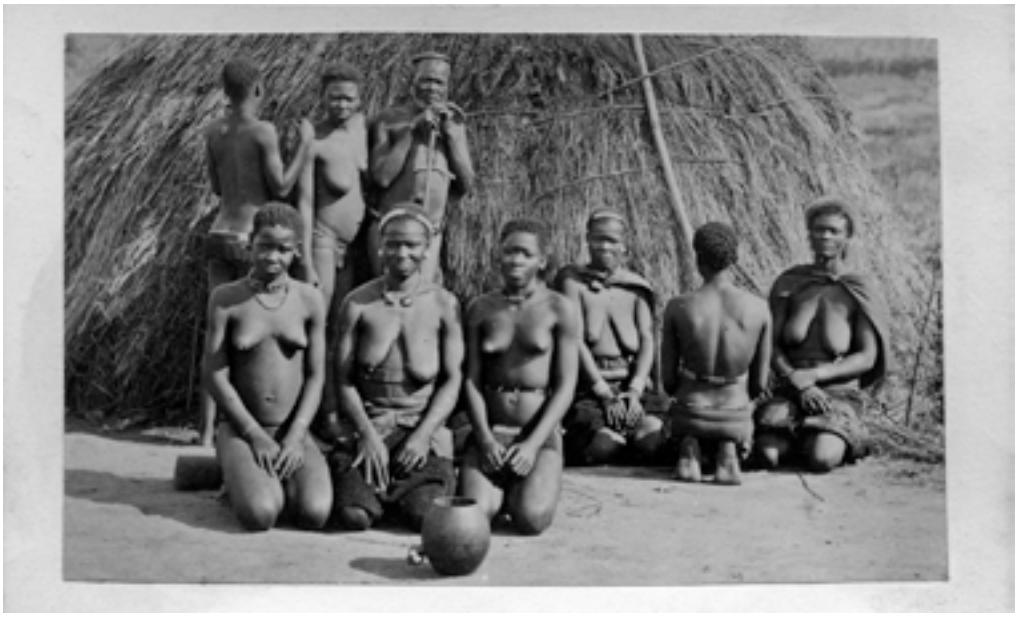

FIGURE **Nº 9**

"A Zulu family", photographer unknown, 1870s? Silver gelatin print.

Iziko Museums of Cape Town.

Studio photographs: pointing identity through beads

Photographs of isiZulu-speaking people in front of their homes dating to the 1870s, for example Figure 9, show men and women posed very carefully, in stylised fashion demanded by long exposure times, in front of grass dwellings (*izindlu*). In most cases, these people wear minimal amounts of beadwork on their bodies. Because they were not attired in "clothes", i.e. garments made from cloth and cut or pieced and sewn together (itself a process of puncturing, lacing and tying), which colonists approved as "civilised" dress, black people's wear was construed by colonists and missionaries and their converts as "primitive" (Colenso 1865; Tyler 1891; Papini 1993).

Yet the people in these photographs all wear one or two of the following visible beaded items: belts, necklaces or girdles which have been carefully threaded, sewn and structured as punctuations within an indigenous image, or lexicon, of the body. In spite of the fact that colonial presence imposed particular dress codes on the indigenous peoples of Natal, where one was required to be covered from the shoulder to the knee before venturing into a colonial town or a mission station (Colenso 1865), by the 1880s beadwork was an exuberant, even excessive, marker of bodily identity

in most posed studio and outdoor photographs of indigenous peoples, existing in a complex and layered relationship of materials, cultural assumptions and relations of inside and outside. The lacing of all of these elements can be traced, if not unpicked, in an examination of a metaphorical relationship of pointing, punctuating and trapping or capturing in both actual singular pieces of beadwork and in their appearance, often as particular *puncta* in photographs of bodies.

Two later nineteenth-century studio photographs offer a vision of how "Zulu" bodies were visually constructed at the time. One, by John Middlebrook (ca 1880), is inscribed on the front "Zulu woman with her best jewellery on" (Figure 6) and thus leaves little doubt as to what it is intended to convey, while the other (Figure 4), probably by William Caney and dating between 1883-1893, showing a young man with his *beshu* of animal tails, a variety of items across his torso and beaded elements around his neck and head, is without a title and thus open to a greater latitude of interpretation. Both photographs, however, bring together bodies and beadwork, skins and costume in relationships that bind the people represented to a wider context. This binding started in a space and physical praxis of making of the things represented. The spaces of making were anterior to those of the photographs and the pieces of beadwork provided punctuation and lacing, both for bodies within these anterior spaces, and for their presence in the photographs. The binding developed through the building of beadworks, encased the human corpora, but the photographs laced them to particular contexts, both spatial and historical. The spatial context of the studio or the landscape intentionally invokes the rural, and the African, while the historical invokes particular relations between indigenous tradition in the form of dress, and "racial", i.e. bodily inscribed and cultural otherness.

In Figure 6, a young woman is imaged wearing a number of beadwork items made in a technique called *umbijo* (pl *izimbijo*) (roll/s), as in her lower girdle. Here the white beads are larger than the dark beads between them creating a three-dimensional effect on her skin, inscribing her body in particularly identifiable ways, and the pouch worn suspended round the neck is on a single beaded roll. This young woman's panels and *izimbijo* are all worn at body points formerly inhabited by scars on the skin. The young man in Figure 4 wears beaded *imbijo* wound around his head.[28] His choker is framed top and bottom by rolls, and each of the panel necklaces hanging over his chest and abdomen is suspended on a roll. The winding of the strings of beads around the grass cores in these objects is somatically related to the ways in which the *umbijo* are in turn wound around parts of the body, resulting in a layering of textural and three-dimensional elements against the skin.

28. These two photographs are so similar that at first glance they could be mistaken for the same young man in different poses. But close inspection reveals clear differences in their anatomy, facial features and in details of some items of beadwork. Furthermore, the panels that hang on the torsos from straps are very close in design, but not identical, in the two images, possibly reflecting a fashion for young men's wear in the vicinity of Durban in the 1880s.

Attached to the coils of the *umbijo* headband worn by this young man, are conical brass buttons whose points penetrate the surrounds and punctuate the changes of colour within the headband itself. Such buttons also fasten *umbijo* tubes to panels, marking the transitions from one to the other in the necklaces of both young people and of the young woman's beaded pouch. The emphasis which these buttons give to points of fastening is also seen in the single-roll *umbijo* round the young woman's hips, above her bead-edged cloth skirt. Details such as these are easily overlooked in small black and white photographs, where beadwork draws attention by its use of white and contrasting darker hues, to particular points on the body. But these details are more visible in the real object (Figure 7) where colour plays an important part, and brass buttons interrupt the colour fields and the two dimensional surface with prominent, pointed emphasis. One can begin to imagine the colours of the beadwork worn in these photographs by stitching them to the actual, remaining beadworks in museum collections.

What is clear from these photographs, however, is that beadwork was, from very early on, multiplied by its decoration (Gell 1998). Alfred Gell (1998) examines the ways in which skill and skilful decoration expands the visibility of objects and thus "multiplies" their presence by making them more than one. This idea is useful in relation to beadwork because the design breaks up the unity the beads achieve when sutured together, emphasising the process of "*pointure*" through which they were created (see Nettleton 2012). The preferred chevron/triangle/diamond designs used in much isiZulu-speakers' beadwork,[29] partly determined by the techniques used to sew the particles into a whole, also serve this fracturing process very well (Figures 5, 7 & 8). In many of these pieces the designs have a visual rhythm, an optical buzz or hum that is so vibrant it could be an early precursor of op-art. The designs make the beadwork live, they enliven even the most static bodies of the posed subjects of nineteenth-century photographs. The flattening of the colour relations, the emphasis on contrast in the photographs, the stillness of the image, all effect a suturing of beadwork to bodies that is only disrupted by the survival of the beadwork beyond the lives of the human bodies that once wore them and the fading photographs to which they were once enlaced.

The stitched survival of the distributed body

Both of the young people in Figures 4 and 6 are bound up in beads: beads that are themselves punctured, or were bought punctured, and were subsequently sewn, sutured to each other physically, and metaphorically; they were also sewn, or laced,

29. This is of course a generalisation. See Jolles (1993) for a discussion of the specificity of Msinga style beadwork for example, although there is not a comprehensive record of where this style emerged or when. See Wood (1996) and van Wyk (2003) for very generalised accounts of different styles.

always in relation to the bodies of the wearers. In their after-lives, many have stiffened into exactly such shapes, formed around absences. The survival of such items in museums can be linked to Gell's notion of the distributed body. Gell (1998) argues that objects which have been associated with, but separated from, particular bodies can be regarded as nevertheless still part of the body, or partaking of its physical (and metaphysical) properties. He discusses this idea in relation to theories of 'sympathetic magic' – 'volt sorcery' is his preferred term (Gell 1998:104). I have discussed this elsewhere in relation to other objects associated with the body (Nettleton 2015, forthcoming), but here I follow it in relation to the notion of *pointure*. While the surviving objects are still, silent material evidence of the processes of stitching of the beadwork itself, the identity the beadwork conveys and the aesthetic it imparts to bodies themselves, as well as the survival of these beaded items, points to another process. This is one of unravelling, of parting and rearrangement of the body now distributed. But it never constitutes complete severance, because the beaded items carry traces of the bodies that they once enveloped. Their spectres are physical absences or lacunae, because beaded items can, after all, stand or lie on their own. Their lacing to the body was never as complete as those forms that saw beads actually threaded onto the hair of the owner and which, once the hair was cut off and discarded as one of the more dangerous exuviae of the body, would have been retrieved from the hair or have disappeared with those exuviae.

Ultimately the *pointure* of both the photographs and the beadwork takes us back to the notion of thinking "in laces". This is how Derrida (1978:440) suggests we cope with the detachment of the object that:

> … as a product of the genus of clothing … is invested, inhabited, informed
>
> – haunted
>
> – by the "form" of another naked thing from which it is (partially and provisionally?) detached.

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