ANGELA IMPEY

# SONG WALKING

WOMEN, MUSIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
IN AN AFRICAN BORDERLAND

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## Women, Music, and Environmental Justice in an African Borderland

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Historical scholarship has developed, through recursive practice, a tradition that tends to ignore the small drama and fine detail of social existence, especially at its lower depths. A critical historiography can make up for this lacuna by bending closer to the ground in order to pick up the traces of a subaltern life in its passage through time.

(Guha 1987, 138)

Wandering implies an in between space, in between here and there. Wandering is not a straight line but a meandering one, allowing oneself to be pulled in different directions and then to drift away again. We do not need to stop to see, rather we see as we move, so that how we move is embodied in how we see—an ambulatory form of knowing.

(Ingold 2000, 230)

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# Song Walking

Daybreak in western Maputaland is a noisy affair. Through the dark and heavily misted Pongola River valley, the ghostly call of the African wood owl* fades to the chorus of cocks crowing from surrounding homesteads. Crested francolins* interject from dense, moist undergrowth, vociferous and shrill, awakening the white-browed robin chat,* who adds fervently to the commotion of the new day. *Nguni* cattle, heavy-horned and resplendent in flecks and patches, file along riverside tracks to the cries and whistles of young keepers, while high above them white-faced ducks,* more resolute in purpose, announce their early morning crossing.

*Sahhukulu

* iNswempe

*umTshweleswali

*iVevenyane

Sometimes the Maputaland rains break at dawn, producing a torrential downpour against a looming backdrop of lightning and thunder. In an instant, dams spill over low-lying roads and merge with the shallow pans on the floodplains. Water rushes down mountainsides, swelling rivers and flooding fields. Goats and cattle retreat under the thinly veiled protection of *acacia* thorn scrub, their ubiquitous presence usurped by the deep wooing of bullfrogs who materialize, as if by magic, from long months of mud-encrusted hibernation.

On these mornings, children will wait under dripping eves for the first sign of letup, when they roll up their trousers, tie plastic bags on their heads to stay dry, and wade to school through impromptu waterways. Some will have the good fortune to be delivered by the truckload, their audacious drivers navigating the networks of corroded cattle paths on higher ground while their cargo, drenched and high-spirited, sing for all they are worth.

In the tranquil afterhours of the storm, the long rays of sunset illuminate the wild fig and acacia forests in bright neon lime. Pied kingfishers* and herons* look on from the deep shadows of surrounding mudflats, anticipating their last catch. The shouts and whistles of cattle herders cut the cool evening air. Returning from faraway grazing lands, they make their way through saturated river rushes holding high the flower of the *Aloe marlothii*,* nature's ceremonial candelabra in shimmering orange-red.[1]

*Lonombe

*Gilonki/Dvoye

*umHlaba/unHlaba

[1] The *Aloe marlothii* is one of the iconic species of the western Maputaland borders. Though barbed and seemingly hostile, it is in fact a sociable species, standing tall in clusters in the stony foothills of the Lebombo Mountains and silently surveying the floodplains below. It is also the most generous of the aloe family, offering every part of itself to nourish human and animal life: Its young succulent leaves are used to treat burns, insect bites, and intestinal parasites. Women use its bitter sap to wean their young. The sweet sticky nectar from the flower is used by young men to trap birds, which they present as gifts to friends and lovers. Old folks derive pleasure from its dried and discarded leaves, which they crush into a fine powder and take as snuff.

# INTRODUCTION

*Kusile bomama* (It is morning, mother)
*Kusile, ubugigagiga* (It is morning, you have to face the day)
*Siya khona koMdada* (We are going to Mdada)
*Tshwele-tshwele! Tshwele-tshwele!*[1]

This book explores contrasting histories of western Maputaland, a little-known locality in South Africa bordering Mozambique and the mountain kingdom of Swaziland. It builds on interweaving narratives and counternarratives, offsetting its documented history, assembled from a scattering of letters, traveler's tales, and government documents, with the experiences of two groups of elderly women, whose memories, songs, and landscape narratives span a century of frontier life. More particularly, it draws on memories inspired by a mouth harp (*isitweletwele*),[2] a small metal instrument that was introduced into the region by European hunters and traders in the mid-1800s and adopted by young women to accompany long-distance walking. Building on the premise that sound, motion, and bodily affect represent elemental though much underutilized mnemonics, it uses walking songs (*amaculo manihamba*) and their embodied attunements as the prompts and embellishments that guide the recovery of an alternative historical epistemology of place.

The book relates ethnomusicological research to the themes of international development, gender, environmental justice, and local economic access to resources, and explores the historical tensions between macro-level spatial development and local dwelling practices. Much of this conflict in western Maputaland has related to the natural environment, whose abundance yet unpredictability has affected a longstanding struggle between human livelihood needs based on mobility, and environmental

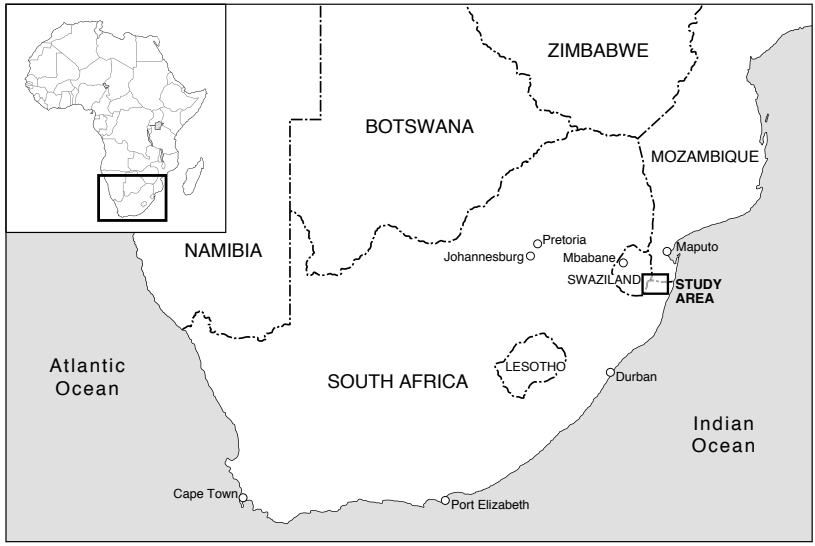


Figure 0.1. Map of southern Africa with study area

conservation, which is invested in enclosure. Rather than engage in a critique of southern African land and conservation politics, however, the book aims to better understand the social and emotional ecologies of the borderlandscape, seeking, through the intimacy of songs, sounds, stories, and silence, situated meanings of land and the legacies of injustice that have resulted from its annexation. By bringing a lived dimension to this political encounter, the book aims to shed light on the human consequences of transnational conservation expansion, whose globalist rhetoric of integrated conservation-with-development camouflages colonial patterns of land appropriation and control.

A study on the phenomenology of borderland spatialities rests on the desire to make audible the voices of people whose experiences at the interstices of three state boundaries have all but fallen off the edges of their respective national land agendas. Their exclusion has been compounded by livelihood practices based on high levels of mobility, by social or ethnic fluidity, and by their seemingly indeterminate citizenship. Its focus more specifically on women's experiences responds to the paradoxical relationship that exists in this region between women's practical role as custodians of land, as enacted through their work as farmers and collectors of edible and medicinal plants, and their structural exclusion from land-related decision-making, as dictated by their resolutely patriarchal and patrilocal cultures. Addition-

ally, women's experiences of conservation-based spatial rupture have been different from those of men. While loss of land and resources forced men to seek wage labor elsewhere, it was women who assumed principal responsibility at home in their capacity as food providers. The book therefore focuses on narratives associated with those for whom land has carried immediate responsibilities of survival, whose working with the land has linked them functionally, affectively, and sensually with place, and for whom loss of land has been experienced as overwhelmingly threatening.

The narrative impetus of the book derives from an email sent to me by farmer, photographer, and long-time research collaborator Mduduzi Mcambi, in which he reflected on why the women, with whom we had worked for the past eight years, had lost the heart to sing:

> I think the ladies are stressed and they are thinking a lot. They are farmers and their lives depend on farming. When there is drought like this, life can be tough. I was in the same situation last month. My goats were dying of hunger and my *mealies* [corn] were dying of drought. I was thinking a lot about families like those in Maputaland who depend on farming.
>
> And here you come with your musical passion and you ask them to play, and promise to give them what you think is enough. But when they look at those incentives—money, food—they know that it won't make any difference to their frustrations. So when they look at you they see a blind person who doesn't see what they see, who doesn't think what they think. Music needs passion to perform, and they have lost that passion. Losing their land has played a big role in their struggles. They once had a taste of the good life of farming but the life they live now is opposite to that of the past. The introduction of community game parks had given them high expectations, but it seems like they are a strategy that the government has used to take more land from the people. They call it "community conservation" but the community has no say in the parks. They come with the promise of a lot of jobs and a lot of tourists so that people can sell, but nothing has been done. So they have lost what they had and life has become tougher and tougher.
>
> They say that this country is for those who belong to it, but I think it is for those who benefit from it. How can the women say that they are proud to be African when they don't get any services from the government; when there is no water, electricity, jobs or food? And now they have lost what they had; what kept them going.
>
> I think you should write about this. I agree that you should quit your

> research in the area now. These are times when you wish you could make a difference in the lives of these people, but you can't; you have nothing.[3]

During my last visit to western Maputaland the women had been distracted, distant; some had fallen silent altogether. The temper of their communication was a stark contrast to previous years when our musical reminiscences had been full of laughter and dancing. No one in Eziphosheni rehearsed the scenario of our first meeting when MaFambile—"or should we call her *MaLambile* [the hungry mother]?"—ate so much that she was barely able to dance. Similarly, in Usuthu Gorge there was none of the theatrical hollering across the homesteads to announce our return, nor the usual "Quick! Go and tell old Makete that her *isoka* [loverboy] is back!"

Over the years we had traveled together and shared personal stories; we had dreamed and grumbled and schemed together. There could be no doubt that I was on their side, if sides were to be taken. But life had taken a difficult turn during the year prior to that final visit. Drought had had a considerable effect on food production, and unemployment levels had risen countrywide, reducing the opportunity for family members to secure supplementary income elsewhere. Economic anxieties were set against the backdrop of HIV and AIDS, the immense suffering and grief from which was affecting individuals, households, and whole communities in myriad ways. Yet, while these conditions may have been more immediately visible, the prism through which everything seemed to be refracted was land.

For a long time, a storm about conservation expansion, land dispossession, and deceptive land claim agreements had been brewing far off across the floodplains. This year, the women's silence signaled that the ominous black clouds had arrived in western Maputaland.

Mduduzi's forthrightness about conservation politics and the restricted value of my role as an ethnomusicologist was pivotal. Yet while I agreed that it would be appropriate to withdraw physically from our project, I knew that in many ways the real challenge of my work had just begun.

## An Enchanting Promise

Over the past two decades there has been a significant reconfiguration of southern African borderlands, generated in large part by the establishment of "eco-regions" that link protected areas across state boundaries by way of vast corridors of land. Known formally as Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA), these multistate rearrangements were the invention of the South

African Peace Parks Foundation, whose grand territorial imaginings were authorized by a rash of intergovernmental agreements and generously underwritten by an assembly of local and international donor agencies. The stated aim of TFCAs is to fuse biodiversity preservation with rural economic development through community-based management schemes and nature-based tourism. Allied to their conservation-with-development agenda are a range of secondary objectives, aimed at strengthening regional cooperation more broadly and reinforcing transnational security.

While creditable in principle, as these massive geopolitical projects have begun to take shape, so their regulation by the interests and agendas of international organizations has become increasingly apparent, prompting a groundswell of criticism. Some have condemned the TFCA process as a new "scramble for Africa" (Mayoral-Phillips 2002; Metcalfe 1999; Pakenham 1992); while recalibrated to conform to the global coordinates of modernity (Bunn 2001, 6), these projects' expansionist ideals nonetheless display all the hallmarks of Cecil John Rhodes's imperial imaginings of a pristine, unobstructed pathway from Cape to Cairo (Igoe and Sullivan 2008; Büscher 2010; Wolmer 2003a; 2003b; Draper, Spierenburg, and Wells 2004). Others have denounced the use of so-called "sound science"—similarly echoing their colonial forefathers—to sanction a Northern wilderness epistemology based similarly on a "precious, unsullied wonderland" (Adams and Mulligan 2003, 34). Underlying both agendas is the drive of neoliberal economics, whose mandate for protected area expansion is to generate revenue for international investment, made possible primarily via hunting and top-end nature tourism (Shongwe 2005; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Brockington and Duffy 2011a; 2011b). Within these contexts, resident communities are construed as depoliticized and homogeneous entities and recognized as the customary owners of land only in so far as they become service providers and their land is made accessible for international capital (Escobar 1995; Igoe and Sullivan 2008).[4]

When asked to comment on the TFCA process, South African botanist Brian Huntley offered the following judgment:

> [TFCAs were] launched with great fanfare [and] political posturing at the level of presidents and prime ministers, and even though they've attracted a considerable amount of donor funding, very few—if any—have actually succeeded in their goals. . . . Like many other grandiose schemes foisted upon Africa, [they are] an invention of the imagination of a few conservationists who believe that big is beautiful, have little experience of institutional realities

> or responsibilities, but enjoy the fun of grand design. (National Geographic Online, qtd. Dell'Amore 2012)

Regardless of how one may interpret their objectives, what has become progressively clear over the years is that despite the guarantees of "fluid boundaries," "unlimited spaces," and "infinite possibilities," as trumpeted on the websites of the corporate drivers of these bioregions, the people most affected by the formation of TFCAs have all but disappeared from view (J. A. Andersson et al. 2012; Impey 2013).[5]

When I first visited the wards of Eziphosheni and Usuthu Gorge in western Maputaland in 2002, two narratives about land were in evidence. The first focused on land dispossession and the forced eviction of some 562 families from the Ndumo Game Reserve between the late 1950s and early 1960s. This narrative was impelled by a fourteen-strand electric fence that separated women's current fields from the land of their ancestors and that crackled and pulsated as a daily memorial to the social fragmentation and economic insecurities that they associated with their removal.

At the same time, however, there was an air of optimism, made evident in a narrative about land restitution, which promised to put an end to the smoldering injustice of land appropriation. This narrative had reached a highpoint shortly prior to my arrival, when the Mathenjwa Tribal Authority (TA), which exercises customary jurisdiction over the region, was awarded the return of all rights to the Ndumo Game Reserve by the newly instated South African Commission of Restitution of Land Rights. Though the land claim was ratified only some years later, and precluded the physical reoccupation of the reserve, it nonetheless guaranteed financial restitution to all affected households. In addition, a range of other agreements had been reached to compensate the community annually from revenue earned from tourism in the reserve, and several proposals were in the making for the development of joint management schemes with private-sector partners to promote economic growth more generally.

The Mathenjwa TA had enthusiastically embraced the conservation-with-development paradigm and consented to the release of an additional thirty-six square miles of communal land on the western perimeter of the Ndumo Game Reserve for the establishment of the Usuthu Gorge Community Conservation Area (CCA). Management of the CCA would operate through a trilateral partnership between the Mathenjwa TA, the provincial wildlife authority, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, and a local community conservation NGO,

and all revenue accrued from tourism and hunting would be distributed equitably between stakeholders.

On a grander scale, as the acknowledged owners of both the Ndumo Game Reserve and the CCA, the Mathenjwa community was ideally situated to play a central role in the Usuthu-Tembe-Futi Transfrontier Conservation Area, which was earmarked for development across the borders of Swaziland, South Africa, and Mozambique. This Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) was to be one of five such bioregions that were endorsed in 2000 by the three governments, all of which fell under the larger designation of the Lubombo TFCA (see fig. 2). In total, some 1,545 square miles were to be added onto existing conservation areas, with annual revenues from tourism projected to be upward of USD 18 million annually (Smith et al. 2008; Meer and Schnurr 2013). The magnitude of these developments was a dazzling contrast to the extreme economic privation in the borderlands, and dreams of growth, prosperity and self-determination were running high.

Initially, the Usuthu Gorge CCA was conceptualized as a narrow corridor within the larger TFCA, linking Ndumo Game Reserve to the Swaziland border in the west. Significantly, this corridor scheme was designed to ensure that the women in Usuthu Gorge would retain their riverfront fields, which would be made accessible through a fenced walkway to guard against potentially dangerous animals. With the completion of the initial phase of the CCA program, the operating NGO released its first media statement to announce the initiative. However, rather than focus on the opening up of spaces, the statement announced a new kind of containment:

> The Mathenjwa Tribal Authority has taken the first step in creating a new community-run game reserve in northern Zululand that will boost the local economy. The authority would soon receive fencing materials worth ZAR 200,000 for the park on the western border of the Ndumo Game reserve in northern Zululand. . . . "It's enough material for 10-kilometres of fencing," said . . . of the Wildlands Trust, an independent fund-raising and project management organisation concerned with conservation-based community development in KwaZulu-Natal. . . . "This is not barbed wire or anything like that. This is Bonnox fencing—the point is to keep the animals in and not to keep people out."[6]

The CCA was touted as a flagship community project, and in due course government ministers and international conservation luminaries arrived in helicopters and 4x4 vehicles to celebrate its inauguration, while the international media flashed and scribbled, and the Usuthu Gorge women watched

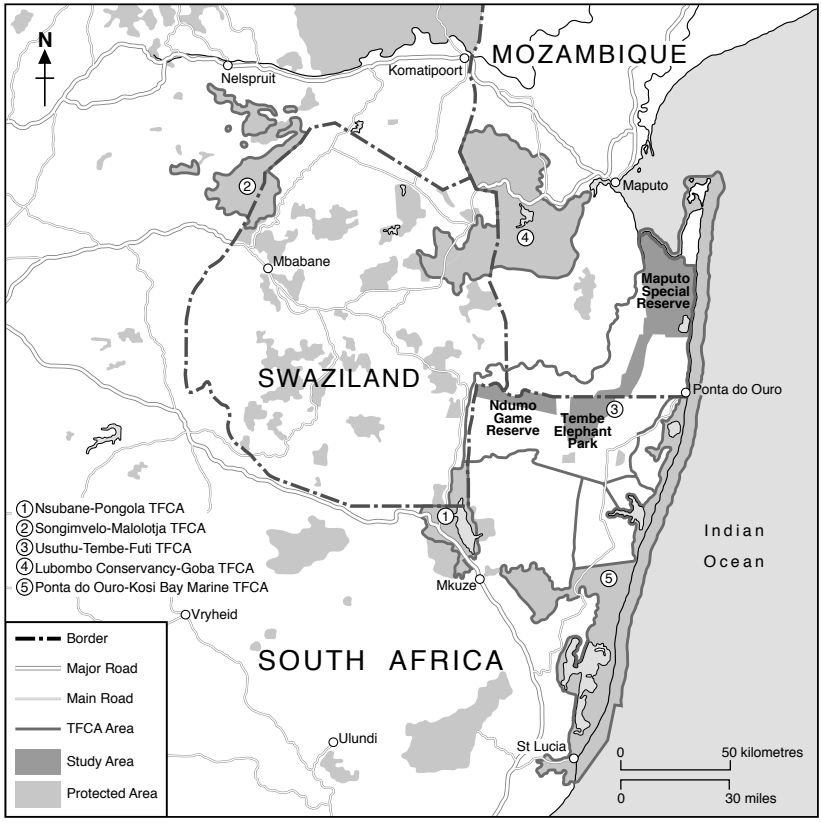


Figure 0.2. Map of the five sub-TFCAs of Lubombo comprises the following: (1) Nsubane-Pongola TFCA (South Africa/Swaziland); (2) Songimvelo-Malolotja TFCA (South Africa/Swaziland); (3) Usuthu-Tembe-Futi TFCA (Swaziland/South Africa/Mozambique); (4) Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA (Mozambique/Swaziland); and (5) Ponta do Ouro-Kosi Bay TFCA (Mozambique/South Africa).

from the other side of the fence. When one young community ranger explained to them that conservation would bring benefits to their families, one woman responded skeptically: "and as soon as they think they can work alone, they will forget about us."[7]

The corridor scheme remained in operation for a short while only. Concerned that the pedestrian walkway would obstruct the westward migration of animals from the Ndumo Game Reserve into the new conservation area, the organizing NGO removed the access route and extended the periphery of the CCA to include all the agricultural fields on the banks of the Usuthu River. New boundary fences were erected, a more robust system of perimeter

policing was established, and access to the trading towns in southern Mozambique was all but shut off.

When I returned to Usuthu Gorge for the last time in 2009, the women were working in a "community garden" that had been established to compensate for fields lost on the Usuthu River. The space was managed by a locally elected committee whose role it was to decide what vegetables to plant and where to sell the excess harvest. Boreholes had been sunk and women were hard at work tending to small, neatly allocated strips of spinach, cabbages, and onions. By all accounts, this was a model development outcome based on democratic engagement and the latest in space-efficient permaculture techniques.[8] Yet the women seemed to be going through the motions with heads down. Some whispered their objections, fearful that they might be implicated by those local leaders who had agreed to the new scheme on their behalf, many of whom were husbands and close male relatives. Most remained quiet, their silence seeming not to communicate active opposition to the new land arrangement so much as reflect weary resignation at yet another cycle of great hopes and broken promises.

At that time, the land restitution payments had yet to be honored, and the promises of private–public sector partnerships had all but faded into oblivion. The TFCA had been in operation for seven years, yet it had provided permanent employment for no more than ten people, and the number of tourists that had visited the area could be counted on one hand.

## Narrative Pathways

The narrative shape of this book draws on Porteous's (1986) cartographic analogy of remote versus intimate sensing: the one disengaged and defined according to scientific and political coordinates; the other visceral, sounded, and experienced on the ground. In order to avoid too stark a division between these narrative positions, I have attempted to explore the dialogic flow between them, charting the overlapping domains of women's everyday activities, pleasures, and encounters alongside the more rigid technocratic accounts of the region.

The interweaving narrative positions mirror the way in which the geopolitical histories of western Maputaland were revealed to me during my research. Time and again, the women would sing about or recount an event in their lives, and sometime later, quite by chance, I would read about the same event in a traveler's diary, a game ranger's memoir, or hear about it in an interview with someone related to the area in an entirely different capacity. While the two narratives undoubtedly concerned the same incident,

they were almost always recounted from opposing positions. Yet while one historical trajectory seemed to be impossibly pitted against the other—each committed to its own political precepts and unshakable truths—there was always content in common. The aim of this project, therefore, is to listen more carefully to the "eddies and fissures" in the territorialization of relations in western Maputaland, and to consider what can be learned when the boundaries of their respective tellings spill over and collide (Whatmore 2002, 68).

## Entangled Presences

In their considerations on walking, anthropologists Tim Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst (2008) remind us that setting out is seldom without precedent. The routes we travel invariably follow those set by others, and inescapably our own stories become entangled with the shadows of those who went before. These ruminations call for brief reflexive positioning on my part.

Since the inception of this research in 2002, several changes have occurred in my own life that have influenced how this story is being told. The project commenced while I was living in South Africa and teaching at the University of KwaZulu Natal. I had the privilege of a generous three-year research grant that supported regular fieldtrips to Maputaland and enabled me to observe at close range the rapidly changing land politics in the region. Extended visits made it possible for me to get to know the two groups of women in Eziphosheni and Usuthu Gorge who are at the center of this narrative, to become acquainted with the comings and goings of their lives and those of their families, and to learn about their songs. Upon completion of the grant, I embarked on a professional "walkabout" to explore the world of international development. Donning a decisively nonmusical hat, I took on work as a social development consultant on an early flood warning project in the eastern Nile region, working over a period of two years with flood-prone riverine communities in Ethiopia and Sudan and encountering the intriguing world of northeast African hydropolitics. Though devoid of any association with sound (at least at a formal level), the work had unexpected resonances with the Maputaland research through the way it linked global environmental concerns with the everyday coping strategies of inhabitants of ecologically vulnerable localities. It also provided me with a more pronounced grasp of the workings of government departments and of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), whose operations are founded on very different rules of social engagement and accountability from those that I had been accustomed to in academic research.

Shortly thereafter I moved to Britain and in 2006 took up a teaching position at the SOAS, University of London. This afforded me the opportunity to return to the Maputaland research, drawn to the relationships that had been built over many years and by a nagging sense of unfinished business. I returned with a deeper understanding of the marginality of culture in development policies and practices and with a stronger conviction by far of its relevance to all aspects of public engagement.

Significantly, the time spent away from Maputaland led to critical reflection on my own political and aesthetic investments in it. Prior to this moment, I had not considered my own borderland identity and what it had meant to grow up on a trilateral border, with its stark political distinctions and hazy cultural confluences, its secrets and vulnerabilities. However, it was only during the final stages of writing the book that I came to realize quite how implicated my personal history was in the actual making of these borders.

White settler development in the northern reaches of KwaZulu Natal (Zululand) in the early twentieth century was inextricably linked to Swaziland and what was then the Eastern Transvaal Lowveld in South Africa, my childhood home. The precursors of these imperial networks were often scientists, whose "expert" knowledge of soils, plants, insects, and weather systems paved the way for European agricultural expansion. The main crop identified for development across the hot dry lands of the Zululand-Swaziland-Transvaal triangle was cotton, and it was my great-uncle, Eric Pearson, then chief entomologist with the Empire Cotton Growing Corporation (ECGC) in the border town of Barberton, who spearheaded the cultivation program in the region. Though the program was ultimately a catastrophic failure, it was nonetheless commercial cotton that prompted the first systematic removal of African subsistence farmers from their land in western Maputaland (Pearson 1958; Lester 2003; Schnurr 2008; 2011a; 2011b), paving the way for a series of other colonizing projects. When large-scale agriculture was considered unfeasible, the South African government turned to wildlife conservation, extending economic and political control of its northern borderlands by keeping them wild.

A related thread in my association with the region is woven through the story of my Scottish grandfather, who, washed up from service in the Royal Scots Fusiliers at the end of the Great War, selected South Africa as his "settler colony" of choice. Unimpressed by the northern South African town of Ofcolaco (Officers Colonial Land Company), where British veterans were allocated land in compensation for services to the Crown (Harper 1998), he headed south to the rugged terrain of Barberton where the soil

was fertile and the mountains purportedly laced with gold. The area had for centuries been the preserve of the Dlamini (Swazi) royal family but was lost to the Transvaal Republic in 1866 when the border was formally delineated between Swaziland and South Africa. The land he purchased was in a region that had been assigned for white agricultural development, thus rendering longstanding Swazi subsistence farmers squatters on their own land (Crush 1987, 26).

The scientist, the farmer, the ethnographer.

Land in South Africa continues to be tormented by the ghosts of racial and political injustice and by stories unheard. While the end of apartheid in 1994 came with the promise of reparations and new beginnings, similar—sometimes worse—injustices have been committed by succeeding governments (Gibson 2009). Correspondingly, while environmental conservation may have been responsible for some of the most extensive forced displacement of indigenous communities in the African subcontinent (Agrawal and Redford 2009; Spierenburg 2011), there is a chilling resonance between the expansionist claims of the turn of the twentieth century and the rhetoric of neoliberal conservation today. While through the routes and pathways of our research we become inescapably implicated in place-making, so too are we afforded the opportunity to listen critically and in different ways. By drawing on multiple qualities of the western Maputaland cultural landscape and its people—some distinct, descriptive, and evocative, others repetitive and mundane—the book seeks to summon the imagination and raise awareness in ways that more conventional geographic or environmental studies seldom do. And somewhere between the women's songs and intimate narratives and the piecing together of letters, journals, and government reports, it aims to bring a hidden world into view.

# PART I

ONE

# Paths toward a Hearing

*Ayihambi lapho thanda khona*
(The road doesn't always go where you want it to go)

The road to western Maputaland rises precipitously from the sugarcane fields of lowland Mkuze and cuts up the Lebombo Mountains through a dry and desolate landscape. From the municipal center of Jozini, where traders and taxis swarm and jostle for a place on the precarious summit, the horizon stretches in every direction. To the west, the Jozini (Pongolapoort) Dam lies brown and motionless, dissolving into an opaque, mountainous frontier with the small kingdom of Swaziland. The Makhathini floodplains extend endlessly eastward, their hot, vaporous interior intersected by the Pongola River that drifts slowly across them as an emerald vein of sycamore figs and silver-leafed *terminalia*. Directly ahead lies Mozambique, its boundary with South Africa incised into the land by the greatest river of them all. Known as the Lusutfu River in Swaziland, the Great Usuthu (Usutu) River in South Africa, and the Rio Maputo in Mozambique, this majestic waterway merges with the Pongola River at the far northeastern corner of the Ndumo Game Reserve, whereupon it flows resolutely north across the Mozambican coastal plains toward its destination in the Indian Ocean.

Some of the earliest records of the region can be traced to the writings of Portuguese sailors in the 1500s, whose designation, *Terra dos Fumo* (Land of Smoke), was taken from the palls of smoke that hovered above the hot savannah plains, generated by slash-and-burn cultivation (Matthews 2005, 11). In the 1800s, British sailors referred to the stretch between the Lebombo Mountains and the Indian Ocean as "Mapoota land," so called after the "Mabudu" (known also as the Mabudu-Tembe or Tonga) who had inhab-

ited the region for centuries. In 1897, the area fell to the British Crown under the appellation (Ama)Tongaland (occasionally, British Maputaland or the Trans-Pongola Territories), and in the 1970s, while under the jurisdiction of the KwaZulu "Homeland" Government of South Africa, it came to be known as Maputaland.

The official Automobile Association map describes the road to Ndumo[1] as a "transit route," yet in reality it appears to lead to nowhere. Its departure from the main arterial road that leads to the official border crossing on the east coast is announced by an unremarkable steel sign, its once celebratory inscription long faded from years of searing summer sun and pocked by the bullets of drive-by drunks. Traversing the seventeen kilometers of sharp, shattering gravel corrugations to the town of Ndumo reveals a hot, exposed landscape that is shrouded in a shimmering, enigmatic silence. Yet all along, there are signs made from pieces of driftwood and reclaimed metals—"Jabulani Str.," "Gogo's Chicken Dust,"[2] "Exactly Bus Stop"—that attest to a vigorous existence behind the lime-washed veneer. Clusters of thatched and half-built brick houses are scattered across the hills, and freshly plowed fields announce recent activity. There is an occasional primary school, a brightly painted "spaza" shop made from a converted shipping container, a copse of "eco-toilets" signifying the former presence of a foreign NGO.

The town of Ndumo, once merely a trading store and labor recruitment depot, is now the economic hub of the western frontier. Its boundary is marked by a rudimentary gravel airstrip and face-brick clinic, whereupon life erupts suddenly into a loud display of buying and selling. There is a gas station, a SupaTrade Spar grocery store, a furniture franchise, and a smattering of Asian-run general dealers. Women occupy a fragile wood-shack market on the edge of the commercial zone where they preside over meticulously stacked fruit, vegetables, and a random assortment of safety pins, hand creams, whistles, and cassette tapes. In a central parking area, buses and minibus taxis hover briefly for their consignment of passengers, groaning under the weight of overloaded roof racks and raring to go. Neatly labeled and lapelled game rangers and military men pull in, announcing their official eminence in starched camouflage and gold-rimmed sunglasses. And every now and then, amid the dust and disarray, a state-of-the-art 4x4 drops by, its cargo of mainly foreign tourists shielded from the turbulence by well-oiled shock absorbers, air conditioning, and the latest in safari gear. With last-minute supplies at hand, they proceed to the nearby gates of the Ndumo Game Reserve where they become instantly absorbed into a timeless, pristine world of nature; a place where black egrets, pygmy geese, and flocks of pelicans congregate in the cool of acacia-lined pans; of vast night skies,

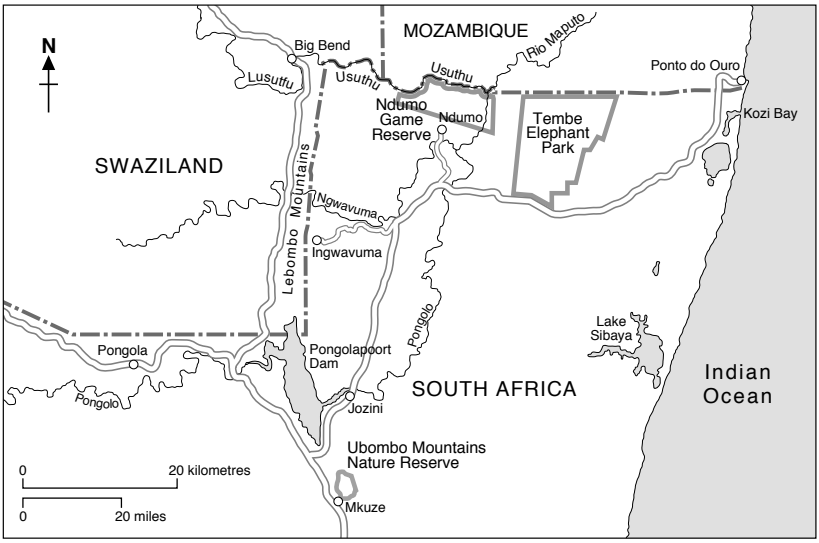


Figure 1.1. Map of the western Maputaland borderlands

flickering campfire stories, and the deep, ethereal call of the Pel's fishing owl. Commandeered by the mystique of the Nile crocodile, the hippopotamus, and the elusive Nyala antelope, they will have arrived at the place that marks the ultimate destination at the end of the road.

## Points of Entry: Far but Not So Far

The purpose of my initial visit to Ndumo in January 2002 had been a simple one. I had gone in search of women who played the mouth harp, an instrument that was introduced into the region by European hunters and traders in the mid-1800s and adopted by young women to accompany long-distance walking. Although it had once been widely played across the southern African region, I had heard the instrument only on old field recordings. For years I had asked people in the southern regions of KwaZulu Natal whether they knew of anyone who still played it and their answers had been curiously the same: "Up there," they would point northward, "beyond the Pongola River, near Mozambique. That is where you will find women who know these things."

For most, "up there"—Maputaland—was located both literally and figuratively on the other side of the mountains, a place known for its magnificent trees, its potent medicinal plants, and its authoritative traditional

healers. It was described as not quite South Africa nor yet Mozambique; this side still of *eSwazini* (the place of the Swazi people), but well beyond the geopolitical sphere of the Zulu.

"Up there," they would advise, "is far but not so far."[3]

On the day that I arrived in western Maputaland, it happened to be pension day in the region. This I learned from the game wardens stationed at the Ndumo Environmental Education and Information Center, a dishevelled collection of prefabricated buildings located near the entrance of the Ndumo Game Reserve. Bemused by my musical quest, they had encouraged me to proceed directly to a ward in the extreme west known as Usuthu Gorge, where hundreds of elderly people would be gathering to receive their monthly government grants. If there is anyone who still remembers this little instrument, they suggested, you will find them there.

So I set off at once, accompanied by a young volunteer from the conservation center and stopping en route to pick up a local hitchhiker who was similarly destined for the pension assembly point. Unlike my quiet-spoken khaki-clad companion, our new passenger had assumed the flashy affectations of the city, his fake designer sunglasses and dashing yellow vest standing proud against the hot, dry savannah landscape. Hearing of my musical interests, he proceeded to make loud pronouncements about the area and its people: "This is a good place!" he pontificated. "It's not like town! Here, there are no f*** criminals! Life is life!" As he persisted, waving vigorously and pointing, I caught a glimpse of a large handgun tucked into the top of his trousers and silently froze.

This is the way with southeast African edgelands, I was to discover, which harbor a multitude of stories about gun running, car smuggling, and other forms of illicit business. However, while the voluminous literature on Zulu political history has long nourished the global imagination with its kings, spears, and military conquests, there had been little way to prepare for the seemingly unspectacular realities of western Maputaland. On the contrary, its public notoriety rests exclusively on its reputation as a remote wilderness, valued in ecological terms as a transitional zone between East and southern African floral kingdoms.[4] Renowned for its two protected areas—Ndumo Game Reserve and its more recent neighbor, Tembe Elephant Park[5]—its vast range of endemic species and inland water systems have earned it an array of high-profile accolades. It is acclaimed as a biodiversity "hotspot" of high conservation priority; it ranks as a "first order" site of global botanical significance and is officially accredited on the prestigious list of Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance (Naguran 2002). Yet while the borderland is celebrated for its unique ecological assets, the border

people, with their mixed heritage and fractured histories, seem to have all but fallen off the edge of public knowledge.[6]

Our journey came to an end in a clearing in front of the newly built Mpolimpolini High School where a large crowd was assembled around a cluster of heavily armored government vehicles. Most people were gray and wizened, some so bent and feeble that they had been carted by relatives over the rocky mountain paths in improvised wheelbarrows. Bustling around them were swarms of traders and hangers-on, attracted, so it seemed, by the smell of fresh cash and the chance to socialize. Mozambican women had crossed the Usuthu River to sell cheap Chinese clothes acquired from the border town of Catuane or further afield in Maputo. Rusted pickup trucks had braved the shattering roads laden high with tomatoes, cabbages, and oranges fresh from the southern market towns of Pongola and Empangeni. A recently slaughtered cow had been hung up for sale in the branches of a gnarled acacia tree, its fly-infested flesh cut neatly into long slabs and manageable portions. And sitting silently amidst the action was a group of *izangoma* (healers), dressed in customary red, white, and black *amahiya* (cloth), hair greased thick with red ochre; roots, wild herbs, and vital knowledge at the ready.

As I began to wander through the crowd, I was summoned by a large woman trader who was presiding over an upturned cardboard box stacked high with bags of dried beans and candles.

"What is your surname [*isibongo*]?" she shouted brusquely, using the customary Nguni greeting that sets out to establish geographic origin by association with a family (clan) name.

"Impey," I replied obligingly, and knowing that this would not mean much to her, attempted an affable point of clarification: "you could say that it is something like the Zulu or Swazi word *impi* [warrior]."

Mystified, she tried again: "What is your [first] name [*igama*]?"

"Angela," I said, "sometimes people call me *ingelosi* [angel]," fumbling to explain that the designation was derived from word association rather than any such personal attribute.

Indifferent, she soldiered on: "Where are you from?"

"*eThekwini* [Durban]," I offered, "I'm looking for people who know these instruments," and I showed her the box of mouth harps that I had brought with me: "I think you call them *isitolotolo*, or perhaps you know them here as *isitweletwele*?"

She stared vacantly at my display of Austrian mouth harps in different colors and sizes, and with evidently nothing to say on the matter, simply turned away, intent on attracting the attention of a more worthwhile cus-

tomer. Deflated by my inability to solicit from her even the slightest curiosity in my spirited musical mission, and not wanting to jeopardize her rare opportunity to trade, I moved on.

My dejection was short-lived, thankfully, as my ensuing, more cautious enquiries began to produce a ripple of interest in the crowd.

"Haibo! These *izitweletwele*!" one woman exclaimed, peering at my collection of instruments as if encountering old friends after a protracted absence. "Hha! It's a long time since we played these things!" She rummaged through the box of mouth harps, pulling out one after the other and tentatively trying to play them. "Hha! The mouth is shaking!" she exclaimed, handing them back and looking at me with amazement.

Soon several women were testing the instruments.

"Hha! *Ndoda!* This one sings like a man!" complained one, exchanging a large model for one of a more familiar size.

"If you play *isitweletwele*, you can't sing!" remembered another, handing her instrument to the old woman standing beside her. Obligingly, and with shaking hands, she positioned the instrument on one side of her mouth, and when failing to produce more than a breathy murmur, tried it on the other. After several feeble attempts, she handed it back to her younger companion, murmuring sadly, "I can't play these days, my dear; it's a problem with teeth."

"It is such a long time since we last played," remarked another. "If our children saw us, they would say 'what is this?' These days the children only want *ama-disco*!"

I watched with fascination as the women began to tune into the sounds and feel of an instrument that they had evidently not played for a very long time. Some experimented with short, stop-start phrases, systematically working their way through each instrument until they settled on a model that seemed to resonate best with their bodies. I was intrigued by how exacting their musical memories appeared to be, and how decisive they were about the size and make of the instruments they had last played so long ago. I noticed too that they immediately began to distinguish between the sounds of the different instruments: "This one is not clear," declared one, using the phrase *awacacanga*, which would more appropriately describe tuning into the radio, hinting at the mediating influence of technology on cultural perceptions of sounds, listening, and performance in the region.[7] Some simply offered the colloquial "Hha!" to announce both deep satisfaction and extreme objection.

When the feeling of an instrument settled, I noticed that the kinetic memory of the player was suddenly unleashed. Like a bird taking flight after

too long on the ground, she seemed to stumble, hesitate, and then very naturally take to the air. A particularly good rendition of a melody elicited loud exclamations from the women who had congregated to listen. And when the song came to an end, they hung onto one another, weak with laughter and a collective sense of amazement. In no time, the sounds seemed to lift the group of old women, who were huddled close together in their *amahiya* (cloth) and faded pinafore dresses, and drop them into another time and place altogether.[8]

"This instrument reminds me of my sister!" one shouted; "we used to walk across the floodplains at Banzi Pan to visit our relatives in Mozambique. All the way we would play these *izitweletwele*!"

"It's true!" said another, "these songs remind me of when I was young. I would feel that I was a girl! Life was good then. We would walk a long way with *ukhamba* [clay water pot]. We would walk from here to is'Khomelela with no pain in our backs."

"It reminds me of when I used to be together with my friends," yet another interjected. "I feel that I want to laugh! But it also reminds me of those who have passed away. While they have gone, this instrument is still here!"

"It reminds me of those days when I was young before I accepted Ngwenya [husband]," offered a woman called maMkhize, "Hha! Wearing *amafaskama* (colored hair combs)! Once there was a man from the Mlambo family. He called to me, 'Hey Mnakeni, where is that *wiggie* [wig] that you came with when you came to this place?' It was destroyed by *ukhamba!* It was still those days when we would fetch water from the Usuthu River!"

"We grew up with our mothers playing these things," explained a woman called Makapazane. "They were there before we were born. When we bought them, they were only a tickey [half-cent], and bread was also a half-cent. We bought them at KwaMatata [trading store in Swaziland] and from Ndumo. We used to go to the other side [pointing to Mozambique] and we learned songs from there. We also learned from those people visiting here."

"That's how it was," agreed old Makete; "we were taught by those who knew how to play. They would say, don't do this; play it like this! After some time, you would be able to make your own songs. If you weren't able to make your own, you could play any song that you liked. You would hear a song at Opondweni and come back to your people and play it. That is how it was."

"We grew up playing them," reiterated another. "The old ladies [grandmothers] used to play them. That's how we learned. We would run playing them. We would run and dance at the same time."

In the midst of all the activity, the bean and candle trader appeared in

the crowd, her morning's takings stuffed into a black plastic money belt and fastened tightly around her considerable waist. Looking unexpectedly agitated, she pushed her way through the group of old women and tugged determinedly at my clothes. "There is one thing that concerns me," she shouted through the twanging and chatter. "Why is it that you have chosen to do something so complicated?" And as I looked around me, attempting to summon a response to her somewhat bewildering question, I noticed that all the women were pointing and remembering.

## Mapping a Research Direction

Ethnography often thrives on the unexpected; on ironies, coincidences, and incompleteness of action; on the substance or residue of everyday life. What set out as a simple organological adventure in western Maputaland rapidly metamorphosed into a more "complicated" journey, enticed by the intensity of the women's narratives, gestures, and musical rediscoveries during that first encounter. Several issues surfaced in their pronouncements about the songs and their traces in the landscape that begged further investigation. Most striking were the women's reactions to seeing and touching the mouth harp (*isitweletwele*) after an absence of many decades and their instant discernment regarding the size and shape of the model they used to perform. When they played the instrument, it was with an immediate and intimate sense of bodily knowing. Notable too was the way that the object at once stimulated a flood of memories about people, relationships, and experiences, each pegged to precise places and to specific movements across the landscape. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the mouth harp in western Maputaland is linked to a long history of precolonial global trade and colonial economic expansion, as well as to gendered socialities and spatial practices. Although it was absorbed into a preexisting performance practice, as a walking instrument it also exposed women to new localities and experiences and to certain configurations of modernity and social change. While interested to learn more about its musical mediations, I was fascinated by the instrument's efficacy as an object of memory—an "actant," as Bruno Latour (1987) might suggest—signaling its significance as the materialization of a particular world of connections, meanings, and contexts (Gell 1998; Appadurai 1986; Knorr Cetina 1997).

A second issue related to the mnemonic properties of the sound of the *isitweletwele* made evident by how exacting the women were about the desired pitch and sonority of the instrument, which they had last played so long ago. Instruments were immediately discarded when they didn't sound

just right. And when, from amid the swirling cacophony of experimentations, one woman began to play a particularly powerful melody, the others immediately stopped to listen, their appreciation expressed in whoops and interjections and elaborated in the animated conversation that ensued, spurred by the myriad associations they seemed to make between the sound and people and events of their past.

In addition to its "material vitalism" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) and sound evocations, the *isitweletwele* had mnemonic properties that suggested the sounding body and bodily sensation in motion. As will be elaborated in the following chapter, in western Maputaland the *isitweletwele* was utilized to accompany walking—hence the denotation *amaculo manihamba* (songs we sing when we walk)—and the production of sound, though seemingly concentrated in the mouth, necessarily implicated the entire body in the creation, control, and amplification of sound. The body was equally engaged in sustaining the rhythmic impetus of the music, which was produced in synchrony with the movement of legs, feet, and torso. Equally, while a song was experienced in the individual body, in so far as walking was rhythmically resonant with the movements of other young women who participated in these musical journeys, its performance was an intensely shared social activity.

Ingold and Vergunst's (2008) study on the phenomenology of walking offers further consideration to an understanding of mobility as aesthetic practice by drawing attention to the ways that walking invokes perceptual sensitivities and narrates places of belonging.[9] They argue that walking, framed as "embodied social action," transforms places from fixed physical and cultural sites into dynamically experienced "entangling intersections of multiple trajectories of movement" (2008, 172). As Ingold (2004) notes elsewhere, to know place as landscape is to move through and with it in such a way that knowledge is built up along lines of movement, so that walking becomes itself a form of "circumambulatory knowing" (331). Synchronized walking, as in religious pilgrimage, binds people together in the immediacy of pace, rhythm, and place and keeps alive—at least momentarily—the actions of past generations who have traveled the same paths (Lund 2008, 2012). I was interested in how a study of walking songs in western Maputaland and their association with regular courses of spatial and temporal intersection might offer insight into an embodied and sociable "dwelling-in-motion" (Sheller and Urry 2006; Edensor 2010), and how this in turn might elucidate changing landscape experiences over time.

Certeau's (1984) conception of walking as "pedestrian enunciation" adds a political dimension to Ingold and Vergunst's phenomenal theories,

suggesting that as an agentive, rhetorical form of place making, walking "affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects . . . the trajectories it 'speaks'" (99). As I was to discover, walking songs in western Maputaland served as a mechanism by which women negotiated and rearticulated spatial activities in their everyday lives. As apartheid legislation imposed progressively tighter restrictions on their movements and actions, so walking songs offered poetic pathways toward a more bearable citizenship. Through analysis of these songs, we see a genre shift from a seemingly frivolous, youthful pastime to a multifaceted milieu of resistance. Their demise in the 1970s, and the (figurative and literal) silence that ensued, became a comparably audible gesture that carried significant political resonance.

Finally, whereas playing an instrument while walking may intensify affective social and political subjectivities, it also fosters an awareness of natural sounds and the acoustical attributes of the landscape. To date, most ethnomusicological studies on human-environmental interactions feature dense rainforests, where human survival is based on acute levels of acoustic adaptation (Seeger 1987; Feld 1984; 1994; Roseman 1993). The open savannah grasslands of western Maputaland constitute an entirely different sonic environment, offering fewer reflective surfaces, and higher frequencies, such as those emitted by the *isitweletwele*, cannot travel far.[10] I was interested to learn how the acoustic ecology has shaped cultural conceptions of the instrument and determined its social function. Such a notion draws on Steven Feld's (1996; 2004) concept of acoustemology (acoustic epistemology), which contends that sound combined with an awareness of sonic presence constitutes a powerful force in shaping how people interact with, interpret, and remember place (see also Impey 2006; 2007; 2013).

## Situating the Study in Scholarship and Praxis

Sound has not been as well developed as the other sensory geographies, yet it evokes memories with an intensity, power, and simplicity that are unmatched by any other social activity (Stokes 1994, 7; Sterne 2012). Its enveloping character makes us especially aware of feelings, proximities, and connections, and its affective "presencing" reintegrates us with an embodied and situated past. The sensation of sound not only stimulates emotions; it also stimulates connections with others who feel (Stokes 1994, 7). The rhythmic, tonal, and "tactile" qualities of sound enable personal and social things to happen (Ansdell 2004; DeNora 1999; M. Duffy and Waitt 2013). When it sustains a feeling of "being in the groove together" (Keil and Feld 1994), sound constructs or reinforces senses of community and belonging.

Despite its ephemeral, intangible quality, and the fact that it is by its very nature transitory and unique, music provides a particularly rich and complex locus of enquiry. As argued by Kaufman Shelemay (2006), "its encoding process is almost inevitably multiple and elaborative, setting into motion connections that cross many different sensory modalities and enter other aspects of experience" (26).

Given the above, it occurred to me that women's multisensory memories, as evoked by *isitweletwele* walking songs, offered a particularly creative entry point for an enquiry into how the western Maputaland borderlands have been constructed over the past century, how gendered identities have been negotiated, and how these processes have interrelated in the making of place. The book therefore builds on walking songs (*amaculo manihamba*) as the prompts, points, and embellishments—the narrative "backbone" and "backstory"—of a historical reconstruction of this little-known trilateral frontier.

From the political perspective, there were numerous reasons why a historical ethnography of western Maputaland seemed appropriate at the time. At the end of apartheid, less than 1 percent of the country's population controlled some 86 percent of all land in South Africa (Stickler 2002). One of the government's priorities in 1994 under the presidency of Nelson Mandela was to institute a legislative framework to support the return of land, or to provide compensation to victims who had lost land owing to racially discriminatory laws or practices (ibid.). When I first visited western Maputaland in 2002, the Restitution of Land Rights Act ("Restitution Act") had been in operation for less than a decade. Many of the restitution claims that had been filed to the Land Claims Commission related to land lost to environmental conservation, amongst which was a claim lodged by the "Usuthu Community" for the return of rights to the Ndumo Game Reserve. In 2000, following several years of negotiations that drew on material evidence to establish prior domicile, the claim was successful.[11] However, the policy of the South African National Parks at the time opposed the resettlement of conservation land, so while rights to the Ndumo Game Reserve were returned to the affected families, they were not able to physically resettle in it, or derive livelihoods directly from it. Rather, in addition to accepting financial compensation, the community was to receive indirect benefits from the reserve through the development of strategic private-public ventures based on nature-based tourism and related commercial enterprises (Meer 2010; Meer and Schurr 2013; Walker 2008).

However, there were critical lessons to be learned from successful land claims elsewhere in the country, many of which had already revealed that

while the rhetoric of restitution resonated with similar assurances of economic development, claimants were often only peripherally involved in decision-making where collective management of commercial enterprises was concerned (Stickler 2002, 4). Equally, economic partnerships with private sector actors invariably produced new problems within claimant communities themselves, because of the unequal flow of benefits—to women in particular—and because they seldom generated the level of benefits expected (ibid.).

A second, related land issue pertained to the radical reconfiguration of southern African borderlands by the development of Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs). Transnational protected area cooperation had been established in other parts of the world for several decades already, and by 1988, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas had identified at least seventy such regions straddling the frontiers of sixty-five countries worldwide (Thorsell 1990).[12] TFCAs were launched in southern Africa in 1997 under the direction of the Peace Parks Foundation in partnership with governments, multinational companies, and international donor agencies.[13] Their aim was to shift the management of conservation from provincial and national authorities into multistate ecosystem governance regimes (R. Duffy 2006, 90). Through the adoption of a "community-based natural resource management" (CBNRM) agenda, their objective was to support both biodiversity preservation and rural economic development by way of a variety of nature-based activities (B. Jones 2004).[14] Through economies of scale, TFCAs aimed to become self-sustaining units, generating revenue for both the state and conservation agencies, while also supporting local communities living within them and in their vicinity (R. Duffy 2006, 96).

The Usuthu-Tembe-Futi Transfrontier Conservation Area was in the early planning stages when I commenced research in western Maputaland, and the economic benefits it proposed were without doubt the most compelling development prospects ever made to the people of this otherwise forgotten region. However, as with the land claim agreement, at the point at which the TFCA was being negotiated in western Maputaland, other, more established TFCAs in southern Africa had already come under severe criticism. For one, it had become evident that while TFCAs promoted the rhetoric of community empowerment through economic growth, their real incentive was international investment, subjecting all values accorded to nature to the imperatives of profit (Cock 2011; Wolmer 2003a; Brosius, Tsing, and Zerner 2005; Van Amerom and Büscher 2005). An additional concern was the discrepancy between their proposed adoption of "community-based

natural resource management" (CBNRM)—which had proven problematic elsewhere in southern Africa—and their actual management by INGOs and NGOs. Finally, warnings were issued about the vulnerabilities associated with their exclusive reliance on tourism (R. Duffy 2006; Brockington and Duffy 2011a; 2011b) and their location in border regions, rendering them particularly insecure and unpredictable spaces.

At the point at which the western Maputaland communities were being introduced to this "win-win" development scenario, therefore, the injustices and precarity of these massive ecoregions had already become evident elsewhere (Büscher 2010; 2013).

It was against this unsettled scenario that I set out to conduct a historical ethnography of western Maputaland, using multisensory memories and their resonance in walking songs as the basis for the mapping of intimate, everyday recollections of place. My motivation was to engage with post-apartheid rights-based notions of democracy as it pertained to land and conservation, and to explore the consequences of introducing into the overwhelmingly technocratic discourse other ways of seeing, hearing, and experiencing landscape. Given that the various parties engaged in land-based development in western Maputaland were already in consultation with community gatekeepers—chiefs, ward leaders, and male heads of households—I decided to focus exclusively on the needs, capacities, and aspirations of women, whose voices were barely audible in the public dialogue about land-based economic development. While it may be plausible to fault this work for its lack of consideration of the experiences of the men who infringe on the world of women, my aim is to redress the longstanding concern, as advanced by Ortner (1984) amongst others, that much scholarship on African women's lives has been constructed from a "typifying" male point of view (Gengenbach 2000, 526). Additionally, southern Africanist scholars have generally overlooked the role played by rural women in the production of historical information (ibid.; Hofmeyr 1993), an absence that is all the more exigent given the intellectual "mnemonic unmooring" that has occurred in rural communities as a result of forced displacement (Gengenbach 2000, 526). This focus on an exclusively female perspective follows in the wake of several distinguished feminist (or feminist-inspired) historical ethnographies of African women. Notable amongst them are Jan Bender Shetler's (2015) *Gendering Ethnicity in African Women's Lives* and Heidi Gengenbach's (2006) *Binding Memories: Women as Makers and Tellers of History in Magude, Mozambique,* which vividly reflects

how women inscribe memories in such activities as pot making, naming, tattooing, and life storytelling.

More broadly, my research aimed to contribute to expanding disciplinary horizons in post-apartheid/postcolonial southern Africa at a moment when "geographies of protest" were beginning to engage with applied development concerns more broadly (Rogerson and McCarthy 1992). It aimed to insert a cultural perspective into discourses about landscapes and belonging in geography and environmental history, and into their emerging commitment to the recovery of the hidden spaces occupied by the subaltern underclass (Blunt and McEwan 2003; Oelofse and Scott 2002; Rossouw and Wiseman 2004). In so doing, it has aimed to build on the rich tradition of South African social history and public memory studies, which had for some time already condemned the "banality" (Guy 1998) of the apartheid grand narrative in support of everyday histories in the practice of social and political reconstitution (Baines 1998; Nuttall and Coetzee 1998; MacEwan 2003; Stolten 2007). Much of the work generated by this movement focused on migrancy and the built environment, however, and there remained much to be done to better understand transitional dynamics within remote rural regions. In addressing this concern, I was fortunate to be able to draw on a small but meticulous body of research from the southern Mozambique-Swaziland-Maputaland triangle through the work of Patrick Harries (1987b; 1988; 1994), Ilana van Wyk (2003a; 2003b), Roelie Kloppers (2003; 2005; 2006), Jennifer Jones (2005; 2006), JoAnn McGregor (1998; 1994), and Heidi Gengenbach (2000; 1998), much of it sensitive to, if not exclusively focused on, gender and postindependence land tenure arrangements. Consistent with the burgeoning scholarship on African borderlands elsewhere (Nugent and Asiwaju 1996a; 1996b; Zeller 2013),[15] much of this work resists the framing of borderland dwellers by ethnicity or nationality, but builds an understanding of lives and identities through the more fluid conceptualization of intercommunicating and dynamically interacting groups of people.

I come to this project with an active commitment to environmental justice and to the incorporation of environmental issues in the broader debate about human rights and democratic accountability (Schlosberg 2013; Schlosberg and Carruthers 2010). As suggested by David McDonald (2004, 4), environmental justice encompasses a broad definition of "environment" and places people at the center of the intersection between social, economic, political, and environmental relationships. As elaborated in the mission statement of the South African Environmental Justice Networking Forum:

> Environmental justice is about social transformation directed towards meeting basic human needs and enhancing our quality of life—economic quality, health care, housing, human rights, environmental protection, and democracy. In linking environmental and social justice issues the environmental justice approach seeks to challenge the abuse of power which results in poor people having to suffer the effects of environmental damage caused by the greed of others. . . . In recognizing that environmental damage has the greatest impact upon poor people, EJNF seeks to ensure the right of those most affected to participate at all levels of environmental decision-making. (EJNF newsletter 1997, qtd. McDonald 2004, 4)[16]

All of these concerns find a home in the inherently interdisciplinary domains of ethnomusicology and performance studies, whose focus on sound, orality, and embodiment delivers unique insights. Of relevance to this research is their emphasis on the place of the senses in the formation of subjectivities and on acoustical and place-based memorialization more specifically (Feld 1984; Stokes 1994; Leyshon, Matless, and Revill 1998; L. Meintjes 2003; Bull and Back 2003; Erlmann 2005; Hirschkind 2009; Sterne 2012). Equally relevant is emerging critical enquiry on the role of listening and silence in the reconstruction of individual experiences and social histories (Ochoa Gautier 2014; Glenn 2004; Glenn and Ratcliffe 2011).

As an ethnomusicologist, I have long been interested in how I might exert practical influence on public policy in my capacity as an ethnographer. However, the greatest challenge in developing "engaged" research across sectors has been how to build "credible" evidence based on communication modalities that are widely regarded as oblique outside of ethnomusicology or performance studies. For most, the fragmentary nature of songs, their apparent imprecision in relation to time and locality, and their foundation in performance make them appear unreliable data. The assumption is equally made that their use of rhetorical idiosyncrasies renders them intelligible only to those within their immediate social milieu. Information gleaned from songs is therefore considered too abstruse to feed policy, particularly by those for whom "evidential" knowledge is only that which can yield quantifiable data. On the contrary, as historian Patrick Harries (1987a) posits, "songs present a localized and subjective view of events and do not adhere to the irreplaceable concrete reality of history. Their richness and strength lie in the perception of the past that is not dominated by the oral history of the dominant lineage or the written history of the literate" (129). Songs allow the historian to "go beneath" actions and events of the past and to acquire

an understanding of the intellectual and emotional constructs that generate change (ibid.; Vaughan 1985). An equally relevant rejoinder is that songs justify claims to rights in ways that may not otherwise be openly articulated, and while reflecting on the past, they often ruminate on imaginaries of the future. Dwight Conquergood's (2002) critique of scriptocentricism adds to this assertion:

> What gets squeezed out by this epistemic violence is the whole realm of complex, finely nuanced meaning that is embodied, tacit, intoned, gestured, improvised, coexperienced, covert—and all the more deeply meaningful because of its refusal to be spelled out. Dominant epistemologies that link knowing with seeing are not attuned to meanings that are masked, camouflaged, indirect, embedded, or hidden in context. (146)

As gender and development studies scholar Cecile Jackson (2012) aptly points out, the tendency of her own community of practice is to proceed from expectations of speech, building evidence on *what* people say rather than *how* they say it. She argues that while development researchers and practitioners may judge speech-based participation as indicative of progressive change—investing in speech as stable or "proper" knowledge—their work by its very nature is aimed at groups who lack access to a public voice. As with Jackson and Conquergood, this study appeals for greater consideration of the range of communication modalities that people invoke to articulate and defend their interests, and challenges the marginality of culture by those sectors where development policy is generated, circulated, and put into action (Gould and Marsh 2004; Radcliffe 2006; Crewe and Harrison 1998).

## A Note on Methodology

It was immediately apparent that there were several exceptional musicians amongst the women who gathered to play the *isitweletwele* on pension day. When I asked if we might get together the next day to talk more about their walking songs, I was instructed to meet two different groups. In the morning, I was to meet with a group near the pension gathering point in Usuthu Gorge; a second party would wait for me in the afternoon in Eziphosheni, a neighboring ward located on the southern perimeter of the Ndumo Game Reserve. Though separated by a mere five miles—a negligible distance in geographic terms—the groups considered themselves linguistically, culturally, and economically quite distinct, a disparity I was later to learn was a

consequence of their respective proximity to the different state borders, to historical trade routes, and to current arterial roads, schools, and commercial opportunities.

Coincidentally, both groups comprised ten women, each consisting of co-wives, sisters-in-law, and lifelong friends. Despite their apparent differences, the women all seemed to identify themselves and their home localities in relation to the Ndumo Game Reserve. As the women ranged in age from approximately fifty-five to eighty years,[17] most either had been removed from the reserve with their families as young children in the early 1960s, or had relatives who had been forcibly evicted. Owing to the loss of land and access to natural resources, their husbands had all had to seek work elsewhere at one time or another, forcing them to assume responsibility for their families in their capacity as farmers and collectors of edible foods. Most of the women were illiterate and had never traveled anywhere except to the towns and trading stores that were within reasonable walking distance of their homes. Most participated only marginally in a cash economy and relied heavily on government grants and pensions to support their basic survival needs.

Our gatherings were as animated that day as they had been the day before, and when I inquired whether the women might be interested in engaging in more sustained research to record their songs and map their histories, they all agreed to the prospect. They had certain conditions for ongoing research, however. First, they wanted to work in groups rather than as individuals; second, they wanted the membership to remain exclusively female. If we allow men to join our discussions, they insisted, we will not be able to talk freely. We want this to be a place where we can tell our stories and sing songs that belong to women.

At first, our modus operandi was to gather under a designated tree away from their homesteads and from the distractions of children and relatives. Our meetings were loose and convivial, our discussions about song lyrics and melodies often serving as a trigger for deliberations about courting rituals and marriage systems, farming practices, seeds, soils, growing seasons, and medicinal plants, i.e., the substance of their daily preoccupations. The women referred to our gatherings as "workshops," as this is what their menfolk engaged in when they worked with the various environmental NGOs in the region. Although I would rather have compensated the women with various forms of practical assistance—e.g., literacy training, facilitating agricultural support, producing and distributing their music—their immediate need for cash to pay for children's school fees and domestic staples by far outweighed these benefits at the time. As engaging in research meant

spending time away from productive work as farmers, it seemed right to reimburse the women in comparable financial terms. Given that my aim was to develop research that was collaborative, responsive (as opposed to "extractive"), and based on listening, I tried in every possible way to downplay any ascription of power that may result from financial remuneration, deferring constantly to the women's interests and directions on how our work should proceed. Conveniently, however, the designation of "workshop" allowed me to frame remuneration according to time rather than the exchange of information and helped to maintain an equitable arrangement for all twenty women involved.

Being able to meet the women regularly meant that I was soon able to view them not as victims of social or economic forces but as individuals who created their own lives despite the constraints imposed on them by various patriarchal forms of authority. Their vitality refuted common representations of rural southern African women as permanently colonized. On the contrary, they were animated and often determined individuals, and each woman unquestionably viewed herself as a decision-making individual, reponsible for her own strategies of survival. While their work was not entirely independent of husbands or male relatives, the women were pragmatic, resourceful, and built on whatever opportunities came their way. Their creativity was particularly admirable when it came to money, and despite their apparent lack of literacy and numeracy, they seemed undaunted by the challenge of having to simultaneously navigate three discrete national currencies. As Celiwe announced defiantly one day: "I may not be able to write, but I have no problem with money! Even a blind man sees money!"

The women were skilled linguists and negotiated their identities and relationships across four languages with ease (see chapter 4). The proximity of the Usuthu Gorge group to Swaziland revealed a greater inclination toward the use of Swazi, while the more easterly Eziphosheni group relied more on a combination of Zulu, Thonga, and Shangane (Tsonga). As I was not competent in all four languages, I sought the assistance of Mduduzi Mcambi, an interpreter and documentary photographer with whom I had worked for many years on a research project in a more southerly district of the province. Through our years of collaboration, I had come to trust Mduduzi's skills, insights, and sensitivities completely. Despite being a Zulu speaker, he quickly learned to follow the women's variable use of language and to decipher their distinct accents. When they disappeared too deep into Thonga or Shangane (Tsonga)—languages most distinct from his native Zulu—he

would laugh and declare, "Hey! I don't know these words!," but he almost always managed to ask his way around the women's communications and reach an adequate level of understanding. When, on occasion, the linguistic idiosyncrasies became too abstruse, we sought the assistance of high school graduates in the area for more precise translations.

Given the women's appeal for gender exclusivity, my decision to include Mduduzi in the research process was not without considerable consultation. Far from impeding the process, as a younger man and an outsider to their communities he became a distinct asset and was rapidly accepted into their ranks. While always deeply respectful, he often teased the women and flirted outrageously with the oldest amongst them. Old Makete from Usuthu Gorge soon declared him her *isoka* (loverboy) and demanded that he bring her gifts of sweets and shoes when he returned after a long absence. Their imaginary impending marriage was the source of much hilarity amongst us, often lifting our spirits when energy levels were low or usefully summoned to deflect difficult or emotionally charged discussions.

Mduduzi also had an admirable ability to render himself "invisible" when photographing and filming our proceedings, which was a method of documentation that we both used extensively over the years. Having worked as a documentary photographer for some time, he had become skilled in the art of deflecting the "technological gaze" by always using the optical screen of the video camera rather than the viewfinder so as not to obstruct the direct line of communication, and by reviewing the footage with the women at the end of the day in order to encourage reflexive participation. The laborious task of transcribing all recorded materials—undertaken either with Mduduzi or with the linguistics scholars at the University of KwaZulu Natal—provided the material from which I have attempted to reproduce a narrative intimacy in this book.

Our meetings focused on remembering social and spatial histories through instrumental playing and followed an organic process where narratives evoked songs, and songs prompted further memories. Sometimes the women brought objects to our meetings to illustrate the stories they wanted to share—old money that they had inherited from parents, a doll that they had kept since childhood, their dreaded "pass books" (*dompas*) that summarized their personal histories of apartheid control (see chapter 5). As with the *isitweletwele*, objects of this nature offered a particularly creative strategy for the recovery of memories, giving weight to Radley's (1990) suggestion that "[r]emembering is something which occurs in a world of things, as well as words, and . . . artefacts play a central role in the memories of cultures

Figure 1.2. Makete Nkomonde demonstrating *ingadla* dance to Mduduzi Mcambi, Usuthu Gorge 2008 (photo by author)

and individuals. . . . Artefacts survive in ways unintended by makers and owners to become evidence on which other interpretations of the past can be reconstructed" (57–58).

In addition to storytelling, Climo and Cattell's (2002) maxim that "social memory as song achieves meaning through a process of enactment and becoming real in the bodies of individuals" (20) rang especially true in our work together, and manifest most powerfully when our discussions morphed into singing and dancing. Often a spontaneous demonstration extended into several hours of "reenactments," in which songs and long-forgotten choreographies were summoned from the past, bringing with them much youthful energy and great merriment.

In the next chapter, I will describe how *amaculo manihamba* comprise melodic and rhythmic fragments of wider stories, their objective being to capture moments in time and space and to "endow them with aesthetic yeastiness" (Scheub 2002, 3). I will also discuss how memories of songs operate on multiple levels and in many dimensions, constantly circling back on themselves as interpretive frames through which past events become re-

assembled and rearticulated in the present. As is the case with most oral history or memory work, experiences in the women's pasts emerged as arbitrary and fragmentary details. Memories of songs equally unfolded in scattered assemblages, and it took several years before I was able to weave them into a coherent framework. The final ordering of these details and events was aided by the construction of cultural maps, which facilitated the collation of many years of disjointed storytelling. As compositions were often historically indeterminate, mapping places and song routes situated these poetic fragments in a format that allowed us to cross-check details with relevant sites and related events in the region. As will become clear in chapter 8, the construction of cultural maps was possible once we had collected and collated an extensive repertoire of songs, which could be accomplished only over a period of several years of singing and remembering.

In time, we began to shift our "workshops" from the deep shade of our respectively allocated trees to the women's fields and areas of interest in their vicinity. We walked as an entire group and occasionally in pairs, tracing some of the routes and pathways that the women had taken as young girls while playing their instruments. Walking while playing produced a different kind of remembering (see chapter 3), and the mnemonics of the landscape expanded our discussions in a range of new ways. These excursions departed somewhat from Hildegard Westerkamp's (1989) portrayal of "soundwalking," which offers an embodied method of connecting with the soundscape through a process of focused listening. Rather, they resonated more with Viv Corringham's (2010) "shadow walks," in which walking and listening are used as activating modalities for memories about a range of other activities in one's life. As Keith H. Basso (1996) eloquently points out, places possess a marked capacity for triggering acts of self-reflection, inspiring thoughts about who one presently is, who one used to be, or what one might become:

> Place-based thoughts about the self led commonly to thoughts of other things—other places, other people, other times, whole networks of associations that ramify unaccountably within the expanding spheres of awareness that they themselves engender. The experience of sensing places, then, is thus both roundly reciprocal and incorrigibly dynamic. As places animate the ideas and feelings of persons who attend to them, these same ideas and feelings animate the places on which attention has been bestowed, and the movements of this process—inward toward facets of the self, outward toward aspects of the external world, alternately both together—cannot be known in advance.

> When places are actively sensed, the physical landscape becomes wedded to the landscape of the mind, to the roving imagination, and where the mind may lead is anybody's guess. (107)[18]

What became most evident at this stage of the research was the extent to which women's landscape memories differed according to the contexts of their telling. When the women were relaxed and playing their music under the trees, their reminiscences were personal, playful, full of rich though often mundane detail. However, when we walked and encountered landmarks that signified traumatic experiences, their memories became overwhelmed by a singular, monumental narrative of dispossession. Their world, at once scattered and individualized, was immediately distilled into a delineated rendering of "us versus them," "there versus here," "then versus now," "health versus disease," and "abundance versus hunger." These demarcations, bound temporally and spatially, pitted prosperity (inside the game reserve) against the violence of poverty (outside). Territorial boundaries of nation-states gave way to boundaries describing racial injustice and political impotence. The story was powerful, immediate, decisive, and the songs associated with it provided poignant reinforcement of the experience.

In time, I learned that these sites of memory—fences, graves, pans, and rivers—and the highly emotive stories that they invoked were not always points of reference for the women themselves. The dominance of the dispossession narrative and its affective immediacy lived on in the communities as a potent second-order memory (Winter 2008, 62; Till 2005),[19] functioning as a giant prism through which all other experiences were refracted. It is this story that directs the historical, political, and affective contours of this book and to which we will return in various forms and contexts throughout the ensuing pages.

## A Different Kind of Telling

It makes no difference where one goes in western Maputaland, or to whom one talks, the story always seems to be the same. It starts with food: lists of vegetables and fruit, wild and cultivated. Then follows the description of the vehicles that came without warning; the shouting and the threats, the indignity of being rounded up and discarded, and the shame of not being able to defend one's children and old people against the brutality of the state. The violence of expulsion from the Ndumo Game Reserve remains bloodied and inflamed in the collective memory of the people, and always it is recounted with the same visceral intensity as if it were yesterday:

There are many things that we remember from that place. There were trees called *umkhiwane* [sycamore fig], *umkuhlu* [Natal mahogany], and *umganu* [*Marula*/*Sclerocarya birrea*]. We would harvest the fruit and brew beer. When we returned from our fields, we would drink. And there were *amazibu* [water lilies]; we would harvest them inside the water and take them home for our mothers to cook. . . . The pans were full of fish. We would take our fish traps and use them to catch fish. At home we would cook them. That is what we found in that place.

At first they [parks authorities] came as if they were coming to fence the hippos in the big pans. They were going to fence the pans because people were destroying nature, but the animals were destroying our fields. After a while they didn't fence only the pans; they fenced the whole area. They started to say that we must not kill the birds. They made the herd boys graze the cattle outside the fences. The boys removed the cows while the families were still in the park, working their fields. We were not even allowed to kill a snake if it entered our houses. We were not allowed to touch the antelope. If they found you catching a cane rat, you would be arrested and taken to the police station in Ingwavuma. When you returned, they chased you from the park. All of those people who were arrested were chased away. After some time, the police came and burned down the houses of all the people who were still inside. If you were not home, all of your things were removed and your house was burned. When you came back from your fields, you would find your things in the yard and your home destroyed. And they would still be standing there! They told us that we had to collect our children and our possessions and leave. We didn't know where to go. They brought tractors and picked us up, put our things—our last chickens and goats—in the trailers and dumped us outside the fences. We were not warned and we had nowhere to go. The old people had to clear spaces under the trees to spread their sleeping mats. That is where we are now. The park was closed and no one was allowed to return. We left our food—our corn, our sweet potatoes, sugarcane, pawpaws, and mangoes. The food was left inside to be eaten by the wild pigs. We woke up one day and went to the fields. When we came back, we saw that they had arrived and burned our houses. We panicked. Then they went to the next homestead and they panicked too. (Shongani Sibiya, Usuthu Gorge, 26 August 2003)

In reality, the final removal of the families from the game reserve occurred more than half a century ago, so while this narrative may reflect early childhood experiences for some, for most it is an inherited memory. As yet deeply unresolved, this collective trauma accentuates the symbolic, emotional, and moral dimensions of women's memories, its details and temporality not

limited to the past but encompassing and defining their present. Through its telling and retelling, the scene, with its distinctive assemblage of images, tastes, voices, and affects, offers a readily available wound to be picked at and reinfected when nothing else seems to shift.

> I was still very young at that time. According to my father, when they came, they requested those places called Nyamithi and Banzi. They said that they would close the area so that the animals would not come out and eat our food. It was agreed that it would be well fenced. It went on until there was a meeting called at the police station with the chief. They told the chief that they were going to fence all the way to Nkonjane [Usuthu Gorge] at the place of Induna Nkomonde. The chief asked in front of the community where they would be moved to, and they said they would let us know. But the chief didn't agree to that. Then they said that the chief had signed. It was too late because he had already signed. So they brought tractors and we were taken to a place where there were no houses. The parents had to make shelters for the children. Everything was left behind and we had nothing. If they had at least provided us with houses when they removed us, it would have made us feel better. They didn't do it that way; they chased us as if they were sweeping rubbish out of the house. They didn't even recognize us as people. (Induna Ngwenya, Eziphosheni, 15 July 2004)

Giving consensus to a single narrative of dispossession keeps the traumatic memory alive, haunting the intimate recollections of individuals and dominating public discourses about the past. For most of the inhabitants of the western Maputaland region, the Ndumo Game Reserve remains a place of yearning, a fantasy that ties people emotionally and ideologically to one another through an image of a particular world. Yet as Rose (1996, 3) argues, fantasy is not antagonistic to social reality; it is its precondition.[20] As long as there is no resolution to the injustice of eviction, this "paradise lost" will remain a persistent mourner's lament that rallies the cry of the people.

Given that displacement from Ndumo Game Reserve occupies such a dominant place in the collective memory of the western Maputaland residents, it is not surprising that amongst the first *isitweletwele* songs that the women recalled when I began working with them were those that memorialized their experience of removal. One song in particular communicated the actual moment of eviction, its lyrics urgent yet deliberately stripped of detail, its insistent tempo and short, sharp melodic repetitions redolent of the panic experienced during that final flight:

*Balekani nonke!* (Run away, everyone!)
*Kukhona ukuzayo!* (Something is coming!)
*Gijimani nonke!* (Run away, everyone!)
*Kukhona ukuzayo!* (Something is coming!)

Though most of the women would have been too young to remember the details of the eviction, and despite the fact that their families' removal from the park had been gradual—precipitated by a relentless succession of petty persecutions by parks officials—collective memory has absorbed their expulsion into a distinct, harrowing exilic moment.

Performance cultivated in the women the capacity to forge connections and focused attention on details and intimate moments. The act of remembering old songs led to a process of creative renewal, stimulating the composition of new ones. Explaining her motivation for composing new songs, Mampolwane from Usuthu Gorge commented:

> These [old] songs describe what happened to us when our land was taken away from us. I only composed these [new] songs because I am playing *isitweletwele* again. When I play them, they make me remember my relatives inside the game reserve and bring back those feelings of anger.

While many of the new songs emphasized current anxieties about the loss of fields to conservation expansion and food insecurity, even more distinct perhaps was their recurrent motif of the reserve official, *umThanathana* (the one who speaks contemptuously and we shut our ears), whose image brought into focus multiple memories about their racially violent past:

*Silala singadlanga umThanathana*
(We sleep with empty stomachs because of umThanathana)

and

*Wathath'izwe lomkhulu umThanathana*
(umThanathana has taken the land of our forefathers)

and

*We umThanthana* (Hey, umThanathana)
*Nqaba n(e)hlathi* (You who denied us our fields)
*Sesolimaphi?* (Where will we cultivate now?)

## Narrative Strategy

This book is inspired by Conquergood's (2002) maxim that "it is the imaginative traffic between different ways of knowing that carries the most radical promise of new ways of seeing and understanding" (145). It examines the disparate histories of the western Maputaland borderlands, using intertextuality as a discursive strategy to explore how differently perceived and experienced geographical spaces have shaped contemporary land-use practices and conservation development schemes.

The book's focus on disparate and stratified ways of knowing lends itself to the cartographic analogy of remote versus intimate sensing (Porteous 1986), juxtaposing contrasting narrative registers—the one lived, sounded, enacted and affective; the other documented, reported, and inscribed—as a strategy to bring an inhabited and multisensory understanding to a politically dissonant landscape. Invoking a cartographic correlation that accentuates epistemological binaries runs the risk of perpetuating historical clichés and inadvertently promoting a Eurocentric, graphocentric point of view. On the contrary, my attempt has been to use maps and cartographic metaphors to generate new understandings of the fluidity and commonalities between positionalities as much as to represent their differences. Maps offer the opportunity to fix events in time and space as well as to track multiple experiences as they progress over time, linking physical sites with placemaking as ephemeral and performed. As Conquergood (2002) asserts:

> The performance studies project makes its most radical intervention, I believe, by embracing *both* written scholarship and creative work, papers and performances. We challenge the hegemony of the text best by reconfiguring texts and performances in horizontal, metonymic tension, not by replacing one hierarchy with another, the romance of performance for the authority of the text. (151)

These movements on the map are represented more broadly in the historical storyline of the book, which follows a broadly chronological pathway. Some chapters follow the trails set by others; some explore unfamiliar terrain, periodically stopping to assess epistemological directionality, and others dwell on what can be learned from spaces of intersection.

The book is divided into three parts. The first offers points of entry to the research, focusing on its theoretical and methodological trajectories (chapter One) and examining the performative underpinnings of the book

through a detailed analysis of the sonic, material, and spatial conventions of women's walking songs (*amaculo manihama*) and the mouth harp (*isitweletwele)* that accompanied them (chapter 2). While for the most part, "remote" narratives are reconstructed from secondary sources and are devoid of musical or performative embellishment, I have drawn extensively from personal memoirs, travelogues, photographs, and interviews in the attempt to insert a more visceral presence into this text. By contrast, intimate narratives are represented as discursive journeys and draw on the motif of *indlela*—pathways or "pedestrian enunciations" (Certeau 1984)—to explore women's landscape memories and experiences as impelled by the content and embellishments of their walking songs.

The second section unfolds as a series of paired chapters that loosely follow a chronological unfolding of historical moments in western Maputaland and their resonances in the southeast African region more generally. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the precolonial and colonial making of the borders and examine ways in which the current frontier between South Africa, Mozambique, and Swaziland has shaped women's cultural identities, socialities, and land-use practices. Chapters 5 and 6 comment on the development of a European settler economy in western Maputaland, and on how regional trade, labor recruitment, and commercial agriculture contributed toward the fashioning of a bounded, racialized, and legalized landscape, affecting, in myriad ways, women's spatialities, livelihood practices, and familial relations. Chapter 7 attends to the politics of environmental conservation and draws the various voices into immediate view of one another through an examination of the Ndumo Game Reserve. While the game reserve is an unambiguous political space, the chapter explores it as a site of impossible nostalgia, a place of yearning that is experienced equally powerfully by its differently situated actors.

The final section of the book (chapter 8 and postscript) considers the politics of representation. Responding to Cecile Jackson's (2012) and Ana María Ochoa Gautier's (2014) appeal for a more judicious listening perspective, it reflects on three kinds of "talk" as they pertain to land, gender, and conservation. The first charts women's walking songs as geopolitical testimony, granting authority to sound and bodily praxis in reconsidering the politics of a transnational landscape. The second considers the translation of silence and contemplates the boundaries of its agency within a development scenario that is increasingly regulated by global neoliberal policies and practices. The postscript concludes with a reflection on the place of the ethnomusicological voice within the noisy dialogue about land, gender, and

conservation in southern Africa, and questions the scope of our reach as cultural intermediaries and academic citizens within a context that is defined and vigorously defended by "sound" science and big money.

The book builds on the songs and landscape memories of twenty elderly women from the wards of Eziphosheni and Usuthu Gorge in western Maputaland. However, as some of the argument made about land appropriation and conservation expansion may be considered controversial, I have decided not to divulge a great deal about their individual identities, or that of their families. While I have attempted to honor their stories, and make as vivid as possible the humor, pathos, and spirit of their voices, I appreciate that my own remains dominant throughout. I am deeply cognizant that the narratives represented can never be more than provisional, and I draw solace from Mary Margaret Steedly's (1993) ruminations on the irreconcilability of historical translation, which offers an aptly poetic summation of the challenges intrinsic to my endeavor:

> Memory is never private property and experience is never a simple matter in this over inhabited terrain; voices are always multiple, fragmented, interrupted, possessed by the memories of other people's experiences. The transfer and transcription of historical experience—in names, monuments, genealogies; in collective fantasy and in the regulated social intercourse of everyday life; in law, property, and desire; in stories inhaled with the common air of shared place or time—is the movement through which subjectivity is produced. Experience is both generated and shaped by tropes and conventions, by the borrowed plots, moods, rhythms, and images of other stories and other people's words. The histories of other people's experiences saturate the various worlds in which we live; and it is with regard to the limits of the narratable that we build our lives and our stories. (22–23)

TWO

# *Amaculo Manihamba*

## *A Genre Considered*

*Nasoke nasoke is'tweletwele!* (Here is the *isitweletwele*!)
*Sishi is'tweletwele!* (We say *isitweletwele*!)
*Amasiko ayabuya!* (Our culture is returning!)
*Sabuya is'tweletwele!* (The *isitweletwele* is coming back!)

When I began to research *amaculo manihamba* (walking songs) in western Maputaland, the women were amused by my interest in their music: "No one has ever asked us about these songs," they laughed; "it was just a time when we were carefree and could enjoy ourselves." They associated the songs with a transitory, lighthearted moment in their lives, using the word *uluhlaza* to invoke young green shoots pushing through the earth. The *isitweletwele* (mouth harp)[1] was similarly dismissed as a simple, childish instrument that carried little social value. Yet, although it had been four or more decades since they had last played the instrument, the sounds, songs, and memories of events associated with their performance seemed to return in an instant.

The trivialization of the instrument in southern Africa generally, and in Maputaland more specifically, is no different from the way that the mouth harp is often viewed in other parts of the world. Because of its rudimentary design and its diminutive size, it is often mistaken for a child's toy that can be easily lost or broken and will most certainly be outgrown. Yet, as mouth harp researcher John Wright (1972) has advised, "An enormous amount of information is hidden within [its] very simplicity" (59). In this chapter, I map the musical substructure of the book by examining the history, culture, and performance practice of *amaculo manihamba* (walking songs) and their instrumental complement, the *isitweletwele* (mouth harp).

## A Brief Word about the Mouth Harp Worldwide

The mouth harp is an ancient instrument that is performed by numerous societies worldwide (Kolltveit 2006; 2009; M. Wright 2015).[2] It comprises a frame (often key-shaped) onto which is mounted a flexible central tongue or lamella. Although it is constructed mainly from metals, bone, or wood (bamboo), its shape, size, and design are dependent on locally available materials as well as on the cultural meanings that are ascribed to it. Common to all instruments is the use of the mouth to amplify sound, a process made possible by positioning the frame between or against the teeth and by plucking or striking the central lamella with the forefinger or thumb to produce a vibration.[3] Although it is able to deliver one fundamental note only, performers will skillfully manipulate the harmonic overtones of that note to create a melody. This is achieved by changing the shape of the mouth cavity and by controlling the passage of air that passes through the body, connecting the larynx (where pitch and volume are manipulated in the throat), the pharynx (which is situated immediately behind the mouth and nasal cavity), the epiglottis, and the diaphragm.

As sound making on the mouth harp employs the same musculature and acoustic principles as verbal communication, the instrument is frequently conceptualized as an extension of the voice (Morgan 2008, 14). Its ability to trace the tonal contours and rhythmic articulations of a spoken phrase allows it to be used as a "voice mask or modulator" (ibid., 29) often employed to generate thinly shrouded messages or to code or conceal intimate information. The use of the mouth harp as a surrogate voice does not imply the exclusive use of the mouth to produce sound, however; on the contrary, the entire body is implicated in the creation, control, and amplification of sound. As Simon Frith (1996) details, "the voice is sound produced physically, by the movement of muscles and breath in the chest and throat and mouth; to listen to a voice is to listen to a physical event, to the sound of a body. . . . the voice draws our attention to something happening to the body itself" (191). Feld's (1996) characterization of vocality draws body and motion into an interaction with the acoustical, affective, and sensory domains:

> Sound, hearing, and voice mark a special bodily nexus for sensation and emotion because of their coordination of brain, nervous system, head, ear, chest, muscles, respiration, and breathing. . . . Moreover, hearing and voice are connected by auditory feedback and by physical resonance, the immediate experience of one's presence through the echo-chamber of the chest and head, the reverberant sensation of sound, principally one's own voice. By bringing a

Figure 2.1. Shongane Sibiya playing the mouth harp (Doromb Hungarian model), Usuthu Gorge (photo by author)

> durative, motional world of time and space simultaneously to, from and back, top and bottom, and left and right, an alignment suffuses the entire fixed or moving body. This is why hearing and voicing link the felt sensations of sound and balance to those of physical and emotional presence. (97).

Many mouth harp cultures privilege its transcendent sonority, which has been conceptualized as "a voice from the soul, addressed to the soul . . . ; a sort of double of the self" (Rault 2000, 9). The Siberian *khomus*, for instance, is considered to hold great spiritual power, which is conveyed in the "turbulence and timbral density" produced by the simultaneity of a deep monotonous drone and high, vaporous overtones (Levin 2006, 56). Timbral manipulation creates an otherworldly effect, which is increased still more when the instrument is played in a resonant acoustic environment or in consort with natural features, such as moving water or the wind (ibid).

Numerous mouth harp traditions exploit environmental acoustics to intensify sound production and enhance the aesthetic experience, whether simply to amplify the harmonics or, as with the *khomus*, to imitate or sound with nature. The Balinese *genggong*, for instance, is modeled on the direct

mimicry of the natural world, its delicate tones drawing inspiration from the sound of the wind in the trees and the croaking of frogs (Morgan 2008). Feld's (1984) research on Kaluli musical systems in the Papua New Guinea rainforests likewise explores how the sound of the bamboo mouth harp (*uluna*) links environment and musical experience and expression. Kaluli spirit cosmologies are rooted in a range of natural features (especially birds), and their manifestation in sound is enhanced by the acoustical potential of the rainforest to echo, reverberate, and accentuate certain presences, which in turn provoke apposite emotional responses.

## The *Isitweletwele* in Western Maputaland

The mouth harp was widely adopted across the southern African region. In South Africa, its most widely used denotation is *isitolotolo*. This term may have derived from *setolotolo*, a traditional braced mouth bow played by the Basotho (Dargie 2008), or may simply be onomatopoeic, derived from the tremulous sound produced by the rapid articulation of the tongue and epiglottis. The Zulu-English dictionary offers a third explanation based on the word *istolo*, meaning store or shop (Doke et al. 1990, 472), which is where most young women would have acquired their instruments. Given that the trading store was an icon of modernity and change in rural southern Africa, this etymology supports the commonly held conception that the mouth harp signaled the reworking of an old performance practice on a new and thoroughly "modern" instrument.

The term *isitweletwele*, on the other hand, is a term used by Swazi-speaking people of southern Swaziland and the western Maputaland region exclusively.[4] Like *isitolotolo*, the term *isitweletwele* may simply be onomatopoeic as described above, or may be associated with the word *-tweletwele*, meaning nervousness or anxiousness, expressive of the rapid movement of the striking hand, as if trembling or quivering.

In western Maputaland, melody making on the *isitweletwele* adheres closely to the phenomenon of word articulation and draws on a combination of Zulu, Swazi, Tembe-Thonga, and Shangane (Tsonga)—related tonal languages—to construct a melodic elaboration of a spoken phrase. Melody is thus referred to as *-iculo* (Zulu pl. *amaculo*) meaning song, implying a composite of words and melody.[5] Instrumental melodies are seldom used only to enunciate language, however. More adventurous players will experiment with phonetic markers such as clicks, breathiness, attack, and delay to elaborate timbral density or accentuate rhythm. These affectations are elaborated

in Roland Barthes's (1977) concept of "the grain of the voice," which he describes as "where melody . . . works at the language—not at what it says, but the voluptuousness of its sound-signifiers, of its letters—where melody explores how the language works and identifies with that work" (182).

As with many other mouth harp traditions, *isitweletwele* players in Maputaland describe the sounds of their instruments in gendered terms, the high pitches likened to women's voices and used as the opening section of a call-response phrase, and lower pitches equated with the male voice that follows.[6] More specifically, the instrument is considered as the surrogate voice, summoned to share observations or opinions. To this effect, it served both literally and metaphorically as the "mouthpiece" of young women and is often described as their *iphephandaba* (newspaper).[7]

As is typical of mouth harp traditions elsewhere, the *isitweletwele* is built on the affecting resonances among voice, language, and the body, the relationship between which is inherent in the interplay between the instrument's musical sensibilities and its cultural significance. The embodiment of the instrument is therefore simultaneously literal (played in the body), affective (experienced in the body), and symbolic (played from the heart). This composite was made evident in the instructions issued by MaFambile when she first tried to teach me to play *isitweletwele*:

> Put it on your teeth but not between them. Hold your tongue far back in your mouth. First you need to have a song in your head. What is your song? Don't play so fast! You sound like a reed frog after the rains: *tshwe-we-we-we-we!* You start singing from your heart and then you sing quietly with your fingers. . . . Yes, that it is coming right now. Now, what do these sounds help you to remember? (Personal communication, MaFambile Khumalo, 31 August 2003)

While songs played on the *isitweletwele* may be conceptualized as "from the heart," they invoke a poetics of the everyday, utilizing a vocabulary and syntax that draw on normal conversation. However, they are set apart from everyday speech by the way they draw on heightened linguistic utterances, rhythms, cadences, and timbres. Notable in MaFambile's comments above is her question about what memories are evoked by the sounds. This unsolicited and indeed quite unexpected question sheds light on an assumption made about the instrument's echoic or acoustical associations. Although we had talked at length about the women's histories and had focused particularly on the old routes and pathways that they had walked while playing the instrument, MaFambile's question was focused more specifically on the

heart-body-sound nexus, signifying how social meanings are encoded in the instrument's sounds and performative contexts.

The women in western Maputaland make a conscious connection between *isitweletwele* and the natural environment. Elsewhere I have written about the zoomorphic association of the instrument, and its correlation with frogs in particular (Impey 2007). The connection is elaborated by the similarities between how frogs manipulate the mouth and throat to create sound, by the equivalent sound envelopes created through the use of attack and decay, and by the way frogs use sound to attract a mate or assert their presence. The following song serves as an example:

> *Siphuma ezulwini* (we come from the sky [implying rain])
> *Siphuma ezulwini* (we come from the sky)
> *Iya ho ho ho* [sounds of croaking frogs]

MaGumede from Eziphosheni explained:

> The song I have been playing is a song about frogs. We copy their sounds. As you play this thing you can't explain what it means, but you will recognize that it is the sound of frogs. The frogs are happy when it is raining, so that is when they start calling. (Personal communication, Eziphosheni, 2003)

Rather than simply imitate nature, however, the women will deliberately engage natural acoustics to amplify their melodies, relying on the wind to transport their messages over open savannah grasslands or across bodies of water. The acoustical limitations of both the instrument and the landscape account for its cultural framing as a transmitter of whispers shared between close friends. Its messages were communicated not through dramatic effect, therefore, but as subtle commentaries or rumors, delivered just loud enough to be publicly audible. MaShongani from Usuthu Gorge explains:

> The *isitweletwele* is very quiet, and when there was wind, it would carry the sound. So you became like a person who could say exactly what she wants. At other times, when we walked, one girl would put a drum[8] on her back and another would beat it and it would make a big noise. The difference is that when we played the drum, we really wanted people to hear us coming. But when we played *isitweletwele*, it was our thing. We played because we liked to. We played because we had things to say. (Personal communication, Usuthu Gorge, 2008)

To compensate for the delicacy of the instrument, the *isitweletwele* would almost always be performed in a call-response format: one woman would play an instrumental phrase, and fellow travelers would respond with a vocal chorus. This strategy would effectively amplify the instrument, lifting it up and out of the body of the individual performer and into the acoustical space of the moving collective.

## European Economic Expansion and the Global Distribution of the Mouth Harp

The *isitweletwele* can best be described as a musical repurposing of the European mouth harp. The link between its manufacture in Europe and its destination in southern Africa is sketchy at best, though its distribution is undoubtedly associated with the European age of discovery, with long-distance maritime travel, and with colonial settlement. Its link with mercantile trade is evidenced by its frequent listing (as Jew's harp) in shipping registers that date back to the sixteenth century, alongside a range of other items—similarly cheap, shiny, and incidental. However, while British colonial documents make frequent note of the mouth harp as an article of trade and appeasement in North America and Oceania, there are very few references to its distribution in Anglophone Africa.[9] One exception is mentioned by mouth harp historian Frederick Crane, who identifies what he believes to be the earliest mention of the *trump* in southern Africa in the diary of Monsieur François LeVaillant, a flamboyant zoologist and explorer of the Cape of Good Hope in the 1780s. In one entry, he describes a day when, having shot five elephants, he settles down beside his campfire with his assistants to celebrate the day's achievements:

> I had a little box brought to me, which I placed on my knees. I opened it; never did any charlatan put as much adroitness and mystery into his act. I pulled out of the box that noble and melodious instrument, perhaps unknown in Paris, but rather common in several provinces, where one sees it in the hands of almost all schoolboys and of the people—in brief, a trump. When I had had enough of my leisurely pleasure, I seized the nearest of my men, and equipped him with my marvellous lute. I took much care in teaching him the manner of its use; when he had reached a reasonable degree of skill, I sent him back to his place. I strongly suspected that the others would not be happy until each also had one of his own. So I passed out as many trumps as I had Hottentots in my company, and, joining together, some of them playing well,

> others badly, and others still worse, they regaled me with a music fit to terrify the furies. (Crane 1994, 38–39)

In an article on the *goura*, an indigenous "Bushman" and "Hottentot" mouth bow in the Cape, musicologist Henry Balfour (1902), makes passing reference to the "jews-harp," which had become widespread through the region:[10]

> A notably successful invader has been the ordinary European jews-harp which, it would appear, has been widely accepted as an excellent substitute for the *goura*. The conveniently small size, cheapness, and greater musical potentialities of the mouth-harp are qualities before which the *goura*, with its many limitations, is rapidly succumbing. (156)

The late 1800s marked the beginning of the mass manufacture of mouth harps in the British West Midlands. From this region, mouth harp historian Michael Wright has identified the main suppliers to South Africa in the nineteenth century as John Barnsley of Netherton and the Troman family from Rowley Regis and Birmingham. A third maker, Isaac Watts, also supplied instruments for export. In an interview with one of Watts's descendants, Frank Southall, Wright reports that "Isaac Watts was making and exporting mouth harps from Albion Street, Birmingham, before 1910. . . . Most of the export business was to natives in various parts of Africa where it was ultimately found that they used to make necklaces of the jew's harps, hence the great demand" (M. Wright 2005; M. Wright and Impey 2007).

German and Austrian mouth harps assumed a greater export profile in the 1860s, following a substantial reduction in trade tariffs in those countries, which stimulated the commercial production of pianos and string, free-reed, and brass instruments (Ehrlich 1985; Eydmann 1995). While archival photographs dating to the end of the nineteenth century evidence the adoption by southern African women of British mouth harps, oral evidence suggests that by the 1950s, the instruments imported into the country were almost exclusively from Germany and Austria. According to Franz Wimmer, current director of the Wimmer Maultrommel company in Mölln, Austria, which has produced mouth harps since the 1700s, "South Africa was by far the biggest export market for the mouth harps of Mölln. From the 1950s onwards all the mouth harp makers in Mölln together sold every year several hundred thousand instruments to South Africa, mainly to Johannesburg, but also to Port Elizabeth, Durban and Pretoria. They preferred 'blank' mouth harps in their 'natural state' (i.e. without Lacquer or coloured varnish)."[11]

## The Trade of the Mouth Harp in Western Maputaland

The trade of mouth harps in Maputaland in the late nineteenth century would not have been significantly different from its distribution elsewhere in southern Africa, which linked international trade networks to various port cities and to remote rural localities inland. A vigorous and specialized sale of European musical instruments in South Africa is revealed in newspaper advertisements in the *Natal Mercury* and the *Zululand Times* from the 1880s.[12] Weekly notices by one of the main musical instrument distributors in Durban, Jackson Bros., Ltd., advertised the sale of "musical instruments of every description,"[13] confirming their connection to the English, European, and American markets specifically.

Associated with the markets in the cities of Durban, Johannesburg, and Port Elizabeth in South Africa, and Lourenço Marques (Maputo) in Mozambique, was a burgeoning network of rural trade that was responsible for the distribution of merchandise to remote localities in the subregion. European wholesale companies based in the urban centers of Natal extended their commercial operations inland via itinerant sales representatives who traveled hundreds of miles across the countryside peddling a wide assortment of goods (Whelan 2011). While most salesmen traded in agricultural and household products and the occasional musical instrument, some, such as the Mackay Brothers, were dedicated traders of gramophones, records, and musical instruments. As agents of the "Gramophone Company," the Asian and African wing of the London-based "His Master's Voice (HMV),"[14] they were reputed to have traveled across much of the South African countryside in the early 1900s, peddling their musical merchandise from mule and ox wagons (M. Andersson 1981, 38).[15]

Wholesale traders were responsible for the supply of mouth harps to the trading stores in Swaziland, southern Mozambique, and western Maputaland. In Ndumo, they were first sold by the Von Wissells, a German–South African family who ran the local trading store between 1895 and1918, before shifting operations across the Lebombo Mountains to Swaziland, where they established the KwaMatata store. The women in Usuthu Gorge and Eziphosheni remember purchasing their instruments from both stores:

> We grew up with our mothers playing *isitweletwele*. These songs were there long before we were born. At that time, we were able to buy the instruments. We bought them at KwaMatata in Swaziland and Ndumo. They were only a tickey or half a cent, and bread and sugar was also a half-cent. (Personal communication, Mampolwane Nkomonde, Usuthu Gorge, 2003)

Trading stores had a mystique about them, and mouth harps were often placed in a glass jar on the counter near the cash register where they were sold as cheap "impulse buys," usually acquired with the few pennies left over from the purchase of foodstuffs and agricultural goods. Alec Frangs, who set up the Wattleton General Store and Produce Company in the Donnybrook area of southern KwaZulu Natal in 1926, remembers mouth harps amongst the various musical instruments he sold to his African clientele:

> Some of the musical items that we stocked were "auto-harps." . . . The auto-harp is a square box with strings, about 12′ x 15′; it was played flat. You don't see them today. They were German made, played by men. Concertinas were very popular. They were usually used for walking. They had guitars later. There were whistles for dancing girls and mouth organs. And Jew's harps were "the thing"! It is metal with a central blade, which is moved with the tongue.[16]

An additional commercial distributor of the mouth harp in South Africa was "native" concession stores, which were located close to the hostels of migrant workers in the Witwatersrand goldmines. Labor migrancy brought men into contact with the style, sophistication, and material culture of the city and was essential in mediating musical change across southern Africa.[17] Many of the men from Maputaland who labored in the mines purchased guitars, concertinas, harmonicas, and gramophones from these stores. Occasionally they also acquired mouth harps for their girlfriends, which they would present to them as gifts when they returned home on annual leave.

As women were largely prohibited from seeking employment in the cities,[18] their adoption of the mouth harp appears to have represented both modernity, experienced vicariously through their more cosmopolitan men, and stylistic continuity, which was suggested in the way that the instrument was adapted musically, as well as the manner in which it was appropriated to adorn their bodies.

## The Mouth Harp and the Political Economy of the Body

> A Zulu will wear a three-piece suit, but with sandals on his feet. The Zulu has thus 'neutralised' the value attached to the suit. It is no longer a western object. . . . The same system of 'neutralisation' exists with musical instruments . . . each object keeps its form, but is diverted from its primary function. (Clegg, cited in Conrath 1988, 73)

As Kevin Dawe (2003) aptly points out, "the morphology of musical instruments (often) reveals through their shape, decoration, and iconography features of the body politic, as embodiments of the values, politics, and aesthetic of the community of musicians that they serve. They are at once physical and metaphorical, social constructions and material objects" (275–76). In Maputaland, while on one hand the mouth harp engaged modernity, linking young women to an imagined world beyond the confines of their own social and spatial realities, the instrument also represented continuity in the practice of "prestige" metal ornamentation, which had grown out of coastal trade in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In Nguni cultures, beaded garments were an important part of the traditional finery that was associated with courtship and the early years of marriage, and young women would make bead jewelry to decorate themselves and to present to the men they admired. Beads of different colors and sizes carried social messages and were used to signify age, gender, and marital status (Preston-Whyte 1991, 64; Ginindza 1974). Dress and body adornments were similarly used in Swazi culture to exhibit social distinctions. As noted by Hilda Kuper (1973a), "As an integral part of every person, the body evokes and responds to motions and emotions of others and must be dealt with 'properly,' that is, in conformity with standards of social propriety" (351).

In her research on body ornamentation, Carolee Kennedy (1991) notes how the use of rare and imported materials such as glass beads and metals served to visually reinforce rank amongst Zulu royalty, and brass and copper neck rings and bracelets were particularly prized by their women.[19] These fashions emerged out of an earlier trade in southern Africa in brass and copper by the Portuguese through Delagoa Bay, along with "Tambo" and "Mercandos" beads and cloth, which were considered the primary trade goods sought by the local inhabitants (Kennedy 1991, 52). Mabudu-Tembe carriers from Delagoa Bay transported unworked metal bars to the south, where they were forged by Zulu blacksmiths into neck rings, bracelets, and agricultural hoes. Kuper (1973a) notes that top-ranking Swazi (Ngwane) queens would wear four rows of large copper beads (*tiqungu*) sewn onto the ends of their aprons, the upper edge of which would be decorated with small triangular metal studs. With the spread of European trade in the second half of the nineteenth century, many of the iron artifacts and brass ornaments became obtainable from foreign traders as finished products, their availability resulting in their widespread adoption by all strata of Nguni society. By the 1950s, similar metal ornamentation could be bought in trading stores and were added to the courting dresses of all young girls (ibid., 354).

Figure 2.2. *Isitweletwele* worn with beaded necklace, western Maputaland (photo courtesy of Mduduzi Mcambi)

As described in chapter 1, when I first visited western Maputaland with a box of mouth harps, the women had not seen or played the instrument for at least forty years. I invited the women to take an instrument, and within days most had beaded them into their necklaces. Comparing them with young Zulu women in archival photographs and postcards dating to the turn of the nineteenth century has led me to believe that not only was the instrument adopted in this region to produce music, but it was also prized as a signifier of age, class, and marital status. As the descendants of clans who lived in the direct path of the metals trade route from Delagoa Bay to Zululand, the women in western Maputaland likely inherited a high regard for metal ornamentation and continue to observe some of the aesthetic markers of distinction of their forebears.

Despite the ideological contrivances that shaped Victorian photographic representations of Africans, the images they produced offer useful information about the use of the *isitweletwele* by young Nguni women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[20] The portrait in figure 2.3, taken circa 1890, reveals the typical clothing and hairstyles worn by Nguni women in the late nineteenth century, each item illustrative of the women's station in life. The caption identifies the "costume" of the woman on the left as that associated with a married woman, implied by her headdress, leather


Figure 2.3. "Portrait of married woman and maiden, Sisters, in costume" (1890). (National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution: NAA INV 06060502)

skirt (*isidwaba*), and *indondo*, the metal ball with a hole pierced through the center and threaded around her neck.[21] These articles differentiate her from her "maiden" sister, who has no headcover, wears a simple cloth skirt, and has a mouth harp attached to a simple string or wire necklace. While the photograph may have been consciously styled, it is unlikely that the mouth

harp would have been used merely as a studio prop, as are the chair and the animal skin backdrop. Its recurrence in several other archival photographs from the same era (see following figures) validate its association with premarital women, and its function as both musical instrument and material emblem of social status.

The portrait in figure 2.4 of two young Zulu women is part of a series of postcards published by Durban-based Sello Epstein & Co. in the early 1900s depicting Africans at play in various Victorian sports.[22] The way the mouth harp is worn by the women is very different from that in the previous photograph, and while it was included as a marker of the women's premarital status, along with some more "traditional" accoutrements such as the pleated cloth skirts, beaded necklaces, and metal arm and leg rings, it appears to have been exaggerated as an accessory, alongside a range of late Victorian paraphernalia, such as umbrellas, handkerchiefs, and straw hats.

## The *Isitweletwele* and Its Musical Compatriots

Mouth-resonated instruments have not been well documented in southern Africa. Percival Kirby, whose comprehensive study of musical instruments in southern Africa in the 1930s offers rare insight into the construction, nomenclature, and geographic distribution of a wide variety of such bows, attributes the lack of scholarly interest to their subtle, almost secretive quality, and to their highly individualized performance practice. In their defense, he writes: "heard in the kraal in the stillness of early evening, they ring out unmistakably, and, combined with the fundamental sounds, produce an effect which has a unique character and beauty all of its own" (Kirby 1968, 225).[23]

In western Maputaland, the *isitweletwele* was adopted into a family of mouth- and gourd-resonated instruments that were played by young women to support a repertoire of interchangeable performance practices. Much of the repertoire could be performed on any one of the instruments, and young women could often play all, or at least a few of them. According to my research collaborators, playing an instrument was a matter of individual choice, and while some young women might have been more adept than others, little attention was paid to exceptional talent. The *isitweletwele* was likely to have been adopted in southern Africa as it shared many sound-production features with these mouth-resonated instruments. Its association with other mouth bows is exhibited in the photograph in figure 2.5, dated 1900–1908: one woman, an *amatshitshi* (virgin), is wearing a mouth harp on a string around her neck, and the other, a married woman (*inkosikazi*, indicated by her topknot hairstyle), is holding a simple mouth


Figure 2.4. "Two Maidens Wearing Body Paint and in Costume with Straw Hats and Umbrellas . . . out on a stroll" (circa 1890). DOE Africa: South Africa: Gen: Pinnick Colln: Album #1 06060504, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. [OPPS NEG 72–8893] Sello Epstein 1904.


Figure 2.5. Photographed by Father Aegidius Müller, Mariannhill Photographic Archive, Killie Campbell Africana Museum, University of KwaZulu Natal

bow (*umqangala*), the most common musical companion of the *isitweletwele* in western Maputaland.[24]

The *umqangala* comprises a length of a river reed (*umhlanga*) and a single string (*usinga*), once made from sinew, hair, or a fibrous plant (Kirby 1968, 220) but replaced now with light-gauged nylon fishing line. The string is attached to the tips of the reed by means of a slipknot, producing a taut

Figure 2.6. Mrs. Minah Mkhize playing *umqangala* (photo courtesy of Mduduzi Mcambi)

thread that is plucked with a tiny reed plectrum held in the right hand. The performer positions one end of the reed in the corner of her mouth between her upper and lower lips without touching her teeth. She holds the other end with the index finger of the left hand and uses her thumb to stop the string at various positions along its length, thus producing different fundamental notes.[25]

A second and more complex mouth bow played in western Maputaland, though more readily associated with the coastal region and southern Mozambique, is the *isizenze*.[26] It comprises an arched frame, which is thinned and bent up sharply at both ends and made from the pliable wood of *tum-Thombothi* (Sw. *umThobombotsi* / *Spyrostachys africana*), *umPhondo* (*Rhus gueinzii*), or *usiPhane* (*Grewia occidentalis*). A single flat "string" made from a strip of *ilala* palm leaf (*Hyphaene coriacea*) is attached to the ends of the frame. A series of small corrugations are incised into the inner center of the stave. Unlike the *umqangala*, which is played by placing the tip of the reed frame into the mouth, the *isizenze* is played by placing the palm leaf between the lips, positioning the mouth near the end but not on it. The player holds the bent stave in the crook of her left arm, using the thumb and the third finger of her left hand to stop the string. With her right hand, she rasps or scrapes the corrugations with a wooden stick, causing the instrument to vibrate.[27] It is more challenging to play than the *isitweletwele* or *umqangala*,

Figure 2.7. Mrs. Gumede ("Mfaz'Omnyama") playing *isizenze* (photo courtesy of Mduduzi Mcambi)

so is seldom used as a walking instrument. While some of its repertoire may be borrowed by other instruments, it is generally performed solo and in the privacy of one's home.

While Kirby's documentation of "complex" mouth bows in other parts of southern Africa associates them with adolescent males, the *isizenze*, along with the *isitweletwele* and *umqangala*, are unequivocally associated with women's music making in western Maputaland. The *umakhweyana*, on the other hand, a notched gourd bow that is played to accompany walking, is performed by both men and women in this region. It is constructed along similar organological principles to the mouth bow, but the resonating chamber is made from a dried gourd, which is attached near the center of the arched wooden frame. The string is "notched" or tied to the frame near its center, producing two fundamental notes, tuned a major second apart. A third note is produced by stopping the string of the lower section with the knuckle of the index or middle finger of the left hand, which produces an interval slightly flatter than a minor third. By manipulating the gourd away from and toward the body, the player may control and amplify a wide range of harmonic partials (Impey 1981, 12).

Figure 2.8. Women at Eziphosheni playing *umakhweyana*; the two women at the end of the line are playing *isitweletwele* (photo courtesy of Mduduzi Mcambi)

## *Amaculo Manihamba:* Songs We Sing When We Walk

> This is a bus, this is transport, this will take you wherever you want to go. . . . This is a very physical instrument . . . if you walk playing . . . the *isifutho* [air button on concertina] . . . will allow you to open and close it. It's got to be pushed at the right times during the rhythms to enable you to go in and out . . . while you're playing your tune. . . . As you're playing, you're walking, your fingers are playing the notes . . . and I know that my little finger is going to go with my left foot when I put it down. (Clegg 1981, 7)

In this excerpt, Clegg describes the performance practice of a Zulu *maskandi*, a wandering songster who uses the musical impetus of his instrument to transport him long distances by foot. Most studies on *maskanda* focus on its poetic convention, the potency of which is measured by the acuity of the lyrics and the intensity of their musical delivery (Clegg 1981; Davies 1994; Carol Muller 1995; Olsen 2000; 2001; 2014). A good performer engages his audience by skillfully interlacing voice and instrument, and by threading narrative fragments from his familial history into poetic imaginings of life elsewhere.[28] Yet, as Clegg suggests, music making for the *maskandi* is intensely implicated in the body and in the synchronized movement of the

feet, hips, torso, arms, and fingers. Each is aligned to articulate, to breathe through, to swing with the melodic and rhythmic action of the instrument. These musical properties, in turn, are propelled by the impetus of the body, merging physicality, vocality, and instrumental sound in an affective whole. This aesthetics of mobility in Nguni bow playing is referred to by Bongani Mthethwa and Veit Erlmann (1982) as "riding the rhythms," an act that transforms walking into a musical experience.[29]

*Amaculo manihamba* is a general denotation used in Zulu and Swazi culture to refer to any music that is performed while walking. In western Maputaland, however, women's *isitweletwele* songs are referred to by this term exclusively. Like *maskanda*, their purpose was to provide rhythmic thrust to sustain long-distance walking; their light, repetitive incantations used to distract participants from weary bones and aching feet. While one woman would play *isitweletwele*, the performance would invariably involve a larger group, the instrument posing a melodic "question" to which fellow walkers would answer with a short vocal response. And so the musical cycle would proceed until the group had reached its destination.

In western Maputaland, pathways (*indlela* or *indlela yesiZulu*) were both the physical locus of walking songs and employed as a metaphor to describe a range of intertwining aesthetic and social configurations. In chapter 8 I will explore the notion of "pathways of song" as a guiding motif to elaborate women's poetic articulations of political and economic change. In the following section I focus on the concept of pathway as it is invoked rhetorically to describe a range of musical features peculiar to *amaculo manihamba*.

The term *indlela* (pl. *izindlela)* describes a physical pathway used by humans but created either by oxen dragging a plow from homesteads to fields, or by the habitual routes of wild animals. The term also refers to the customary way of doing things—e.g., *indlela ezikhula*, "the way we grew up"—appealing to patterned social practice and the meanings people bring to their experiences. Pathways intersect as physical courses and routinized social action through the act of walking. They are the physical traces of our social orientations that map on the ground where people's trajectories intersect and separate in predictable ways.

One day, in a discussion of the idiosyncrasies of *amaculo manihamba* with the women in Eziphosheni, the following conversation ensued. It revealed how footprints on a pathway are read by the women as inscriptions of an interior social world of knowing, distinguishing "the concept of walking *within* the world from simply tramping on its surface" (Ingold and Vergunst 2008, 7). Walking while playing—or walking the "rhythms of place"—thus

promotes place making as embodied, material, and sociable "dwelling-in-motion" (Edensor 2010; Sheller and Urry 2006), as well as aesthetic social action.

AI: If a woman walked past your homestead playing *isitweletwele*, would you know who was playing without seeing her?

MAFAMBILE: You see, my child, when someone is wearing shoes, we can't identify who has been walking on the path. But when people walk with bare feet, we always know who has been there by her footprints. It is the same with these songs. We always know if it is a chicken or a dove.

AI: So each woman has her own sound, her own style of playing? It's like when you dance, each one dances with the style of her own body?

MAFAMBILE: Yes! *Kanjalo nje!* It is just like that!

The concept of the pathway is also embedded in the conceptualization of melody and harmony in Nguni music. In their work on Zulu gourd bow songs, Mthethwa and Erlmann (1982) describe melody as a narrative surface whose reliance on prosodic contour transforms the concept of "tune" into one of a path: "The same tune repeated with different words will differ slightly because the pitches of the words are subject to change, but the melodic shape—the path—remains constant throughout." Inherent in their analogy is a sense of directionality, of the movement of melody from a specified beginning to a predictable end. This mirrors the concept of walking while playing, which facilitated the movement of stories from one locality to another, binding individuals to one another and to place through synchronized action.

Harmony, Mthethwa and Erlmann (1982) suggest, is considered introspective, emotional, envisioned as intertwining pathways or as *isigubudu*, which describes the converging horns of a bull whose tips touch the body of the animal. In *isitweletwele* performance practice, which employs similar musical principles to that of the gourd bow, melody and harmony are produced through movement within the body—through the inhalation and expulsion of air which supports the manipulation, projection, and arc of the sound itself—and are "set in motion" by the rhythmic propulsion of feet on the ground. Thus, mobility, and its allusion to ways of moving through space, which influences feelings, perceptions, and engagements with one's social and natural environment, is mirrored in the conceptualization and production of sound, signifying how social meanings come to be encoded in performative acts (Impey 2013).

## The Poetry of *Amaculo Manihamba*

As mentioned earlier, the women in Maputaland were adamant that *amaculo manihamba* were devoid of any rhetorical or political authority. That they were considered nothing but lighthearted youthful expressions associated with unmarried women whose voices carry little currency in a decisively age-hierarchical and patriarchal culture added further to their presumed insignificance.[30] However, having analyzed a large repertoire of women's songs in western Maputaland, I have come to realize that this is far from the reality. While Zulu political culture is based on well-defined hierarchies that are reinforced and memorialized through formulaic political oratory that builds on praise names, geopolitical coordinates, and genealogical recitation (Opland 1983), in southern Africa power is transitory and thus reflected in very different aesthetic expression.[31] As noted by Landeg White (1982):

> Few of the peoples of Mozambique or Malawi . . . seem to have made the praising of their rulers a very formal matter. Where praises of the powerful do exist, they are in the form of brief lyrics, often no more than three-to-four lines long, and belonging to the contexts of dance songs or canoe songs or pounding songs rather than to official genres of courtly praise. This makes them very much the voice of those who are on the receiving end of power, the voice of those excluded from the concerns of the early Izibongo (praises) . . . , the voice in short of those who are trying to ensure that power accepts the obligations of patronage. But it also makes the songs ephemeral, of short-lived relevance. Once a particular ruler has gone, there is no particular point in preserving his memory. (26)

I would question White's assertion that the songs are of short-lived relevance in southeast Africa. While they may have a certain overlooked social power that comes from their preoccupation with everyday matters, most of the *amaculo manihamba* that I recorded had been passed down several generations, and when analyzed across the repertoire, they revealed a wealth of historical information. As with Nguni oral poetry, *amaculo manihamba* are a rhetorical abridgment of a multilayered set of experiences and images, their objective being to provide the mood or ambience of a narrative and to endow it with "metaphorical yeastiness" (Scheub 2002, 3). Therefore, any attempt to understand a single song as a complete narrative construct would be to miss the "curvature of their story" (ibid.).

As mentioned, *amaculo manihamba* build on a tradition of fleeting state-

ments that are delivered as scattered assemblages of information, often merging with other genres as may be called for by specific moods and contexts. A wedding song may be stripped back and reconstituted as a walking song. A walking song may mutate into an *ingadla* dance song upon arrival at *esigcawini* (the place of moonlight dances) (see chapter 3). And so forth. The following analysis of two *amaculo manihamba* serves to illustrate the nature of this poetic mutability and explain their attendant social value.

The lyric *Intombi kamakhweyana isele amabele* (The groom's bride-to-be has no breasts) is not intended as a criticism of a young bride, but finds meaning in the cultural convention of lighthearted banter that takes place at the beginning of a Nguni wedding ceremony when the bride is ritually transferred from one family to another. This genre is referred to in Zulu as *ukugqumushela* (insult song)[32] and is performed on the morning of the wedding ceremony. Both the bride's and the groom's parties—*ithimba* and *ikhetho* respectively—will perform in a circle in the courtyard of the groom's home, "vying with each other in the loudness of the singing and the vigour of the dancing" (Joseph 1983, 73; 1987; see also Krige 1936, 122). In this particular song, which is also performed on *isitweletwele*, insulting the bride's breasts purportedly discredits her ability to nurture new life and equally questions the groom's ability to attract a beautiful, childbearing woman. In this way, the bride's body comes to signify multiple social and gendered expectations. However, understanding the song in relation to a particular ceremonial interaction is in itself limited and needs to be contextualized within a repertoire of social exchanges, which form part of a protracted and highly ritualized matrimonial arbitration between two families.[33]

In a similar example, *Woza lapha dali-wami* (Come to me, my darling) is not intended as a mere flirtation, but invokes a repertoire of songs referred to in the Zulu canon as *elokubalisa* (songs of brooding) (Joseph 1987, 99). These songs were typically performed by the wives or girlfriends of men who worked as migrant laborers in distant localities, a system that was bound to the economic imperatives of the South African state and had devastating consequences on marital relations, families, and rural livelihoods. While *elokubalisa* refers to the poetic expression of deep yearning by a woman for an absent partner, Joseph describes the genre as correspondingly expressive of the joy she experienced upon his return. The songs thus represent both the trials and the tribulations typically associated with love (Joseph 1987, 99). Therefore, embedded in one song phrase is a spectrum of political, cultural, and emotional references, the articulation of which varies according to individual performer and her particular circumstances.

Lyrics used or implied in *amaculo manihamba* were drawn from a wide

range of sources: sightings, encounters, greetings, or statements of activity. These citations were not necessarily rendered as historical "fact"; rather, they were deployed through various narrative devices—metaphor, irony, ambiguity, and humor—which offered a range of expressive pathways toward a more malleable social reality. According to both Harold Scheub (2002) and Leroy Vail and Landeg White (1991), these rhetorical strategies allowed the singer to exercise a certain amount of poetic license, purposefully blurring fact and fiction so that truths could be implied by what was not said (Kresse 1998). Again, two brief examples serve to illustrate this point.

The walking song *Deda endleleni Nkolombela* (Move off the pathway, Nkolombela) is not intended as a practical request but refers to a more nuanced and ritualized refusal of love delivered by a young woman to a male suitor. The song invokes the image of a pathway that leads to a river, which was a customary site of proposition and early courtship in Nguni culture. As Mampolwane Nkomonde explains:

> When a boy liked you, he would go to the river and wait for you. When you went to collect water, you would notice that he was always there, waiting. Because you were young and knew nothing, the boys would try all kinds of ways to proposition you. He would want you because he saw that you were growing and had become beautiful. (Personal communication, Usuthu Gorge, 23 August 2003)

Rather than simply rejecting the man's advances, however, the young woman would use the song to extend a gentle renunciation, employing the metaphor of the pathway to convey her feelings and enable the suitor to leave with his dignity intact. In this instance, a song that may originally have had its roots in an actual event would enter into a widely shared repertoire, available for use by any young woman wishing to similarly decline a man's advances.

In a similar vein, the song *Bhasobha Ungeleni* (Be careful of Ungeleni), while seeming to caution against the potentially threatening behavior of a certain "Ungeleni," is an advice song sung by young women to a friend who is about to be propositioned. By using the nickname "Ungeleni" for the young man—allegorically described as "most food thrown away still has value"—they are suggesting that their friend think carefully before refusing his advances, as he may have much to offer her. As with the previous example, the song may have been composed for a specific occasion but will have been consigned to a collective repertoire, available for use by anyone wishing to offer similar counsel.

As I demonstrate later in the book, during the harsh, repressive years of apartheid, the women resorted to singing increasingly encrypted messages, playing on ambiguity and abstraction to communicate what Mariane Ferme (2001) has referred to as "the underneath of things." *Amaculo manihamba* are rooted in orality, improvisation, and collective invention. Some songs loosely assign authorship to a known or remembered composer (often grandmothers, aunts, or older sisters), but most belong to an unattributed though region- and language-specific repertoire. Through their performance, the songs offered the opportunity for both individual communication and collective reenactment, facilitated by the dense overlapping poetics of call-and-response and reinforced through walking in time with others.

## The Demise of the Mouth Harp and *Amaculo Manihamba*

The mouth harp is almost entirely absent from formal documentation of Nguni music in southern Africa, and its demise only partially coincided with the decline in mouth bow performance in the region more generally. Passing mention of the mouth harp by Deirdre Hansen (1981) supports its widespread use in the Eastern Cape and offers some reasons (though characteristically vague) for its loss in popularity in the 1970s:

> Boys and girls play the jew's harp for their own amusement, and sometimes wear them around their necks attached to intricately beaded 'collars' or necklaces. . . . However, I was always hearing complaints about the jew's harps manufactured and sold at trading stores. People said that they were too small, did not 'cry well,' and complained that they had been cheated of their money. . . . The instrument produces only the partials of the harmonic series over the drone (which is the note of the tongue), but apparently it is not possible to produce this drone satisfactorily on the instrument available today. The thin metal prong which fits adjacently is apparently too short in length. (182)

While Hansen's description of inferior metals was echoed by several storeowners in rural KwaZulu Natal with whom I spoke, the mouth harp's demise is attributed to a much wider range of factors. The trade embargo imposed on South Africa as part of the anti-apartheid movement in the 1970s led to a dramatic reduction in imported goods. What mouth harps were available in the stores at this time became more expensive and thus less accessible to the average rural African woman. In addition, in western Maputaland, the introduction of radios and cassette players and the arrival

of churches and schools played a significant role in affecting cultural change in the region. A conversation with the women in Usuthu Gorge delivered the following judgment:

MAKETE: Things started to change when education came and churches came. Zion came, and all kinds of other churches. We had to leave these things [*isitweletwele, amaculo manihamba, ingadla dances*]. And it was the same when "radios" came; we stopped what we were doing so that we could listen.

SHONGANE: We had to wind them up and put the needle on the record. When the song was finished, you had to take off the needle.

MAMPOLWANE: They called that one *igilamafomu* [gramophone].[34] When it finished, you had to close the cover. They came with them from Johannesburg. We were happy to hear those new sounds when that thing came with our fathers! That is how we stopped playing our own music.

Circumstances peculiar to the geopolitics of western Maputaland may also have contributed to the demise of *isitweletwele* and to the walking songs that accompanied them. The region was incorporated into the KwaZulu Homeland in the 1970s (see chapter 4), and the strategic introduction of schools in the borderlands was aimed at inculcating in young people a sense of "Zuluness." Teachers, imported from the south, introduced the children to the language, history, and musical practices of the Zulu, triggering a radical cultural rupture across the generations. Concurrently, the threat of the civil war in Mozambique led to the erection by the South African government of an electrified fence along the border, severely constricting everyday spatialities and altering transnational mobilities. As Mr. Mthethwa, headmaster of the CommTech High School in Ndumo, explained:

> These instruments just disappeared with time. They were not purposefully stopped. I think what changed was that people couldn't walk long distances anymore, so with this, their culture and their movement patterns also changed.

# PART II

THREE

# Walking, Singing, Pointing, Usuthu Gorge

*Vula laph'esangweni, kuzovula ubani laph'esangweni?*
(Open the gate, who is going to open the gate?)

***November 2003, Usuthu Gorge***

We meet when the sun is sitting low on the Lebombo Mountains and walk in single file on a path flanked by tall waving grasses. Generous summer rains have saturated the land, and the trees are covered with thick, shielding foliage. Everywhere there is shimmering late afternoon silver. The women shout back and forth to one another. MaShongani plays her *isitweletwele*, repeating the same short phrase over and over again: *Izwe lakithi liyanyamezela* (This land is on trial), *Izwe lakithi liyanyamezela* (This land is on trial). The sounds emanate from deep inside and gently encircle her body. Makapazane, walking behind her, hums a short response to the instrumental melody, weaving the two in a delicate thread of song, joined, yet each alone in her musical reverie. The melody is upbeat, energized by the skillful manipulation of rapid handwork in sync with the movement of their bodies. When the song tapers off, they begin another: *Uyatatazela ubaba; umama uyalobaloba* (You are busy, father; mother, you are moving around).

We move quickly, run almost. This is the path that the women traverse daily from their homesteads to their fields on the banks of the Usuthu River, and they navigate the rock pathway with apparent ease. Today they are like butterflies, stopping every now and then to take stock of the ripening fruit on a tree, a medicinal plant, before moving swiftly on. For several days we have been meeting in the deep shade of an old *uvovovo*[1] tree at the edge of a cluster of homes, spending long hours discussing episodes in their lives and recalling songs. Our sedentary gatherings have produced a particular

kind of remembering, nurtured by collective prompting and by sharing and reencountering sounds. Exchanging memories this way is how we learn to remember, Sue Campbell (2008) suggests, or "how we come to reform our senses of self as we come repeatedly under the influence not only of our own pasts as understood by others, but the pasts of others" (42).[2] By the same token, this kind of collective memorizing has the tendency to arrest images and incidents: once declared, details become repetitive, differences slip away, and a sequence of events coalesces into a single, committed account.

Walking produces a different set of mnemonics, offering other ways of reimagining places, of unearthing connections and reinvesting them with meanings. As walking-through-place was the "natural habitat" of *isi-tweletwele* performance, simulating this experience blended sensual and contextual cues and helped to revitalize memories of the past. Smelling, hearing, and sounding while walking effects a dynamic, iterative relationship with place; just as places recall stories, so stories stimulate memories about songs about space and place. As Ingold and Vergunst (2008) remind us, walking is about much more than the human body and its movements; it is about "perception and the work of the senses; about education, enskillment and the formation of knowledge; about the constitution of space and place; about wayfaring and storytelling" (1).

Inasmuch as walking is fundamental to the women's sensory recollections of place in Usuthu Gorge, so understanding the ways that the women interact with, sound, and narrate their routes is fundamental to my own ethnographic understanding of their lives. By walking with the women, I begin to appreciate how routes and mobilities are refracted sonically, both present in and resounding from their pasts. As we proceed, the women translate features and functions of their landscape while I document the proceedings on video, trying to keep the camera low and unobtrusive and stumbling to keep up.

We walk and stop; walk, play, and stop.

Mampolwane points to an *Aloe marlothii*, its red-orange candelabra flower, once resplendent against the barren winter landscape, now brittle and drained of its sticky-sweet sap: "You take the dry leaves of this *umhlaba* and break them into a two-liter bottle. Add water and the solution will heal all kinds of diseases in your body."

Makete joins in: "You can also take the dry leaves and burn them; with the ash, you make snuff." She points to a tall thorn tree with small round leaves, its dark, stringy bark pocked with self-protective knoblike protrusions: "This one is called *uFenisi*.[3] You use the wood to fence your home. You can also mix the bark with water and drink it as a cure for sore eyes and the

stomach. Our mothers taught us to take only a small piece at a time so that the tree would not die."

Several of the other women join in. "This is *umGongwane*,"[4] instructs Bellinah; "the fruit is sweet and eaten by children like candy."

Manoni is waiting further down the path. "This tree is called *isiFice*.[5] You take the bark and boil it in water. When the liquid is cool, you drink it. It will thicken in the stomach."[6]

"This is *umViyo*,"[7] offers Shongane; "you eat the brown fruit by crushing it to make porridge. It is good for malaria and for the chest."

"This is *isiThibane*,"[8] explains Bellinah. "In the old days you would take the roots, crush them, and place them in water. It was good for colds and stomach aches."

"Here we have *umKwakwa*,"[9] Sthivile offers. "You pick it and put it under the tree to dry. When the outside is dry, you chew it, and the sweet liquid inside is refreshing." She then points to a tree with thorns extending alternately backward and forward: "When someone dies in the hospital, you have to take a branch from this *umLahlankosi*[10] and fetch the spirit of that person. Starting at the hospital you have to follow a special route, stopping at all the rivers and announcing their names. Then you take a branch from that tree, *umGanu*.[11] You hit the graves twice, chew the bark, spit, and cry *Mayebabo!* [Oh dear!] Then it is finished."

The path leads out of the woodland and into a clearing of fields that slope down toward the western periphery of the Ndumo Game Reserve. The land is flanked on all sides by grids and boundaries, some deliberately constructed, others, such as the Usuthu River, naturally implied. The reserve fence runs perpendicular to the river, cutting through a shallow valley and up the hillside in a sharp, insistent line. The fine metal slices the landscape in two, standing as a stark warning of rights and access. On one side, the women are classified as subsistence farmers and carriers of deep knowledge about wild foods and medicinal plants; on the other, they are poachers, invaders, unskilled in the custodianship of the land and its resources.[12]

"We called the big fence *ucingo weBelungu* [the wire of the white people]." Mampolwane says. "The way we told stories about the fence was through the names we gave our children. If one man [supervising the building of the fence] was called 'uSikhindi' [short pants], we would call a child by that name because he was born at the time of uSikhindi. That is the way we remembered how we were chased. We feel sadness each and every day."

"We left everything inside," adds Sthivile. "The antelope chased us from the park. The things that we remember are the wild fruits and *amakowe* [mushrooms]. Now there is hunger and we are suffering. There is no wealth

[*umnotho*] here. We left everything inside: our sugarcane [*umoba*], bananas, *amadumbe* [wild root vegetable], and sweet potatoes [*ubhatata*]. We are struggling with our fields here. If there is drought, we are not able to harvest a thing."

The fields are laid out like a giant strip-woven cloth, each measuring some five-by-thirty meters and divided unevenly into blocks of onions, sweet potatoes, cassava, beans, and pumpkins. Some trees have been left in the fields to provide fruit, shade, or soil fertilization. Others, such as the *umGanu*, are maintained for their fruit and their capacity to deliver ancestral protection. On the edges of the plots are large banana plants and the odd mango tree. Everywhere there are small thickets of mature sugarcane that will soon be harvested and fermented into a sweet, intoxicating drink.[13]

According to Nguni customary law, men have direct inheritance rights to land, cattle, and domestic property, and women's access to these resources is sanctioned by kinship or marriage. Yet responsibility for domestic food production lies almost exclusively in the hands of women. As members of established floodplain communities, they have a deep understanding of the soils and waterways and know how to utilize the region's microenvironments. If the summer rains are light, the moisture is rapidly absorbed by the intense summer heat. Alternatively, if the rains are too heavy and persistent, the area becomes vulnerable to protracted flooding. Livelihood security is therefore dependent on the skillful diversification of production through both wet and dry seasons, and on the use of the fertile soils on the floodplain or next to rivers, as well as the poorer soils on higher ground.

Over the centuries, subsistence farmers in this region have refined a range of production techniques. The first is slash-and-burn or shifting cultivation, which takes place in the more heavily forested areas some distance from the floodplains. As Roelie Kloppers (2003) explains, an area will be cleared of all trees and undergrowth, and the ash from the burned residue of grass and weeds will be used to fertilize the soil. Between planting and harvesting, the only work undertaken by women is weed management and the protection of crops from wild animals. After several seasons, the nutrients in the soil will become depleted and the weeds and undergrowth will begin to regenerate. At this point, the plot will be abandoned and a new area cleared for cultivation.

A second agricultural practice takes place alongside the pans and river systems. This involves cultivation in slightly raised beds, which are often top-dressed with dry grasses and organic matter to maximize moisture retention and increase fertility (Taylor 1988). In the days before the removal of the communities from the Nyamithi and Banzi Pans in the Ndumo

Game Reserve, farmers depended heavily on this type of farming, benefiting especially from the rich alluvium that was washed down annually with the flooding of the Pongola River, often making possible two crop rotations per year (Bruton and Cooper 1980).

Finally, the women practice dryland cropping on higher elevations and in close proximity to their homes. Here, cultivation is almost entirely reliant on rain, though some organic fertilizers, such as composted grass or chicken manure, may be used to enhance soil quality (Taylor 1988, 472).

Most women farm independently, occasionally coming together at the time of groundnut planting or harvesting to work cooperatively in a system known as *ilimo* (Taylor 1988, 472).[14] During difficult years, the women will resort to cooperative farming, drawing largely on co-wives and female relations to maximize scarce resources. Women's work within families and communities is controlled by subtle forms of encouragement or coercion. One day, when I asked what the consequences would be if a wife did not work her fields, the following conversation ensued:

"She will begin to steal because her children will be starving!" Mampolwane answered emphatically. "When we come back from the fields in the evenings, she will be going that way to steal our food. She will sit with her in-laws and watch them eating; when they are finished, she will eat the scraps from the pot!"

Makapazane gives her own explanation: "When we are together at a gathering, eating and drinking, we will sing a song. That person will understand that the song is directed at her. We will sing about a woman who is too lazy to work in her fields, yet she is always available to join in the drinking."

SOLO: *Asambe siy'emasimini* (Let's go to the fields)
CHORUS: *ngiyazigulela mina* (I am sick)
SOLO: *Asambe siy'ezinkunini* (Let's go to the fields)
CHORUS: *ngiyazigulela mina* (I am sick)
SOLO: *Asambe siy'otshwaleni* (Let's go to drink alcohol)
CHORUS: *ngizakutotobela khona* (I will try to follow you)

"We sing this song after we have had a good harvest," Makapazane elaborates. "We do it before the food is finished in the fields. When our first harvest is ready, we will sample all the vegetables. First it is for our families that we work our fields; thereafter, we will share our vegetables with others. To supplement this work, we cut grass and sell it in bundles for thatching. We also cut reeds [*umhlanga*] to sell [to make sleeping mats]. In the summer, we fish. Both men and women will fish. Sometimes when you put your hand

in the water to feel for fish, you will catch a small crocodile or a snake! If you catch a monitor lizard, you will know what it is because it will put up a fierce resistance!"

"There is another song we sing when a man is lazy," offers Manoni. "All the men are working at eHlanzeni in Swaziland, but this one is just sitting here, staring at other men's wives. It is an old song that was sung when I was a child to encourage the men to go elsewhere to work."

*Amanye amadoda ayasebenza; wena angazi uhlaleleni*
(Other men are working; why are you just sitting?)

Agnes offers a story to illustrate the indignity of not sharing resources: "There was once a family that was suffering from hunger. The husband managed to find a beehive but didn't tell his family about it. Whenever he was hungry, he made the excuse that he was being called by the Chief. He even complained to his wife that it was difficult to be one who was so admired by such an important man. He would sneak off and eat and eat and eat honey until his stomach was full. One day his wife grew suspicious and decided to follow him. She found him sitting under the tree, stuffing himself with honey. She said, 'Aha! Now I see who is this "Chief" that has been calling you!'"

This year, the fields beside the Usuthu River are wet and marshy, some still partially flooded from the recent rains. The women tell me that they are grateful for the water and will plant in the fields near to their houses to compensate for the loss of riverfront land. Most women have two or three fields near the river and one or two rain-fed fields close to their homesteads. This flexibility lies at the heart of agricultural practice in this region, and the judicious use of space is central to their efficacy—and by association, their senses of selves—as providers of food for domestic consumption.[15]

Manoni points to the land that she has been cultivating: "I was given this field when I married this family. It was just a forest when I came, so I prepared it for myself. I am happy that this area is mine. When there is food, we can eat and be satisfied. As long as the water doesn't lie too long on the ground, I can produce enough for my children."

"You wouldn't be a wife if you didn't have two fields," Thokozile explains. "A wife is supposed to have two, three, or even four fields." During the dry season, the women may temporarily abandon their high fields and concentrate on cultivating only their land on the floodplains. Dur-

ing particularly rainy years, such as this one, they will work the other way around.

"On top, we grow maize, groundnuts, and beans," Mampolwane explains. "We eat cowpeas [*imbumba*] with samp [roughly ground corn porridge] and groundnuts. It is very delicious! At the river we grow corn [*umbila*], cassava [*udombola*], sweet potatoes [*ubhatata*], pumpkins [*amatanga*], and sugarcane [*usukela*]. If it rains, we plant the same things up there. Last year I didn't work my fields down below. This year, I have found that my sugarcane down there is much healthier." She explains the pattern of land inheritance for women. "When you are seventeen or eighteen years old, you will be given a place to work. Your mother will give you one field and later she may add others. Only girls are given fields; the boys work with the cattle. Our fathers will divide the land into smaller and smaller pieces so that each gets a field. If a mother has a son, his wife will inherit her fields. If there is no wife, the oldest daughter will take the field. When you marry into a family faraway, your fields will come from that family. You will have to spend the first year working with your mother-in-law who will show you how to do things. After some time, she will either divide the field and give you your piece, or you will be given another."

Makete reflects on her own experience: "I had my first fields in the game reserve with my mother. I was still 'inside' when I got married. When we settled on this side, I inherited the fields of my father's mother. When we were still living in the game reserve, my grandmother was living this side, and when she passed on, I inherited her fields. Now my oldest daughter has moved to Emakanyise near to the Kentucky Fried Chicken,[16] and the other daughters are also married. I am living with the wife of my son, and she is the one who is helping me in these fields."

Makete's younger sister, Bellinah, has a similar story. When her family was living in the game reserve, her current fields beside the Usuthu River were already part of their property. However, because the area is often waterlogged, they seldom used them: "On the other side we had a lot of land and the soil was fertile. When the fences were erected, we were left with only this land here. Before we left, we would grow for a year or two [in the same location] and then move to another field. We had more land then and more space to cultivate like that."

Kinship regulates the sharing of food and prescribes laws of sociality. As we walk toward the river following a path that runs alongside the game fence, Makete points to her field: "Here are my sweet potatoes and bananas. If one has too many sweet potatoes and another has plenty of tomatoes, we will exchange. I started working here when I was small. It's just like that.

When we were children, this fence was already there." She points to the other side of the fence to an area that had once been cultivated by the mothers of her family. "We were young when the game reserve started. We were growing food on that side when they put up the fence. There we used to eat the fruit from trees called *umKhuhlu*[17] and *umKhiwane*.[18] Then the police came and took all our things and threw us out. Here, we have little land, so we have to plant everything together."

Listening to the way that the women describe their fields, I begin to appreciate how land exists for them not as fixed functional spaces but as entangled intersections of multiple trajectories. Traversing long distances from their homes to their various fields is a daily performance that weaves women into a rhythm of women's histories and relationships. Here, the social allocation of space, though regulated through male lineages, rarely involves men in an everyday practical sense. Rather, the patchwork of fields is an intricate map of co-wives, in-laws, and female relatives, living and dead, each codified in a web of relationships that are inscribed on the ground.

In her analysis of gendered spatial mapping, Shirley Ardener (1993)[19] argues that while women in patrilineal societies may not control physical spaces directly, they nevertheless become mediators in the allocation of space, using the product of their labor to negotiate gender relationships. Similarly, Melissa Leach (1992) maintains that while men in West Africa fill "genealogical spaces," women are not only genealogically positioned by these spaces but consolidate them through their physical and everyday relations to land. Her work with Mende farmers in Sierra Leone reveals that where men divide up spaces, "women move in areas within and between the spaces, a fluid movement, managing in the face of uncertainty but seizing opportunities so created" (88). Relating these ideas to gendered spatialities in southern Mozambique, Heidi Gengenbach (1998, 17) notes that women's relationships to land privilege practical experiences over normative principles of land tenure, grounding their claims in their own work and in teachings passed on to them by mothers and grandmothers. For Gengenbach, as for others such as Sarah Whatmore (2002), Ingold (2011a, 2011b), and Jan Bender Shetler (2007), analysis of everyday performative relationships with place reveals how land takes on different meanings and agency when translated through its qualities and capacities, and through attendant relationships of exchange and service. As Bender Shelter (2007) writes about women's knowledge in western Serengeti:

> They [women] keep and transmit knowledge by the paths they walk each day and the positions they occupy in the imagined male and female spaces that

> permeate their world. Women may learn some of men's knowledge about the past, but they do not transmit those stories in the narrative style of men or in the formal setting of men's courtyard meetings. Their knowledge about community relationships and genealogies is, however, critical to understanding the imagined landscapes shared with men, even though it does not appear in the formal narratives. A gendered analysis of oral tradition is necessary for finding its historical meaning. (12)

One day, while I was sitting with the women in Usuthu Gorge, the following conversation ensued:

"We are proud of our land because it has nice trees, grass, and animals," said Bellinah. "We work hard to bring up our children. Our role as women is to work in our fields, grow food, and provide for our families. These things that we are talking about (fields, vegetables) are things that make us proud."

I ask what happens to those women who don't marry or have children, and my question elicits an emphatic response: "*Akubukeki!*" says one, it doesn't look good; it is not admired!

"You are a nothing if you don't marry," corroborates Mampolwane. "Everyone can say what they like about you. How can you not have a man at the house? Even if your husband has passed away, you have to stay and support your children. You have to be proud of yourself that you are the wife of the family."

Their comments reveal the hegemonic constructs that still dictate their lives and their world. The women sing the following song to explain the dilemma as they see it, their citizenship dependent still on patriarchal authority, identity, and land tenure arrangements.

> *Kodwa uthembeni uma unqaba indoda*
> *Uzosizwa ngubani uma unqaba indoda*
> (If you don't accept the man, who are you going to depend on?
> Who is going to help you?)

In reality, labor migrancy and AIDS have had a shattering impact on marriages and families. Today, there is a high rate of woman-headed households in the region and, correspondingly, an assortment of adjustments made to accommodate women's rights and status. I persist: "But what does happen to those women who don't marry or have children?"

"They have to go to town!" Mampolwane stands her ground. "They can't stay here!"

I know that with time, this response will fragment, just as did their in-

sistence on their exclusive identity as Zulu. However, I try a different line of inquiry and ask about the evocation of town as morally other. "If all of your children leave to work in *Egoli* [Johannesburg], what will happen to the way you are living now, to the pride you feel in your land and in your labor?"

Mampolwane answers: "First, you wouldn't be proud of yourself as a woman if *all* your children left home. With this [younger] generation, it is acceptable to find work in the cities to make money to help your family. The problem is when they leave and never come back; when they don't visit the family, or help them financially."

I explain that I am asking these questions because having spent years talking to the women and walking with them to their fields, I have become aware of how their lives and those of their families are so implicated with their land and natural resources. "You have your homes and every day you walk past here to your fields," I say. "You know the way so intimately, and you have just told me that your fields are the source of deep personal pride and your sense of belonging. The land is the basis of your culture, your history, your identity."

"There is an important song that we used to sing as young girls when there was an infestation of locusts in the fields," offers Makapazane, drawing on my reference to women's embodied association with natural resources:

> *Nono no sijibela nono! Famba nono!*
> (Locusts, we are chasing away the locusts! Go away, locusts!)

She explains: "In the old days when the locusts came, everyone had to remain in their houses except for the girls. They had to run out into the fields with no clothes on and frighten them away with their song. The insects would jump into the river or fly north across the Usuthu River to Mozambique. Then the girls would collect pumpkins, maize, and other vegetables. They would make a fire and throw the vegetables into it. This way, they would be sure that the locusts would never return."

I am intrigued by the suggestion that the girls would literally shame the insects with their bodies. "Its true," Bellinah insists; "the insects would not leave if the girls were not naked!"

"This is an old law," Mampolwane explains. "Girls had to do this because it was they who worked the fields. Boys would not have the same effect because they work with cattle. They wouldn't understand these things." She resumes our earlier conversation: "We know that life changes and we have

to accept that. As I am here at home, I am wearing a long skirt and sitting on a mat. When our daughters come back, they will be wearing trousers and high shoes. They will ask to sit on a chair."

"The bigger problem is that young people don't even like the food from our fields these days," bemoans old Makete. "They don't want our groundnuts and wild spinach. They want maize meal from [ground by] machines. They want to eat rice and buy paraffin. Young people today don't like to work as we do."

## Multiple Languages, One Place

We come to the last fields, which are enclosed by an old veterinarian fence that runs parallel to the Usuthu River. Originally constructed to stop the spread of rinderpest (foot-and-mouth disease) by cattle wandering across from Mozambique, the fence tells a story of different times and changing frontier controls. Today, its sagging, rusted filaments serve ironically to signal the most westerly border crossing at the river where a small boat, operated by two young men, transports people back to Mozambique after a day's shopping in Ndumo. While the men cautiously carry one load across strong, menacing currents, a group of passengers sits patiently on the bank with bags of maize meal, cooking oil, and sugar, waiting their turn.

"They built these fences to protect against the cattle," explains Mampolwane, using the word *ucinwo* (wire) to imply the fence, but applying the alveolar *q* click (*uqinwo*) instead of the dental click *c*, as would be used in Zulu. Mduduzi laughs and points out that he finds it difficult to understand her when she uses Shangane (Tsonga) pronunciations. "It is because we are in the middle, Mdu! Mozambique, Zulu, and Swaziland, there!" Mampolwane responds lightheartedly, pointing north, south, and west respectively. The subject of borderland identities and their manifestation in language is frequently raised in our discussions, particularly as it reflects women's spatial histories. Induna Ngwenya from Eziphosheni once explained:

> The people living in this place are very mixed: Zulu, Swazi, and Tsonga. If you listen to us, you can hear that we don't speak proper Zulu. When we speak Zulu, it is mixed. That means that we understand all of these languages. Some can even speak languages from Mozambique. We can speak Swazi; we can speak Zulu. That means that we are a bit of everything, even though this place is under Zulu "rule." It's just like that. Even the Traditional Authority is divided into two parts. The people up there in Emanyiseni—the Nyasa—they

> live close to Swaziland. They buy at the shop of KwaMatata, which is the shop that used to be here.[20] Those people are linked more closely with Swaziland and Swazi culture. Down here, we are more closely associated with Zulu. In Usuthu, they don't speak Shangane; they speak Thonga and isiGashe. It is only if you go deeper into Mozambique that you will find Shangane. (Personal communication, Eziphosheni, 15 July 2004)

The women's treatment of language is different from that of men, reflecting different geographic roots and mobilities. However, it took a long while before the women were prepared to discuss these complexities with me. Their initial claim to Zulu identity was obviously a hangover from the 1980s when the KwaZulu "Homeland" government reclassified all Maputaland inhabitants as ethnically Zulu (see chapter 4). It may also have been an opportunistic move on their part to authorize their citizenship as South African—as opposed to Swazi or Mozambican—which endorsed their right to own land in South Africa and to access government benefits.[21]

Some months earlier, while sitting in our usual meeting place beside a cluster of homesteads in Usuthu Gorge, I asked the women whether they considered their songs to be Zulu or a mixture of many languages.

"We play only Zulu music!" Mampolwane's insisted. "The Swazis play only their music and the Mozambicans play theirs!"

"But once you told me that when you go somewhere new and you like the music, you simply take those songs," I respond.

"It's not easy! It is difficult to sing *that* language," she explains, pointing north to Mozambique and referring to Shangane (Tsonga). "We may not share languages, but we listen to one another's cassettes [songs]. But sometimes it is difficult. You see, Sotho, Xhosa, Tswana, we don't understand those languages, but we used to work with those people in the cotton fields [as forced labor], so we learned their songs. We couldn't understand them, but we picked them up anyway. Now *those*, we don't understand!" she says imitating the Shangane (Tsonga) popular music that she hears beamed in on shortwave radio from Maputo, making fun of the distinctive high-pitched vocals and rapid rhythms produced on overworked drum machines. Her imitations are shrill and meticulously observed, and we fall about laughing.[22]

Makete joins in: "We often hear them. Their drums go gum-gum-gum-gum . . ." and she imitates the pitched resonance of drums heard at night way off across the floodplains, suggesting a lack of understanding of the music.

"Are your customs very different from theirs?" I ask skeptically.

Agnes responds abstrusely: "We don't know their things because we don't know them!"

Eventually Makapazane concedes that there are some similarities with the cultural practices across the border: "Girls' puberty rituals are the same; marriage ceremonies are the same. We also have *amakoti* [practices governing relations with mothers-in-law]. Their dances are different from ours, and they dance with *ilala* [palm leaf skirts]. But their culture has changed, just as ours has."

"Is it acceptable for you to marry into families in Mozambique?" I ask.

"Yes! Yes! And we are free to marry across the Pongola River. The same would go for Swaziland," replies Makapazane.

"So why then do you call yourselves Zulu, if you are really so mixed?" I persist.

Sthivile remains evasive: "We are originally Zulu people. We don't know the music or languages on that side [Mozambique]. When a person talks, you can only look at him."

I decide to play devil's advocate: "Yes, but if you play *isitweletwele*, there is no language. Could you not simply borrow those sounds?"

"No! No!" Mampolwane corrects me. "Even if there are no words, the sounds come from our language. If you don't understand the language, you can't make the changes [pitch intonation based on language equivalence]. You have to know how to control the sounds. If you don't know how to control them, you will play nonsense!"

I push on: "Then what about *umakhweyana* [gourd bow]? I know that it is also played in Swaziland."

"Yes, but that instrument is easier because it is the same," she explains, implying that Swazi and Zulu gourd bow practices are almost identical and that their languages are close enough to have little influence on their respective melodies.[23]

The women demonstrate the similarities by singing songs that they consider interchangeably Swazi and Zulu. The first comprises a short, rhythmically clipped phrase, reminiscent of a typical *isitweletwele* melody from the region:

> *Woza! Silale mkhwenyana* (Come here! Let's sleep, my husband).

Makapazane sings a more detailed song:

> *Wo ngilal'ebaleni nabozingane kungibangela bunzima*
> (I slept on the open ground with my children; that was difficult)

Although described as Swazi, the song is structurally indistinguishable from the *umakhweyana* gourd bow pieces that I recorded many decades previously in northern Zululand, where the melody typically starts in an upper register and slowly tumbles down a scale constructed of consecutive fourths. As with those songs, the women immediately join in a chorus, the two phrases overlapping in a compact, effortless cycle, the vocals replicating what would likely have been the melody produced by the harmonics emanating from the gourd resonator. The piece comprises a fixed sequence of paired phrases that make up a "strophe"; while the main melody may change slightly, the lyrics and chorus remain the same.

When the song ends, Makapazane attempts to clarify the apparent confusion about language, making evident that linguistic variation is directly linked to women's spatial mobilities: "You see, I come from here, but my mother was from Swaziland. She talked with *tsi*[24] and she played *umakhweyana*. When I go to Swaziland, I speak as the Swazis speak because I learned the language from my mother. When I'm here, I speak Zulu."

"She used to live in Swaziland," Mampolwane reiterates. "That song she was singing, she learned from her uncle's house." I notice that her original assertion about linguistic distinction and its association to fixed geographical points is beginning to unravel.

Makapazane continues: "When I go to Mozambique, I know how to greet in their language: *xewani* [good morning]; *khanimambo* [thank you]. I don't speak Portuguese, but I do understand it. In my family, my grandmother spoke Thonga [Tembe-Thonga]. We used to say, 'but what do you mean, *gogo* [grandmother]?' and she would have to explain. So I grew up also speaking that language. It was a mix. Maybe a man had a girlfriend who was from across the river [Mozambique] who spoke a different language. After he proposed to her, she would have to come to live here with her husband's family. She would come with her language, and others would begin to understand it. She would also learn a new language. The men would take wives from far away, so that is how they learned to speak different languages."

"Here, we know how to greet Mozambicans in their language, and we can talk to the people from close by in Mozambique." Mampolwane explains, submitting now to a very different scenario. "Those who come from deep inside Mozambique speak different languages."

MaShongane says: "This is a song that we sang to accompany ourselves when we pounded maize with a pestle and mortar. We used to go to the other side [Mozambique], so we learned this song from them. We also learned it from people visiting here." She sings a song in Shangane (Tsonga) and the others join in:

*Tuloo Anishavanga!* (I did not buy)
*Tuloo kamalume* (At my uncle's house)
*Hho siyathlamula ugamtili* (We are cutting the gum [eucalyptus] tree)

"I have never lived in Mozambique, but part of my family was from there," Makete offers. "Some have come across to this side, but some remain there. In Mozambique, people speak Zulu because they have worked in the mines in Johannesburg. When they took the buses to Johannesburg, the men would come via Ndumo, so that is how we heard those languages." She sings:

*Lekelela, lekelela* [Zulu] *Xikwembu* [Shangane/Tsonga]
(Help me, help me, God of mine)
*Mai babe!* [Swazi 'babe' instead of Zulu 'baba']
(Oh father!)
*Lomfana uhlala dakiwe* [Zulu]
(This boy is always drunk!)

Just as we are beginning to untangle the fluidity of familial and linguistic relationships, a group of Mozambican women pass by on their way to the Usuthu River crossing, and the women launch into a long and involved discussion.

I am reminded of how the women in Eziphosheni had exhibited a similar resistance to the notion of cultural and linguistic fluidity. One day, when I asked them why it was that people in Durban and Johannesburg viewed people from this region as inferior, MaFambile offered the following explanation: "It's just like that. When I go to Durban and I speak, people will say 'Oh! You are Thonga!' I don't like to be called that! It's the same with Shangane. It's something in us; we feel inferior. We are not regarded as good people, so we try to be thought of as something else."[25]

Yet these cultural entanglements are profoundly part of their borderland identity, and someone remembers the following song, which they all sing with a great sense of celebration:

*Yithi amaZulu* (We are Zulus)
*Sesenza okwakithi kwaZulu* (We do our Zulu things)
*Yithi eSwazini* (We are Swazis)
*Sesenza okwakithi seSwazini* (We do our Swazi things)
*Yithi KaNgwane* (We are Ngwane)
*Sesenza okwakithi KaNgwane* (We do our Ngwane things)

## Longer Phrases, Different Steps

It is late afternoon in Usuthu Gorge. As we head back up the gravel road toward the homesteads, several women begin to play *isitweletwele*, evidently unperturbed by the soft cacophony of melodies that whirl and collide with each other. There is something strangely normal about their performance. It is as if they have slipped back into a coordinated end-of-day routine from some forty years ago, when they used the rhythm of their walking songs to propel them homeward after a long day's work in the fields. After some time, MaShongane confirms my observation: "We used to play *isitweletwele* like this when we returned to our homes at sunset after working in the fields. After we finished our work at home around seven o'clock, we would play again. And when we went to fetch water, we would play again. Late at night when we went to *esigcawini* [the place of *isigcawu*] to dance, we played again."

Mampolwane joins in the discussion: "We learned to play these songs in the fields when we were young girls. After that, we cooked and cooked and cooked and cooked. Then in the evening, after we had completed our work, we would go to the forest with those boys who knew how to catch birds. We would go to sing and dance and whistle. Even our boyfriends would be dancing! That's what happened when we were girls. We were the last generation to play *isitweletwele* and to dance at *esigcawini*."

Stories about *amaculo manihamba* invariably involve departures, routes, and destinations. As musical conduits, the songs naturally emerged from one set of experiences and transported women to another. One frequently recounted destination was *esigcawini*, where young people would gather on bright moonlit nights or on special occasions, such as the annual return of men from work in the mines in Johannesburg. People would walk up to twenty-five kilometers across the landscape to attend these events, which would take place close to a group of homesteads (*imizi*), a trading store (*istolo*), or a similar place marker. Here, girls would perform circular *ingadla* dance songs, while the boys danced *isizingili* in a separate space to the accompaniment of *isighubu* (small drum played on its side) and *ingulule* (friction drum).

*Isigcawu* gatherings provided the social bedrock of exogamous marriage, which is still strictly observed in these parts. While all Nguni cultures may adhere to the practice of exogamy, in western Maputaland, marrying outside of one's district was particularly observed as a strategy to survive the strains of unpredictable environmental conditions. *Isigcawu* gatherings were considered of particular importance as they provided the social context where

young people could meet others from distant localities and begin to explore initial attachments. During a discussion about *isigcawu* with the Eziphosheni women one day, MaFambile explained the central role it played in the lives of young people:

> *Isigcawu* was so important to us in those days. When we walked to *esigcawini*, we would walk playing *isitweletwele*. We visited different *isigcawu* (pl. *izigcawu)* to gather together more and more songs. We visited so many places. When we got there, the boys would dance on one side and the girls would be on the other. When we were tired of dancing, we would come together and make a fire and we would cook birds and eat honey. In the time of the aloe [i.e., winter, when the *Aloe marlothii* is in flower] you could catch many birds. The boys would bring *isikhwehle* [crested francolin], *unkombose* [Namaqua dove], *umjombo* [red-faced mousebird], *intengu* [forked-tailed drongo], and *amakwezi* [glossy starling]. There were no schools then so *isigcawu* was a place where we learned things. It was our backbone [*umgogodlo wetu*]; everything started from there. We learned *ukusina* [dance], *isitweletwele*, and *amaculo* [songs]. We would choose a big tree or a place near to the homesteads. People would come from Embondweni and 'Eposheni. They would walk on the pathways through the bush when the moon was full.
>
> If your boyfriend was working in Johannesburg, he might be gone for up to two years. When he returned, he would send his sisters to his girlfriend's house. The sisters would return home to announce his arrival, and they would call other girls to arrange *isigcawu*. That would give us the occasion to be with our boyfriends while the other girls played at *isigcawu*. In the morning, both of you would come out and the girls would greet the boyfriend. We would go to the store at Ndumo to eat sugar and we would dance *ingadla*. The boys would wear *amahiya* [cloth]; later they wore trousers from *elungwini* [the place of the white (official) people]. When we gathered at the dance ceremony, the girls would wear their traditional attire. After that, we would go and sit at the Ingwavuma River at the Sidlakhona Bridge. Others would be watching and ask you what you were doing. We would stay all night and return in the morning. Many of us met our husbands at *esigcawini*.

Although no longer practiced, *izigcawu* (pl.) were fundamental to women's memories of spatiality, sociality, and musical expression, and reminiscences about walking songs regularly ended up in descriptions—and lengthy demonstrations—of these gatherings. In Usuthu Gorge, Makapazane once shared her reminiscences of the event: "I haven't forgotten my story. I remember when we began to go to *esigcawini*. We would do our work at home

and in the evening we would call each other and make a fire at *esigcawini*." She demonstrated the call that they would make to alert young people in the vicinity of the impending dance. It was unlike anything I had ever heard in southern Africa, delivered as a series of high-pitched falsetto whoops, more reminiscent in their sonority and reverberation to people calling in the rainforests of Central Africa or Papua New Guinea. Here, they had none of the acoustical advantages of the thick rainforest canopy to amplify or sustain the sounds, however, and relied only on the wind and expansive surfaces of water to project their voices across the wide-open landscape. When a woman began to call, others would respond accordingly, their voices resounding eerily across the dark savannah night.

"At that time, we had boyfriends of birds," Makapazane continued. "They were just playful boyfriends. We would go to *esigcawini* [the place of the *isigcawu* dance gathering] with *bhatata* [sweet potatoes], *umoba* [sugarcane], and other food for the boys. When we were tired of playing, we would cook. Each girl and her boyfriend had their own fire. To say that we ate the birds doesn't mean that I had to give myself to him. We were not used to that thing [physical contact]. It was only when we grew up that we found real boyfriends."

Thokozile added her story: "I was proud of myself when I was a girl. When my boyfriend arrived [at our homestead], my younger sisters would see him and say 'Oh! This person looks like our sister's boyfriend!' and they would go to him. He would ask to speak to me. I would tell my sisters that I was working and didn't have time for him. I would stay at home and later I would take *ukamba* [clay pot] to collect water at the river and I would find him waiting for me. We would talk and talk and talk. After some time, I would say, 'Don't waste my time! Can't you see that I have work to do?' In the evening, we would come together again at *esigcawini*. We would have 'boyfriends of the birds' and each girl would sit with her boyfriend. He would never touch you. If a person asked for 'fruit' [sex], we would tell him that we are only playing birds here. It is not good to be a person who wants to 'help' everyone. We were very respectful then."

"All of this has changed," old Makete muttered disparagingly, her criticism typical of old people nostalgic for another time. "Today young people meet at school and a boy will simply propose to a girl on *i-over* [mobile phone]."[26]

*Ingadla* dances were performed in a circle; each participant took a turn in the center, either individually or in pairs,[27] where they would show off their dexterous footwork (*ukudliba*) and dramatize humorous events, while their friends sang, clapped, ululated, and cajoled from the outer circle. These

songs were more rhythmically, melodically, and lyrically complex than *isitweletwele* melodies, but were inextricably linked to walking songs, whose principal performance context was the bush paths that wove across the landscape and connected fields and homesteads to *esigcawini*.

While spatiality is invoked in the circulation of *ingadla* gatherings and in their memorialization as "faraway," it is more specifically the tonality and style of this dance-song practice that speak to the geographical mobilities of its performers. Unlike the *isitweletwel*e melodies, which strongly invoke Nguni (Swazi/Zulu) tonalities and are characterized by short, interweaving ostinato phrases and a descending melodic contour (Rycroft 1967, 91; Impey 1981), *ingadla* songs comprised tight semitone melodic progressions, delivered in a consistently high-pitched, pinched vocal register, which is reminiscent of Shangane (Tsonga) musical styles from southern Mozambique. Structurally, the songs consisted of a lead singer, whose melodic line would be repeated by a chorus, though enunciated in vocables only. The songs are divided into two rhythmic sections. The first consists of a basic overlapping call-response phrase that would be repeated several times, supported by fast regular clapping. The second—cued by a whistle—comprised the same antiphonal arrangement, but was divided into irregularly accented clap patterns that provided the structural framework for intricate footwork.

Unsurprisingly, the songs dealt with courtship and marriage, though underlying the narrative fragments in the following two examples is an ambivalence about modernity, which is considered threatening to these institutions and to the singers' status as women. Each song would be embellished by a long chorus of vocables:

> *Ngoba ngimuqomile akananko*mo *uzongilobola ngani. Yisimanjemanje!*
> (If I accept him and he doesn't have cows, how is he going to *lobola* [dowry] me? It is the modern thing!)

and

> *Udokotela akananko*mo*!* (The doctor doesn't have any cows!)[28]

## Final Steps

As we proceed on the last leg of our walk, the long shadows of the afternoon are beginning to fade. Small flocks of hadeda ibis call out insistently as they fly overhead: *Nga nga hamba! Nga nga hamba!* (We are going! We are going

home!). We hear the last cries of fish eagles that are nesting in the wild fig trees beside the Usuthu River. High above us, flocks of pelicans float this way and that, gently following the wind.

Suddenly we are confronted by a soldier who appears from out of nowhere. Immediately I switch off my video camera and slide it behind my back. I am all too familiar with officialdom in these parts and am not about to test the limits of this large military man who is clearly in the mood to assert his authority. He asks why we have not sought his permission to walk in the area: "Everybody who walks on this border has to report to me!" he roars, pointing in the direction of his camp, which is hidden behind thick bush. I apologize and tell him that we have walked on this road many times but were unaware that there was such a protocol, or indeed that his camp even existed. Unconvinced, he turns his aggression on Mduduzi: "But this young man should know!" he persists, clearly unaware that Mduduzi is not a resident of the area. When his accusations become threatening, the women quietly encircle Mduduzi and speak on his behalf. Their coordinated action makes it evident that they are accustomed to talking their way out of aggressive confrontations with authority, and their appeasements are cool, almost nonchalant. The bellowing soldier loses his edge and backs down. As he makes his way back through the thick foliage, I catch a glimpse of some of the women's daughters who have taken up residence in the military camp. The women watch and murmur softly: "We try to tell them to stay away from the soldiers, but how else can they make money out here?"

For a while we stand about silently, recovering from the abrupt reentry into the realities of life in the borderlands today. However, when we proceed, I notice that the women's body language has changed. Makapazane, Manoni, and Bellinah begin to play *isitweletwele*, and their instruments are unexpectedly in tune. They walk-dance along the road, shuffling their feet on the stony gravel to add percussive weight to their song, swaying their bodies to the rhythm. The others follow suit, dancing a few steps forward and then drawing back, forward and back. There is a hint of defiance in their steps, and Mduduzi points out that their comportment suddenly appears to be that of much younger women. They play the song *Woza! Hlal'ehlanzeni!* (Come here! Stay in the wilderness!), and the rest of the crew sings back the chorus. Mampolwane laughs rebelliously and shouts over the singing, retrieving the thread of our previous conversation: "Hey! This helped to ease the tiredness when we returned home from our fields!"

We continue for some time, almost running now in single file. When the gradient of the road becomes steeper, the pace slows down. Makapazane and Manonyi continue playing *isitweletwele*, and the others stop and cluster

around them. The melody mutates into a wedding song, and the women slowly dance into a circle, singing back the chorus:

*Ngoba ukhalelani?* (Why are you crying?)
*Khalela intombi ingalile* (I'm crying for the girl that has left me)
*Khomba mkhwenyana!* (Say it, my son-in-law!)

I notice that old Makete does not join in at first but observes from a distance, assessing the performance with the critical authority of old age. I am concerned that the walk has been too much for her, but suddenly she rushes into the center of the circle, brandishing a stick as is the tradition of a wedding dance, and lifting high her wafer-thin legs with surprising vigor:

*Lekelela S'bali* (Help, brother-in-law)
*Lomfana uhlala edakiwe!* (This boy is always drunk!)
*Nangu omakoti! Shi hha!* (There is the bride! Shi hha!)

The creative energy among the women intensifies, and they sing for a long while, experimenting with their movements and gradually synchronizing their intricate footwork, letting their collective bodies do the remembering. It is a transcendent moment, their memories seeming to transport them into long-buried times and spaces, removing them fleetingly from the realities of their present. When the dance finally comes to an end, they hang onto one another, breathless and giggling conspiratorially, just as they might have when they were young.

"We are reminding one another about the songs we used to sing together!" shouts Mampolwane. "Our daughters don't know these dances; they only learn things from school!"

Makete, bending over to catch her breath, shouts, "Hey, don't forget that we still have to run up that hill!" Undeterred, the others slowly proceed up the road, trying out a few familiar melodies, hanging on to the residues of the moment and seemingly lost in thought. Gradually a song coalesces and the others join in, picking up pace to reinforce the rhythm of the song:

*Wayi lahla ngani emasimeni* (She left/lost her child in the field)

Makete, clearly reenergized by the afternoon's performance and not yet ready to give up, rushes to the front of the group, and using her stick to support her old bones, heads up the procession as we run-dance our way back to the homesteads.

FOUR

# Cartographic Encounters

## *Settling the Southeast African Border*

> In the 'eighties of last century, Northern Zululand was a sort of Alsatia where the Queen's writ did not run. It was a refuge for lawless characters who lived by the chase and levying tribute of corn and cattle from the natives.
>
> (Reitz 1999, 383)

There is an uncanny uniformity in the way that western Maputaland is depicted in the scattering of oral histories, European travelers' memoirs, and official records that date back to the mid-sixteenth century. As a region that encompasses a naturally defined geographical trough, it has repeatedly offered its mountain caves as protection to the battle weary, its valleys as temporary refuge for cattle raided or retrieved in battle, its malarial floodplains as a zone of alienation, and its waterways as easy access into and escape from the interior. For most of its documented history, therefore, Maputaland has functioned as a transitory passage, a land beyond the command of chiefs, governments, and regional authorities, a place in between.

Narratives of European occupation from the more recent past are similarly congruent. They begin by extolling the region's abundant natural resources and by praising its teaming herds, saturated soils, and bountiful river systems. However, as with the circular movement of water when the tide turns and opposing currents meet, they invariably conclude with descriptions of dramatic departure, impelled by capricious environmental conditions, fatal tropical diseases, and famine.

As the region is prone to severe flooding and drought and offers neither sweet grasses nor soil suitable for sustained agriculture, those who adapted to its natural oscillations relied as their principal source of survival on a

combination of territorial rootedness and localized mobility. This mutability between sedentism and regional migration was fundamental to every aspect of people's lives: it determined short- and long-term livelihood practices, shaped lineage, marriage, and residence patterns, and became deeply inscribed in cultural identities.

While the contemporary boundaries between Swaziland, Mozambique, and South Africa may be traced to official agreements between Portuguese, Boer, and British in the late 1800s, the lines of demarcation reflect political coalitions and ruptures that predate European occupation by centuries. This chapter will trace the vacillating currents in western Maputaland's geopolitical history and examine how the ebb and flow of alliances and hostilities between multiple intersecting powers culminate in the national borders as we know them today. It draws on John Rennie Short's book *Cartographic Encounters: Indigenous Peoples and the Exploration of the New World* (2009), which argues that contemporary state demarcations in North America and the antipodes must be ascribed to much more than brute force alone. Rather, territoriality grew out of both contestation and mutual reliance between interest groups, impelled by a combination of needs, environmental constraints, and economic opportunities. Short's notion of "encounter" is particularly applicable to western Maputaland, where the dynamic interaction between multiple polities displaces the Eurocentric notion of "discovery" that is so often invoked in southeast African historiography. Equally, in keeping with critical studies in the anthropology of empire, the concept of encounter challenges traditional understandings of hegemonic power, leading to a more nuanced set of dynamics in the construction of colonial control based on a combination of force, negotiation, vulnerability, and opportunism (Cooper and Stoler 1997, qtd. P. Gupta 2009).

## Precolonial Assemblages

Disentangling the histories of western Maputaland highlights the complexity of state borderlands as places of research, where the trope of fixedness and flow aptly conveys their inherent irrationality as places that at once separate and connect (Nugent and Asiwaju 1996a; 1996b). Borders represent a clash of endings and exist as places of "incommensurable contradictions" (Bhabha 1989, 67; A. Gupta and Ferguson 1997). At once politically overdefined and more socially imprecise than other geographic spaces, they are distinguished by an inherent tension between distinct national demarcation and fluid, arbitrary citizenship. Accordingly, while borderlands sig-

nify spaces where territoriality may be amplified, the corollary is that the histories, identities, and experiences of the people who inhabit them often remain conspicuously silent.[1]

Attempting to reconstruct the precolonial histories of a trilateral frontier is complicated further by the way that they have been inscribed by three distinct official narratives. Although each may allow for some geopolitical "overflow," these accounts are essentially refracted through discrete nationalist prisms and brought into focus through purposeful silences and erasures. Concerned principally with heroic figures and territorial victories, they reveal little about the everyday experiences of the people who inhabit the interstices, or of the ways in which modern state boundaries have served to define, constrain, or benefit them.

The image that may best describe the precolonial history of the western Maputaland borderlands is that of a vortex that has been transacted by periodic waves of political turbulence and has encircled the region for centuries. Rather than describing something undisciplined or irrational, the vortex is a metaphor for a dynamically stable pattern in turbulent conditions. It comprises complexly interwoven dynamics in which there is no rigidness or predesigned boundaries, but which is centered and creates and preserves emergent forces. Five rival clans were caught up in this disturbance, all of whom were to preside over the northern Zululand, Swaziland, and southern Mozambique triangle at one time or another from the mid-sixteenth century (Dominy 1983). These included:

the Mabudu-Tembe (referred also as Tembe, Tonga, or Thonga), associated with the coastal region south of Delagoa Bay
the Ngwane (later known as Dlamini-Ngwane or Swazi), associated with territory west of the Lebombo Mountains in what is current Swaziland
the Zulu (Mthethwa clan), associated with Zululand, south of the Pongola River
the Ndwandwe, associated with the region north of the Pongola River
the Shangane/Tsonga (known also as Ngoni or Gaza Ngoni), associated with territory north of Delagoa Bay

The impetus for political transformation in southeast Africa has been the subject of much academic debate over the years and is generally attributed to a combination of population expansion, ecological pressure, and trade. Philip Bonner (1983) and D. W. Hedges (1978) ascribe precolonial political change to ecological circumstances, which necessitated the regular move-

ment of people between wetter coastal regions and drier uplands, which in turn promoted local trade. Linked to this were the demands for more efficient food production due to population growth, and to the need for a more effective labor force than could be provided by local lineages (Bonner 1983, 13). These factors gave rise to a system of political control based on forced labor and tribute payment, a system that dominated the region until the early nineteenth century, forcing clans and chieftaincies into constantly shifting coalitions and contestations (Dominy 1983).[2]

This mutability was represented in the constitution of the clans themselves, which Henri A. Junod maintained existed as little more than ideological constructs, providing their members "with a sense of temporal and spatial belonging by fitting them into a range of accepted social relationships. . . . A high degree of social segmentation and migration ensured that no clan was of 'pure' descent or occupied one contiguous territory" (1927, 1: 158–59).

Exogenous trade had considerable influence on the politics of the region and intensified with the arrival of the Portuguese in northern Mozambique (Ilha de Moçambique) in the 1500s. While their territorial claim was extended southward only some two hundred years later (McGregor 1994), to compensate for weak military capability, the Portuguese relied on trade to extend their influence in the region, strategically forging alliances with dominant lineages to secure access to ivory, slaves, and gold and to ensure safe passage inland. In turn, local lineages competed for monopoly over the lucrative interregional trade with the Portuguese, using the relationship to leverage political power and drive their own expansionist agendas. In time, the Portuguese exploited escalating tensions between these groups to reinforce their position in the region and in particular to protect their commercial interests in Delagoa Bay against encroaching competition from the British and Dutch (Dominy 1983; Etherington 1979; Hedges 1978).[3]

Most Portuguese trade during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries followed a north-south axis. The success of their endeavors was guaranteed by their deployment of the coastal people to the immediate south of Delagoa Bay as trade intermediaries with more powerful clans in the south (Hedges 1978).[4] Trade relations with the Portuguese played a pivotal role in consolidating these Delagoa groups under the Tembe chiefdom (Kloppers 2001, 57). However, they were equally responsible for competition over leadership within the chiefdom and for the subsequent ascendency in the mid-eighteenth century of the Mabudu clan. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Mabudu-Tembe (a designation I will use from now) had

amassed an impressive military capability, extending their sphere of influence from Delagoa Bay to Lake St. Lucia in the south, and from the Pongola River in the west to the Indian Ocean.

Trade played an equally significant role in consolidating the power of several other dominant clans, many of whom challenged Mabudu-Tembe authority at one time or another, each attempt setting in motion new waves of regional migration that continued late into the nineteenth century (Kloppers 2003, 28).

The first to challenge the Madubu-Tembe were the Ngwane (later known as Swazi), a dominant lineage who inhabited the area to the west of the Lebombo Mountains. Their advance on Delagoa Bay in the early 1800s resulted in fleeting domination over the coastal region. The Mabudu-Tembe, anxious to wrest back privileged trade relations with the Portuguese, leveraged power by entering a tribute relationship with the powerful Zulu who were extending their influence from the south (Kloppers 2001, 65).

The Ngwane were consequently impelled southwest, where they met their match in the Ndwandwe, a powerful sub-Nguni clan who presided over the northern reaches of the Pongola River (Bonner 1983). Unable to hold their own against the Ndwandwe, the Ngwane were duly forced back north across the Lebombo Mountains, where they settled in the territory now known as Swaziland.

Having ejected the Ngwane, the Ndwandwe themselves fell prey to the Zulu *mfecane*, the fiercely expansionist campaign that was being waged from the south by the Zulu king Shaka.[5] Shaka's ferocity was such that it prompted a senior Ndwandwe general, Soshangane, to flee northward, taking with him a large group of followers and eventually settling north of Delagoa Bay in the province of Gaza. Here he carved out a powerful empire, fashioning distinct ritual practices to reinforce the parameters of his political influence and establishing his own language, Shangane or Shangane-Tsonga (Harries 1994, 5).

The Shangaan people (known also as Shangaan/Tsonga, Gaza, or Gaza Ngoni) were not interested in occupying the malarial marshlands south of Delagoa Bay but relied rather on a system of raiding and tribute payment to sustain their dominance in the region (Harries 1994, 5). Harries's description of the malleability of the Gaza clan during this period resonates with that noted earlier by Junod:

> The chiefdom was an open institution attracting and incorporating outsiders prepared to *kondza* [pledge allegiance to] the chief. It was thus able to absorb the many refugees and other in-migrants displaced by famine, soil exhaus-

> tion, and warfare, together with those fleeing from ritual contamination with death, disease and witchcraft. The point is that political institutions such as the chiefdom, and at a more local level the homestead, were corporate groups well adapted to handle and contain large numbers of uprooted people. (Harries 1994, 6)

Having displaced the Ndwandwe, Shaka set his sights on the Ngwane (Swazi) on the other side of the Lebombo Mountains, who managed to defend themselves by hiding in the mountainous "caves and rocky eminences" (Bonner 1983, 39). Following Shaka's assassination in 1828, his successor and half-brother, Dingane, maintained the northern offensive, intent on expanding Zulu dominance over the entire region. However, his efforts were thwarted in 1840 by a power struggle within his own military ranks, forcing him to flee into the Lebombo Mountains, where he was murdered by a group belonging to a lesser-known clan, the Nyawo. All further efforts by successive Zulu leaders to extend their sphere of influence north of the Pongola River were blocked by Ngwane forces (Bonner 1983), rendering from this time onward the region now known as western Maputaland a political *cordon sanitaire*, a place in between.

Meteorological records from the first three decades of the nineteenth century reveal abnormally low rainfall levels across the southeast African region, resulting in severe famine and prompting widespread population dispersal. The famine had a particularly devastating effect on the inhabitants and livestock around Delagoa Bay (Ballard 1981, 108). While acute drought and disease may have weakened certain clans, it offered opportunities for the political consolidation of several others.[6] The conditions may equally have paved the way for the first European settler-traders in southeast Africa, whose arrival met with little resistance from a defeated and malnourished population (ibid.).

British settlers, attempting to escape similar severe environmental conditions in the Eastern Cape, moved into the new territories of Natal and Zululand in search of economic alternatives through trading, hunting, and commerce (Ballard 1986, 363). The cumulative effects of ecological disaster and resource depletion, together with the increasing demand for labor on newly settled land in Natal, transformed the tributary system that had existed for centuries between the Mabudu-Tembe, Zulu, and Ndwandwe, paving the way for a new set of economic relations and setting in motion new waves of political turbulence in the region.

## British and Boer Territorial Expansion from the South

South Africa in the late 1800s was divided into three European polities: the British colony in Natal, the Afrikaner republics of the Orange Free State, and the South African Republic. Although much scholarship of this period focuses on hostilities between British and Boer, the power vortex in western Maputaland involved a much wider range of players. While certain African chiefdoms were directly responsible for affecting political transformation, some, such as the Ngwane (Swazi) and the Ndwandwe, merely passed through the eye of the storm, exploiting relations with both Boer and British in the attempt to advance their own interests (M. Wilson and Thompson 1982, 334). In keeping with Short's (2009) dialogic theory of cartographic delimitation, Wilson and Thompson (1982, 335) argue that the consequences of conflict in the region did not merely produce antagonism between African and African, Boer and Briton, black and white. On the contrary, the various dispersions and regroupings resulted in a comingling of peoples and cultures and included the newly arrived white settlers, traders, and missionaries. In the following section, I explore the power dynamics that emerged from these intrusions, taking a brief step back in time to establish the context.

The roots of European settlement in South Africa are associated primarily with the establishment of a way station by the Dutch East India Company at the Cape of Good Hope in the mid-1600s. Intended merely for the supply of fresh produce to sustain Dutch maritime trade with India and Asia, the station expanded in the 1680s with the arrival of French Huguenots, whose assimilation with the Dutch resulted in the ethnolinguistic identity known as Afrikaans (the people were referred to as "Boer," meaning farmer).

In 1765, the British invaded the Cape, seizing control over maritime trade in the Indian Ocean and securing administrative control of the entire region in 1814 under an Anglo-Dutch treaty. Although European settlement had met with violent resistance by numerous indigenous groups, it was the arrival of the British that profoundly altered political relations in the region, provoked, in large part, by Britain's desire for all-out military conquest (Ross 1999, 38). Population growth, land pressure, and fundamental ideological differences prompted many thousands of Boers to migrate northward. One such group traveled northeast toward the Indian Ocean, where they met with fierce resistance from the Zulu king Dingiswayo, Shaka's predecessor. Victory over the Zulu at the legendary Battle of Blood River paved the way for the establishment of the Natalia Republic in 1839, a short-lived Boer administration that exercised control over the region south of the Tugela

River, which marked the geopolitical division between Natal and the Zulu-controlled region of Zululand.

Shortly prior to the establishment of the Natalia Republic, there was a second wave of British "assisted immigration" to South Africa resulting in the establishment of a new British settlement at Port Natal (later to be called Durban). Intent on protecting their dominance of the sea routes to the east, the British seized control of the coastal region from the Boers in 1843, successfully driving them into the interior, where they established two new Boer republics: the Orange Free State and the Transvaal (or South African Republic) (Ross 1999, 38).

Initially, Britain enjoyed cordial relations with King Shaka, who was reputed to have willingly endorsed documents that conferred on them large portions of the Natal region (M. Wilson and Thompson 1982, 348.) However, Zulu-British relations soured in the aftermath of Shaka's assassination in 1828, when his successor, Dingane, failed to absorb the trading hub of Port Natal into his sphere of influence. Britain's military advantage gradually weakened the Zulu forces over successive Zulu invasions, making way for the annexation by the British of the entire Zululand region in 1897.

With the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886, the British shifted their attention to the two Boer republics, whose economic success threatened their imperial influence in the subcontinent. Realizing that control of the gold industry was dependent upon the removal of President Paul Kruger and the Transvaal regime (Warwick 1983, 2), Britain embarked on a three-year bloody battle against the Boers in what became known as the Anglo-Boer or South African war. Britain's victory in 1902 resulted in the annexation of the two Boer republics, which were subsequently consolidated in 1910 with Britain's two other long-established colonies—the Cape Colony and the Colony of Natal—to become the Union of South Africa.[7]

## Settling the Southeast African Borders

Prior to Britain's victory in the South African war, the British had shown little interest in the area north of Zululand, which was then referred to as Tongaland (AmaTongaland). However, when it became apparent that President Kruger of the Transvaal Republic intended to establish a route from the Witwatersrand to a harbor at Kosi Bay, thus reducing commercial dependency on the British-held Port of Natal, they immediately responded by extending the border north (Bonner 1983, 117; Zimmerman and Visser 1996).

The same border had been the source of ongoing conflict between the British and the Portuguese in Mozambique, who had long disputed each

other's right to the territory south of Delagoa Bay. In 1875, the claim was submitted for arbitration to the French president Marshal MacMahon, who settled the delimitation between Mozambique and South Africa by drawing a straight line along latitude 26°30′ S inland from the Indian Ocean to the Lebombo Mountains (Kloppers 2003, 61).[8] Delagoa Bay and adjacent land to the south was duly awarded to Portugal, while the southern half of Tongaland was given over to Britain (Webster 1986, 615). However, the MacMahon award failed to take into consideration the effects of the boundary on the Mabudu-Tembe ('Tonga'), as is sardonically noted by Thomas Victor Bulpin:

> The effect of the MacMahon Award on the Tonga people themselves would have been comic if it wasn't pathetic. Far away in Paris a politician in striped pants sat down and drew a sharp line straight through their tribal possessions while they sat drinking lala wine, quarrelling over women and scratching themselves in the sun. Nobody took the trouble to inform the Tongas of the profound change in their territorial possessions. Accordingly, when the Portuguese, after a few years of enertia [*sic*], started demanding taxes on account of the Tongas now being their subjects, there was a certain amount of surprise. (Bulpin 1969, 395, qtd. Kloppers 2003, 62)

South of the border, Britain signed a treaty of amity with the Mabudu-Tembe regent, Queen Zambili, in 1887, effectively prohibiting the encroachment by the Transvaal Republic on Kosi Bay. The treaty left the status of the Transpongola chiefdoms ambiguous, however, and in 1897, Tongaland was absorbed, together with Zululand, into the self-governing Colony of Natal (Dominy and Martin 1986, 511). A more colloquial version of the border demarcation was noted in the memoir of the Ndumo-based settler-trader Louis Charles von Wissell (1895–1919), who writes:

> One day several uniformed high Portuguese naval officers appeared saying that they had come to meet the British Boundary Commission in order to fix the boundary from the junction of the Pongola with the Usutu in the latitude straight eastwards towards the Indian Ocean. Next day the British Boundary Commission appeared clad in khaki slacks and shirt. One was a Scandinavian sea-captain and the other an engineer, son of a German and a Chinese lady. Both well up to the work of defining such a simple straight line. The yarn went round that the Portuguese had their suspicions about this so informal and unconventional looking British Boundary Commission, and in order to allay such, secretly sent a special messenger to Eshowe, Government Quarters

> saying that two men giving themselves out to be the British Commissioners had presented themselves. One had the appearance of a European but spoke English with a most peculiar accent; the other was a Mongolian who however was a complete master of the language. The Portuguese therefore wished to be reassured that these two men really were Her Majesty's representatives.
>
> There was some difficulty about settling the starting point of the latitude at the beginning as the Pongola shortly before joining the Usutu separates into three arms. Now which of the three exits was to be taken as the starting point? Eventually they decided to drop a cork in the river above the delta and so appeal to the river itself as umpire. So one of the champagne bottles which the Portuguese had brought along (magnum this time) was opened, the contents drank and the cork placed carefully in the centre of the river. (31–32)

The Mozambique-Swaziland border was settled in 1888 by a boundary commission comprising representatives of the United Kingdom, Portugal, Swaziland, and the South African Republic, identifying the Great Usuthu River as the natural southern terminus and the Lebombo Mountains as the northern frontier. While this border was never disputed, resolving the Swaziland border with South Africa proved more complicated. Much of the contention focused on the land located between the Pongola River and the Lebombo Mountains, which was home to three lesser-known clans, the Nyawo, the Mngomezulu, and the Mathenjwa. These communities were not affiliated with either the Ngwane (Swazi) or the Zulu lineages, but were of mixed ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identity (Great Britain 1890, qtd. Meer 2010). On one hand, the Boundary Commission ruled that the Ngwane (Swazi) zone of authority ended at Nyawo Point, excluding the area of Ingwavuma, which was considered to fall under Zulu influence. On the other hand, a magistrate sent from Eshowe to adjudicate the matter reported that the people appeared to be of Swazi origin and that he doubted "whether their relations to Zululand have been closer or more intimate than has been their connection with Swaziland" (Bennett and Peart 1986, 37). Despite this, when the administration of Swaziland was handed over to the Transvaal in 1895, Britain unilaterally proclaimed the territories belonging to the Nyawo, Mngomezulu, and Mathenjwa clans to be part of Zululand and thus under Natal administration. In 1908, the governor of Natal and the resident commissioner for Swaziland signed a final agreement on the southern boundary, using the Great Usuthu River as the definitive demarcation (ibid.).

## Suddenly They Are Cutting the Land into Lines

Just as Tongaland was used by Britain as a buffer zone to prevent the Transvaal Boer from forging a pathway to the eastern seaboard, and to protect against Portuguese encroachment from the north, so Swaziland was utilized as a "buffer state." Like Tongaland, Swaziland did not feature prominently in Britain's expansionist agenda: it was small, somewhat out of the way, and Swazi men were initially reluctant to enter the labor market on the Witwatersrand (Crush 1987, 33). Nevertheless, Swaziland was caught in the middle of smoldering hostilities between Boer and British, a role it assumed willingly in exchange for political independence and protection from the powerful Zulu incursions from the south. However, Swaziland was to pay a heavy price for its submission to both settler parties.

In 1875, while under the rule of King Mbandzeni (Umbandine), the country was inundated with Boers seeking winter pasturage for their cattle (Crush 1987, 33). This precipitated what Allister Miller (1907) described as the "orgy of the concession boom" (18), when Boer and British pursued all manner of tactics to secure rights to vast portions of the country. Concessionaires paid generously for land and mineral and trading rights, which King Mbandzeni handed out liberally, benefiting personally from rents, transfer dues, and obligations (Kuper 1980, 25). By 1889, the entire country had all but been concessioned away (Crush 1987; Gosnell 2001). Folk songs remembered to this day provide evidence of the attitude of Swazi "commoners" toward their loss of land, adding significant resonance to Swazi historiography. The following song, which is directed at King Mbandzeni's predecessor, Mswati, queries the monarch's motives for surrendering land to foreigners (qtd. Mdluli 2009, 67):

| | |
|---|---|
| LEADER: *Mswati yinkhosi kaHhohho,* | (Mswati is the king at Hhohho) |
| *Wabekwa kaNgwane,* | (He was installed king at kaNgwane) |
| *Wabekelwa kwentani?* | (But what for?) |
| CHORUS: *Gcamu Gcamu balisik'emakhondosi* | (Suddenly they are cutting the land into plots) |
| LEADER: *Mswati yinkhosi kulelive,* | (Mswati is the king of this country) |
| CHORUS: *Hhohho* | (Hhohho) |
| LEADER: *Yinkhosi kaNgwane* | (He is the king at kaNgwane) |
| CHORUS: *Hhohho,* | (Hhohho) |

| | |
|---|---|
| LEADER: *Wabekelwa kwentani?* | (Why was he installed the king?) |
| CHORUS: *Gcamu Gcamu balisik'emalegeni* | (Suddenly they are cutting the land into plots) |
| LEADER: *Bhuza wabekwa eZitheni* | (Bhuza was installed the king at Lozitha) |
| CHORUS: *Hhohho,* | (Hhohho) |
| LEADER: *Wabekwa kaNgwane* | (He was installed king of kaNgwane) |
| CHORUS: *Hhohho* | (Hhohho) |
| LEADER: *Wabekelwa kwentani?* | (Why was he installed king?) |
| CHORUS: *Gcamu Gcamu balisik'emalayini* | (Suddenly they are cutting the land into lines) |
| LEADER: *LakaNgwane balisik'emalegeni* | (The land of kaNgwane is cut into plots) |
| CHORUS: *Hhohho* | (Hhohho) |
| LEADER:Leader: *Balisik' emalayini* | (They are cutting it into lines) |
| CHORUS: *Hhohho* | (Hhohho) |
| LEADER: *Balisikela kwentani?* | (Why are they cutting it?) |
| CHORUS: *Gcamu Gcamu balisik'emalayini* | (Suddenly they are cutting the land into lines) |

The concession boom rendered Swaziland vulnerable to annexation, and in 1895 the country was duly appropriated by President Kruger of the Transvaal Republic. With the outbreak of the South African War four years later, the Boers relinquished their control of Swaziland to the British, who immediately set about passing legislation that reserved the most arable land for themselves. As Alfred Mndzebele (2001) writes:

> The Land Proclamation Act was enacted in 1907 by the British to address the concession problem. This legislation reserved 1/3 of the land, 37.6% of the total area for the exclusive use and occupation by the Swazi people. This land came to be known as the Swazi Nation Land. The 63% of land with good soil and best land, very good for grazing was expropriated from the Swazis for settler use and become title land and crown land. About 58% of the Swazi population was situated in the reserves whilst 42% were on the settler's land. The Swazi in the settler's land were given five years to move voluntarily to the reserved areas after which they could be allowed to stay on the title land at the discretion of the landowners. Since then conflict between Swazis (called squatters) and landowners became the order of the day. (1)

## Western Maputaland: The Mathenjwa Tribal Authority

In the 1800s, the region between the Pongola River and present-day Swaziland—the region that constitutes the research focus of this book—was occupied by three clans: Mngomezulu, Nyawo, and, in the extreme west, the Mathenjwa. While the Mngomezulu and Nyawo trace their origins to the southern Nguni, the Mathenjwa clan are something of an anomaly.[9] According to the current clan elders, population growth and conflict over resources in Malawi in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries caused the Mathenjwa clan to segment, forcing the followers of a breakaway group to travel southward under the leadership of Mlotshwa, an event that is memorialized in a well-known song that marks the commencement of their migration: *Abathanda uMlotshwa abahambe!* (Those who support Mlotshwa must leave!)

As one of the Mathenjwa Tribal elders explained:

> Music was our way to communicate as a nation and to spread messages to one another. If we wanted to take a certain political position, we would announce it in a song. To this day we perform songs that recount the life and deeds of the Inkosi [chief]. (Personal interview with Mathenjwa elders, Emanyiseni Tribal Authority, 14 July 2004)

The group allegedly traveled through present-day Zimbabwe and settled for a period in what is now northern South Africa, where they became closely associated with the Balobedu, a small monarchy known for its "rain queen," Modjadji. They subsequently proceeded through Mozambique and Swaziland, finally settling in Emanyiseni on the Lebombo escarpment, where they pledged their allegiance to the Swazi king. One of the Mathenjwa elders explained:

> In our rituals, we are connected to the rain queen, Modjadji. That's why in our praises we mention that we came from the Modjadji and Thobela. That's where we passed by when we were migrating south from Malawi. We also have the ritual of rainmaking. All the women of the village will come out and pick up everything they see in the wild. They take stones and papers—it's like a cleanup campaign—and they will be dressed in umSenge leaves.[10] When they walk together, they look frightening. They will sing and dance while they are walking. They will throw all the things that they have picked up in a certain lake and then bathe in the water. If they are successful, it will be raining by the time they reach their homes. If they fail, the men will come out carrying branches of that same tree. They will be wearing their traditional

> *amahiya* [cloth]. These men will go to the grave of the king's sister, Nomayala [rainmaker] and slaughter a black bull, which they must eat and finish there. They cannot take any part of it to their homes. On their way back, it will rain. When the rains come from the south, we say that it is Nomayala's rain. This is soft rain that will continue for about three to five days. This is how we connect with Modjadji. That is our ritual and this is how we are related to those people. In 2002, Queen Modjadji sent us cattle, but before we could thank her, she had passed away. Some of our people stayed there when we were passing through, which means that there are still Mathenjwa people there. When we arrived here, we were identified as Thonga, but they were mistaken. We settled in Emanyiseni, which means "the place of the Nyasa [generic for Malawian] people."

As with their southern neighbors, the Nyawo and Mngomezulu, the Mathenjwa clan prospered from trade with the groups in the eastern lowlands, and by the 1800s their territory extended from eastern Swaziland across the floodplains into southern Mozambique (Torquebiau et al. 2010). To this day, they enjoy strong links with Swaziland, and many openly claim Swazi identity (ibid.). As one of the Mathenjwa elders explains:

> We lost most of the practices of the original Mathenjwas. Those were left with the Nyasa. When we arrived here, we adapted to Swazi traditions, language, and culture. Those who remained were left with their culture. We prefer calling ourselves Swazi because our traditional attire is identical to theirs. We respect the feather of the purple-crested Turaco [*uphaphe legwalagwala*]. That is why we sing *Bahlom'amagwalagwal bantwabenkosi* [They took the feather of *legwalagwala* [purple-crested turaco], the royal children]. We don't speak Zulu; we speak Swazi. The traces of Zulu culture that we have adopted are not important to us; they have only been recently incorporated into our lives. Even our songs are the songs of the Swazi. Yet even though our cultural influences come from Swaziland, today we are from both sides [of the border]. One thing that makes us say this is that when the last Mathenjwa chief was instated in 1973, he was ritually acknowledged by King Sobhuza of Swaziland but officially inaugurated by Dinizulu, the king of the Zulus.[11]

While the Nyawo and Mngomezulu clans were implicated in the conflict between Boer and Briton, periodically shifting their allegiances to advance their own interests (Schreuder 1980, 14), the remote geographic location of the Mathenjwa people protected them from the political turmoil that raged around them. In the *Natal Almanac and Register* of 1894, it is noted:

> Then, again, these peoples, being the proper subjects neither of Zululand, nor of Swaziland, nor of Tongaland, were always liable to be attacked at any time by one or other of those more powerful countries. Interesting as the whole past history of these tribes is—tribes, that is, who for many generations have lived on the tops of the Ubombo range of mountains isolated from what to them always were the great and dreaded countries of Zululand and Swaziland, isolated, but yet always in dangerous proximity to both—such history, much as we should like to do so, cannot be examined into or related here. This little country, not a republic but divided by factions, in spite of all Blue Books and Conventions, has always been practically and politically cut off from its three powerful neighbours, and its people have been practically without any government worthy of the name. We find at one time that the Chiefs gave their allegiance more to the Zulu than to the Swazi Kings, at another, just the reverse. The question of allegiance was always one of political expediency, although the inhabitants say that they, generally speaking, "put one hand" in Zululand, whilst another was "put" in Swaziland, i.e., as a token of their entire submission or subjection to both those states at one and the same time. (493)

Traces in Mathenjwa performance culture support their claim to a less violent history than that of their neighbors. The first clue lies in their most celebrated male dance, known locally as *isizingili*. Though strongly influenced by Swazi and Zulu regimental *indlamu*, which involves lifting the legs high and kicking the earth, *isizingili* is notably less assertive. Here, the leg is lifted, but the foot does not rise above the knee, the consequence of which is that the downward stroke is short and brisk. The stick used by *isizingili* dancers is often decorated with skin or fur, rendering it ineffectual as a weapon. Equally, the way in which dancers brandish their sticks is notably less aggressive, and it is often placed under the armpit rather than held up in an act of assault or defense. Finally, it is the only regimental dance in the region that includes full turns, thus implying a lack of concern with the possibility of attack from behind (Ngema 2007; Pewa 2005; Tracey 1952).

## Western Maputaland in the Twentieth Century

White settlement in northern Zululand increased rapidly after the South African War, supported by the establishment of the Zululand Delimitation Commission, which set aside reserve land for Africans and appropriated the remainder as crown land. With the establishment of the Union of South

Africa in 1910, new laws were passed that had a profound effect on the entire southeast African region. Significant amongst them were:

- the South Africa Act, which authorized the disenfranchisement of all non-white South Africans
- the 1913 Native Land Act, which prohibited ownership of land by Africans beyond designated reserves
- the 1923 Urban Areas Act, which introduced residential segregation and guaranteed the supply of cheap black labor to white-controlled industry
- the 1927 Native Administration Act, which transferred responsibility for African affairs from Paramount Chiefs to the British Crown

These laws formed the political bedrock of the apartheid system, which was officially enshrined with the accession to power of the National Party in 1948. However, racial segregation had long been enforced by the Union under the British, who had carved the country into a tapestry of ethnic reservations that served as labor reservoirs for the rapidly expanding industrial economy. The force of South African capital had an overwhelming effect on the entire southeast African region, and its mines and industries acted as an indomitable magnet for hundreds of thousands of male laborers—from Mozambique and Swaziland, in particular—effectively absorbing all regional economies into its sphere of influence. Extreme racial inequality and rigorous constraints imposed on black South African and Mozambican citizens spawned Marxist-inspired resistance movements in both countries, the effects of which were to shape the next phase of political turbulence that encircled western Maputaland.

In the 1970s, the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) launched an all-out military revolt against the Portuguese colonial government. The then-banned South African National Congress (ANC)[12] established operational bases in both Mozambique and Swaziland from which it began to organize against the apartheid government. Prior to the 1970s, the borders between South Africa, Mozambique, and Swaziland had been open to the comings and goings of frontier inhabitants. Those families in Maputaland that had been divided by the construction of the Ndumo Game Reserve in the 1950s and 1960s were given the option either to remain in South Africa or to settle with relatives in Mozambique. Despite this, for some time residents were permitted to traverse the game reserve to visit families and to trade with communities on both sides of the state border. It was only after independence in Mozambique in 1975 that transnational contact became

restricted, a change that reflected a radical shift in relations between the two governments (Kloppers 2005). Where the colonial government in Mozambique had supported apartheid South Africa in its attempt to stem the tide of African liberation, the new FRELIMO government actively supported the ANC and its military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*.

However, having gained independence from Portugal, Mozambique immediately lapsed into civil war, instigated by a Rhodesian- and South African-backed counterinsurgency movement, RENAMO, whose principal objective was to destabilize the newly instated socialist regime.[13] The war rapidly spread into southern Mozambique, displacing some 50 percent of the rural population and spilling over the borders into South Africa and Swaziland (Griffiths and Funnell 1991).

Many of the families who had settled in Mozambique with the creation of the Ndumo Game Reserve sought refuge with their kin in South Africa. Initially, the South African government was sympathetic to their return; however, fearing that the frontier had become particularly porous to cross-border movement by *Umkhonto we Sizwe* operatives, the South African Defense Force was deployed to the region, an electric fence was erected along the entire expanse of the state frontier, and its current was raised to lethal levels (McGregor 1994).[14] Despite this, South Africa and Swaziland willingly received army deserters, Portuguese sympathizers, and others fleeing Mozambique, and RENAMO came to use both countries to recruit, organize, and penetrate Mozambique (McGregor 1994; 1998).

As had been the situation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the Ngwane (Swazi), Mabudu-Tembe, and Ndwandwe had battled one another over territory and political dominance, Swaziland, by virtue of its geography, became a prism in the twentieth century through which all regional politics became refracted. On one hand, it served as an important infiltration route for *Umkhonto we Sizwe* cadres reentering South Africa from training camps further north; on the other, it became a willing partner with the South African Nationalist government in a scheme aimed to subvert the ANC.

In the mid-1980s, the apartheid government reached a crisis, affected by a combination of civil unrest and industrial action within the country and by the imposition of economic sanctions from without. In desperation, it turned its attention to the "homelands," attempting to divide black opposition by boosting the power of "traditional" chiefs, extending their territories and modernizing their systems of patronage (Harries 1987b, 105).[15] Maputaland—also referred to as Ingwavuma after the local magistracy[16]—had been incorporated into the KwaZulu Homeland in 1977 under the

presidency of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who was also leader of the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party. Unlike most homelands, which were classified according to ethnolinguistic identity, this northernmost segment of the KwaZulu Homeland was consolidated on the basis of geography. As was explained earlier in the chapter, the Zulu sphere of influence had never extended north of the Pongola River; the Mathenjwa Tribal Authority had openly claimed allegiance to the Swazi king, and the Mabudu-Tembe on the east coast had had little affiliation with the Zulu other than through tribute payment that had ended in the late 1800s (Kloppers 2003, 2).

In order to protect the frontier with Swaziland and Mozambique, the South African government hatched a plan with the reigning King Sobhuza II of Swaziland, which built on a number of related historical wounds that still festered in the collective memory of the Swazi (Ngwane) people. The first was the border people's unwilling incorporation into a Zulu "homeland." The second drew on unresolved historical hostilities between Zulu and Swazi (Ngwane), and the third was the political boundary drawn through the Swazi nation by the British in the late 1800s, excluding a significant number of people who had traditionally owed allegiance to the Swazi king (Griffiths and Funnell 1991).

With this in mind, the South African government sought a secret nonaggression pact with the Swaziland government, offering to cede Ingwavuma (western Maputaland) to Swaziland on condition that Swaziland agree to expel all African National Congress cadres and actively operate as a buffer between South Africa and Mozambique (Griffiths and Funnell 1991).[17] The "Ingwavuma Land Deal," as it became known, was vigorously contested by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, then president of the KwaZulu Homeland Government, who fought hard to retain the border region under his control. Although he could make no historical claim to the area, he used the court system to block the deal, successfully arguing that the government had not obtained the requisite consent of the people of Ingwavuma and the KwaZulu Territorial Authority, as stipulated by the Black Constitution Act of 1972.

Despite Buthelezi's rhetoric of inclusivity, once the secessionist deal was averted, he ordered that all people in Maputaland be reclassified as Zulu (Kloppers 2005). This all-out campaign to impose "Zuluness" in Maputaland resulted in what David Webster (1991) describes as a "paroxysm of Zulu jingoism, with mass, sometimes enforced recruitment into Inkatha [the Zulu nationalist political party]" (248). Zulu cultural identity was strategically enforced through the establishment of schools in the extreme border areas (including in Usuthu Gorge and Eziphosheni), which were administered by Zulu teachers imported from the south.

As efforts to incorporate the Mathenjwa clan into the KwaZulu Homeland intensified, many fled across the border into Swaziland. Despite the reluctance of the Swazi government to take in refugees from the civil war in Mozambique, they welcomed the Mathenjwa people (Sw. Matsenjwa) and willingly supported their cause (McGregor 1994). One of the songs that the people still sing in western Maputaland communicates their opposition to their incorporation into the Zulu hegemony:

*Thina sambamba uZulu* (We do not know Zulu)
*Asesabi ukuboshwa* (We are not afraid to be arrested)
*Isikhulu sakaNgwane* (Leader of the Ngwane [Swaziland])
*Thina kasimazi uZulu* (We do not know Zulu)
*Uthi manyumanyu ushis'umbango* (He [Buthelezi] is double tongued, he wreaks havoc)
*Thina kasimazi uZulu lo asesabi ukukhuluma* (We don't know Zulu, we are not afraid to say so)
*Sasikhuluma kwaLobamba* (We told them at Lobamba)[18]

## Reconfiguring the Borderlands: Transboundary Conservation

With the establishment of the KwaZulu Homeland in the mid-1970s, much of the communal land that had been held under the South African Development Trust was handed to the KwaZulu legislature. When, in 1990, Buthelezi threatened to boycott the first national democratic elections, fearing loss of power to a majority ANC government, one of the many political compromises brokered was the retention of the 2.8 million hectares of KwaZulu communal land under the charge of a local trust.[19] All development policies related to communal land, and benefits from would-be development, would be handled by the trust, while chiefs (*izinkosi*), traditional councils, and elected leaders (*izinduna*) would remain responsible for local land tenure arrangements.[20]

As state-sponsored forced removals were deemed amongst the most contemptible human rights violations under the apartheid government, one of the first pieces of transformative legislation passed by the new government under the presidency of Nelson Mandela was the Restitution of Land Rights Act. The expectation underlying the act was that land restitution would not only redress the injustices of the past but also ensure tenure security and support rural development more broadly (Walker 2010, 1). For most previously dispossessed South Africans, restitution implied both the return of physical land and the restoration of historical identities (ibid.). A commis-

sion of restitution of land rights was subsequently established and a land claims court founded to oversee the adjudication of submissions. Eligibility for land restitution was based on tangible proof of dispossession prior to the 1913 Land Act and could take the form of land restored, procurement of alternative land, financial compensation, or a combination of all.[21]

As was discussed in chapter 1, and will be further elucidated in chapter 8, forced removal from the Ndumo Game Reserve remains deeply inscribed in the collective memory of the people of western Maputaland. The reserve was proclaimed in 1924 following widespread anxiety about the destruction of its fauna and flora. Its original objective to protect the dwindling hippopotamus population in the Banzi Pan area was superseded in the early 1960s by the extension of its perimeter fences and the removal of all its human inhabitants. In 1998, the displaced "Usuthu Community," acting under the auspices of the Mathenjwa Traditional Authority, lodged a land claim for the return of rights to the Ndumo Game Reserve. The claim argued that their removal had been based on racially discriminatory laws of practice[22] and that no financial compensation or alternative land had been awarded at the time of removal. The claim was approved in 2000 and the following settlement package awarded:

> 4.2 The RLCC: KZN, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, and Umkhanyakude District Municipality is in full support of restoration of full ownership rights to the claimant community *without human residential occupation nor changes in the current land use* [my italics] as the land is a protected area and part of a transfrontier program. Such restoration of ownership must be done in such way the current status of the park; the biodiversity and the Transfrontier Peace Park Programs are not adversely affected [*sic*]. The claimants are fully supportive and aligned with the current national macro-Program.[23]

The claim further stipulated that the community should work in partnership with the Ndumo Game Reserve under the Provincial Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Services, who would (a) administer a program of training and capacity building in the community; (b) allow for regulated access by community members to natural resources and sacred sites in the reserve; (c) share benefits from tourism revenue in the reserve, and (d) support the development of a business plan for further tourism development in the claimant community.

This resource-sharing model was not new to western Maputaland, however. A similar scheme had been introduced a decade previously by the KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources (KBNR) under the KwaZulu Homeland

Government. The KBNR had recognized that sustainable interaction among people, resources, and the environment was dependent on a system that permitted communities to benefit from protected areas (Curry 2001, 101; Glavovic 1991). Accordingly, a system of benefit sharing had been proposed based on controlled access to natural resources and direct financial benefits accrued from tourism (Glavovic 1991; Meer 2010).[24] This model, which proposed a three-way partnership among conservation agencies, private developers, and local communities was celebrated as an "African model of ecotourism development" by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (Meer 2010, 104). Mirroring community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), a sustainable natural resource governance regime that was implemented elsewhere on the subcontinent—notably Namibia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Kenya—it was considered the ideal model for the development of transfrontier conservation.

In 2000—the same year that the rights to the Ndumo Game Reserve were returned to the Usuthu community—the governments of South Africa, Mozambique, and Swaziland signed a resource area protocol for the development of the Usuthu-Tembe-Futi Transfrontier Conservation Area, an area encompassing eastern Swaziland, western Maputaland (Usuthu Gorge Conservation Area), Ndumo Game Reserve, Tembe Elephant Park, and the Maputo Elephant Park in Mozambique. Though ratified at the intergovernmental level, this hugely ambitious development included formal participation by numerous traditional authorities, NGOs, and the private sector, with substantial financial endorsement from international donors (Büscher 2009; J. L. Jones 2005; Porter et al. 2004).

In addition to preserving the biodiversity in the region, the TFCA was promoted as a panacea for a range of social and economic ills in the region. In western Maputaland, the integrated conservation-with-development model was enthusiastically embraced by the Mathenjwa Traditional Authority (TA), who saw it as a unique opportunity for economic growth in the otherwise desperately underdeveloped borderlands. The TA consented to the release of communal land in Usuthu Gorge to facilitate the consolidation of the TFCA from the western boundary of the Ndumo Game Reserve westward to the Swaziland border, and agreed to its management as a "community conservation area" through a partnership among themselves, the Ezemvelo Wildlife Authority, and a local community conservation NGO.

The Usuthu-Tembe-Futi TFCA had been preceded by the establishment of several other TFCAs elsewhere in southeast Africa, where it had become rapidly evident that despite the claim to participatory management and mutual benefit, private-community partnerships rapidly devolve into

large areas of land given up to private investment (Wolmer 2003a; 2003b; R. Duffy 2006). In addition, in Maputaland, warnings had been raised by several scholars about the livelihood impacts of conservation expansion. For instance, environmental scientist Jennifer Jones (2006) wrote:

> Development strategy in Maputaland continues to focus on conservation, including the expansion of protected areas to form transboundary peace parks linking reserves in South Africa, Mozambique, and Swaziland. However, expanded conservation is likely to result in household resettlement, lost access to socio-cultural and natural resources, and an increased risk of conflict over land use between conservation authorities and local residents. Complicating the success of any conservation and/or development scheme in Maputaland is the massive HIV/AIDS prevalence. With more than one third of residents infected, the disease will deepen poverty, decimate local capacity and leadership, and lead to an increased risk of resource degradation and land use conflict that ultimately undermines the long-term security of both biodiversity and local livelihoods. (ii)

Despite the return of rights to the Ndumo Game Reserve to the "Usuthu Community," and the community's apparently pivotal position with regard to the Usuthu-Tembi-Futi TFCA, in reality communities have very little leverage against the dictates of the globalist "green" agenda. As suggested by William Wolmer (2003b), today the dominant "clan" has become the almost invisible presence in international conservation agencies, who meld conservation imperatives with neoliberal economics, privileging large-scale ecoregional planning with the investment interests of development banks and the global corporate sector. As nation-states lose power to global institutions, so local people lose power upward to states (ibid.). However, it is local residents who are most vulnerable to these expansionist imperatives and whose livelihoods are sacrificed to the illusory scientific and economic scenarios they are known to proffer. While many question the qualitative difference between TFCAs and colonial "fortress conservation" (Brockington 2002), in western Maputaland it is nonetheless once more the environment that is positioned at the center of an intensifying political vortex.

FIVE

# New Routes In and Out, Eziphosheni

*Naliveni bakithi naliveni!* (There is the van, my people!)
*Naliveni bafana naliveni!* (There is the van, boys, there is the van!)
*Balekani bafana naliveni!* (Run, boys, there is the van!
*Lizonibopha!* (They will arrest you!)

***August 2004, Eziphosheni***

MaFambile's home is located half a kilometer off the Maphindela road. It is a typical *umuzi*, comprising five houses arranged around a gravel courtyard of shade trees. As with many homesteads in this region, the architecture reveals a mix of cultural influences: lath-woven houses characteristic of the Mabudu-Tembe from the coastal region, round mud and thatched huts typical of Swazi and Zulu traditions, and a square brick house with flat corrugated iron roof reflecting new money from several elsewheres.[1] Chickens and guinea fowl scratch about in the dust, chirping softly, and goats move about silently in small family teams. To the side of the homestead is the cattle byre (*inhlohla*), a circular stockade skillfully fashioned from the thick twisted trunks of the *umkhaya* tree.[2]

Of MaFambile's five sons and three daughters, only her last born still lives at home. As custom dictates, his house takes pride of place at the entrance to the yard. He has worked wonders with his residence, attaching a large homemade speaker to the thatched roof and connecting it indoors by means of a cable through a milky window set deep in the mud walls. As there is no electricity in this area, these gestures are sculptural, aspirational, cosmopolitan dreams of a young man imagined in all the trappings of technology. On his front door he has painted in large white letters: "I LOVE A HOUSE."

When we arrive at the homestead, there is a delegation of women waiting for MaFambile at the entrance gate. They are the relatives of a young woman who has become pregnant by one of MaFambile's older sons. He is already married with a family, so he will be obliged to take her as a second wife. In the meantime, there are cattle to be exchanged in compensation and various protocols to follow to "ask for good relations" with her family. As MaFambile's son is working in Johannesburg, and her husband passed away many years previously, the responsibility will fall on her to direct the negotiations. "*Kanjalo nje*," she says, laughing graciously through her troubles: it's just like that.

We wait in the cool morning sunshine for the others to arrive: Mfaz'Omnyama, MaKhumalo, Nomadlozi, and Qomakufa. We have organized to walk the three or so miles to their fields on the Msunduze River. It is a journey that the women make several times a week, often setting out at first light with their hoes and baskets in order to complete their day's work by the time the intense midday heat sets in. Like the Usuthu Gorge women, each cultivates several fields in addition to the rain-fed plots adjacent to their homes. Unlike them, however, the Eziphosheni women are located closer to larger roads and commercial developments, and there is greater competition between them for arable land. Here, the soil on higher ground is stony and particularly susceptible to drought, so securing a place on the saturated alluvium beside the river is crucial for year-round food production.

The proximity of Eziphosheni to regional markets means that the women are more competent at dealing with the formal economy than are their Usuthu Gorge neighbors. Because husbands and male relatives are employed elsewhere, the women have developed close networks of affinity, and while farming remains the mainstay of the domestic economy, they are constantly on the lookout for opportunities to generate a cash income.[3] Some sell doughnuts at the local primary school; others take on short-term "piece" work on the roads or in the game reserve. There is money to be made from the seasonal harvesting of thatching grass for roofs and river reeds for sleeping mats. The more productive farmers sell their surplus vegetables at the market in Ndumo town or to their neighbors.

As the principal provider for her family, MaFambile is the only woman in this group who has taken on the arduous business of long-distance trade, braving the bone-shattering eight-hour taxi ride to Durban once a month to purchase clothes from Chinese and Indian wholesalers and selling her stock of shirts, pinafores, and skirts from the front room of her house. [4]

When I first encountered this group of women, I was struck by how clear they were about when, where, and how our research should proceed. They

worked as a tight-knit pack, and it soon became evident that ours was one of several activities that they pursued as a group. When forest resources are ready for harvesting, they set out together to perform the laborious task of cutting, bundling, and selling their produce. Where the women in Usuthu Gorge still practice the old system of *ilimo* (communal agricultural work), this group developed a voluntary savings club (*stokvel*), using the accumulated monthly cash contributions of its members to pay for their more expensive domestic needs, such as weddings and funerals.

Given their sharp economic acumen, it did not come as a surprise that within a year of commencing our work, the women had transformed their musical activities into an income-generating enterprise. Establishing themselves as a performance "club" with the stage name *oMama bazoTweletwele* (Mothers of the isitweletwele), they designed a signature "uniform" and began contracting themselves out to various interested parties for small sums of money. During the period of our research, they performed at numerous public meetings prepared by the Ndumo Regional Council, at weddings and funerals, and on two occasions were featured on the dedicated traditional music show on Maputaland Community Radio.

When MaFambile returns from her discussion with her newly acquired relatives, the burden of her responsibilities is evident: "That son of mine already has two girlfriends! The women were pregnant at the same time. One had a girl and the other had a girl. Then I told him, 'Hey! I'm tired of you! You should find a job.' So now I am left struggling to look after his children." She continues in a hushed tone: "The problem is that we are afraid of those condoms because they have diseases that can kill us. If you take a condom and put it in the sun, you will find worms!"

The communities in western Maputaland suffer from one of the highest incidences of AIDS in the southern African region, and the depth of anguish caused by illness and loss is overwhelming.[5] Each time we visit, we hear more stories about the passing of members of the women's families and those of their neighbors. Condoms are a new phenomenon to the people, however, and consequently AIDS, and the paraphernalia associated with it, have become coopted into a raft of conspiracy theories (as is the case in most parts of southern Africa). One day, when asking Siphiwe what young people in her community aspired to, given that postschool training is beyond most families' financial means and opportunities for formal employment in the region are almost nonexistent, her response was forthright: "They go to the cities to find work, but many come home sick and prepare to die. We don't know this thing! It is a white person's disease. They go and then they come

Figure 5.1. *oMama bazoTweletwele* (Mothers of *Isitweletwele*) (photo courtesy of Mduduzi Mcambi)

home with AIDS, and as parents, we suffer. We have to sell our cows to pay for treatment."

Over the years, the act of remembering songs inspired the women to compose new ones, invoking the cultural task of *amahubo manihamba* to ruminate on current issues in their lives. Unsurprisingly, one of the main issues summoned was AIDS and the manifold effects it is having on individuals and families in their communities. The songs are characteristically epigrammatic, their work achieved only partially in the lyrics, their essence more poignantly conveyed in the broader social contexts they imply and in the emotional engagement of their performance. For instance, the brooding, endless iteration of the following song serves to open a space for collective expressions of helplessness, grief, and fury:

*Safa ngenculazi sekutheni? Siyafa, siyaphela! Siyafa, siyaphela!*
(Why are we dying of AIDS? We are dying; we are finished! We are dying; we are finished!)

In the following song, the women use another rhetorical strategy, common to this genre, that allows for the details of one state of affairs to stand in for a range of comparable situations:

*Ntombi zakithi ziyafa yingculazi kuPhaphukulu*
(The girls are dying of AIDS at Phaphukulu)

In his research on Western Apache landscape memories, Keith Basso (1996, 61) suggests that by naming natural features, we transform them into "crisp mental pictures" imbued with historical memories or morally instructive stories. This rhetorical framing applies correspondingly in this song, where Phaphukulu, a road in Ndumo[6] that may have been the site of some of the first AIDS-related deaths in the area, lives on as a memorialization of all rupture and loss due to AIDS, a collective marker where "memory crystallizes and secretes itself" (Nora 1989, 7). As Pierre Nora instructs in his classic *Lieux de Memoire* project, what separates a site of memory from a mere historical marker is the *will* to remember. The song's reference to Phaphukulu draws attention to how people and places are dynamically constitutive in western Maputaland and demonstrates how direct, unembellished statements may be used rhetorically to signal multiply layered social, affective, and geographical meanings.

The suffering inflicted by AIDS is the most recent in a succession of major challenges that the Eziphosheni women have experienced in their lives. Theirs is the generation that was forcibly removed from their homes in the Ndumo Game Reserve in the 1960s and experienced the dispersal of their communities across several wards, regions, and state boundaries. Owing to the subsequent loss of land and resources, they endured the out-migration of their fathers, brothers, and husbands to the Witwatersrand goldmines and sugar estates in the south, and braved the dire emotional and economic consequences when some of them failed to return. While farming remains their principal livelihood activity, increasing demand for cash for food and school fees forced these women into income-generating schemes, many of them deemed illegal (e.g., brewing alcohol), rendering them vulnerable to police harassment, imprisonment, and extended periods of forced labor. It was they who watched as the border fences were erected in the 1980s and their homes transformed into an active military zone. So too were they caught in the political crossfire between their pro-secessionist Mathenjwa Tribal Authority leaders and the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party, who fought hard and dirty to retain the area under the KwaZulu Homeland jurisdiction. When the Ingwavuma Land Deal was averted (see chapter 4), they were subjected to ethnic reclassification and compelled to assume Zulu identity. They witnessed schools being built along the frontier as a strat-

egy to assert Zulu territorial authority and watched as their children were transformed into loyal Zulu subjects, assuming a foreign language as their mother tongue and performing their regimental *ingoma* dances that commemorated a foreign history.

In this chapter, I describe a walk that crisscrosses women's recollections of these transformations in the 1960s. Their wanderings, and the songs that act as their cues and embellishments, narrate their everyday reactions to the new racialized proscriptions of the apartheid government, and their geographical endorsement in new grids and boundaries set up to make way for white agricultural expansion. While continuing to trace the musical movements of young women from their homes and across state boundaries, the songs begin to reveal both mounting anxiety about their place in the landscape and an emerging spirit of defiance. As with Certeau's (1984) notion of "pedestrian enunciations," walking songs became a rhetorical means by which women negotiated and rearticulated spatial activities in their everyday life. At once youthful and frivolous, they also became a milieu of confrontation and resistance, summoned as a strategy toward a more bearable citizenship.

## Onward to the Msunduzi River

From MaFambile's house we walk on a well-worn path toward the main road. As we set out, Mfaz'Omnyama begins to play her instrument. "I have to walk a long way to my fields, which are far away at the bridge," she explains between melodies. "In the old days, I played my *isitweletwele* so that I didn't have to think about the distance." We pass by neighboring homesteads, and people shout greetings and ask where we are going. Always there is a comment about the *isitweletwele*: "Where did you find that thing? Hha! Its been a long time! Where can I buy one?"

The path joins the main gravel road at a brick watertower where a group of women are still occupied with their morning's water collection. As we walk along the newly resurfaced road, the women point out various landmarks: the new trading store located next to a large tree where they used to congregate for their midnight *isigcawu* dances; the flat expanse of thornscrub where white farmers once tried their hand at farming commercial cotton; a face-brick primary school recently constructed by a Japanese aid program.

We reach an intersection where the road splits off in several directions. One leads west to the mountaintop settlement of Emanyiseni and to the Mathenjwa Traditional Authority. The route continues across the Lebombo Mountains to the Swaziland border and eventually reaches the KwaMatata trading store in the town of Big Bend. In the opposite direction, the road

leads to the town of Ndumo, where the women purchase basic commodities and attend the small clinic. From Ndumo, they will occasionally take the bus to the regional magistracy of Ingwavuma,[7] where they have access to a greater selection of shops and a large provincial hospital. The road northwest leads to Usuthu Gorge, from where they will take the road—barely wider than a path—to the river crossing to Mozambique.

"When we were young, we used to walk from here to Ingwavuma," Mfaz'Omnyama tells me, pointing to the mountains in the south. "We didn't use the road; we used shortcuts through the bush. It is a long way and the path becomes very steep near to the town. We would wake up very early in the morning and come back when the sun was setting. We would travel in a group so that we could walk over the mountains together. We would be happy and play our instruments. Our fathers worked in Johannesburg and they would send us shillings and tickeys so that we could buy things."

MaNtombeni plays a song on her *isitweletwele* that reminds her of the tough mountainous route. It is unusually fast paced, and the other women listen intently:

> *Ningaholobi, ndinkantako* (He doesn't beat me; we are together)
> *Ningaholobi, singaxabani* (He doesn't beat me; we don't quarrel)

Mfaz'Omnyama points out that its rapid tempo is typical of the songs of the Shangaan (Tsonga) people in Mozambique. She asks MaNtombeni to play it again and attempts to sing back a chorus, the instrumental and vocal melodies winding tightly around each other. When they stop, MaMkhize claps and declares triumphantly: "Hha! If you play like that you will reach Durban before you know it! You won't even have time to stop at Kentucky [Fried Chicken]!"

The conversation moves on to their recollections of the town of Ingwavuma during the apartheid years. As the regional magistracy, it was here that the racially repressive ideologies of the state were most tangibly played out. Ingwavuma was established as the regional magistracy in 1895, and its place in the spatial imagination of the Eziphosheni women today still summons contradictory associations with modernity and administrative control. The following posting by Fr. Edwin Roy M. Kinch on the website of Our Lady of Ingwavuma Mission offers an elucidating description of the town in the 1960s:

> The Magistrates office and Court House were about a kilometer from our mission site. It was quite a new, attractive building. As usual the South African

> Police commandant had his home and office in a solid stone structure. The village comprised the Jail which was about 100 meters from the Court House, Hubert Moore's Trading Store, the District Surgeon's corrugated iron clinic, cum library, Steegen's Butchery, G. Bartle Moore's The Upper Store owned and run by Hubert's parents [Bartle, an ex-Zululand policeman] and Amy who did the books . . . and ran the Gollel to Ingwavuma transport. . . . The NRC [Native Recruiting Corporation] agent—Mr. Hunter Groom—had an office with Zulu staff who organized men to work in the gold mines. There were three such centers in Ingwavuma district with white managers, two buses and a highly organized system. They were: Ingwavuma, Maputa and Ndumu.[8]

The women remember the town's crushing jurisdictive resonance in a song. Although not clear about the exact details it describes, the song refers to a court case involving a migrant worker who had traveled elsewhere—perhaps Johannesburg—where he had been arrested for outstaying his employment contract. At that time, his circumstances would have been treated as a criminal offense:

*Abafana beguzu batheth'amacala* (Those boys who take the train)
*Uyamemeza!* (He is shouting!)
*Siwuzwile lo mtheth'ophum'enkantolo/eNgwavuma* (We have heard the ruling in Ingwavuma)
*Uyamemeza; uyababaza!* (He is shouting; the law is exclaiming!)

Mfaz'Omnyama has brought along her old "passbook," which was issued in Ingwavuma in 1965:[9] "In Ingwavuma, we would go for our *dompas* and then we would know ourselves," she explained, referring to the photograph of herself pasted on the front page. Its lack of official stamps reveals that she neither traveled into areas previously designated "white" by the apartheid government nor ever held down formal employment. Although in the 1960s and 1970s, women from far-flung areas such as Maputaland would have been restricted from urban employment, and their daily lives remote from white-controlled industrial capital, they would nevertheless have been frequently stopped by the police, who would check their passbooks. If you were unable to produce your document, you would be handcuffed, loaded into a police vehicle, and taken to the jail in Ingwavuma. Release was possible only upon payment of a fine. Predictably, there were several songs in the women's repertoire that reflected the anxiety caused by these brutal police encounters. In the following example, the generic denotation of "boy" is used to warn others of an approaching police vehicle. It also parodies the

infantilizing term used by the white authoritarian establishment to refer to black men. While describing a particular scenario, the song was also used more generally to protest the intense police surveillance under which they were living at the time:

> *Naliveni bakithi naliveni!* (There is the van, my people!)
> *Naliveni bafana naliveni!* (There is the van, boys, there is the van!)
> *Balekani bafana naliveni!* (Run, boys, there is the van!)
> *Lizonibopha!* (They will arrest you! [lit., They will tie you up!])

Mfaz'Omnyama explains the context of the song: "From Ndlaleni's house we used to walk all the way from here to Emakanyise playing our instruments. That's what we were doing when we were going to eat sugar [shop at KwaMatata store in Swaziland]. We were singing *iveni* because the police were giving us problems. They wanted us to pay for *dompas*."

"If you weren't able to produce your passbook, you would be arrested!" MaFambile reiterates, but goes on to clarify: "Only the men were arrested when they were found without their *dompas*. Women would be arrested for brewing beer from sugarcane. They would stop us to find out who we were and where we lived. Then they would go and check our houses."

"That's true. We sang that song because we were running away from the police who wanted to arrest us for alcohol," Qomakufa reiterates. "We would go to the stores in Mozambique to buy things to make alcohol. The police would want to see what we had purchased and would really harass us, but we knew how to hide our things and would often brew deep in the bush."

"Things were different in Mozambique," MaFambile qualifies. "We used to go there to buy at the stores at Catuane and Emapahleni, which were run by the Portuguese. We bought things that we couldn't find here at Ndumo. In the 1960s *amahiya* [cloth] cost only twenty-five cents. There were no restrictions then, and we could still walk through the game reserve. At that time, there were no dangerous animals; it was only later that the white veterinarians injected animals and they started to attack us.[10] There were only white rhinos; there were no black rhinos or buffaloes. There was a little boat [to cross the Usuthu River] and you had to pay money. If we wanted beads, we had to buy them in Swaziland at KwaMatata. We would cross the mountain on the other side near Ekuhlehleni and Emanyiseni. At that time, we knew this place only with our feet; today the people know it with wheels. We used to carry twenty-five kilograms of maize meal all the way from the store with a baby on our backs. It was a long way! We would have to rest and then pick them up again."

State repression was experienced in western Maputaland not only via the police but through a range of other modernizing developments.

"We remember when this road was built," MaFambile continues. "That's when we saw cars for the first time. We saw white people too! We saw them when they came to build the cattle dip. The dip is near to the Impala Store and the school on the other side [pointing west to the Vula Mehlo (Open Your Eyes) Primary School]. The man who built it was called Thomas.[11] The other white person who used this road was the one called uShungolo. He had only one leg and he took people to Johannesburg with the KwaTeba bus.[12] I can still remember the first time I saw a car. We were scared to get into it! We were scared because we heard there was a man who used to drive here that liked to kill black people. He would just cut off their heads! We heard that he came from Swaziland. He didn't stay in a specific place but he would offer you a lift and then cut off your head. Even now there is a red Toyota Venture [vehicle that is often used as a taxi] that we don't understand. We tell our children not to get into it because we don't know it."

Later Mduduzi tells me that he grew up hearing the same story in his home area of rural KwaZulu Natal and suggests that it is likely to be a foundational myth that has been infused with contemporary characters and images. It demonstrates how memories may sometimes cross borders between biography and fiction and in this instance is used to delineate moral parameters underscored by deep racial tensions.

Sometime before, I had asked the Usuthu Gorge women about their memories of the first roads in their area, as their location at the confluence of the three borders linked them to a slightly different arterial network from that of their Eziphosheni neighbors. Built by the Chamber of Mines Native Recruitment Corporation (NRC), this road linked their men via a northerly route to the town of Siteki in Swaziland, where they were joined by Swazi recruits and by men from southern Mozambique.[13]

Old Makete responded: "I am not educated so I don't know exactly when it [the road] came. I saw it when I was already grown. When we came out [of the game reserve] it was already there. The road was constructed when there was a store there called kwaGcinumthetho. The old bus used to come from far away, from kwaBalamhlanga. Then it used to stop overnight at Siteki [Swaziland]. At Siteki, the bus used to fetch the Shangaan people who had come from Inhambane [Mozambique] and then take them all to Johannesburg. I'm talking about the old road that came from Ndumo that used to turn there [points north to Abercorn Drift]. *uTeba* is the name of that road. It used to collect people from Ndumo and take them to Johannesburg. It used to pass a place called uMambane [Swaziland]. They used to cross the

[Usuthu] river with a small boat. This new road was not there yet. At that time, we women didn't use the road; we used to walk on pathways only."

I was interested to learn about the impact that the roads had had on both the physical and the cultural landscape, bringing with them new forms of authority and systems of economic extraction. I wondered also whether the road might be understood by the women as having figuratively "sliced" across gender relations, transforming domestic divisions of labor and introducing new configurations of patriarchal control.

Makete explained: "The men would join [*ukujoyina*] the mines for one year. A whole year! On the day they left, we would cry! Even in Ndumo you would find women crying when their husbands went to the cities. We would cry because we knew that it would take many months before they would come back. We would be left here through summer and winter, left here to feel that cold alone. My husband would leave me pregnant and only return when the child was walking. We would have lost hope by that time, but when they came back they would always find us here. At that time, we had to plant and feed our children until they were grown up. Our husbands would post money back to us for the children. But when they returned. . . . Hha! We used to dance!"

"The painful thing is that when they came back from Johannesburg, they had to sleep in their mother's house for one week," adds Mampolwane. "The trunk full of presents would first go to the mother before it came to us. They had to greet their ancestors because they would not have talked to them for a whole year and they had returned unharmed. We would have to wait until our mother-in-law gave him permission to take the goods to our house. That was very hard! Some of the men went to work in the sugarcane in M'tubatuba and Empangeni. Some of them went to Durban. Those ones would come home more often. If they stayed for a year, it was because they chose to. When the sugarcane was ready for cutting, they would go there to work for a few months. When it was harvested, they would come back home. They worked there because they wanted money. They needed money to buy cows for *lobola*. It's our culture; you wouldn't want to move to your boyfriend's house without *lobola*. When they were away, we would play any song that made us feel that we were connecting with them. There were so many songs from that time that we played on *isitweletwele*."

Mfaz'Omnyama demonstrates a song that she used to play when her husband was away. The melody traces the contours of a simple phrase, the first word starting on a high register, the second dropping into a low refrain.

*Kubuhlungu inhliziyo* (My heart is aching)

The song circles and circles as a tender, brooding lament: "When you played that song you would feel, 'My heart is very painful when I remember my man,'" she explained. "You didn't notice anyone around you; you just thought of him. The song followed the woman's voice and answered with a male voice. Each person had her own style, and your boyfriend would know your style. My boyfriend loved it when I played, and I could always hear when it was he playing harmonica [*ubhelebane*]. When he played, he played with force!"

The women demonstrate a series of songs that they used to sing when they were separated from their men. One example is

> *Awusangibhaleli soka lami iyo?*
> (Why don't you write me a letter, my boyfriend?)

The song refers to the letters that would circulate between migrant workers and their loved ones back home. Mr. Mthethwa, headmaster of ComTech High School in Ndumo, described in a later interview how, as one of the few literate young boys in the community, he would offer his services as a scribe to the women in the area:

> When I was growing up, some women came to me because I was able to write and their men had gone to work in Johannesburg. The Mamas would come to me and they would talk and I would write down what they were saying. Sometimes they would go a bit far [share personal information], but I would not disclose what was in those letters to other people, not even to my mother! There was none of this sweetheart "what-what" in those letters and I was never paid. It was enough for me to hear the women say, "Hha! So-and-so has a good son; he has helped us." (Personal communication, Ndumo, 6 August, 2009)

When the men returned for their annual leave, there would be great celebration in the community. Some songs were presented as straightforward announcements of their return:

> *Umfaz'wabuya sithandwa! Wabuya owakwami!*
> (My lover has returned! My man has returned!)

Others referred to the gifts that men brought back for their girlfriends, conveying their fascination with new commodities:

> *Egoli, Egoli Ha!* (Johannesburg, Johannesburg! Ha!)
> *Ahh sibukele sibukele!* ([Bring us a mirror so that] we can look and look!)

As mentioned, one of the main motivations for men to enter into migrant employment was to earn money to purchase cattle for *lobola* (marriage dowry). *Lobola* is considered a central symbol of masculinity and patriarchy in Nguni culture and is essential to becoming head of a household. When the Eziphosheni women were young, there were strict protocols regarding courtship and marriage. As MaFambile explains: "If our boyfriends were working in Johannesburg, they might be gone for up to two years. When they returned, they would send for their girlfriend's sisters. The sisters would return home to announce his arrival, and they would call their girlfriends to arrange *isigcawu* [night-time dance]. This would give us the opportunity to be with our boyfriends. We would just sit like this [crosses her arms]. If the boy tried to come closer, we would move away a little. If he tried to come closer, we would move again. If he tried to hold us, we would cry! Others would be watching and ask you what you were doing."

Mfaz'Omnyama adds, "And if the boy was too persistent, we would sing '*We dali, ungivalel'ekhoneni!*' [Hey darling, you are putting me under pressure!]"

"We would stay all night and return in the morning," continues MaFambile. "We would bathe and put on our *amahiya* [cloth]. Then we would go to the store in Ndumo to eat sugar. The girls would dance *ingadla* at the store to show that the boyfriend of their sister had returned from Johannesburg. There we would find everybody wearing traditional clothes. We would buy bread and sugar and go down to the river to dance again. We would dance until late in the afternoon and then go back home again."

"The places of *isigcawu* didn't have names," Mpungose explains. "When we arranged a dance, we took the name of the district or the store: Embandleni, Embondweni, Emakanyise. . . . We walked from one place to another. We walked a lot! We walked! And we liked to play. If we heard that they were dancing at Emakanyise, we would go. Year after year! We would dance and sing *ingadla*. When we finished, the people would go back to their homes. On the way back, girls and boys would go together and the boys would use that time to proposition us."

Courtship proprieties and ideas of self-respect are recurring themes in our conversations in both Eziphosheni and Usuthu Gorge and are used as a common measure of intergenerational change. One day, old Makete in Usuthu Gorge complained that young people no longer respected traditional institutions of courtship and marriage: "They are only interested in mobile phones and pregnancy. Those are their cows! They wear trousers. Now *we* are afraid of trousers!" The other women agree with her and mimic the actions of young people, simulating them kissing in public and smoking

cigarettes. Makete bends her head coquettishly to one side and pretends to talk on a mobile phone. Peering heavenward she babbles in high-pitched vocables: "ya ya ya . . ." At that moment, Mduduzi's phone rings and he moves away quickly to talk to the caller, who we assume is a woman. His actions are not dissimilar to Makete's impersonations, and we all collapse with laughter. The women immediately tease him with a song:

*Uya yizwa lentho ekhuluma nawe?* (Do you hear this thing that speaks to you?)
*Woyilalela* (You must listen to it)
*iCellphone!* (It is a cellphone!)

## Settling in the Shade

As we approach the fields, the Eziphosheni women begin singing: "*O ihlala ihlomile!*" (Always armed and ready to fight!)

"This is a wedding song that we sing when the new bride is delivered to the husband's house," Mfaz'Omnyama explains. "It is a song that introduces the girl to her new home. We are singing it now because we are introducing you to our fields."

The fields next to the Msunduze River are located in a flooded savannah depression. It is winter and the river is running low; despite this, the soil still supports verdant strips of maize, pumpkins, onions, and cassava. On the edge of the fields are old, established mango trees and bananas; beyond them are dense thickets of reeds that will be harvested by the women to weave sleeping mats (*amacansi*).

"I used to stay over there with my aunt when I was very young," Nomadloze explains, pointing north to the game reserve. "We stayed at a place called iDiphini [cattle dip]. Life was easy inside. All the houses were built from reeds, not like here where we use corrugated iron for our roofs. Now I will show you the fields where I am working. Even my husband said that he wants you to film my bananas and mangoes. We are proud of this place. If you return after the rains, you will see what we have. There will be lots of food stored in our granary [*inqolobane*], and we will sell the surplus to pay for our children's school fees. My husband is a traditional healer. There are people who come to him for help, and that way he earns some money. I work in the fields and try to make money, so between us we are able to send our children to school. If there are no people coming to him for help, I have to work extra hard in the fields." She points to trees that have been left in the field. "These are the trees that we kept when we cleared this field. We use them to shade us when the sun is hot and we need to rest. When I clear

the field, I will burn the trees I don't need and make them fall. We leave the *umganu* trees;[14] we let their fruit ripen before we collect them. Then we go home and make beer and call the neighbors to drink. We take the seeds and grind them to cook for our children."

Now Mfaz'Omnyama shows us her fields, pointing out the subtle perimeter of her long strips of land indicating where her tall, swaying maize plants are separated from those of her neighbor. Further away, she has fields that have been freshly plowed by her husband. After a lifetime of migrant employment in Johannesburg, he has invested in a tractor and now earns a small income by working other people's lands.

MaFambile is related to Mfaz'Omnyama by marriage, and their fields border one another's, the division between plots marked only by the occasional stone or narrow strip of unworked land that serves also as a pathway. MaFambile is a keen farmer, a hard worker, an enterprising woman: "I have been working these fields since I was a girl," she tells me. "When I married, I continued to use them, and now my children use them. When we see that the soil is tired, we let it lie for two years. During that period, we move to our other fields far away. Sometimes these fields get flooded. Hha! It really fills up! But luckily they have never been so bad that we have had to move to another place. It used to happen like that. When there were floods for two or three years, the people had to move to their relatives. That is why they used to say *Induku enhle igawulwa ezizweni* [Good (fire)wood is found far away]."[15]

We find a place in the field and settle down in the deep shade of tall, luxuriant maize plants. MaFambile continues to talk about her life: "I was born at Banzi Pan [Ndumo Game Reserve] but left when I was very young. My father had a lot of cattle, but they were looked after by my uncle on this side [of the reserve fence]. When my father found out that my uncle was eating his [her father's] cows, he decided to build a home on this side. He brought me here and some of the family stayed in Banzi Pan. But life was difficult there, so eventually they all moved across. At that time, if they [park's officials] caught someone eating an antelope, they would fine them. So people found a new place and just stayed. Later, I found temporary work in the game reserve clearing the roads, so that is how I remember parts of it now. There were pathways between the homesteads. They were close to the Usuthu River. We didn't suffer from hunger; we had access to wild fruits, we collected water lilies and we grew vegetables: *amadumbe* [root vegetable], *umbila* [maize], *ubhatata* [sweet potatoes]. It was very nice for us. The only thing we bought from the shop was salt, and sometimes we didn't even buy salt because there was a saltpan near to the Nyamiti Pan where we would collect. There, the soil was white like salt. After a while we couldn't cross

over [traverse the game reserve] any more. Even when we found temporary work in the reserve, we couldn't cross over because they switched on the electric fences. It shocked us if we touched it! We had to forget about our relatives. Many of them moved this side in the beginning when the fences went up. Others moved here later during the war in Mozambique. Before that we used to go to Mozambique at Christmas [*iKisimusi*] to visit our relatives. We ate very well. Hha! We even ate rice and tea! We would eat meat and goats and chickens. At that time these things were new to us so it was a big thing then even if it is a small thing now. My father would come back from Johannesburg with sweets and bread in *amakatoni* [cardboard boxes]. And I remember when he brought back his first gramophone. It had records that would go round and round. We had to use a needle [*inalithi*]." She sings a song that she remembers from the gramophone records, and the other women are quick to join her:

> *Baleka webaleka safa ngejubane* (Run away as fast as you can)
> *Wemthaka Baba* (Child of my father)
> *Gijim'uqinise* (Run fast)

"Hey! If you think hard, you can remember these things!" MaFambile exclaims with amazement. "First it was the *igilamafomu* [gramophone] and next it was the radio. The *igilamafomu* had a 'cassette' [vinyl record] that changed itself, and then you took the needle and put it on the next one. After gramophone came *gumba-gumba* [cassette boom box]. It had big speakers. I remember when the radio was introduced. I used to think, who is talking in there? We wanted to see who was hiding inside. When there were no adults at home, we would look behind the speakers to see who was talking inside. The stories on the radio [radio dramas] came much later. We knew that they were for the white people, so we were scared of radios. We were listening to the gramophone when I was still living in the game reserve. I used it before I was married. Only my firstborn [child] knows this thing.

"Sometimes at *iKisimusi* we would go to the store in Ndumo to eat sugar and dance *ingadla*.[16] There was a big *umkhaya* tree and we used to dance under it. The tree is there where they are selling things now. When we were tired, we would make a fire and rest. The boys would play harmonica [*ubhelebane*]. There were men who played concertina [*inkonsitini*]. They would come back from the mines with them. Cassettes came after the record. That is when life changed and we started to dance, dancing *ama-bumpjive*.[17] There was no *ingadla* in those *i-amplifyia* [i.e., *ingadla* songs were not recorded and therefore not available on radio or cassettes]. After *i-amplifiya* was intro-

duced, we stopped playing these *izitweletwele*. We started to dance to this music. If we had been able to record *isitweletwele,* perhaps we would still be playing it today. We just ignored them. Instead of going to *isigcawu*, we stayed at home to dance to the cassette."

"Life was good then," Mfaz'Omnyama reminisces. "We had fields and we had water. We would walk everywhere and we didn't have shoes. Only white people wore shoes at that time. We were proud of ourselves."

Qomakufa reminds us that in the 1960s things had begun to change and there were already one or two schools in the area: "My father didn't let me go to school; he thought I would become '*estus mina*' [excuse me] like white people. He thought I would become more interested in their culture and forget about mine."[18]

## Romancing the Past

The women's resistance to the loss of tradition is common amongst elderly people worldwide who seek stability in memories of a certain past amidst the threat of cultural change. As suggested by Kathleen Stewart, nostalgia rises in importance when culture becomes diffuse, a wistful memory of earlier times, a "structure of feeling" (Williams 1977, qtd. K. Stewart 1988, 227). For the women, two images are repeatedly invoked as material and emotional orientations of their pasts. The first is the trading store, which served as the new social and economic "docking point" for communities in the region and remains to this day a distinct site of memory, imbued with a range of emotional and symbolic associations. The second is *isigcawu*, the moonlight gatherings that facilitated multiple social, economic, and emotional junctures in the lives of young people. These memories are located in a generalized geography of belonging inseparable from the landscape and experienced in sound and bodily praxis. As migrant employment became a culturally embedded, normative practice, transmuting into something of a rite of passage for young men seeking to establish themselves in their communities, so the *isigcawu* gatherings slowly drifted away from homesteads and remote natural localities to the trading stores, where socialities became predicated on a range of new interactions. While the distinctions between new and old, tradition and modern are clearly enunciated in the women's narratives about gender relations and marriage, there is a flattening of these binaries when reminiscing about the trading store and *isigcawu*.

While today *isigcawu* is remembered as the "backbone" (*umgogodlo*) of young people's socialities and is iconic of the activities, places, and relationships that remain temporally and spatially fixed in "tradition," the store is

considered a place of change and modernity, of departures and returns, new commodities and trends. The trading store linked women to an imaginary world beyond. Yet the romanticized memories of the store and the triumphant *ingadla* dancing that took place next to it when the buses returned with their men belie the fact that it was inextricably linked to industrial labor and to a revolutionary moment in the lives of the western Maputaland communities. *Isigcawu* became bound to this change, providing a cultural rejoinder to the extreme challenges posed by migrancy and sanctioning the experience with sweetness. Ironically, it was this introduction of economic capital that paved the way for the establishment of schools and churches and ultimately led to the demise of this youthful exchange, as Headmaster Mthethwa explains:

> The store was the place where the girls would dance *ingadla*. The young boys would be playing alone nearby. The girls would play *lethi* [dance game meaning "come later"]. They would sing "*inja nxa, inja nxa*" [dog "nxa," dog "nxa"], and the one would touch the other and run around the circle. . . . And the grown-up men who wanted to get married would propose here. They will have crossed miles playing their instruments! They used to say that they didn't feel tired when they played the harmonica [*ubhelebane*]. We would see them with a mirror carried in a small bag. In our culture, when you were in love with a girl, you wouldn't go to her house until you had paid *lobola*. It was difficult to call the girl, so you would catch the girl [with the reflection off the mirror] and shine it on her face. That was our technique; our "SMS."[19] These were things done then. When schools came to this area, teachers stopped us from dancing *isigcawu*; they said it was a bad thing to do at night. Teachers would go around at night and check on who was at the dances. Next morning in class, all of those who had been at *esigcawini* had to report to them. And we would be honest; we didn't lie! We would tell them and we would be beaten. (Personal communication, 6 August, 2009)[20]

In reality, trading stores were the sites where the hegemonic foundations of the apartheid system were first manifest in this region. The women's wistful descriptions of the depot overlook their reality as places of extreme racial segregation. Here, Ben Highmore's insights into nostalgia's defensive formation and its ability to reify the past are instructive: "Radical transformations become 'second nature.' The new becomes traditional and the residues of the past become outmoded and available for fashionable renewal. But signs of failure can be noticed everywhere: the language of the everyday is not an upbeat endorsement of the new; it echoes with frustrations, with the dis-

appointment of broken promises" (2). Headmaster Mthethwa offers a less sympathetic recollection of the store in the 1960s, acting out the characteristically dismissive attitude of white storekeepers toward their black clientele:

> I couldn't go through the main door. There would be two doors: the whites would go in one and we would make a long queue outside. Fifteen shillings for sugar. There would be no paper to put it in. Mamas would have to tie their sugar in a corner of their cloth. Even the bread would not be covered.

The trading store was also implicated as a site of radical social change in the way it served the growing economic disparities between men and women. The migrant labor scheme radically transformed rural subsistence livelihoods, shifting from an economic practice where profit was invested in livestock and soil to one in which people became dependent on cash to supplement food and other basic commodities. In developing the migrant labor system, the Union government and the apartheid regime (post-1948) attempted to restrict entry into the labor market to male workers, introducing laws and clever tactics to limit women's movement to the cities. At the same time, however, they blocked commercial production by black farmers by moving them to inferior land and denying them water rights, ultimately preventing the establishment of a viable black rural economy. As land security weakened, so women's domestic food production became increasingly threatened. Those women who lost access to men's cash earnings when husbands or fathers failed to return had to either migrate to places of employment (e.g., manual labor on white-owned farms or domestic work in European homes) or pursue some form of entrepreneurial activity. Both options were tenuous. As Charles Ballard (1986) notes, the unpredictability of climatic conditions, indebtedness, and increased labor migrancy rendered women, children, and the elderly vulnerable to widespread malnutrition and starvation, and for the first time they became dependent on trading stores.

In Maputaland, remittances from male relatives were an important resource for wives and children, and several songs describe the monthly expeditions undertaken by women to collect their money from the local trading stores. These were often arduous journeys involving several days' travel:

> *Mema mtanami siye kaMazambane kuyaholwa* (Come, my child, climb onto my back so that we can go to Mazambane [trading store] to fetch the money).
> *Holalaphi namhlanje?* (Where will we sleep tonight?)[21]

Further, women's local entrepreneurial activities often relied on the cash earnings of their own men, forcing them deeper into relationships of dependency and subjugation. Headmaster Mthethwa recounts a typical scenario:

> Now the bus used to come to the trading store twice a week; these were not *uTeba* [mine recruitment company buses] but Magaris buses [owned by the Rutherfoords]. When it came, we would go there and wait for it at night. And people would come with their big luggage—*amabhokisi*—and because they had money from wherever, the women would offer to carry it. Some women even carried them to Mozambique. People coming from the urban areas would take everything and put it in these trunks and these Mamas were so strong! The women would carry these things for this Baba [man] to the Pongola River and they would give them money. Now that was money! But when teachers came they said, we don't want young women going around carrying heavy things for the men, so it stopped.[22]

Back in the field, Mfaz'Omnyama produces from her pocket a cloth in which she has wrapped a few old coins: "As we have been talking about old things, I decided to bring this old, old money that our parents used to use when they bought things from the store. We used to wrap it in a small cloth and tuck it into our *ihawu* [cloth]. This is a half-cent [*isenta*] and this is a cent; this is two cents. This one was 'chased' [replaced] by this one."

She has also brought an old teddy bear, which she ties onto her back, demonstrating how the young girls used to carry their younger siblings when they walked to the store to buy sugar: "If you returned with an amount less than was sold to you, that would mean that you had eaten some along the way and you would be severely beaten!"

The women decide to show me how this all worked. Nomadlozi assumes the role of the storekeeper. She spoons an imaginary quantity of sugar into the corner of her cloth and carefully ties it into a knot. Mfaz'Omnyama, the client, folds the knot of sugar into the waist of her cloth and embarks on her long walk home, playing her *umakhweyana* gourd bow. On her way, she meets her friend MaKhumalo, and they proceed together. They pass by MaMkhize, who is collecting firewood, and MaQomakufa who is shredding sugarcane to make beer. MaFambile adopts the role of the mother who is working in her fields. When her daughter, Mfaz'Omnyama, hands over the sugar, it becomes apparent that somewhere along the way, she has helped herself to a generous portion. This is cause for a harsh reprimand—and much laughter.

I am amazed at the spontaneity of their role-play and of the unvoiced col-

lusion of its narrative construction, manifest in coordinated inflections and bodily flow. I am reminded of how collective memory, particularly when reflected performatively, helps us to recover time and space as a unified, synchronic gesture, and acts equally to reinforce long-held social bonds in the present through shared knowledge.

"We have known each other since we were girls," Mfaz'Omnyama reminds me. "When we went to *isigcawu*, we would go together. When we went to the store, we walked together. We went to each other's weddings. The songs we are singing now are still the same. Some of the songs and games that we have shown you are from that time, and we have many, many more!"

## Trading across the Borders

While men explored new worlds elsewhere, the lives of women remained spatially and culturally circumscribed. When I asked the women whether any had ever been to Johannesburg or Durban, all except MaFambile responded that they had no idea of what life was like in the city: "We only know Ndumo, where we buy maize meal and come home. We started catching cars to the store only a few years ago. Before that we would put the bag of maize meal on our heads and walk or use a donkey cart. If we had oxen, we would walk alongside them, carrying our children on our backs. In Johannesburg, they use money to pay for everything. Here, we use our power [*amandla*] to survive. Everything they do there requires money. Here, we work on our own."

While few women ever traveled as far as the capital city of Lourenço Marques (Maputo), they frequently walked to the *cantinas* in southern Mozambique. The *cantineiros* used enterprising ways to attract customers, and for the Maputaland women, these stores offered a different experience from the racial constrictions of the South African stores.

"In those days [1960s] we were free to buy in Mozambique," explained MaFambile. "We would go there to eat *isigwamba* [corn porridge and green vegetables] and peanuts. When we came back, our stomachs would be full. We used to buy *amahiya* [cloth]. It was just like that. In those days, we didn't buy things to sell here; we bought things for ourselves only. First, before we went into the store, the owner would give us bread, water, and sugar. You would sit down and eat before you went into the store. You paid nothing for this. Then you looked in the store and when you were finished buying, the storekeeper would give you salt or sugar for free. It was their way to encourage people from Ndumo to come and buy, and it kept us happy. It was nice buying on the other side. In Mozambique we would go for *esigcawini*. We

would sing our Mozambican songs there, and sometimes the groups would be invited to dance when a new store was opened."

"These days it is not easy; you need permits and money [metical] to buy in Mozambique," MaFambile states. "First education came and then the churches. Zion[23] . . . all kinds of churches. We had to leave a lot of these things [traditional practices]. In the end, we stopped buying in Mozambique when they put up the fences for the game reserve. We used to travel where the game reserve is now. The war [civil war in Mozambique] started after the game reserve was there. It was difficult to go to Mozambique then because the people on that side fled to our side and they couldn't go back. They were killing on the other side, and as the war progressed, they burned down all the shops so there was no reason for us to go anymore. Then the war came to our side. They cut our breasts and said, 'go and give them to your chief!' Do you still remember those communists [*amakhomanisi*]? They used to cut your mouth and your breasts. We asked if it was the Boer [*iBhunu*] who were doing these terrible things, and they said no, it was the black people on the other side."[24]

Despite the dramatic changes in the lives of the communities in the 1960s and 1970s, one institution that remained fixed in women's imagination was marriage. Nomadlozi recounts her story: "I was born at Lutubani near Ingwavuma. Life wasn't easy for me there. I lost my mother when I was very young. It happened before I could even sit up. Then I had to go and live with my aunt inside the reserve. When we were made to leave, we went to live in Emakanyise. I stayed there until I was a young girl. Then I went to visit my father's home where I met my sisters [daughters of father's second wife]. I loved it there and decided to stay. I stayed there with my grandmother. It was the time when we used to go to *isigcawu*. That is where Ngwenya [husband] first saw me. He always threw things at me when I was dancing. He used to place tufts of grass in front of me as a sign of appreciation. I soon realized that he was interested in me. When other girls were dancing, he would do nothing. But when I danced, he would throw things. When I went to the Ndumo store to buy sugar, he would follow me. At that time, the Ngwenya family was staying together in the same homestead, and I lived in Lutubani. We had to walk a long way to *esigcawini*. When he came back from the city, he would give me money to buy sugar and bread. Now he was working in Swaziland at that time, and the cows he bought for my *lobola* he bought with that money. In those days, we were proud of ourselves, and the most important thing was to get a good *lobola* for our parents. But once *lobola* had been paid, there was nothing left to say. Everything changed. You had to listen to your in-laws."

"We have a song that explains that as women, our role is to 'collect' cows from a man's family," MaFambile explains. "We sing *imbombosha lisheshe*, which means that when a man finds a woman [bride], the marriage will be completed with the exchange of cows."

*Ayi, imbombosha* (Hey, little cattle egret)
*Wemalanda zonke* (You who marry "everyone")
*Wemalanda nkomo* (You who fetch cows)
*Lisheshe lashona imbombosha* (The sun sets early, little cattle egret)

Mfaz'Omnyama elaborates: "The song explains that where there are cows, there will always be cattle egrets [*imitoshane* or *lilanda*].[25] In the afternoon when you go to collect the cows [to bring them back home], you will always first see *imitoshane,* and then you will find the cows."

"When you marry, you lose your pride [individuality]," continues MaFambile with surprising candor. "You have to follow the law of that family. That *lobola* has been paid for you and you have been introduced to the ancestors of your husband's family. Once you are married, you have to leave *isigcawu*; you are finished with playing. A woman belongs to her husband's house and she can't just go anywhere. But because it is his house, the husband is still free to roam. And if he does, you can't say anything!" She wipes her hand across her mouth to simulate silent obedience. "He can even make advances toward another girl and come back and tell you that he has a new girlfriend. You have to accept that. They have paid *lobola* and you have to forget about yourself. You have to think about your own parents. You can't eat food and vomit at the same time. Even if your in-laws are harsh, you have to stay because of that *lobola*. We had to stay at home for a long time while our men went away to Johannesburg. In the old days, they wouldn't take another wife in the city. When they 'joined up,' they lived in a closed environment and didn't encounter other women. But today it is different; now they take women. And you are not allowed to have another man because your husband is staying in the city! When your womb is easy [sexually promiscuous], he will find you pregnant with another man's child. You must not take advantage of his absence. If you like other men, you might risk losing what you have. If the husband did not return from the city, you would have to work in your fields to survive. The women were not allowed to go to Johannesburg. It was like being in jail; you would stay for many, many years without meeting a man."

Despite the women's continued belief in the institution of marriage, relationships were often fragile. One woman in our research team, who

wished to remain anonymous, explained how her marriage was irreparably damaged by the separation imposed by labor migration: "I married but my husband left me twenty-three years ago. He went to Empangeni [to find work] and he found another wife. But because he had paid *lobola*, I had to stay with his family. Even though our home was broken, I could not leave. I had to move to his uncle's house. I am told that he [husband] has a nice home in Empangeni near the airport and that he drives a big truck. But even if my husband is not here, I cannot go back [to my parents' home]. Because he left his cows, the marriage remains intact. If I take the cows and go back home, he will come after me and accuse me of stealing his things. So it's better that I stay and eat those cows or use them for some other reason. I can only do this while staying with his family. I know that his uncles will look after me. It is very difficult to stay alone. It is better for those women whose husbands have passed away. In my case, I know that my husband is alive; he is working and has no problems and stays somewhere. But he doesn't send even a cent. As I am now, I have no house and I don't have anything to build a house. I don't have anyone to turn to for help. He just left to find work. He found another woman and he forgot about me here. When I tried to go there to see him, he said, 'I'm trying to live on this side now and you must stay where I left you.' I didn't know what to do, so I just stayed."

Despite the prevalence of marital breakdown brought about by migrancy, people—often other women—whispered and jeered at those whose husbands failed to return. Their situation was all the more difficult if they had no children to show for the marriage in the first place. The same woman composed two songs that described her experience as an abandoned, childless wife:

> *Angizali mina bangibiza ngesiphukuphuku*
> (I have no children; they call me stupid)

and

> *Abanye bayajabula ekhaya kodwa mina kangijabula*
> (Others are happy at home, but I am not)

Though they were composed many years ago, when she sang them for me it became clear that she did not sing the songs as private ruminations only. On the contrary, the songs were well known to the other women sitting with us and especially to her close friend, MaFambile. I am left wondering whether they are a call for sympathy and understanding only or whether they were

used to actively challenge the negative moral aspersions cast on her by others. The performance structure, which was based on call-and-response format, would have resisted the social exclusion that they alluded to.

## New Strategies for Economic Subsistence

The 1970s and 1980s were a period of great change in the border region, generated by increasingly repressive laws and by the rising demand for cash for commodities, school fees, and so on. Cash remittances from husbands and relatives were often not able to accommodate these needs and sometimes dried up altogether. While women in western Maputaland may have been able to meet basic subsistence needs from agriculture, and were therefore somewhat better off than women in other rural communities in South Africa at this time, who spent on average 60 percent of their household income on basic foods and consumer goods produced elsewhere (VARA 1989), the escalation of the civil war in Mozambique and the securitization of the border region produced a unique challenge that hampered their ability to meet their families' needs.

One way that women generated cash was by distilling alcohol. Although the brewing of "beer" from the fruit of the *umganu* (marula) tree was considered a traditional occupation by women, indulged in by everyone at particular times of the seasonal calendar, alcohol made from sugarcane and other store-bought ingredients was considered particularly desirable by men who had money to spend. Distilling spirits was illegal under the 1928 Liquor Act (Bradford 1987), and the police consequently staged frequent raids on those women who they suspected to be involved in the activity, often blitzing their homes at night, causing widespread damage to their property and engendering deep resentment amongst them. Headmaster Mthethwa explains:

> There was this *isicatha* [sugarcane brew], and they [the police] would go around [checking on the women to see whether they were brewing]. One policeman could arrest hundreds of women in one day. They would say that the law is arresting you for drinking unauthorized alcohol. We were not allowed to drink *utshwala* [bottled beer]. No black man could go to the bottle store to buy alcohol.

The women would purchase the basic ingredients to prepare alcohol from the *cantinas* in Mozambique and prepare their brew deep in the bush.

If discovered, their distilleries would be destroyed, and the women would be arrested. They would be incarcerated in Ingwavuma for anything from one to three months. Frequently, they would be released early from prison by white farmers from the Pongola valley, who would "buy them" (put up their bail) in exchange for work on their farms. This system was particularly common during harvest time, when the women would be put to work picking cotton, pineapples, sisal, and potatoes. At other times, they were made to weed and irrigate fields of vegetables or tend to cattle. Almost all the women with whom I worked had experienced this form of forced labor at least once in their lives. As with the migrant labor system, being arrested had bittersweet resonances, as despite the hardships involved, it provided the women with a small income. One day Makete played the following song on *isitweletwele*:

> *Emsebenzini kukhala ingolovane* (The siren [of the train] is calling us to work)

The song makes reference to the train that would transport the men to the mines in Johannesburg. However, as the men would first be driven by buses from Ndumo to the railway stations in Siteki in Swaziland or in Pongola to the south, it was unlikely that women would have seen a train or heard its signal. She explained her song in the following way:

> Once I saw a train when I was coming from Pongola where I had been in prison. I was arrested for brewing alcohol and sent to jail for three months. I was quite young then and strong, not like now. Singing the song made me think of my husband and helped to soothe my heart. (Personal interview, Usuthu Gorge, 18 November 2003)

## End of the Day

It is late afternoon and the women have things to do. Some wander off to the local store, while others proceed to the fields next to their homes to harvest vegetables for the evening meal. We walk back along the main road with MaFambile to her home. Before we leave, she asks me if I would like to buy some clothes from her "shop." She shows me her collection of shirts, skirts, and pinafores, proud of her business and prepared to endure all manner of difficulties to make it work. She tells me that when she travels to Durban to buy, she sleeps on the grass verge in front of the taxi rank so that she can catch the early morning transport back to Maputaland. The city at night is

frightening and full of thieves. Now that she will have the burden of paying for her son's second marriage, she may consider moving closer to the main coastal road, which will give her easier access to Durban and may be more profitable for her business. For the moment, she has limited support from men in her life, as is the case with most of her friends, and will simply have to manage just as she always has. "*Kanjalo nje*," she says; it's just like that.

SIX

# Rain Is Only One Aspect of Water

*Iqhude lakhala kathatu sekusile amanzi awekho*
(The rooster cries three times at dawn but there is no water)

One of the more striking images of western Maputaland today is that of women pushing heavy wheelbarrows stacked high with twenty-liter jerrycans. The parade begins at dawn when girls and women of all ages appear on the paths and corrugated gravel roads that lead to the tall brick watertowers stationed intermittently along a main pipeline. The jerrycans are lined up in single file in front of a solitary tap—silent, acquiescent, in bright plastic blue and yellow—where they will remain until each owner has presented a coupon to the tank bailiff and the first distribution of the day may begin.

Water is women's business in this part of the world, whose every day begins and ends with the tedious, backbreaking activity of its fetching and carrying. However, water is part of a variety of water-related associations that carry deep cultural meanings alongside its more mundane consumptive value. As the substance that is fundamental to every social and organic process, water is a key symbol of identity, sociality, and human-environment interdependence in western Maputaland, its qualities of fluidity and transmutability utilized rhetorically to describe boundaries, flows, and interconnections (Strang 2006). Local stories abound with references to water points and states of water. Rivers flow through songs, praises, and ritual narratives. Running water is used to wash away sickness, hostilities, and sorrow; when still, it is ingested to purify states of being.

And almost always water is invoked to memorialize the past.

As MaFambile once declared, "Water is a traditional thing. To say my name, I must refer to my water." Correspondingly, when the women intro-

duced themselves at our first gathering, it was water that was summoned to signal both familial moorings and physical displacement:

> "My name is A.[1] I was born here and I married here. Where I married, I am still drinking from the same river."
>
> "My name is B. I came from the other side of the Msunduzi River at Ephondweni. I was married in Eziphosheni and now I am drinking from the Eziphosheni River."
>
> "I am C. I am married to the X family. Originally I was from 'inside' (the Ndumo Game Reserve), but I came out when I was young. I grew up in this area and got married in this area. I was drinking from the Msunduzi River, but I have ended up drinking from the tanks [*amathangi*]."

This chapter will focus on socioeconomic transformation in western Maputaland and consider the effects that shifting European landscape epistemologies had on the economic production and political reconfiguration of the borderlands. More specifically, it will examine the phenomenology of water as the discursive backdrop that both shaped incomers' aspirations for spatial development and affected their ultimate demise. With the more permanent settlement of a white community at the turn of the twentieth century, epistemologies of water gradually transmuted into more "grounded" imaginaries of landscape domestication, extraction, and control. Although the topography comprises a multitude of rivers, pans, and extended waterways, it was the denial of access to water that had the most deleterious effect on local subsistence farmers. It is the same manipulation of water rights that today sustains this legacy of spatial and economic control.

The chapter focuses on the period prior to and immediately following the removal of the families from the Ndumo Game Reserve. Change in western Maputaland was refracted through regional development and was shaped fundamentally by its position in relation to southern Mozambique and Swaziland, whose capitulation to global demands for cotton and sugar, and to the expanding South African industrial economy, transformed the region into a labor reservoir. As with chapter 4, which traces the textualized history of border making in the region, material in this chapter generally represents storying told remotely. While the patchwork of citations from memoirs, interviews, and government documents is used to generate a sense

of livedness in the text, the narrative unfolding is generally devoid of the sensory, the quotidian, and the sounded.

## New Currents in Maputaland

Maputaland is a coastal plain underlain by marine siltstone that has been carved into a wetland complex comprising pans, floodplains, and valleys (Matthews 2007). It is unsurprising, therefore, that the narratives of early European pioneer traders and settlers were preoccupied with water. Their stories not only involved experiences of the inland waterways but drew on a much older oceanic imaginary that was shaped by centuries of maritime trade. Knowledge of the currents, tides, and monsoon winds enabled Portuguese sailors to traverse the Indian Ocean with relative ease, seizing the most profitable ports along the East African coast, the Persian Gulf, and the western seaboard of India to monopolize the Indian Ocean trade routes (Oishi 2007, 289). In 1510, the Portuguese established the capital of Portuguese India in Goa, which remained the administrative center of Mozambique until the mid-1700s, positioning it centrally within the Goa-Mozambique-Lisbon triangle.[2] For several centuries, the Portuguese in Mozambique concentrated their settlements on the coast, focusing attention on the extraction of resources and relying on the ocean as an escape route from dangers inland. Locating their initial settlement on the northern Ilha de Moçambique, they gradually worked their way southward to Delagoa Bay (Maputo Bay),[3] bartering their stocks of woolen and cotton blankets, calico, metals, brass ornaments, and glass beads (known as "trade-wind beads") in exchange for cattle, hides, ivory, and slaves (McGregor 1994).

Extending trade operations inland depended largely on the navigability of rivers to facilitate the transportation of commodities across vast geographic distances. Crucially, these operations relied on the geographical knowledge, interregional networks, and physical labor of local inhabitants. As Junod (1927) tells us, the movement of goods from the interior to the coast was such standard procedure that trade was locally conceptualized as "journeying."[4] However, by the early twentieth century these itinerant commercial undertakings were superseded by less risky and apparently more prosperous sedentary trade, which profited from the incorporation of southern Mozambican men into the South African labor market. This economic shift supported the development of a burgeoning network of rural trading stores, which played a significant role in transforming socioeconomic practices and gender relations across the southeast African border region.

## European Settlement on the Western Frontier

Water dominated the narratives of European travelers to western Maputaland at the end of the nineteenth century, and anecdotes detailing the challenges involved in traversing the saturated, disease-ridden terrain filled the pages of their diaries and letters. For instance, in a letter to the *Natal Mercury* in 1897, Colonel Friend Addison described "Tongaland" as a "howling wilderness of sandy flats and swamps and the deadliest hole for civilized man to get into" (qtd. Pooley 1992, 60). Some years later, the traveler Carel Birkby (1937) focused his anguish on the iridescent "fever trees"[5] that proliferate on the edges of the Ndumo waterways, writing that their "naked trunks [are] tinted a vivid sulphurous-yellow, and their greenery-yallery [*sic*] branches are covered with slimy bloom which stains the hands when you touch them. . . . Their foul look fits well with their name and you cannot wonder that the first men who sweated and shivered in this unhealthy country blamed them for malaria" (115–16).

It was one thing for Europeans to simply pass through western Maputaland but another altogether to put down roots and remain for the long term. While the diaries of these European settlers may initially have praised the breathtaking beauty of the region and its seemingly limitless economic potential, they soon make evident that the rugged topography and unpredictable weather conditions challenged any expectations that they may have entertained of uncontested conquest and control. For most, water was the metaphorical double-edged sword that defined both opportunity and failure. While it was the waterways that provided the only viable access into the area at the end of the nineteenth century, it was water that flooded their fields and carried away their crops; it obstructed the roads they attempted to build to support commerce and agricultural development, and it bore the fatal diseases that claimed the lives of many, as well as their livestock.

Not every settler fell prey to these watery afflictions, however. It was his fine-tuned knowledge of coastal tides, winds, and seasonal storms that enabled Louis von Wissell[6] to set up the first permanent trading station in Ndumo in 1895. His memoir makes evident his enthusiasm for the beauty of the region, which he invariably describes from the vantage of its waterways:

> The scenery is very interesting and variable, the banks being covered with dense trees of various kinds, palms and creepers, multi-flowered convolvulus[7] teaming with bird and monkey life in parts. Hippos in certain parts were also to be met with regularly. One passenger described the [boat] journey as "the poetry of motion." (Von Wissell 1895–1919, 21)

Prior to settling in the region, Von Wissell had escaped the harsh summers in the northern regions of South Africa by investigating trading opportunities in and around Lourenço Marques (Maputo). Here he met with Chief Nosingili of the Mabudu-Tembe clan, who offered him safe passage into Tongaland, where he learned the ways of the rivers and became acquainted with the network of Indian and Portuguese *cantineiros* who managed rural trading stores in southern Mozambique. Recognizing the economic potential of cross-border trade, he went on to establish a depot at Mtini's Drift and subsequently at "Ndumo hill," which he considered a healthier site with a fine view. His principal lines of trade were game horns, bones, hides, cattle, and rubber,[8] which he transported out of the area by way of a flat-bottomed pont. In time, he amassed a small fleet of larger vessels and later still acquired a ten-ton shallow draft motorboat, as noted in the 1894 *Natal Almanac, Directory and Yearly Register*:

> Whilst on the subject of rivers it may be worthwhile making a small digression, in connection with the navigation of the Maputa [*sic*] or Usutu [River]. It has within the last six months (April to September, 1896) been found possible to bring boats from the mouth of the river (which, of course, empties itself into Delagoa Bay), to a point quite close to the junction of the Usutu and Pongolo rivers referred to above. Indeed, competent judges state, that much difficulty would not be experienced in steering a boat some miles up even the Pongolo itself. The energetic pioneers of this scheme are Messrs. Wissell and Finetti, storekeepers, who have been authorized to trade both in Portuguese Tongaland (through which the Maputa flows) and in the newly annexed country. It is not too much to expect that Messrs. Wissell and Finetti will be able, without much additional outlay, to bring up loads of 6 tons at a time. To go by boat from Lourenço Marquez close to the North-Easterly point of this District takes, roughly speaking, from twelve to eighteen days. It is found that a boat can be worked quite satisfactorily during the greater part of the year. The worst time is during the rainy season, or rather when the river is actually in flood. Of course there are many difficulties still to be overcome before the route can be regarded as properly established, but it may be hoped that the energy which has already been displayed will meet with the full support it rightly deserves from the Government, both of Tongaland and of Zululand.[9]

Von Wissell's mastery of the waterways appears not to have been matched by subsequent settlers, however, and his departure from Ndumo in 1918 marked a new era in the economic development of the region. His successor, Richard Hubert Rutherfoord, had for several years attempted to farm cotton

in the Umfolozi River region of Zululand but had migrated north when his crop was devastated by successive years of floods (Rutherfoord 1995). His management of the Ndumo store was underwritten by the Ndumu Co-operative Labor Association (later Ndumu Ltd.), which comprised a conglomeration of wealthy sugar farmers he had come to know in Zululand. As the company name suggested, besides trade, his principal undertaking in Ndumo was the recruitment of labor for the sugar industry in the south (Rutherfoord 1995).

Rutherfoord's arrival at the station marked a shift in the settler imagination of western Maputaland. Competing with the fluid images invoked in Von Wissell's memoir, the letters and reminiscences inscribed by the new settlers resorted to more grounded metaphors of locality and belonging, signifying a commitment to a more permanent, sedentary existence. The police officers, missionaries, traders, and game rangers who came to make up the small white community in Ndumo wrote endlessly about treacherous sandy tracks, broken axels, and spare parts that never seemed to arrive. Roy Rutherfoord (son of Richard Hubert), in his aptly entitled memoir *Beyond Where the Dirt Road Ends*, dedicates a whole chapter to the perils of road travel, the following passage serving as one typical such scenario:

> From O'tobothini we travelled on an ill-defined old wagon track that led to Ndumu. At times we had to get out to walk to higher ground in order to see where the track continued. We proceeded on, and duly arrived at the banks of the Ingwavuma River, a spot approximately two kilometres from Ndumu store. The river was flowing strongly and was quite impossible to cross by car. There was a small pont, which the natives managed to pole backwards and forwards, and onto which our belongings were loaded. Homan organized some porters who carried it from there to Ndumu. (Rutherfoord 1995, 3–4)[10]

The challenges posed by marshes, pans, and flooding rivers to the establishment of an effective road infrastructure were interminable, but just as relentless were the attempts made by this generation of incomers to purchase bigger, better, and more robust vehicles to overcome them. To fortify their labor recruitment and trading enterprises, the Ndumo Ltd. ventured into commercial transportation, investing in a fleet of tough Magirus trucks and buses that were renowned for their ability to operate under the most arduous circumstances.

## Trading Stores

When R. H. Rutherfoord assumed ownership of the Ndumo store in 1918, there were already some twenty *cantinas* on the other side of the border (Rutherfoord 1995). In addition to selling imported goods such as traditional cloth (*capulanas*), "colonial wine," and basic household goods (Bastos 2005, 281), the Mozambican *cantinas* relied heavily on buying and selling locally grown produce. Many *cantineiros* were also involved in the ivory trade, both supporting the hunting of elephants by supplying guns, gunpowder, and other hunting paraphernalia, and operating as middlemen in the transportation of ivory from the interior to the port at Lourenço Marques (known previously as Delagoa Bay) (Harries 1994, 13). Significantly, rural trade was inextricably linked to employment migration by African men to South Africa. Bastos (2005) describes the scenario of one Indian trader in Mozambique whose relatives made their fortune from the debts accumulated by the thousands of Mozambican men who worked in the mines:

> First my *dada* found work with an Indian boss, a Banyan from Diu. . . . Some years later, together with his brothers, they set up a firm, and they began by doing what was then called the *cantineiro* business. . . . Back then, thousands of Mozambicans went there to work in the mines. So many Africans, before they left, made an agreement with the Indian *cantineiro*. They told their families to shop at that *cantina*, and when they returned they paid up. My grandfather and other Indians extended such credit, they made good money and then came to live in the street behind the Bazaar in Lourenço Marques. (285)

Whereas in Mozambique there was a level of social integration among Portuguese, Indian, and African residents, when Europeans arrived in western Maputaland they moved into a landscape that they regarded as geographically remote and socially isolated.[11] Despite this, relations between white storekeepers and their African clientele were often intensely interdependent. As suggested by Debbie Whelan (2011), the trading store formed an integral part of the rural community, situating the trader in a network of relationships in which economic prosperity was dependent on a range of social obligations. This intimacy compelled white traders to learn local languages and to become attuned to the needs and cultural practices of their patrons. Not only did trading stores serve as an outlet for commodities, they operated as a postal service and telephone exchange and were periodically called upon to offer legal advice. Colin Foxon, whose father ran

a trading store in Ingwavuma in the early 1900s, remembers these multiple obligations:

> If you work now for the [mines], how do you get your money home? The post office was always in the store. The wife or the mother [of a migrant worker] would arrive and she would be known to the postmaster. . . . They knew the families so there wasn't the intrigue of people getting the wrong money. That never happened. It was usually the employee of the storekeeper who would be educated. My father had a man called Ellis Caleka who had copperplate handwriting. He had been well educated somehow. They [the women] used to put their thumbprint and then he'd write "X crosses her mark" and sign *E. Caleka*. The mineworkers would send their money through the NRC [Native Recruitment Corporation]. And the other thing that happened was when there was a death or someone was sick, telegrams were sent: "mother dying . . . " And registered letters were a big thing! A big thing! The letters used to go back and forth and the envelopes were sometimes highly illustrated. They [the women] would put pictures on the back with diagonal designs in ink or pencil. There was a lot of time then, and those who could write would help out. And then someone—the mother, bride, or sister—would illustrate the envelope. These were very diagrammatic illustrations, much like their beadwork. . . . That was their contribution on the back of the envelope or in a margin. (Personal interview, Colin Foxon, Durban, 19 August 2004)[12]

Astute storekeepers capitalized on their role as mediators of cultural change, extending nonessential services where appropriate. Again Foxon reminisces:

> The storekeepers would celebrate Christmas at the stores. They would slaughter a beast for their clients and the men would arrive as if for a wedding—*udwendwe* or *izindwendwe*. The storekeeper would get women to brew beer . . . in big tea boxes that would be stripped of their lead lining. . . . They would grind their own sorghum and then they would brew it and Christmas Day would arrive and the menfolk would arrive in their splendor [*amahiya* ceremonial cloth]. . . . The men would sit around and drink and the women would arrive with children and the party would begin. The next thing would be a great *ngoma* [dance]. The women would dance with umbrellas. When the men danced, the women would ululate with her umbrella either opened or closed.

Trading stores were occasionally called upon to operate as logistics centers that administered emergency food during periods of extreme climatic

difficulty. One of the greatest threats to food sources at the turn of the twentieth century was the East Coast locust.[13] Von Wissell (1895–1919) describes being called upon to assist with food supplies following a major infestation from the north:

> They came in dense swarms, their silver wings glittering in the sun and more than once actually obliterated the latter. Where they settled down overnight not a blade of grass, nor a leaf was left; the country became brown as the locusts themselves. The result was famine throughout the whole country. . . . And thus a heavy call on my services was put. I had to provide the entire population of North Zululand with mealies [maize]. For months and months I was busy up and down the Maputa, occasionally going down to Lourenço Marques to secure further supplies of small yellow corn imported from Argentine. (61)

Half a century later, Rutherfoord (1995) describes a similar scenario when his family was required to assist with food distribution across Maputaland and southern Mozambique during a period of extreme drought:

> There was a period, I think it was in the late 1950s, where we had severe droughts and the natives were unable, for two years, to reap any form of crops, so they relied entirely on us for their food. We were getting SAR [South African Railway] truck-loads of maize, but then, there was always the problem with distribution. . . . I used to organize convoys of trucks and passenger buses, which could also carry goods. They were so constructed that seats could be folded away. . . . The trucks would come back as soon as they could on the Saturday from the Friday's run. They would be loaded and we would leave at three in the morning. I used to drive one of the trucks and Maureen and Peter used to come with me to start with and later, David. We would go off to the border stores. Muzi and Kosi Bay were our biggest problems, because they were feeding Africans from miles inside Mozambique, as they had nothing there. The whole family used to come down and they would buy a bag of maize, a little bit of sugar and other oddments. Each one would carry something. The bag of maize would be divided into two, which usually the two "mamas" had to carry, and off they would move back again to their homes. (58)

## The Ebb and Flow of Intraregional Labor

Efforts to recruit labor by the Rutherfoords' Ndumu Ltd. to the sugar farms in Zululand came in the wake of a much longer, often tortuous history of

migration in southeast Africa. Delagoa Bay had been an epicenter for the southeast African slave trade for close to two hundred fifty years (Harries 2013, 323). Slaves captured in northern Mozambique and later Inhambane and Delagoa Bay, as well as inland via indigenous slavers such as the Ndwandwe and Gaza Ngoni, had been exported to the Cape Colony and the Americas since the 1770s (ibid.). Concurrently, the expansion of the ivory trade in the early nineteenth century precipitated a significant increase of migration by Mabudu-Tembe men to various localities along traditional north-south trading routes (Kloppers 2003, 72). After the abolition of slavery in 1860, the Portuguese government found a new market for the sale of labor in the British colonies of South Africa. As Harries (2013) writes, "The terms of service of these contracted, migrant labourers retained many aspects of the earlier systems that had brought forced immigrants and slaves to the Cape. This experience would exercise an important influence on the development of labour relations in South Africa for the next hundred years" (323).

Gaza Ngoni (Shangaan/Tsonga) men had begun to participate in the recruitment of migrant labor for the sugar farms in the south and for the diamond fields in Kimberley from the mid-1880s (Harries 1994, 17).[14] Thereafter, the development of a more sustained migration of labor from southern Mozambique (and, by association, western Maputaland) was due to several factors. The main pull factor was the high wages offered in the mines at the time—some six times higher than those in southern Mozambique. The push factors were a combination of drought and declining peasant production, and the outbreak of the rinderpest epidemic, which decimated the local livestock economy (Kanyenze 2004).

At first, the formal recruitment of Mozambican labor to the Witwatersrand goldmines targeted southern Mozambique, and the central and northern province followed an entirely different economic trajectory. In the absence of sufficient capital to colonize the country, the Portuguese government assigned the development of the central Manica and Sofala provinces to private Portuguese-owned concessions for the development of a mining and agri-industry (Vail 1976, 389). Between 1891 and 1942, the Mozambique Company, the Niassa Consolidated Company, and the Zambesia Company between them controlled two-thirds of the economy of Mozambique. Concessions were granted for fifty years, permitting companies to exploit resources and resident manpower at will, and granting them exclusive rights to local taxes. In return, they were responsible for the public administration of their territories (e.g., construction of railways, roads, and port facilities, establishment of schools and hospitals, etc.) and were expected to

repatriate some 7.5 percent of their annual profits to the Portuguese state (ibid.). For the most part, these companies operated as autonomous units that had the freedom to treat African labor as they wished. Their power was founded on the *xibalo* (*chibalo*) system, which operated as a form of debt bondage that obliged all Mozambicans to work on plantations, cotton fields, or public works projects. Hut taxes were set high to ensure that people would have to work for long periods to accrue sufficient earnings to fulfill their obligations.[15]

In the 1890s, the recruitment wing of the Chamber of Mines, the Rand Native Labor Organization, signed a modus vivendi with the Portuguese government to recruit labor south of latitude 22° S (Vail 1976, 398). In 1901, the Witwatersrand Native Labor Association (WNLA, locally referred to as Wenela) was established with the explicit aim to recruit Mozambican men to the goldmines. In time, recruits from southern provinces constituted some 65 percent of all mineworkers in South Africa (Connor 2003, 95), and by the 1930s most southern Mozambican men between the ages of seventeen and sixty spent most of their working lives in the mines (Isaacman 1992, 817). At home, migration became associated with cosmopolitan masculinity, and men who migrated were treated as a source of wealth. As Harries (1994) notes, "Red-coats, smoking jackets, hats and trousers bought on the mines were the symbol of the new status" (17), while men who remained at home were denigrated as "*mumparras*, narrow-minded and ignorant provincials" (18).

Declining profits from cash crops in the north forced companies to turn to labor recruitment as a source of income. To maximize their returns, companies arranged that all laborers working outside the territory be paid a substantial part of their wages in scrip (scraps of paper), redeemable only at their local trading stores in Mozambique (Vail 1976, 399). Not only was local livelihood production severely disrupted by loss of land and the extended absence of men, but families became unavoidably tied to local trading stores and to a household subsistence that became increasingly reliant on consumer goods (ibid.).

While South African capitalist expansion had a significant influence on the economy of Swaziland, the recruitment of Swazi labor to the mines on the Witwatersrand was initially slow. Favorable weather conditions at the turn of the twentieth century supported large herds and good crops, enabling households to pay taxes to local chiefs as well as sustain domestic consumption needs. However, pressure on the domestic economy followed in the aftermath of severe drought, the rinderpest epidemic, and several locust infestations in the early 1900s (Booth 1986, 129). As much of the

arable land had by then been given over to European concessions, Swazi farmers were prohibited from moving to alternative lands, as had been their coping strategy in the past. When the Swazi monarchy raised local taxes in order to buy back land from European concessionaires, Swazi men were left with little alternative but to enter the migrant labor system.

According to Booth (1986), labor agents in the employ of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines took full advantage of the vulnerability of rural Swazi men at this time. However, prior experience of exploitation by various authorities had left Swazi men deeply suspicious of recruiting agents, motivating many to make their own way to the mines as "voluntaries." Things changed with the establishment of the Native Recruitment Corporation (NRC) in Swaziland in the 1920s, which went to great lengths to promote formal recruitment (Prothero 1974; Crush 1985; Bonner 1983). First, it instituted an "Assisted Voluntary System" (AVS), which involved short-term contracts in the mines, enabling men to return home at vital times in the agricultural calendar. Then it offered incentives such as a "cash advance" system, paying recruits up to a year's wages prior to departure to enable them to purchase cattle for marriage dowry (*lobola*). By helping to sustain local economic and marriage practices, the NRC gradually enticed large numbers of previously reticent young men into the system (Crush 1985). Predictably, the NRC's gain was a loss to both the agricultural economy in Swaziland and the subsistence of the Swazi household. This extreme dearth of men is noted in a communiqué by the district superintendent of the NRC in Swaziland, F. A. Lesrend Whittle, whose jurisdiction included the western Maputaland region:

> Throughout the area I have been struck by the preponderance of women over men and the almost total absence of the latter. . . . It appears that almost the entire Native male population is away from home at employment on the [Rand] Mines, [Natal] Sugar estates or in other industries, and that the reservoir of labor is sadly depleted. (NRCA 1948, qtd. Booth 1986, 130)

European landowners in Swaziland found themselves on the losing end of the competition for Swazi labor. Consequently, they sought to fulfill their requirements by recruiting Swazi women and children, as well as Shangaan (Tsonga) workers from southern Mozambique. Although employment-based migration was deeply gendered, the disparity between men and women's mobilities within states and across borders has not been well documented. In addition, while the pressure exerted by male migration on rural

women and the home was immense, the details of women's experiences remain significantly underrepresented in the economic history of the region. Zimisele Precious Simelane (2004) argues that male heads of households and chiefs often conspired with colonial administrators and European farmers to control women's labor:

> The male interest in keeping women in the rural areas coincided with those of the colonial state and white settler agricultural producers. The colonial state opposed permanent Swazi urbanization because it would undermine the availability of cheap labor for an agrarian economy centred on commercial settler production. Thus, from the beginning of the colonial period, there was general agreement between Swazi men, indigenous chiefs and colonial administrators about controlling female mobility. In effect, they formed a kind of patriarchal tripartite alliance, based on the assumption that power over women should be maintained and consolidated. (109)

Despite the collusion among male stakeholders to actively control women's mobilities, untenable domestic circumstances and extreme poverty often compelled women to escape across state lines in search of wage employment and a different life.

## Labor Migration in Western Maputaland

As western Maputaland was situated at the intersection between the labor recruitment routes from southern Mozambique and Swaziland, the pattern of employment-based migration largely reflected linguistic and cultural allegiances and geographic proximity to the various labor recruitment depots in the region. Men recruited by the NRC from Maputaland and southern Mozambique (Shangaan/Tsonga and Mabudu-Tembe) were categorized as "East Coast natives," a designation that distinguished them from Zulu recruits in the south, who were considered "a better class of natives" (Packard 1993, 277). This label, and its pejorative, primitivist association, remains intact in the collective imagination to this day.

Prior to the establishment of a formal recruitment infrastructure in western Maputaland, men walked great distances to the mines. As described by W. C. A. Shepherd (1934), an independent recruiter, "The East Coast native, south of latitude 22° S. was first attracted to mining work offered on the Kimberley Diamond Fields, when many of them walked from Inhambane, Gaza, and Tongaland districts years before the Rand mines were dis-

covered. These 'boys' were a plucky lot, as they had to pass through countries inhabited by more or less hostile people, who often made them work for the privilege of passing through their territory" (253).

In the 1930s, migrant labor from "Tongaland" fell under the control of NRC offices in Piet Retief and Ingwavuma or in Siteki (Stegi) in Swaziland, as Colin Foxon explains:

> It was well-known in the area that there were jobs on the mines from the 1930s and on until the 1960s. My uncle Howard was with the NRC. Now what happened was that they were well-known to provide work in the mining areas. . . . Swaziland fell under Piet Retief for the Native Recruiting Corporation. They even recruited men from Mozambique from the Ingwavuma office. It was before the *dompas* [identity book] in those days. If you were a Tembe, no one checked on whether you were from this side. They had field officers who would liaise with the families and encourage the young bucks to go. You know, your brother is in his thirties; he's done his stint and made his money and is coming home now to take his wives and children. Some moved on from the mines into other areas, some into industrial, some became "domestics" or worked in hotels and as night guards. Then some of them ended up working for families—like the chief mine manager. Their preference, in fact, was always to work above ground.

The reports and memos written by various recruitment administrators of the NRC in Siteki and Ingwavuma claim seamless relations across the borders, as described by Father Edwin Kinch, a member of Our Lady of Ingwavuma Mission:

> There was a concordat between Portuguese Mozambique and South Africa that Mozambique would receive a subsidy bounty for every laborer that was recruited in Mozambique to work in South Africa. Ingwavuma and Swaziland being on the boundary with Mozambique, literally hundreds of men slipped across the border and were registered as being South African blacks. I don't know how the authorities viewed this, but it seemed to continue without any objections to the loss of revenue from either side. This recruiting was only a small proportion of foreign workers, and the "open border" system seemed to work well.

Contrary to this perception of open borders, citizenship was vigorously invoked by the NRC when it came to protecting its monopoly over labor. One of their greatest concerns was how to exert control over "clandestine emigrants" who crossed into South Africa without passports, tax certificates,

or "inward passes." Various administrative mechanisms were instituted to control cross-border movement—intended mainly to curb the recruitment of labor by the sugar industry in Natal—but the NRC lacked the infrastructure necessary to make a substantive difference. In the 1940s, it began to explore other strategies to sweeten the appeal of labor migration. It launched propaganda campaigns that included the distribution of NRC calendars depicting work in the mines as highly remunerative and adventurous, and distributed gifts of matchbooks and razorblades. In 1947, it began to show films and play audio recordings at mass meetings to promote the NRC message. According to Alan R. Booth (1986), "The shows became rather elaborate, involving cartoons and American-made 'western' short feature films, then photographic slides with recorded messages depicting life on the mines. £25 per affair was budgeted to provide free beer and meat. Extra 'runners' [Swazi ex-miners who broadcast the NRC message at cattle dips, beer-drinks, and weddings] were added in targeted areas" (137).

Men from western Maputaland had initially walked upward of one hundred thirty miles to sign up at the various NRC recruitment depots in the region. To reduce this burden, therefore, the company invested in constructing roads into areas of high recruitment. These roads, and the "railway motor transport" (RMT) services they laid on, came to be known locally as *uTeba*, (see chapter 5), so named after H. M. Taberer, the special commissioner of the Transvaal government in the native labor recruiting areas of British South Africa.[16] During one of his trips to Tongaland, travel writer Carel Birkby (1937) came across the NRC bus at the Usuthu River crossing:

> At the Usutu River pont I saw a big red motor-'bus with the letters "N.R.C." painted on its side, and also the slogan *Indhlele Elula*.[17] A score of natives with battered suitcases on their heads and bundles on their shoulders were wading across the river to join another 'bus that would whirl them up to Stegi to join the railway train for the Rand. The other 'bus, too, bore the slogan *Indhlele Elula*—the Easy Way. The Native Recruiting Corporation, a division of the Chamber of Mines, assists the natives with kindliness and generosity to reach the Rand. . . . Rapidly growing mines and an unending boom in gold has made labor one of the greatest problems of Johannesburg: the stream of native workers must not be allowed to dry up. Recruiting posts have been established in many parts of the country; and now they have been set up even in Tongaland. Intelligent "boys" go out visiting the kraals to talk of the benefits of the highly paid work in the mines. They even have to aid them portable gramophones with a set of records specially made for the Chamber of Mines: wondering kraals listen to the voice of Mr. H. M. Taberer, whose native name

> is U.Tebu [*sic*], telling them how they will be taken to the Transvaal and how much they can earn. On the 'bus and at the recruiting stations I saw a vivid enamel sign—a shield with four scenes emblazoned on it: a train off for the Rand with natives waving good-bye from the windows; natives underground pushing along "trams" of ore; a jack-hammer boy using pneumatic drill and "jumpers"; and lastly, the triumphant return to the kraal of the mine-worker, wearing swagger clothes and showing a palm full of golden sovereigns to three admiring women. (125–26)

By the 1960s, opportunities for South African workers increased significantly, as did wages for mine workers. However, rising infrastructural costs persuaded the NRC to reduce the foreign component of its labor force (Harington et al. 2004, 67). Further reductions occurred at the end of the 1980s, when drought and the impact of international economic sanctions on South Africa began to affect the mining industry. By the 1990s, varying gold production costs and high taxes, allied with the lack of development capital, led to a fifty percent fall in employment. Retrenched mine workers were made to return to their rural villages, where the sudden increase in population placed a substantial burden on land and on subsistence agricultural productivity (ibid., 70).

## Agricultural Expansion in Maputaland: A Case for Cotton

According to Matthew A. Schnurr (2008), in the 1850s it was cotton more than any other agricultural crop that was considered capable of remaking land and life for European settlers in southeast Africa. Its story of dramatic expansion and spectacular failure is unmatched by that of any other cash crop in sub-Saharan Africa. Allen Isaacman's (1992) writings on the history of cotton in southern Mozambique note similarly:

> The Mozambican cotton scheme provides an ideal case study to explore the interrelated issues of labor organization, state power, and the impact of petty commodity production. No cotton scheme was built upon a more repressive or sustained work regime, no system was more completely predicated on state intervention at the point of production or experienced more effective government control of the terms of exchange than in Mozambique. And while most Mozambican cotton producers did not benefit from new market opportunities or technology, as some would suggest, neither were they simply the passive victims of surplus extraction. Their story is far more complex. (816)

Both the Von Wissell and Rutherfoord families owned large cotton farms in Ndumo. Their efforts were supported by a state-led imperative to extend an agricultural zone from the Eastern Transvaal through Swaziland to northern Natal (Schnurr 2008, 128; 2011a; 2011b), a venture that was strongly promoted by a new "breed" of scientific expert, who lent authority to the economic and political ambitions of the colonies. As a "tool of empire," cotton facilitated an increase in colonial revenue, expanded settler numbers (particularly into remote border regions), and galvanized divisions between settler and African space. By 1924, some seventy thousand hectares had been reserved for cotton cultivation across South Africa (Schnurr 2008, 139), and northern Natal, with its hot, dry climate, was considered its prime territory (ibid., 137). While cotton never accounted for more than four percent of South African exports (Leverton 1963, qtd. Schnurr 2008, 2), it played a fundamental role in effecting structural change in the agricultural, political, and cultural landscape of the subregion (Isaacman 1992; Headrick 1981).

Its dramatic failure was attributed to several factors. Despite intensive efforts by the state to introduce new fertilizers and breeding technologies, there was little that could be done to curb the high incidence of hail and flooding (Schnurr 2011b, 132). In addition, insects thrived in these hot, steamy environments, and areas where cotton was monocropped were most susceptible to pest damage (ibid.). Finally, aggressive labor recruitment by the NRC and by sugar producers in Natal left cotton farmers with little option but to rely on the services of labor that others would not take on, many of them unwilling subjects of a plantation labor regime (Lincoln 1995, 52).

While cotton was mainly grown in the central and northern provinces of Mozambique, its production in the south had a particularly severe impact on the local economy. In order to boost supply, the government made it compulsory for all subsistence farmers to dedicate at least one field to commercial cotton production. Owing to the absence of men, this burden fell almost exclusively on women. However, cotton was an unpredictable and unprofitable crop, and its heavy demand on labor made it particularly incompatible with subsistence production. The repercussions of this system on the household were often overwhelming, forcing many women to flee their rural homes in search of economic opportunities elsewhere. Isaacman cites one such fugitive in Lourenço Marques (Maputo):

> Many women ran away just like their husbands. They too were tired of suffering everyday in the fields or the Administration, cultivating all the time. So they decided that the only alternative was to abandon their home and come here to Lourenço Marques. Some worked in the cashew factories. Others

> rented rooms and turned them into a place where men go to have pleasures. (Interview with Adelina Pensilla, qtd. Isaacman 1992, 837)

As in southern Mozambique and northern Natal, the cotton boom in western Maputaland came to a dramatic end in the mid-1920s. While insects, labor shortages, and inadequate transport systems were all factors, it was in fact water that effected its ultimate demise. As Schnurr (2008) reports,

> Rains arrived early in the 1924 growing season, and fell steadily during October and November. Seed was planted soon after and successful germination was widely reported. But expectations were doused in early March. On March 10th, storms brought six inches of rain to parts of Zululand. A relentless, heavy downpour continued for the next ten days. Precipitation records were set across Natal and Zululand. . . . Nongoma, Hluhluwe, and Ingwavuma all reported 60 inches or more. These unprecedented rains caused devastating floods over much of the province. All the northern rivers overflowed their banks. On March 19th, the uThukela Bridge—linking Natal and Zululand—washed away, isolating Zululand settlers. Roads were impassable. All postal communication was interrupted. The local newspaper reported that Zululand was reduced to "one big mud puddle" [qtd. *Zululand Times*, 19 March 1925]. The timing of the rains was particularly disastrous for the 1925 cotton crop. (169–70)

In his memoir, Roy Rutherfoord describes the same floods in Ndumo, the effects of which put an end to his family's escapade with cotton:

> Farming at Ndumu [*sic*] carried on but with little success. If it wasn't drought it was bolweevil [*sic*]. Every cotton crop except for the first one failed. . . . The 1925 crop was apparently a terrific success. The whole field looked like a snowfield, Mother said, and it was all ready for picking. But then came the 1925 floods. . . . The whole crop instead of being sent to Delagoa Bay by pontoon, floated there on its own. There was just nothing left of it. They then decided to give up cotton farming altogether. (20)

Following this, white farmers in western Maputaland experimented with the commercial production of pineapples, sisal, maize, and sugarcane. Some tried their hand at cattle. Each time, the vicissitudes of the weather overwhelmed their ventures, and by the late 1980s all efforts to develop the region were put to an end.

## The Power of Water in Post-Apartheid Maputaland

It is water, more than any other resource, that forged a deep epistemic schism between residents and incomers in western Maputaland. For centuries, the Madubu-Tembe people had worked the rich alluvial soils that were deposited annually when the floodwaters of the Pongola River receded. In addition to supporting the cultivation of a wide range of crops, the forests adjoining the floodplains had provided an abundance of food, fuel, traditional medicines, and winter grazing (Harries 1994; Bruton and Cooper 1980; van Vuuren 2009). The removal of resident families from the Ndumo Game Reserve in the 1960s, and their settlement on higher and drier land, coincided with the first large-scale development program initiated by the Nationalist government in the region. Rather than focus on floodplain ecosystem services to support a thriving subsistence agricultural economy, however, it constructed the Jozini Dam (Pongolapoort Dam), actively obstructing the flow of the Pongola River downstream to boost commercial agriculture by poor white farmers on the adjacent Makhathini flats (Derman and Poultney 1983). Paul Dutton, an environmental consultant and officer in charge of Ndumo Game Reserve from 1965 to 1972, observed the effects of the scheme downstream:

> In 1963, Josini [*sic*] dam, a scandalous, wasteful scam, completely altered the normal flow regime of the Phongolo [*sic*] River. The dam was the start of Ndumu's [*sic*] hydrological malaise and disrupted the lives and culture of thousands of AmaThonga people who harvested fish in pans filled with summer water and, in winter, planted crops in the alluvium left by the receding waters. . . . To evaluate Ndumu's ill health, compare the current situation with the social and ecological dynamics of the Phongolo floodplain in the sixties. . . . Nyamithi and Banzi pans, afflicted by Josini and ill-conceived concrete weirs, have been converted into placid, sterile, monotonous bodies of fresh water. The ecological functioning of these previously biodiverse systems was, undoubtedly, better understood by the AmaThonga once occupying Ndumu than by the managers responsible for the weirs. ("Ndumu Is Sick and Dying")

In the two decades following, the government supported an initiative to build boreholes fitted with hand pumps across the region, but maintenance programs were ad hoc, and many remained out of order for long periods at a time (Still and Nash 2002). Following the 1994 democratic elections, a reconstruction and development program (RDP) was established, which

subsidized several piped water schemes in Maputaland. Today its two-story elevated water tanks (*amathangi*) are a key marker of place in Usuthu Gorge and Eziphosheni, standing tall against the dry savannah landscape and gesturing to a precarious post-apartheid rural modernity.[18] Yet while the tanks may represent progress for some, they remain a brazen symbol of dispossession for most, a daily reminder of the region's autocratic and deeply racialized development history. When, some years later, the families displaced from Ndumo Game Reserve applied to the Land Claims Commission for the return of rights to the reserve, many admitted that what they needed more than land was water. As MaFambile explained:

> Here, there is no river. The river is in the reserve. If you have no money for the taps and there is no rain, there is no water. Absolutely none. So you see, we are not really fighting for our land. . . . If they said that we could return, it would not be possible to leave the places where we have been staying for so long now. So we don't really want land; we want our water.

While the first settler farmers and traders battled to survive the rampant, destructive, and often deadly forces of water in western Maputaland, their control of the landscape was secured by their ability to deny access by local subsistence farmers to water. Unsurprisingly, therefore, it was water that was invoked in the songs performed by those dispossessed farmers and their families to rally support for the return of their resource rights and for environmental justice more broadly:

> *Baleka mfana, lashona ilanga* (Run, boy, the sun is setting)
> *Gijima mfana, awekho amanzi* (Run, boy, there is no water [here])
> *Awekho amanzi, asemfuleni* (There is no water, it is in the river)

SEVEN

# Dwelling in a Futurized Past

## *Longing for Ndumo*

> Nostalgia is a longing not for a simple past, but for the past reconstituted and futurized, a past restored to an imagined pre-colonial, pre-exilic integrity and relived, elsewhere. By its very temporal and spatial impossibility, such nostalgia wears its sufferer's body and story into scraps of absence: scraps that only a *counter*-story . . . can tell.
>
> (Tageldin 2003, 232–33)

*Balekani nonke!* (Run away, everyone!)
*Kukhona ukuzayo!* (Something is coming!)
*Gijimani nonke!* (Run away, everyone!)
*Kukhona ukuzayo!* (Something is coming!)

### *July 2008, Ndumo Game Reserve*

"All of these places, I know them well," Celiwe announces as we drive through the entrance gates of the Ndumo Game Reserve, leaving behind a huddle of bewildered game guards. I have been granted permission to take the Eziphosheni women into the reserve for the day and am driving with MaKhumalo, Celiwe, and Mpungose. The rest of the group is traveling with Mduduzi and will meet us for lunch at the picnic site at Red Cliffs, where we will have a panoramic view of the Usuthu River and across the magnificent Mozambican floodplains.

Ndumo Game Reserve means different things to my three travel companions. MaKhumalo was born at Banzi Pan and was evicted from the reserve as a young child with her family. Her husband, a local *induna* (elected leader), was

instrumental in mobilizing the successful "Usuthu community" land claim and continues to lobby on behalf of his ward for access to water and natural resources in the reserve. Celiwe's now deceased husband was employed for many years as a laborer in the reserve and had been part of a team that erected and maintained its perimeter fences. He was a difficult man, so her memories of the place are enmeshed in grim recollections of a fractured and sometimes punishing relationship. Mpungose, on the other hand, has never been to the reserve and has little association with it other than via the stories of relatives and friends in Eziphosheni who were removed in the 1960s.

Regardless of their differences, over the years the women had recounted only one story about Ndumo. The reiteration of the narrative had intensified and receded over the years according to the status of the land claim and the larger TFCA program that encompasses it. When spirits were high with expectations of new economic opportunities, so the narrative of their forced removal faded into the background, mollified by the assurance of financial restitution and preoccupations with the future. However, when it dawned on them that the flow of benefits from these new arrangements would be a trickle at best, the Ndumo story reared its menacing head once more, offering itself up as a readily available wound to be picked at and reinfected.

The vacillation of the Ndumo telling had left me wondering whether the game reserve was less a physical space of yearning than an image kept alive by the political injustices that frame it. The limited capacity of the women and their families to physically interact with the traumatic site nourished these injustices daily; its proximity to their homes and fields meant that it was always within sight, but in every other way—social, historical, economic—it remained unbearably distant. Accordingly, time and space in Ndumo were explained away by a stock of images that memorialized life as ceaselessly abundant and harmonious, a scenario that inescapably cast their current lives in negative relief: as deprived, dissonant, and inconsolably interrupted.

Inspired by the proposition by memory studies scholar Karen Till (2008) that engaging with the sights and sounds of a traumatic site may be a restorative and even resistant act, I organized a return to Ndumo with the women, hoping that the experience might challenge the haunting sustained by a seemingly irreconcilable past. As Till (2005) writes:

> Places are never merely backdrops for action or containers of the past. They are fluid mosaics and moments of memory, matter, metaphor, scene, and experience that create and mediate social spaces and temporalities. Through place making, people mark social spaces as haunted sites where they can

> return, make contact with their loss, contain unwanted presences, or confront past injustices. (8)

In the book thus far, I have explored contrasting historical representations of western Maputaland, using a narrative strategy that has brought oppositional voices into range of one another across chapters and via different narrative registers. In this chapter, I experiment textually with what can be learned when disparate narratives come into immediate view of one another, and when voices and stories—at once so distant from one another in terms of race, class, and culture, and deeply divided according to gender—begin to spill over and converge. This strategy draws on Short's (2009) petition for a more nuanced, situated understanding of territorialization, and argues that while cartographic demarcations and their materialization in fences, roads, and rivers may appear to function as unambiguous political citations, they often shield a range of narrative truths.

The chapter explores narratives of Ndumo Game Reserve through the concept of overlapping nostalgias, drawing on Svetlana Boym's (2001; 2007) thesis that longing for the past is invariably shaped by the needs of the present and imaginaries of the future. While nostalgia for a pristine past in nature may be more readily associated with the colonial or white liberal imagination in southeast Africa, longings for Ndumo by residents and incomers are mutually expressed through a past that is "reconstituted and futurized, a past restored to an imagined pre-colonial, pre-exilic integrity and relived, elsewhere" (Tageldin 2003, 232). While the locus of their yearnings may differ—for the Maputaland women, it dwells in a familial, economically and politically autonomous natural landscape; for white conservationists, it is imagined via a more sagacious, nonracialized human ecology—the chapter argues that when we listen to multiple landscape ontologies and the reverberations between them, different perspectives emerge. As Patrick Wright and J. Davies (2010, 200) suggests, nostalgia offers discursive possibilities to keep all sorts of questions open, to thicken things up, and to escape programmed realities.

In the section that follows, I trace imaginaries of Ndumo via a narrative flow that moves between disparate encounters and reminiscences: a drive with the women through the reserve, ruminations and ecological hindsight articulated by retired white game wardens, and fragmentary forays into southeast Africa's documented conservation history. This strategy aims to complicate the "programmed" binaries good/bad, black/white, and victim/perpetrator that serve to sustain political lesions related to land and con-

servation in the region. While the racial violence underpinning different positionalities should not be ignored, I suggest that recognition of points of contact may help to shift the discourse beyond mere critique and open spaces for potential communication.

The chapter argues that the points of contact between residents and incomers emanates from their mutual relationship to a sentient relational ecology (Ingold 2000, 25) and to a perception of nature as an unfolding story. As J. S. Thomas (2001) notes, such intersections emerge when subjects "have an integral and constituent role within landscape" (181). This mutuality makes evident the epistemic fault lines between nature as enfleshed and embedded, and as understood through human-nature coexistence and senses of place, and contemporary neoliberal "green" politics, which considers nature as property to be regulated, aestheticized, and consumed. Reifying this disjuncture (albeit setting it up as yet another binary) aims to challenge the TFCA agenda and its propulsion toward horizontal power and profit, in the hope that poignantly enunciated lessons from the past may help to shift policies for conservation expansion and their projections for the future. While the intention is to unsettle such developments in one locality in southeast Africa, the story is undeniably globally resonant.

"Oh you know this place?" MaKhumalo asks Celiwe as we drive into the game reserve. "You used to walk here? Were you not afraid?"

"I used to walk with my husband to the place where he stayed [laborers' lodging]."

MaKhumalo stares out of the window, distracted by thoughts of her family. "Can you not see that N and the others are crazy?" she asks the women, referring to her children; "they are just like their father!"

Ignoring her appeal, Mpungose sits back in her seat and declares: "This is good; we don't have to work like we did yesterday. My body is tired from harvesting thatching grass."

For Celiwe, being back in the reserve evokes distinct memories. "They used to go to all of these places to hunt. There were people all over this place. There is no place that they did not know. When they moved, everyone would go with them. When they moved to another place, the others would also go."

MaKhumalo asks Celiwe, "Are you talking about the Mbongo area in Mozambique? I don't know that area."

"No, I only know this place; I don't know the other side [Mozambique]." Celiwe clarifies. "I used to go that way with him [husband]. We would walk and walk until we reached the cattle dip."

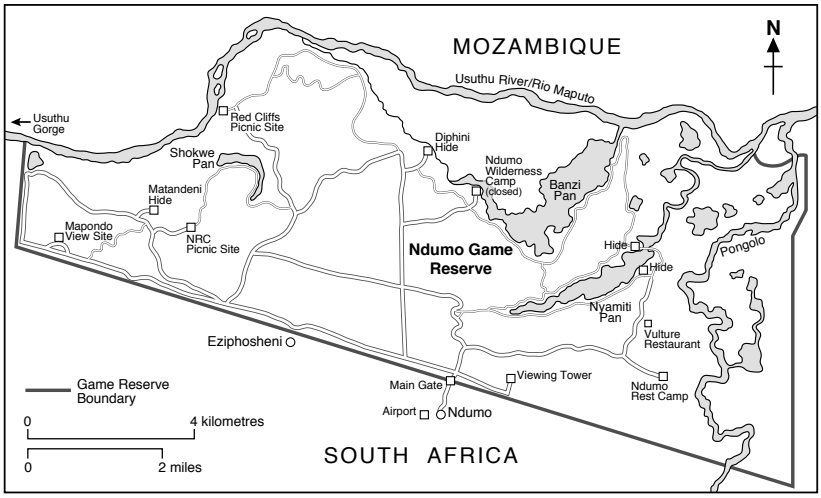


Figure 7.1. Map of Ndumo Game Reserve

"Even when we used to plow with our mothers, we did not go beyond the fields," says MaKhumalo, referring to her childhood in the reserve. "I don't remember exactly, but when I walked to granny's house, I used to walk past that place they called iDiphini [cattle dip]. We would pass it when we went to kwaGala."

"I think . . . yes, the cattle dip was on the other side of the road," Celiwe muses.

Mpungose says indifferently: "I don't know this place. I have never even been to the white man's place [rest camp]."

We reach a fork in the road, and Celiwe assumes the role of tour guide: "From here we will move to the Red Cliffs. If we did not turn here, we would go straight to the rest camp. This is the road that will take us there."

"I used to go there at Christmas," MaKhumalo announces, pointing in the direction of her family's home in Mozambique. "When we went to celebrate Christmas, I would first have to go to the fields to work. When I returned, I would find them [men] very drunk. . . . Hey! There is an impala! Oh, the meat is very nice! If only I could snatch this young one, I would eat it! I would take it home and fry it!"

Mpungose agrees, "Mmm! I like meat!"

"You see," MaKhumalo tells me, "we were very happy then, eating meat. Now we are given only bread!"

Celiwe points out a nyala antelope that is standing in the deep shadows of a copse of trees. Mpungose shouts, "*Ipi*? [Where?]"

"There! I don't know it by its Zulu name. Is it *impunzi* [gray duiker]? No, *impunzi* is the small one. I will talk to Fred [senior game ranger]; he will know." Celiwe is clearly the "insider" of this group; she is familiar with the rules of the park and is known to the rangers. "It has a white stripe here and is also. . . . Hha! Look! A giraffe!"

"This rubbish!" MaKhumalo shouts. "We have them [referring to the giraffes that she sees from her fields that abut the southern perimeter of the game reserve]."

In jest, I ask MaKhumalo if she would like to eat it too. She responds theatrically: "Yes! I will put it on the fire and eat its little head! Wow, this is a male one! It is taller than the car. Stop the car so that we can catch it! I will pull it down, pull it! Cook it! Hha! Just listen to the sound of him walking. Look at its small head; it is like a snake!"

Celiwe intervenes as keeper of the rules: "This thing is cheeky but they say we shouldn't scare it." I note an elusive, authoritative "they" and wonder how the game reserve management is constituted in her mind. It has been quite some time since the white authoritarian establishment under apartheid was replaced by African rangers and conservationists.

"Hha, this person, doesn't she see that it is going to injure us? Hey, Angela! Go back!" MaKhumalo urges me.

"Are you really scared?" I ask. "Look at the beautiful bird that is sitting on its neck."[1]

"Yes, it is beautiful," MaKhumalo concedes after a while. "Its 'outfit' is very beautiful, but *this* [giraffe] is very cheeky! It will only move when it wants to. It can see very high up! Look at its little horns!"

"Look at the neck!" remarks Mpungose. "How does the food get to the stomach? Where are the breasts when it is like this?"

"The breasts?" ask Celiwe, pointing. "They are there."

"I once saw a giraffe giving birth on television," says MaKhumalo. "This one is a boy, I think. . . . Hha! Look! There is another rubbish! What is it? Is it a pig?"

"No!" says Celiwe. "It is *umkhombo* [white rhino]."

"Wow! I'm really scared of this one; it is so big!" MaKhumalo's apparent amazement at seeing the rhino so close puzzles me, as they often graze on the other side of the fence from her fields. It is as if she is looking at the animal for the first time.

"It's coming to us! Oh Jesus!" shouts MaKhumalo, who is watching intently, scrutinizing its every feature. "Because it has this horn, it is a rhino . . ."

"This one never goes alone," Celiwe explains in tour guide mode.

Mpungose interjects: "Hha! This one is very dusty!"

"Don't drive so close, Angela!" MaKhumalo instructs me. "Hoot at it!"

"No, don't hoot! You shouldn't make a noise!" Celiwe admonishes, then continues: "Now, this is a white rhino; the black rhino is big like a cow. The black rhino is not dirty like this one. It is reddish. When their ears are . . ."

"Hha! Where are its eyes?" MaKhumalo interrupts. "I don't like it. It is very irritated! Now it is running and there is a small one! Do you think it is a baby?"

"Yes!" says Celiwe. "That is her baby."

"I want Angela to drive past fast!"

"No," instructs Celiwe, "they are not allowed to drive fast here!"

"This animal is very ugly! Hey, are the eyes up there?"

"And look at the ears!" adds Mpungose. "Look at its mouth. The skin looks very dry! Can you see it? It's very ugly! Hha! It has two horns; the one is short."

"I have seen it from a distance, but I didn't know it was *this* ugly!" remarks MaKhumalo. "It is dry like a stick! If a person said that you were ugly like a rhino, it would be an insult! It is very short, this thing! Hey, I'm really scared now!"

We wait for the two rhinos to wander into the bush and then continue on our way. The women are quiet for a long while.

Eventually MaKhumalo says, "There is no water in the rivers but the rains have come. And now you can't drink the water from *ichibi* [little lakes]. At that time, we used to drink from the lakes and didn't get sick. Now, if you drink it, you will get sick. What has killed the Namani River is that they have closed it [sluice gates of the Jozini Dam upstream]. Namani is like the Pongola River. When it is closed, you can't plant. When the Pongola River is full, the Namani will also be full. They usually open the Pongola when they see that the rains are coming."

"If you go this side you will find the cattle dip [iDiphini]," Celiwe points out. "This is where we used to graze our cattle. Before they moved the people, they moved the cattle. We had kraals outside when people were still living inside."

I ask whether people used to eat the antelope and Celiwe is quick to remind us of the rules: "No! You shouldn't eat the antelope!"

## The Colonial Construction of Wilderness in Southeast Africa

The appeal for wildlife preservation in the Maputaland borderlands was first conveyed in the writings of hunters and traders in the late nineteenth century, whose anxiety about the decline of certain species precipitated the

establishment of the first protected areas in the region.[2] Although the Boers were generally held responsible for some of the most indiscriminate hunting in the region, it was Paul Kruger, then president of the Transvaal Republic, who established the Pongola (Phongolo) Game Reserve in 1894, the first of its kind in Africa. In Swaziland, conservation was promoted by British concessionaires whose apprehension about wildlife endangerment was underwritten by a more widespread investment in colonial control. Consequently, the first protected areas proclaimed—Hlatikulu in 1905 and the Ubombo Reserve in 1907—targeted the steamy, malarial southeast region bordering Mozambique and South Africa, which had remained under Swazi custodianship (Hackel and Carruthers 1993). In southern Mozambique, the Maputo Reserve for Elephant Protection was established in 1932, spanning the region between the southern shores of the Bay of Maputo to the South African border in the south and to Swaziland in the east. Once it was proclaimed, all people living within its boundaries or who fished, hunted, and gathered wild foods within it were resettled in the village of Salamanga on the Rio Maputo (Langa 2000).[3] Significantly, it was the proximity of these protected areas to one another that sowed the seeds of transnational conservation (Hackel and Carruthers 1993, 68) and became the template upon which the Lebombo and Usuthu-Futi-Tembi TFCAs were modeled almost a century later.[4]

Game reserves protected a range of interests beyond the preservation of wildlife and were inextricably linked to the politics of race, property rights, and landscape aesthetics in southern Africa (Carruthers 1995, 55). Wildlife conservation became integral to the political imperatives of segregation and control, which were aimed at "stemming African urbanisation, maintaining the migrant labour system and 'developing' Africans within their 'own' areas" (Beinart 1989, 153). Parks became compensatory spaces for the rapidly urbanizing white population. Their protection was guaranteed by the institution of a semimilitarized security infrastructure, which conferred upon armed and uniformed wardens the power to protect both their natural assets and the people residing within them. Despite the forced expulsion of the residents from these spaces, the mystique of game reserves remained premised on a primitivist image of Africans as picturesque, traditional custodians of the land (Draper et al. 2004), their token presence as rangers and guides serving to sustain the imaginary of a pristine, healing landscape (Bunn 2001, 12; Neumann 2000, 212).

While conservation in southern Africa may be considered an exclusively colonial preserve, the strategies utilized by settler conservationists relied heavily on the ecological knowledge of local inhabitants, which included the institutional regulation of resource use and strict adherence to hunting

seasons (K. B. Wilson 1989; Murombedzi 2003).[5] Conservation of wild animals was integral to the maintenance of precolonial subsistence economies and essential to foreign trade (Murombedzi 2003; Hedges 1978). In Zululand, hunting was inherent to the development of political and ritual power, which was reinforced by the creation of royal hunting grounds and the protection of certain species as royal game (Ellis 1993, 27; Bonner 1983, 17).

It was ivory, more than any other product, that effected political change in southeast Africa and shaped its relationship with the world (Carruthers et al. 2008, 25; Harries 1994, 13; Junod 1927, 2: 59). The smooth, fine-grained tusk of the African elephant was considered the most precious commodity of all, its soft constitution making it more amenable than the Asian variety to carve into ornaments and jewelry (Carruthers et al. 2008, 25; Alpers 1992). Although the ivory trade in southeast Africa is most commonly associated with Portuguese and Goan hunter-traders, the industry depended on a wide network of operatives. Amongst these were African hunters, whose expertise and manpower were essential to procurement and distribution. With the expansion of the ivory trade in the eighteenth century, Portuguese *cantineiros* began to serve as intermediaries inland, facilitating access to labor and managing the movement of stock to the port city of Delagoa Bay. In the 1840s, Transvaal Boers established themselves in the ivory trade (Harries 1994, 14), joined shortly thereafter by British hunters and merchants from Port Natal (B. Ellis 1993, 28).[6] Yet despite the devastating effects that European hunting had on the elephant population—and indeed on wildlife populations in general—the image of frenzied, gratuitous hunting by Africans was so persuasively inculcated in the white settler imagination that the impact of their own activities seemed to escape notice.[7]

As many protected areas in southeast Africa were remote, understaffed, and situated on frontier lands, legislation against hunting and poaching proved almost impossible to enforce. What offered the most effective mechanism for spatial management was the fence. Fences were tied to the development of bureaucratic order in southeast Africa more generally (Hofmeyr 1993, 72), and in Maputaland they assisted in both protecting animals and controlling the illegal movement of people across state boundaries. The role of fences in disease control proved particularly important at the turn of the nineteenth century when two devastating panzootic events swept across southeast Africa, threatening to annihilate domestic livestock and significantly challenging colonial priorities regarding wildlife preservation.

The first was rinderpest ("cattle-plague"), a highly contagious viral disease that spread from wild ungulates to cattle, decimating the livestock economy from 1896 to 1904. The second was nagana sleeping sickness,[8] a

blood-borne disease that was lethal to both humans and cattle (K. Brown 2008, 287). Like rinderpest, nagana was considered to be carried by wild animals, who were immune to its effects. By 1894, the epidemic had assumed such alarming proportions that a vigorous wildlife eradication campaign was launched across Natal and Zululand, and all people living in areas deemed high risk were subject to forced "villagization." The campaign lasted from 1917 to 1953, when it was discovered that the vector was in fact the tsetse fly[9] and the disease was duly brought under control (Mackenzie 1988; K. Brown 2008; Henning 1956).[10] The extreme brutality of the eradication campaign over so many years had a profound impact on the public, whose sympathies shifted once more in favor of game preservation.[11]

## Rewilding the Borderlands: The Making of the Ndumo Game Reserve

When Colonel Deneys Reitz, minister of lands for the Union of South Africa, declared "Ndumu" a protected area in 1924, he is purported to have said: "Now I have done my duty to God and the hippo" (qtd. T. Pooley 1992, 54; Dutton 2008).

Proclaiming his duty to the preservation of the hippopotamus belies the fact that Reitz was himself an avid hunter. His exploits were emblematic of a certain class of white settler in southeast Africa in the early twentieth century who willingly braved blistering heat, impenetrable terrain, and a profusion of tropical diseases to satisfy an insatiable desire for a trophy. Little of the impetus behind his exploits had to do with subsistence, and less still with the then lucrative trade in hides, horns, and tusks. Rather, his impulse was driven by a pioneering masculine resolve, underwritten by an undisputed sense of entitlement to the spoils of the new "dark lands" of the colony. For imperial agents such as Reitz, killing was a gentlemanly sport that tested worthy moral objectives, built physical strength, and attested to a spirit of true grit (Mackenzie 1988, 41).[12] Yet while this liberal Afrikaner[13] may have adopted the British hunting ethos as a marker of civilization, his pact with God was endorsed by a more pluralistic wilderness imaginary, fusing Victorian reverence for nature as "a place of deep spiritual significance and a symbol of an earthly paradise" (Short 1991, 6)[14] with a Calvinist mandate to protect God's dominion (Templin 1968).

What his statement above makes evident is a deep indifference toward the fate of the residents in the region.

Reitz's private chronicles are replete with bureaucratic ambitions to simultaneously preserve and develop the African wilderness. This preserva-

tion/progress trope is particularly evident in his writings about "Tongaland," which he first visited in 1922. While effusive about its economic potential, he was equally enchanted by its unique ecology, which he resolved to rescue from its presumed arbitrary destruction at the hands of local African hunters and farmers.[15] However, Tongaland was an isolated and permeable border that existed beyond government administrative control,[16] and it was resident Ndumo storeowner R. H. Rutherfoord who informed Reitz of the decimation of its wildlife at the hands of British, Portuguese, and Boer *biltong* (dried meat) hunters, prompting him to declare the region a protected area.

At first, Ndumu (meaning "thunder") fell under the control of a local police sergeant who did little more than monitor cross-border activities. Shortly after World War II, a certain E. B. Burnett was appointed its second overseer, but he too only made periodic visits to the area. However, the area was brought to public attention when it played host to several scientific expeditions in 1947 under the aegis of the Natal Society for the Preservation of Wild Life and Natural Resorts. Publishing their findings in a series of articles in the *Natal Mercury*, members of the team enthralled readers with detailed descriptions of "a world apart and a world unknown," declaring it potentially "one of the finest nature resorts in the country" (Davidson 1947).

Their correspondences conveyed the usual colonial ambivalence toward the resident "Tonga," who they both admired for their fine-tuned knowledge of floodplain ecology and considered culpable for its destruction. Interestingly, however, there was some disagreement amongst them about the destiny of the residents were the area to be proclaimed a "nature reserve." While most supported their removal, one member, a certain A. Hammond (1947), questioned the moral right of the government to establish a reserve, insisting that "it [the region] was formally annexed [by the British] and cannot be taken from the Amatongas without breach of faith" (16–17).

Despite this, the expedition helped to accelerate the establishment of the Natal Parks, Game, and Fish Preservation Board in 1947, a provincial body that was granted the authority to enforce the protection of wildlife in Natal and Zululand.[17] The same board advocated for the reclassification of Ndumu from "protected area" to "game reserve," thus conferring upon it legislative authority to proclaim all residents living within its boundaries "illegal squatters." In 1951, Thomas Elphick was appointed its first resident warden, charged with the responsibility to evict the 1,466 persons residing in it (T. Pooley 1992, 56). His son, David, remembers his father's work:

> When the old man went there, there was nothing, absolutely nothing: no roads or anything. . . . He loved it because it was thick bush but there weren't

> a lot of animals. They had been poached out—nyala, impala, everything . . . kudu. They were poached by the local blacks. It was a proclaimed game reserve but it had never been looked after, so the locals had gradually encroached on the park and what you might call "colonised" it. They built their huts there. They were illegal occupants but they almost had a right by prescription, you might say. His job was to try and get the park viable and up and running. . . . One of his first tasks . . . was to make roads through thick forests and then he had to get these "illegals" out of the park. [Evicting them] wasn't that easy, but eventually they . . . found that if a person was found guilty—charged and found guilty—of poaching, cutting down trees, anything that was not legal, then they could be evicted. His job was to implement that ordinance and try and get rid of the illegal squatters. And he was successful. . . . So he carried on getting rid of these guys and then they found another way of eliminating the illegals and that was that foot-and-mouth disease [rinderpest] was rife in Mozambique. There were no fences around the park and the possibility of foot-and-mouth occurring in Ndumu was reasonably high. Actually, I don't think it was; I think it was just a ploy really. So they [residents] had to get rid of their cattle, and once they got rid of their cattle, they could no longer stay there because that was their way of life. They ejected all the cattle and the last remaining people who lived there left. This is how they achieved their purpose. (Personal communication, 8 August 2009)[18]

Thomas Elphick was succeeded by several other game wardens in the 1960s who oversaw the final clearance of the reserve of its residents. While most families settled on land on its immediate periphery, loss of land and resources forced many of the men into the migrant labor economy, obliging women to assume responsibility for domestic subsistence on substantially reduced tracts of land. Most men signed up to work in the mines on the Witwatersrand or on the sugar estates in Natal and Swaziland. However, a few "fortunate" ones were able to secure employment in the Ndumo Game Reserve, where they were put to work erecting the boundary fence, whose purpose was to protect the animals in the reserve and to keep their families out.

## Onward to Red Cliffs

We have been driving for over an hour and MaKhumalo is distracted: "I was told that X passed away. The person who was told cried so much that she died too. She died of a broken heart."

Celiwe is musing over the rules of the game reserve and ignores her: "If

you see an animal here, you shouldn't kill it. We are used to chasing them away."

I stop the car and ask for the vernacular name of a large tree beside the road. The women respond nonchalantly, pointing out several others nearby as well: "*uMkono*, *uMhlala*, *uMganu*, *isifici*. . . . We don't eat this one. The shade under those trees is very beautiful. Look at that tree; it has such big branches. *Iphosheni* is its name."

Suddenly MaKhumalo shouts: "There! *Intibane* [warthog]! It is very ugly. Its teeth are sticking out! There is another one! Oh my Lord, they are so ugly! This one doesn't have a tail! Hha! These things are so foolish. They run and run and forget what they are running for!"

We come across another group of white rhinos and MaKhumalo delivers the ultimate insult: "Hha! The rhino and the warthog are both rubbish! If you had to pay *lobola*, you couldn't pay with *these* things!" Her depiction of animals as "rubbish" and "ugly" is obviously a statement of derision derived from the privilege given to animals in the area over people; to express one's appreciation of them would be to concede one's own insignificance. This contest speaks to the political history of conservation across the southern African region, which has produced a distinct episteme of relations between people and wild animals. Feigning ignorance of rhinos and giraffes and hurling the worst possible insults at them is a plausible act of defiance in light of this racially fractured history.

Nevertheless, Celiwe has chosen to assume the role of mediator and attempts to soothe her friend's derision: "Yes, but the black rhino is very beautiful. . . . Oh! There is something down there that is moving its tail. I can't see what it is. Down there! It is a big bird! I think it is *uThekwane*."[19]

Mpungose sees it and says, "It has a big body and long legs. I wonder how it can give birth when its legs are so long?"

"It knows how to because God created it like this." Celiwe to the rescue.

*uThekwane* is a common waterbird and has a distinct call, so I ask the women if they have any songs about it. They respond instantly by singing,

> *Wamuhle thekwane inyoni yamanzi*
> (You are beautiful, hammerhead stork, bird of the water)

And then another:

> *Nanguya uthekwane ezibuka emfuleni, ezitshela ukuthi muhle kanti cha, woniwa yileli qhuzu elisemva kwakhe.*
> (There is the hammerhead stork looking at herself on the river. She thinks she is beautiful but she is not; the bump on her head spoils her beauty)

For years, I had been walking with the women across the landscape, discussing trees, medicinal plants, birds, and animals. I was all too aware of their encyclopedic knowledge of the natural environment and how enthusiastic they were about their "world" on their side of the fence. Despite the changes that had come to western Maputaland, nature remained deeply implicated in every aspect of their lives, shaped by their assiduous observation of and interaction with its myriad sensory qualities and uses. Hilda Kuper's (1973b) study of Swazi culture in the 1960s and 1970s remained relevant in this region, where plants, the elements, directions, and topographies provided the semiotic scaffolding for all social and ritual beliefs and economic actions (614).[20]

One afternoon, while walking with the women in Usuthu Gorge, I was struck by the intensity of the soundscape. The range of frequencies, timbres, and sound sources of birds and insects was particularly awe-inspiring, producing the ultimate in surround-sound. When I asked the women what birds they enjoyed listening to when working in their fields, I was treated to an animated inventory of species: some sang songs about birds, others described them onomatopoeically, others still mimicked their flight patterns and feeding behavior. They were expert ornithologists, names, descriptions, and anecdotes of birds immediately at the ready. Birds are our messengers, they told me; we watch them closely and we listen. They alert us to rain and thunder, they tell us when to start planting and offer advice on how to protect ourselves from bad news and witchcraft.

Three birds figured most prominently in their avian epistemology, their songs, colors, and behaviors subjected to an elaborate cultural, moral, and political logic. The first, the *iGwalagwala* (purple-crested turaco),[21] a mid-sized dark blue and green bird with bright red wing tips visible only in flight, invokes political power. Its magnificent colors are equated with the "beauty of kingship" (*buhle bebukhosi*); while ordinary people may honor themselves by wearing a single red feather in their hair, only Swazi royalty are permitted to decorate themselves with more (Kuper 1973b, 614). If treated with irreverence, the bird can wield negative power, as Makapazane explained: "Myeni is my surname, which means that *iGwalagwala* is my totem and cannot be eaten by my family. If we kill it, it will bring terrible bad luck." The following song, performed by the women in Usuthu Gorge, explains that when the king chooses a young bride, he will announce his impending marriage by wearing the red feather of *iGwalagwala:*

> *Bahlom'amagwalagwala bantwabenkosi*
> (They wear the feather of *iGwalagwala*, children of the king)

The second bird, the *iNsingizi* (southern ground hornbill),[22] is associated with the mystical order and is feared for its cruel, vindictive powers. A large black bird with vivid red patches of bare skin on its face and throat (yellow in juvenile birds), it is dreaded for its deep drumlike call that can be heard several kilometers away. The sound is likened to thunder and interpreted as a warning of impending doom. If a person kills this species, it is believed that its mate will revenge its death by sending sickness or even death to the culprit and his family. Makapazane described her experience of the bird's malevolence, attributing its vindictive nature—and that of other such birds—to its association with the Ndumo Game Reserve:

> When *iNsingizi* passes over the homestead, people die! When it cries near your home, it means that something will happen. Once that bird came to my house. It flew over my house at the same time that another cried down in the valley. That night, our ancestral house burned down. There are many birds of this kind here. They come from the game reserve.

Finally, in Nguni cosmology, the eagle (Sw. *lusoti*) is considered the king of the birds, admired for its strength, accuracy, and farsightedness. According to Kuper (1973b, 614), the feathers of certain eagles may only be worn in the headdresses of important Swazi chiefs; others are associated exclusively with the king. Mampolwane explained the significance of some eagles in Usuthu Gorge, making evident how the calls of these birds are emblematic of people's sense of home:

> I won't eat the eagle, especially the one that is gray like a dove. It is the totem of my husband's family. But there are many eagles here. There is the fish eagle [*iNkwanzi*], which is the [emblematic] call of this place. Once there was a man who was leaving to go to work in Johannesburg. Just as he was departing on the bus, he heard the call of the fish eagle. He knew that it meant that the men were out on the river, so he stopped the bus and returned home.

Besides these three, birds are represented in an abundance of songs, idioms, and stories, providing evidence of the functional and symbolic human-environmental intersections that anchor people's senses of place in western Maputaland. (See appendix 2 for an extended list of birds and their local cultural and auditory references.)[23]

## Overlapping Boundaries

In his seminal book *How Societies Remember*, Paul Connerton (1989) argues that subaltern oral histories "produce another type of history: one in which not only will most of the details be different, but in which the very construction of meaningful shapes will obey a different principle. Different details will emerge because they are inserted, as it were, into a different kind of narrative home" (19). In this section, I query Connerton's commitment to fixed epistemological disparities and argue, as does Short (2009) in his reading of cartographic modeling, that when two groups of people are bound to a distinct set of relationships with places and resources, their dissimilarities begin to develop into more than the mere juxtaposition of distinct representations.

Most studies in southern Africa correctly argue that colonial conservation gave little consideration to customary land tenure arrangements (Curry 2001, 83). For indigenous communities, conservation implied loss of control over natural resources and the violent transgression of cultural landscapes. Coercive land removals merely served to reinforce this racial polarization (ibid., 87). However, during my research in western Maputaland, I noticed that while it was control over land and resources that most readily pitted racial groups against one another, it was through their mutual instrumentalization of nature that the boundaries of their narratives began to blur. When we step in closer and listen to different narratives about Ndumo Game Reserve, therefore, we begin to hear overlapping values that emanate from meaningful exchanges between individuals and their landscapes. Underscoring this is a cultural intimacy that results from "collusive knowledge," i.e., knowledge that is based on agreements between ordinarily opposing voices, which may result in new ways of seeing.

To be clear, the reciprocity between individuals did not make the individuals equal, and while the politics of these intersections remains an unsettling undercurrent to the stories that follow, I am interested in giving a hearing to how certain everyday intimacies emerged between individuals, what they imply about relationships between people and place more generally, and how they moved those in positions of power toward different modes of listening and relating.

The familiarity implied in these collusions is most evident in narratives that describe how people (men) came to perceive the environment through dwelling and skill, and through the performance of particular tasks.

One story that frequently draws together disparate voices is that of the

*iNgede* (greater honeyguide).[24] The bird's inimitable habit of leading people to hidden beehives to access beeswax and honeybee larvae distinguishes it as a uniquely strategic and gregarious little creature. Its vigorous antics were often described to me by the women in western Maputaland and regularly appear—in strikingly similar narrative form—in the memoirs of European game rangers and traders. Old Makete from Usuthu Gorge described the behavior of the *iNgede* as follows, imitating the chattering and whistling of the little bird as if perched in the branches above her:

> Now *iNgede* calls you to a beehive and gets you to break it open for the honey. You have to whistle—*ingongodo*—then it will call you and will guide you to the hive. If you head off in the wrong direction, it will fetch you and redirect you. It will warn you against big snakes too. We are women, so the snakes don't bite us. But some hives have snakes in them and there are ways of checking. You take a stick and place it inside the hive. If the bees crawl out on that stick, you know that there is a snake in there. If they don't crawl out, you will know that there is honey in there.

Both Roy Rutherfoord, who grew up in Ndumo, and Tony Pooley, who worked for several years as a senior game ranger in Ndumo Game Reserve, discuss the behavior of the greater honeyguide in their memoirs, revealing that their understanding of its calls and distinctive behavior was acquired from local inhabitants with whom they shared a great deal of their time. In his 1995 autobiography, Rutherfoord writes:

> Another interesting thing I learned from the young herd boys was to follow a honey-guide to bee hives. One day we came across one of these birds just where the entrance of the Ndumu Game Reserve stands today. The bird was in a tree chattering for all it was worth. As we approached, it took off and then settled on a tree further away and the calling would continue. Each time we approached, it would fly off to another tree. It led us into really thick bush and then into a small open glade where it stayed in a tree, calling all the time. We could not find a hive and one of the *umfaans* [young boys] claimed that at times these birds took people to snakes. A careful look around and we saw an enormous black mamba [snake] crawling away. . . . We retraced our footsteps and on reaching the spot where we had originally set off, we met up with the honey-guide again. It was calling again and when we approached it, it set off in a different direction. As this new direction was more open country, we followed again and this time we did find a bee hive. (8–9)

As mentioned, relationships between different players were shaped by profoundly unequal political and economic circumstances, and it is impossible to consider these personal interchanges without acknowledging the contradictions that frame them. In Ndumo, many of the white wardens had come out of the police force or the cadet system, and despite their young age and limited training, they were given immense power to control and maintain "order" within the reserves. Invariably, they were partnered with older African men whose expert knowledge of natural resources and animal behavior was indispensable to their work, and indeed their survival. The paradox inherent in these alliances—played out through a convoluted, reciprocal benevolent paternalism—lessened the effects of racial administration (Bunn 2001, 13).

For instance, in his 1992 autobiography entitled *Mashesha: The Making of a Game Ranger*,[25] Tony Pooley's reminisces about how he came to understanding the Ndumo landscape at the hands of expert "Thonga" instructors:

> It was in and around Ndumo game reserve that I learned more about the art of trapping and the methods the local Thongas had developed and perfected utilising only natural materials. Game guards Nyosi Gumede, Sigodhlo Mbazine and Sigia Gumede were my teachers and there were few who were better qualified. Through them I learned how it was possible to live off the land as the Thongas had done so successfully. (106)

Despite this, as David Bunn (2001) argues, the value of these "guards" was conditional upon their representation as a particular kind of African: as wise, morally conservative, and at one with nature. Accordingly, they were invariably depicted in the various autobiographies of Ndumo wardens as loyal, dignified, scrupulously honest, and highly protective. Black bodies were "switched on and off" (8) depending on the teleological context; while they were left out of colonial narrative by the likes of Reitz, they were idealized by white game wardens who sought to reframe their African protectors through an Edenic imaginary of a natural and moral landscape.[26] Invariably, however, these guards were members of the very families that had been evicted from the game reserve, many of them convicted of "poaching" and considered to have experienced a "conversion" to wildlife conservation while incarcerated in Ingwavuma. While they had little economic alternative but to become the product of this so-called "conversion," their knowledge offered them some leverage in their relationships with their white bosses and the hegemonic administration.

In contrast, Bunn (2001) invokes the concept of "conversion" to describe

the white body (i.e., game ranger), who "needed to assume a transitional, native dwelling for the sake of its own colonial citizenship" (14). It is this transformation that I wish to address for a moment, for persuaded by its political imperative as well as a deep yearning to belong, it often motivated individuals to act in politically enabling ways. While Malcolm Draper (1998) correctly argues that political change cannot be attributed to a few significant biographies alone—even if the individuals represented were to become key spokespeople for integrated conservation in southern Africa—I am nonetheless interested in how meaningful interactions between individuals in Ndumo produced a counterdiscourse about human ecology and environmental justice. By giving a hearing to these "conversions," to their regrets and conciliatory reckonings, my aim is not merely to complicate the historical metanarrative about southeast African conservation but, more important, to challenge the enduring racial, gender, and cultural biases that are used to justify transboundary conservation today (Büscher 2013, 72).

One example is that of Ian Player,[27] who replaced Thomas Elphick as warden at Ndumo Game Reserve in 1954. By his admission, it was his everyday exposure to "wilderness people and place" that ultimately led him to critically assess the part he played in supporting a racially divisive conservation order:

> Every day [in Ndumo] was filled with a new sense of meaning. We were unaware of it, but we were also being taught the values of an indigenous culture. Daily we worked with the game guards or the labourers. Their quiet humour and acceptance of life blunted our Western mind-set and subconsciously led us on new paths. These were wilderness people who had existed in a tough environment of malaria, searing heat, and extreme material poverty, but spiritually they had a richness we could not imagine. They were being moved from the game reserve, and their situation would come back to haunt us. They had been part of the landscape, and although it was true that they had killed most of the antelope, it was their slash-and-burn practices that later enabled the game to increase dramatically when the last person left. (Player 1997, 47)[28]

Similarly, Pooley describes how his close working relationship with African game guards in Ndumo radically altered his understanding of local cultures and their relationships with nature. His particular "conversion" proceeded from a deepening appreciation of "Thonga" masculinities, which are invested in physical strength and judicious hunting practices. This motivated him to challenge perceptions widely held by the white hunting-

conservation lobby at the time—and enforced by the Natal Parks Board for whom he worked—that African hunting was tantamount to uncontrolled poaching:

> My firm belief that hunting and trapping was practiced solely to steal or procure free meat to satisfy personal lust and greed, was tempered when I learn that in earlier times communal hunts, *izingina*, were usually controlled by the *induna* or headman, or his appointed huntsmaster. . . . The organized hunts were seasonal and the timing was geared to avoid the killing of pregnant does or young animals—with the exception of vermin or crop-raiding species such as cane rats or bushpigs. (T. Pooley 1992,100)

Player and Pooley were amongst numerous game wardens who developed a deep moral ambivalence about the eviction of the families from Ndumo, some dismissing outright the necessity for their removal. Player's remorse, albeit rationalized via a hybrid Christian/Jungian imaginary, motivated his development of several national programs aimed at challenging the racial politics of nature conservation in South Africa.[29]

> There were unpleasant tasks too, and the main one was to arrest people who lived in the reserve when they committed even a trivial offence. It was the policy of the Department to try and have the reserve cleared of human beings. Many years later when my interest in Jungian thought was growing, I wondered if not wanting anyone to live in the reserve was not part of our shadow. It was an equivalent to the Garden of Eden in which there was not room for both Cain and Abel. In retrospect I believe it was a mistake not to have left at least half of the people there. After all they were part of the ecology. (Player, qtd. Saayman 1990, 112–13)

Of all references to the evictions of the families from Ndumo Game Reserve, it is the autobiography of Tony Pooley that most poignantly communicates the injustice of the exercise. In the lengthy passage that follows, he describes his arrest of a "poacher," which results in his imprisonment in Ingwavuma and the eviction of his family from the game reserve.

> The lorry started up as game guard Nyosi Gumede put a match to the thatched roof of Dhlamini's hut. As the orange-red tongues of flame and wisps of blue-grey smoke curled upwards from the roof, I saw the tears streaming down the cheeks of the women and children as the next hut, then the next, burst into flames as they slowly drove off along the reed-lined track. I felt a strange

> anger deep inside of me. A sense of injustice and also sadness. Here was this pathetic group of humans being punished for the misdeeds of one of them. Women and children who for many years had lived in the area, had tilled the soil, planted and reaped their crops, had known lean times, and times of plenty. Had laughed and played in the sunshine and at other times had lain desperately ill with fever. And now, they were being ejected from their home in the cause of nature conservation. Would their children grow up believing that to the white man, animals and game reserves were more important than they were? They had every reason to believe so! (T. Pooley 1992, 82)

## Power and Paradise

At lunchtime we meet with the rest of the Eziphosheni group at Red Cliffs. We stand together at the site that overlooks the slowly meandering Usuthu River and peer across the flat open Mozambican floodplains. Way below, a small herd of buffalo is wallowing sleepily in the muddy shallows.

The women reminisce amongst themselves about pathways and trails. They point in the direction of their families' homes and to the *cantinas* that they used to visit in Mozambique as young children. But the landscape has changed; tall grass and new bush shield many of the anticipated landmarks and confuse memories. The talk doesn't last long. By the time we sit down to eat lunch, the conversation has reverted to daily concerns: the condition of fields, the wayward behavior of children, the inattention of husbands.

I am puzzled. For years I have heard the same narrative about this paradise lost with such intensity that I was certain the women would savor every last detail of the place. Yet now that we are here, touching, feeling, hearing the place, the women have relatively little to say about it.

On the drive home, MaKhumalo announces: "Hey! I gained something yesterday at the store from this little *isitweletwele*! When I played it, people gave me money. *Mfuwethu!* [Brother!]"

Celiwe is pulled momentarily into the discussion: "Someone has taken my *umakhweyana* and hasn't returned it."

The conversation floats on . . .

MaKhumalo says: "X is a very humble person; she is very silent. But Y is jealous of her. She talks about her when she is not present. She took all the fields for herself and didn't share them. Now she even refuses to share her bananas . . . !"

Celiwe tries to redirect attention to the game reserve and resumes her role as tour guide: "There is an impala! It is beautiful with its little horns."

MaKhumalo continues regardless: ". . . Didn't she know that when you are not married, when a man tries to touch you, you run away? It's different when you are married. You can't do what you want to because he has paid *lobola* and you live in his house."

"There is *iTamboti*,"[30] attempts Celiwe. "If you put it on the fire, your meat will become sour and the smoke can kill you."

As this is common knowledge, no one takes up her lead.

We drive the long way around, passing by iDiphini, where many of their families once lived, and skirt the acacia-lined Banzi and Nyamiti Pans. The women stare out of the window in silence.

Finally, Celiwe remarks reflectively: "You know, if we were to be moved back here, some will be happy and some won't. If those at home were told to return and white people were moved to where we are now, it would be very hard. Some have already built their houses so they will refuse to move."

We stop to look at a zebra. The insults have abated.

Celiwe continues: "If you look at this land, it is difficult to identify the exact places [where people lived] because it is now thick forest."

"Sometimes people who work here find old boxes," adds MaKhumalo. "Once they found a grinding stone and they took it away with them." Her comments invoke the land claim application process, which required material evidence of prior habitation of the reserve.

"They also found *ithilamu* [wooden trunk that was used to transport things back from the mines] and clay pots," Celiwe confirms.

MaKhumalo returns to her domestic ruminations: "X has left her man; she told him that the father of her children was coming. We pity that man. She will not find another one like him! When the child died, we had to collect him from the father's house and bury him here. They made a good grave from cement."

When we arrive at the exit gate, the sun is lying low on the horizon. It is a magical, soft, rose-colored time of day. The women are silent, each deep in her own thoughts. We sign out, bid farewell to the game guards, and drive away.

It is some time before Celiwe offers her reflections on the day: "You know, when you are at home and you look at this area, you think that things are very big. But now that I am really looking, there is nothing here."

When, some days later, I ask the women what impressed them most about the game reserve, someone says, "We saw the place where the swallows [*inkonjane*] nest on the banks of the Usuthu River."

## Concluding Thoughts

The apparent lack of response by the women to the materiality of the game reserve reinforced my sense that their yearning for the place was more a yearning for justice, for a past "reconstituted and futurized . . . , a pre-exilic integrity . . . relived, elsewhere" (Tageldin 2003, 232–33). Listening in on the reminiscences by white rangers, whose racial superiority under apartheid had conferred on them the power to determine the destinies of the very same women and their families, correspondingly reveals a yearning to recalibrate the past and their place in it. As Jennifer Ladino (2004) has suggested, nostalgia in which nature is the object of longing "can be a mechanism for social change, a model for ethical relationships, and a useful narrative for social and environmental justice" (89). Yet, despite the lessons to be learned from the miscalculations of the past, there remains a chilling resonance between the expansionist claims of the turn of the twentieth century and the rhetoric of neoliberal conservation today. As William M. Adams and Martin Mulligan (2003) note:

> Many conservationists have worked hard to adapt their agendas to discourses about dismantling the colonial legacy. . . . However, even when conservation action has involved resistance to imperial, utilitarian views of nature, it has rarely been sensitive to local human needs and a diversity of world views. It has often been imposed like a version of the imperial endeavour itself: alien and arbitrary, barring people from their lands and denying their understanding of non-human nature. (9)

In the final part of the book, I will consider the contributions that can be made by ethnomusicological research to environmental justice, taking direction from Helen Gilbert and Sophie Nield (2008), who write,

> as thinkers and makers, we continue to return to performance, and to performance analysis, to frame questions about bodies, identity, movement, surveillance, power and resistance: questions that lie at the heart of our experience of contemporary geo-political circumstances, questions that are crucial to the discourses and regimes of power which constrain our movement, and questions that are vital to our ability to interrogate, provoke, problematise and, ultimately, resist. (136)

# PART III

EIGHT

# Beyond Talk and Testimony

> If our personal past takes on meaning as it is socially shared with others, then the ways in which others listen to, hear, and interpret our past has implications for what aspects of the past will be validated. Listeners can accept or dismiss, negotiate, cajole, or coerce particular evaluations over others. . . . Through this jointly constructed version of what occurred and what it means, some aspects of memories are given voice whereas others are silenced. Moreover, what is voiced and what is silenced occurs at multiple levels simultaneously—cultural, individual, and situational.
>
> (Fivush 2004, 89)

*Izwe lakithi liyanyamezela* (This land is on trial)

### *July 2009, Western Maputaland*

We return to a landscape that is shrouded in a soft wintery hue, the dry, silver monochrome punctuated intermittently with the bright red-orange flower of the *Aloe marthothii*. Winter is the time of the aloe in western Maputaland. When all else has died back or is lying in waiting, the aloe alone prospers, distinguishing itself as a key landscape metaphor of gentle humility yet dogged resilience.[1]

It has been a year since my last visit, and there have been numerous developments in the interim that have unsettled this year's seasonal tranquillity. Some months previously, the residents of the Mbangweni Corridor, a narrow strip of land between Ndumo Game Reserve and Tembe Elephant Park, had forcibly occupied an eastern segment of the Ndumo Game Reserve.

Having waited more than a decade for the agricultural support pledged by the land claim, the villagers had removed a section of the boundary fence and begun farming on some of the most ecologically sensitive land on the Pongola River floodplains.[2] The incident had sent shockwaves through certain sectors of the South African public, generating a rash of newspaper articles that predicted an apocalyptic end to nature conservation as it had been known.[3]

While on the surface all appeared to be quiet in Usuthu Gorge and Eziphosheni, relations with the Land Claims Commission and the Ezemvelo Wildlife Authority were notably strained. During the year, the boundary of Usuthu-Tembe-Futi TFCA had finally been consolidated, encircling a territory of some 640 square miles across the borders of South Africa, Mozambique, and Swaziland. The Usuthu Gorge CCA, which had originally been conceived as a narrow strip of land between the Ndumo Game Reserve and the Swaziland border, allowing for the continued cultivation of land on the banks of the Usuthu River, had been extended to include the entire riverfront. More robust periphery fences had been erected, and game guards had been imported from other regions of the province to oversee the management of the area.[4]

The new scheme threatened access to various livelihood resources for the families of both Usuthu Gorge and Eziphosheni. Not only had the women lost their most productive fields, but the closure of the CCA meant that they were no longer permitted to harvest medicinal plants, wild honey, or river reeds within it, which they had depended on for both domestic consumption and income generation. Additionally, they were obliged now to seek special permission from the CCA game guards to traverse the area in order to access the important trading town of Catuane in Mozambique. While guest accommodation had been established in the CCA for several years already, it had become evident that the predicted numbers of visitors had been vastly overestimated and the community had yet to receive financial benefits from tourism. As Mduduzi explained later in his email (see Introduction):

> Losing their land has played a big role in their [women's] struggles. They once had a taste of the good life of farming but the life they live now is opposite to that of the past. The introduction of community game parks had given them high expectations, but it seems like they are a strategy that the government has used to take more land from the people. They call it "community conservation" but the community has no say in the parks. They come with the promise of a lot of jobs and a lot of tourists so that people can sell, but

nothing has been done. So they have lost what they had and life has become tougher and tougher.

This year, Mduduzi is unable to join me to work with the women, so I enlist the help of Khulekane Mbuyise, a young high school graduate and resident of Usuthu Gorge who I had come to know over the years. We arrange to meet at a designated water tank along the Eziphosheni road and proceed to the Ngwenya homestead where we find the women already congregated. We greet amicably and settle down for a catch up. I am subjected to the usual "you always disappear from us and leave us in the lurch" run-around, and MaKhumalo threatens to beat me for my noticeably rusty Zulu, as a teacher would an inattentive pupil. Yet while there is warmth between us, the familiar, lighthearted chiding has lost its sheen.

There is much news about the AIDS-related funerals that have taken place during the year, many of them involving young members of the women's extended families. People wear only black these days, they tell me; AIDS, and the weekend funerals, have become our norm.

There is concern too that the drought has intensified over the past months, removing all hope that they will be able to harvest their crops this year. Their anxieties about food security are intensified by the rising level of unemployment countrywide, making it virtually impossible for family members to secure supplementary work elsewhere, as was their strategy in the past. They complain bitterly that the tanks are no longer able to produce enough water for the rising population in the area. Furthermore, the irrigation scheme, which had been promised to them as part of the land claim agreement, enabling them to pump water from the Usuthu River to their fields, has not materialized, and they have finally come to realize that it never will.

Predictably, the narrative of dispossession has assumed new force.

It is some time before it is appropriate to share the box of new *izitweletwele* that I have brought with me, along with the beads and cloth that the women have requested and some staple foods for their families. Given the exigency of their circumstances, the gifts seem absurdly inconsequential. Yet the instruments seem to lift the atmosphere a little, and in no time the women are testing each one, passing them around until each has identified a model that feels and sounds just right.

Qomakufe experiments with one *isitweletwele*, and her cautious phrases soon mutate into a strident, full-bodied melody. The others immediately

stop in their tracks. Someone exclaims, "Hha! She is *really* playing!" and reminds the group that this is how they should all play when they perform in Durban one day. Qomakufa's response is characteristically modest, attributing the power of her music to the instrument alone: "When I breathe, the instrument accepts me. If I play slowly, it is fine. When I play fast, it follows."

And so ensues the intimate tunings into their own sounds and each other's, the yard awash with the now familiar melodies rendered in a whirl of tempos and pitches.

"We are testing to see if they go where we want them to go!" MaGumede reminds me as she works her way from one song to the next, subtly engaging what appears to be every muscle in her body. On our drive to the Ngwenya homestead, Khulekane informed me that MaGumede had become "famous." Some months previously, the headmaster from the local high school had discovered her playing her *umakhweyana* while walking home from the Ndumo store. Inspired by his encounter with this wandering songster—a scene that he had not witnessed since childhood—he had immediately called the Maputaland Community Radio in Jozini and arranged for her to perform on air. At the time, the Maputaland Community Radio had a listenership of some 150,000 people scattered across the northern reaches of KwaZulu Natal and southern Mozambique, its popularity attributed largely to its regular phone-in programs that encouraged public dialogue about matters of critical social and economic concern.[5] While MaGumede's appearance on the station's only show dedicated to traditional music had been something of a novelty, it had unsettled the other women in the group, who felt that they should have been included in the arrangement.

I broach the subject with caution: "When you played your songs on Maputaland Radio, MaGumede, what responses did you get from the public?"

"They said that they were very happy to hear instruments that they remember from such a long time ago," she replies cheerfully, indifferent to the censure of her colleagues. "They said that I was bringing back their traditions and encouraged me to continue playing. This is our culture and we should be the ones to promote it!"

Celiwe is quick to add that the entire group had been invited by a local councillor to play at a major municipal event in Ndumo town: "People were very happy to hear us. The old ones danced and said, 'Hha! This is our tradition!' One old man announced that our playing made him want to rush home and put on his *amahiya* [ceremonial cloth]."

"Even the young people have become interested in our music these days,

so we need to keep playing," MaGumede encourages. "A soldier always has to go with his gun. This is my gun!"

In the afternoon, Khulekane and I drive up to Usuthu Gorge to greet the women. We find them hard at work in a newly fenced communal garden that has been constructed by the operating NGO to compensate for the loss of their fields along the Usuthu River. We wait at our usual meeting place under the *uvovovo* tree and watch as the women weed exactly apportioned blocks of spinach, cabbages, and onions. Slowly they drift over to greet us. As with the Eziphosheni gathering in the morning, the reunion lacks the joy of previous years, and no one bothers to rehearse the usual gestures that acknowledge the intimacies of our relationship. The women are distracted and reluctant to talk about the events of the past year. They offer fragments about the loss of their land and about the *amaphoyisa* (police) that have been employed to regulate access to Catuane via the CCA. I hear about the committee that has been set up to run the communal garden, some of whom are represented in this very group.

Most remain silent, heads down.

The meeting lasts a short while only. Someone shouts from the far corner of the garden that the pump for the new borehole has been repaired, and we have enough time only to arrange to meet again in the coming days before the women rush off to fill their jerrycans and painstakingly irrigate their vegetables.

In a matter of one year, the reconfiguration of the borderlands had exposed deep vulnerabilities within the communities, making evident what can occur locally when land and environmental development are regulated from a distance and according to a neoliberal globalist agenda. As suggested by Md Saidul Islam (2013), a community's level of vulnerability correlates with its ability to manage and control the risks it faces. The compromised status of the western Maputaland communities—resonant with numerous other southern African border communities that have been caught up in the TFCA process—stood in direct contrast to the South African government's alleged commitment to environmental justice and to its condemnation of the disproportionate environmental burdens that had been associated with social and racial inequality under the apartheid regime (Chakraborty et al. 2016; McDonald 2004; Schlosberg 2013).

To the unknowing outsider, the women's garden in Usuthu Gorge would no doubt be judged as displaying all the signature indicators of contemporary development: community participation, democratic decision-making, economic progress through income generation.[6] However, my many years of walking with the women to their fields and listening to their stories made it patently clear that for them, the garden represented quite the opposite: alienation from familial and cultural landscapes, loss of autonomy and decision-making, community competition not cooperation, and deep anxiety about hunger. While certain male gatekeepers may have acceded to the dazzling economic scenario proffered by the TFCA—arguably echoing the tripartite alliance that was previously enacted between colonial officers, chiefs, and male heads of household—women had less agency than ever before to counter the power structures that now dominated their lives, or indeed to manage the economic risks they posed. Predictably, the developments of the past year had provoked a deep weariness amongst them about yet another round of great hopes and broken promises. While it was some time before I was able to appreciate the enmeshed politics underlying the women's reserve, what was immediately apparent was that their silence was not empty, nor was it an expression of mere acquiescence.

One clue to their disposition was offered in the rather unexpected analogy delivered by MaGumede in the morning: "A soldier always has to go with his gun. This [*music*] is my gun!" Arguably a throwaway statement made by a woman renowned for her spirited imagination, its defensive citation marked a shift in attitude from our first meeting eight years previously, when their music was dismissed as mere lighthearted entertainment. It alluded to more than an acknowledgment that the songs carried their intimate stories and opinions, summoned opportunistically when other forms of oratory were deemed either inadequate or socially inappropriate. So too were they no longer deployed simply as "hidden transcripts" (Scott 1990) as they may have been previously as a strategy to rally against the constrictions of the apartheid state.

In contrast to the relatively discernible colonial/apartheid and patriarchal configurations of the past, a new set of largely invisible political, economic, and cultural hegemonies prevailed, the women's lives now dictated to by an assemblage of global environmental agencies, banks, and investment corporations. MaGumede's military metaphor suggested that she had come to see her music as a classic weapon of the weak (Scott 1987), a form of "tactical" or reactive action (Certeau 1984) that is called upon during moments of indeterminacy and when there is no discernible locus of power. As determined by Certeau (ibid.), the efficacy of a tactic lies in its pragmatism

and political acumen, and in its ability to manipulate the space of the other in the context of unpredictable change. Likening her instrument to a gun suggested that MaGumede's musical charge had assumed a tough, protective stance—invoked as a war from the ground up—her resilience drawing strength from recognition of the power of history, knowledge, memory, aesthetics, and skill.

Yet while MaGumede was determined to keep playing, others chose to shield themselves behind a rhetoric of suspension.

Recognizing women's performative reactions thus returns us to the epistemic foundation of this book, and to its appeal for greater attentiveness to the range of communication modalities that people invoke to define their needs and defend their interests. Correspondingly, it returns our focus to ethnographic listening and to the contention that effective listening, particularly during moments of indeterminacy and rupture, necessarily extends beyond text and talk, as Conquergood (2002) persuasively argues:

> The visual/verbal bias of Western regimes of knowledge blinds researchers to meanings that are expressed forcefully through intonation, silence, body tension, arched eyebrows, blank stares, and other protective arts of disguise and secrecy. . . . Subordinate people do not have the privilege of explicitness, the luxury of transparency, the presumptive norm of clear and direct communication, free and open debate on a level playing field that the privileged classes take for granted. (146)

> The state of emergency under which many people live demands that we pay attention to messages that are coded and encrypted; to indirect, non-verbal, and extralinguistic modes of communication where subversive meanings and utopian yearnings can be sheltered and shielded from surveillance. (314)

In the final segment of the book, I summarize the rhetorical power of performance in the historical reconstruction of land, gender, and spatiality in western Maputaland, and revisit the book's narrative arc through an analysis of three kinds of "talk."

The first returns to the cartographic trope of remote versus intimate sensing and focuses on the mapping of women's walking songs no longer as mere oral history, but as geopolitical testimony. This "talk" grants authority to sound and bodily practice in the reconstruction of a gendered politics of place, and accordingly challenges the primacy of speech in the communication of women's subjectivities and resistance. My second "talk" considers

the translation of the women's silence, as encountered during my last visit to the region, and contemplates its agency within a development scenario that is increasingly regulated by exogenous systems of governance based on a neoliberal "green" agenda. Silence constitutes a powerful yet elusive form of expression, and I consider how as ethnographers we interpret these culturally structured pauses and to whom we mediate their inferences and implications.

In the Postscript following, my third "talk," I conclude with a discussion about the place of the ethnomusicological voice within the noisy dialogue about land, gender, and conservation in southeast Africa, and consider our agency as witnesses, interlocutors, and academic citizens, particularly in those contexts where injustices experienced at the local level are vigorously rationalized by the globalist alibis of "sound science" and big money.

## Mapping Rhetorical Landscapes: A Brief Word on Methodology

Participatory methodologies have been explored in southern African anthropology for several decades, utilized to support integrated policy design and practice (Goodwin 1998). Much of the impetus behind participatory research came from Robert Chambers's work on "Rapid Rural Appraisal" (RRA) in the 1970s, which delivered a toolkit of information-gathering techniques formulated to promote agricultural development based on local knowledge and capacities. Drawing on anthropology's emphasis on situated knowledge, RRA's methodology promoted systematic listening as the basis for iterative project design and implementation (Chambers 1997; 2006; Absalom et al. 1995).

Participatory Research and Action (PRA) was one of numerous methodologies to emerge from RRA that advocated a similar collaborative research-reflection-action cycle to promote critical involvement by affected parties in every phase of a project. Though extensively critiqued (Cornwall and Pratt 2010; 2003),[7] one of the tools from the PRA repertoire that I considered of particular relevance to the project in western Maputaland was cultural mapping.[8] Unlike mapping that uses scientific coordination techniques to merge spatialities and temporalities into a single epistemology (Turnbull 2007, 141), cultural or "use-and-occupancy" mapping (Tobias 2009) involves the performative co-production of data assemblages aimed at representing multiple dimensions of the local: e.g., the stories and the journeys, the experiential, and the spiritual. Such maps have rhetorical power as they involve the marking of spaces in which people and places are discursively linked.

Accordingly, they challenge the framing of land, water, and natural resources as fixed assets or commodities, and support an understanding of natural elements as imbued with cultural meaning (Strang 2010). While the aim of cultural mapping is to translate aspects of dwelling by inscribing things, concepts, processes, and events within and across points of delineation, all maps run the risk of radical reductionism (Brosius et al. 2005; Turnbull 2007). Nonetheless, they lend shape to the interrelationships among local social and spatial practices and epistemologies and topographical markers, and shed light on how these relationships come to be manifest in performative engagements with place.[9]

Significantly, maps carry the credibility of "science," and translating the intangible aspects of landscape use onto a two-dimensional measurement and management tool offers a range of practical applications.[10] As anthropologists Hugh Brody (2002) and Nigel Crawhall (2001; 2007) have demonstrated in their work with Canadian Inuit and Kalahari San respectively, by bringing temporal, embodied, and sensory relationships with place into a relationship with economic models of landscape use, cultural maps may become persuasive devices for defending land and resource rights against undesirable or potentially locally destructive "development."

The aim of mapping women's spatialities in western Maputaland was to make visible and consequential their experiences of land, livelihoods, and conservation expansion within a discourse that is dominated by patriarchal and exogenous authority-conferring bodies, and to thus challenge their status as marginalized players. It also provided a way to make a more robust statement about their positionality within a policy environment that otherwise grants little authority to performative knowledge. Ironically, however, when I first suggested to the women that we attempt to mark their homesteads, fields, and other places of significance on a map, their response made it immediately evident that the exercise would be anything but enabling. As none of the women had had the opportunity to attend school, textual inscription of any kind invoked amongst them feelings of anxiety and incompetence. We don't know these things, they said, and that was that.

It was not until we had spent several years singing, walking, and discussing changing spatial practices in the region that I cautiously returned to the idea of marking song routes and places of significance on a physical map. For one, the women had been attending adult literacy classes in the interim and were no longer intimidated by the concept of writing. On the contrary, many were proud of their achievements and excited by the world that had been opened to them as a result of this new knowledge. For another, we had

already mapped the area performatively, and the physical maps were a mere by-product of the variety of activities of orientation that had already been achieved.

Constructing maps at the end of the eight-year research process served also as a valuable analytical tool for navigating disparate information. It helped to bring into focus the women's individual and collective narratives, giving temporal and spatial coherence to many years of disjointed storytelling. Equally, as songs and stories could not be pinned to specific dates, cultural maps helped to situate these poetic fragments in a time-space framework that in cartographic terms offered a measurement tool to "geocode" information that could be cross-checked with other data: e.g., the construction of the Ndumo Game Reserve fence, the migration of men to the mines and sugar estates, or the onset and conclusion of the Mozambican civil war.

Ultimately, the exercise made sense once we had collected an extensive repertoire of songs, which could be accomplished only over many of years of walking, singing, and remembering. Equally, the songs needed to be understood in relation to a wider cultural and performative matrix, which was discernible only with evidence of recurrent themes and noteworthy absences, and by the slow, systematic translation of their rhetorical meanings. As Tim Ingold (2000) reminds us, "mapping and speaking [sounding] are genres of performance that draw their meanings from the communicative contexts of their enactment" (231); in our project, these meanings were realized only through a gradual process of rediscovery and attunement.

## "Talk" 1: Women's Song Routes in Western Maputaland, Pre-1960

In this section, I focus on the analysis of three cultural maps, each utilizing memories of song routes as the points and coordinates that chart women's changing experiences of the western Maputaland borderlands. Each map marks a seminal moment in the political history of the area: the first represents the period prior to the removal of the families from the Ndumo Game Reserve; the second profiles their musical mobilities immediately following their eviction; and the final map chronicles women's current spatial practices, reflecting the new boundaries established by the Usuthu Gorge Community Conservation Area (CCA) and the wider TFCA that encompasses it. Rather than produced as ideal points on a map, song routes are conceptualized as zones of discourse—as "pedestrian enunciations" (Certeau 1984)—each evoking memories and actions that comment on women's relationships with each other and their world based on a residential sense of place.

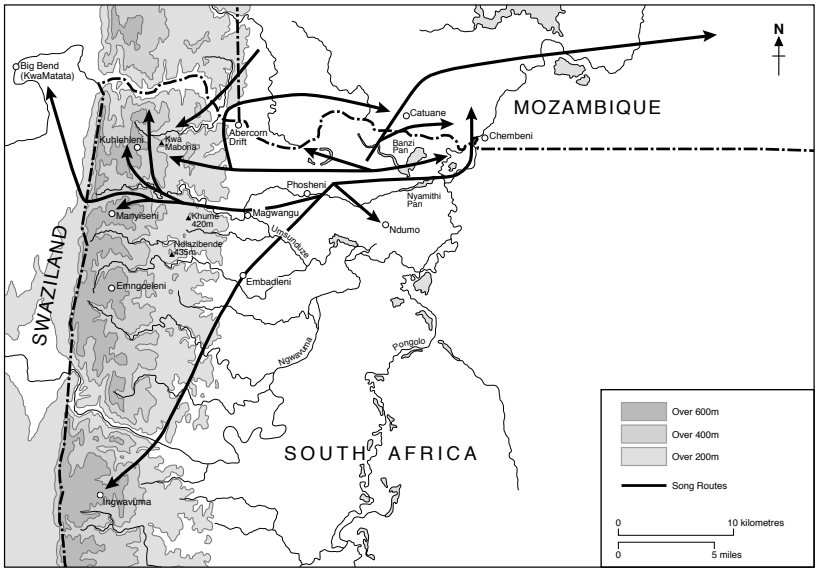


Figure 8.1. Women's song routes in western Maputaland, pre-1960

As explained in chapter 2, walking songs were composed individually but were exchanged and redistributed freely, representing the veritable "soundtracks" of women's movements across the landscape and operating as microhistories of their everyday borderland experiences (Impey 2007). It is this privileging of the sensory in the making of maps, therefore—the sounded, embodied, the "groundedness" of place—that lends itself to an alternative epistemology of place.

The first map represents the period prior to the 1960s and to the final removal of the families from Ndumo Game Reserve. This period is represented in those songs described by the women as belonging to mothers and grandmothers, as "those that went before." Although historically indeterminate, given that the women in the two groups ranged in age from fifty to seventy-five years, it is reasonable to suggest that the songs extended back at least a century, their content and routes of performance offering useful insight into the customs and spatial practices of young women during that time.

The repertoire from this period is notably everyday, comprising simple interactions between friends and relatives, and emanating from economic activities and social events. Their mundane subject speaks to the place of these song as embedded rhetorical practice, conveyed thus as chatty exchanges rather than delivered as discrete, self-conscious performances.

Given that they predate the lives of the women with whom I worked, specific references in the lyrics were not always fully evident. Equally, the impact of the shifting geopolitics on women's language use posed certain constraints on their translation. However, while some details may not always have been clear, we attempted to deduce their meanings by relating them to corresponding social and political events, and to the compositional structure of the song itself.

We began our mapping exercise by identifying fixed places of habitation, which are noted on map 1 as concentrated around the Banzi and Nyamithi Pans and along the Pongola River catchment area. Homesteads were located within proximity to land that was replenished annually by the flooding of the Pongola River (Bruton and Cooper 1980). Diets were supplemented with fish and water lilies from the pans and rivers, and sustained by the abundance of wild fauna and flora in the adjacent forests.

Determining these homesteads as points of departure and arrival, song routes are represented on the map as densely intersecting pathways that follow topographical features: watercourses and shallow river crossings; gentler contours across the mountains. These paths led to a range of places scattered across the three countries that were of functional and familial significance. Notable amongst them were fields and homesteads situated on the other sides of the border, trading stores, and places of ritual importance (graves near homesteads, the seat of the Traditional Authority at Emanyiseni, etc.).

As the principal context in which songs were performed, these pathways represented both the physical and the metaphorical threads that linked people to one another and to places in the landscape. They reveal the main orientations of women's activities, which were directed principally west across the mountains to the stores in Swaziland, where they purchased sugar, beads, cloth, and mouth harps, and in Mozambique, which stocked rice, cooking oil, and European alcohol. Many of the families residing next to the pans and river had fields on the other side of the Usuthu River, which the women worked daily, and most had relatives in localities deeper in Mozambique, who they would visit for family celebrations or during periods of extended flooding or drought.

The fluidity of movement implied by this map does not preclude the existence of fences and other physical obstructions. In 1949, a five-strand wire fence was erected to control the movement of cattle from Mozambique to Swaziland and South Africa to prevent the spread of rinderpest (see chapter 6). This fence did not impede the movement of people across the state border, however, nor did it have an impact on the border economy (McGregor 1994, 552). What the map makes evident, therefore, is local inhabitants'

disregard for the national borders, their sense of locality enacted as a state of across and in between. In demonstrating the flow of movements predominantly west, north, and northeast, therefore, the map reveals economies and socialities based on historical and residential claim to land rather than on ethnicity or national identity.

Gendered spatialities began to diverge somewhat at this point due to the participation by men in the migrant labor system. Though their rate of participation accelerated substantially in the 1950s and 1960s owing to their removal from the Ndumo Game Reserve, men had been conscripted into work by the Native Recruitment Corporation (NRC) for several decades already, a change facilitated, in part, by the establishment of roads and a regional transportation system. Roads, known locally as *uTeba*, were designed to transport the men from Ndumo either south via the town of Ingwavuma, or north through Stegi (Siteki) in Swaziland (see chapter 6). Correspondences by NRC operatives in the region indicate that road building was consistently hampered by heavy rains and flooding, however, often prohibiting access to the region by "motor-trolley" for long periods of time. The absence of these routes from the women's map suggests both their impermanence and their infrequent use by women.

Though the routes and pathways may offer tangible representations of landscape use, experiences of them are more readily signified in the sounds, motions, and corporeal references that animated them. The songs associated with these routes reflected everyday details and social exchanges. They were passing gestures, sightings, and commentaries on social norms. Delivered as whispers and rumors, they announced everyday socialities and gave resonance to women's senses of belonging. Many were no more than greeting songs that affirmed relationships and commented on the memorable behavior of others, as the following two versions of the same song suggest:

> *Sawubona Mayoyo, Sawubona uthembebe-bebe*
> (Hello, Mayoyo, hello [the one who sits in a compromising manner])

and

> *Ngambona uMayoyo, Ngamthola uthenkwantsha-kwantsha*
> (I saw Mayoyo. I encountered him/her [sitting modestly])

Although the meanings of *uthembebe-bebe* in the first song and *uthenkwantsha-kwantsha* in the second were unclear to the women with whom I worked, it was suggested that they were colloquialisms that were extended poetically to accentuate the rhythmic configuration of the song.

*Amaculo manihamba* were customarily performed prior to marriage, and many of the songs communicated the tension characteristic of this transitional period of life between girlish abandon and acknowledgment of the more serious obligations that come with womanhood. Love, courtship, and marriage were deliberated through a mixture of excitement and trepidation, fear and flirtation. For instance, while the mention of breasts in the following two songs is a celebration of beauty, purity, and fecundity, breasts were not sexualized in Nguni culture, so their reference serves to signify the premarital status of the singers: [11]

*Wangiphatha mabele. Uyanginabela?*
You are touching my breasts. Are you interested in me?

or

*Ugabisa amabele entombi*
Showing the breasts of a girl

Tension between the customary status of marriage and the desire to remain free to exercise individual agency similarly permeates this repertoire. For instance, in the song *Deda endleleni Nkolombela* (Move off the pathway, Nkolombela), a young woman rejects the advances of a man, Nkolombela, who approaches her as she walks to the river to collect water.[12] In contrast to this apparently bold gesture, the following song exposes a young woman's fears about marriage, which, as is the custom of patrilocality, will necessitate her relocation to the home of her husband—invariably far away—where she will be obliged to live according to the conventions of his family:

*uMankomeni usaba ukugana kuMaphindela*
Mankomeni is afraid to marry Maphindela

A song indicating similar reticence:

*Ayisavumi. Ayilali phansi*
She doesn't agree/consent [to the marriage]. She doesn't want to lie down [in the bed of the groom]

The following song, which was also sung at weddings, issues a warning to young women about the responsibilities they will have to assume in the

marital home. Here it is expressed symbolically through water, the task of its fetching and carrying for domestic use being quintessentially the business of women (see chapter 6):

*Qhude lakhala kathatu sekusile amanzi awekho*
The rooster cries three times at dawn and the water is not yet here/there

The expectation placed on young women to marry early is made evident in many songs from this period, their principal responsibility being to boost their family's wealth in cattle through *lobola* (marriage dowry). In this song, the young woman is referred to metaphorically as a cattle egret, a bird closely associated with cattle.[13] However, rather than using the vernacular denotation *umLindankomo* (Sw. *liLanda*), "the bird that waits for the cattle," the song employs the metonymic reference *imbombosha*, meaning "coming together, agreement," thus implying a woman's responsibility to secure relations between two families:

*Ayi, imbombosha* (Hey, little cattle egret)
*Wemalanda zonke* (You who marry "everyone")
*Wemalanda nkomo* (You who fetch cows)
*Lisheshe lashona imbombosha* (The sun sets early, little cattle egret)

The following song boasts of a successful marriage agreement by announcing that there will be a black bull amongst the cattle to be given as *lobola*. The black bull is a symbol of the Swazi royalty and is highly prized for its rarity.[14] Its presentation in marriage is powerful endorsement of the bride's beauty and social value and equally a statement of the groom's social and economic distinction.

*Ngiyalobola yimi loyo madoda! Ngikhuluma ngenkunzi emnyama!*
I am offering *lobola*; that's me! I have a black bull!

Some songs reveal discord between individuals, reflecting the natural ebb and flow of relationships experienced in all social environments. The relevance of this information to this study is that it offers insight into the complexities of a social world that is otherwise characterized in the collective memory as flawless. The following song refers to a double-tongued woman (implied by the snake) who will extend her friendship at one moment by singing with you but will criticize you harshly as soon as you turn away:

*Uyayibona inyoka? Inyoka eyashaya isitweletwele*
*Uyayibona inyoka? Eyaluma yaphenduka*
(Can you see the snake? The snake is playing *isitweletwele*
Can you see the snake? It/she bites and turns around)

Several songs built on idioms and proverbs that extend moral instruction. The following identifies the family as the essential arbiter of wisdom. It advises that personal difficulties always be worked out within the family rather than amongst those you don't know or necessarily trust:

*Indaba zophela emalawini* (All stories end in the home)

Work and food preparation songs offered poetic license for the candid disclosure by women of strained domestic relationships; at the same time, they were used to criticize those who shirked their domestic responsibilities, which in this case is attributed to laziness and the abuse of alcohol:

SOLO: *Asambe siy'emasimini* (Let's go to the fields)
CHORUS: *Ngiyazigulela mina* (I am sick)
SOLO: *Asambe siy'ezinkunini* (Let's go to the fields)
CHORUS: *Ngiyazigulela mina* (I am sick)
SOLO: *Asambe siy'otshwaleni* (Let's go to drink alcohol)
CHORUS: *Ngizakutotobela khona* (I will try to follow you)

Themes of territoriality and belonging were similarly built into work songs. The following affirmed a woman's connection to the land of her husband's family, which she had been allocated to cultivate upon marriage, as is the patrilineal inheritance practice in western Maputaland:

*Kuwe Kuwe* [name of husband's family]
*Mina ngagana kuleli zwe kuwe*
(I married in the land of the Kuwe)

Many songs from this era cite natural features, the evocation of rivers, mountains, cattle, snakes, birds, and crocodiles used as a metaphorical anchor or as a social or spiritual lever, and making evident the human-environmental connections that frame their worldview.

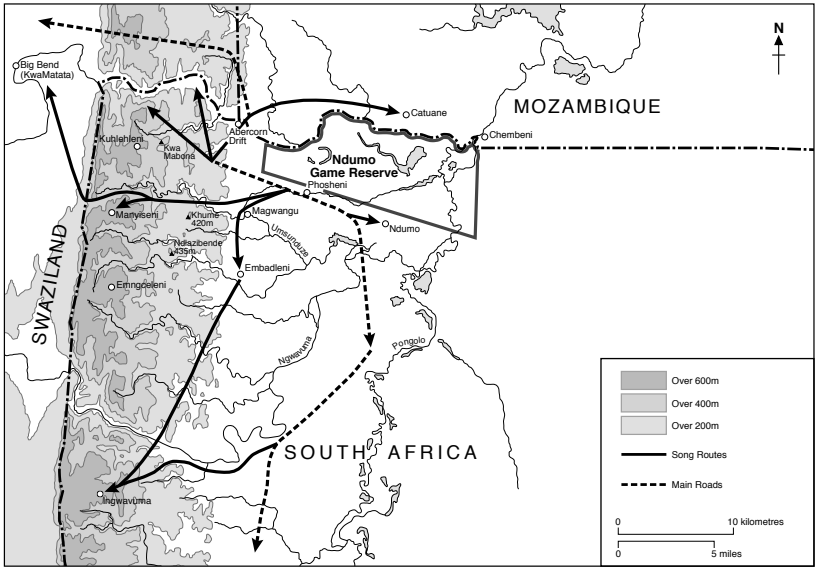


Figure 8.2. Women's song routes in western Maputaland, 1960–early 1980s

## Women's Song Routes in Western Maputaland: 1960–Early 1980s

The final eviction of the families from the Ndumo Game Reserve in the early 1960s coincided with a range of political developments in the region. With the accession to power by the Nationalist government in 1948, and the ensuing legislative consolidation of apartheid, so the borderland communities fell victim to a range of new racially restrictive controls. The consequences are reflected on map 2, which describes women's musical mobilities during the two decades following their removal from the reserve. During this period, the perimeter fences were erected and service roads improved, creating coordinates in the landscape that are defined by new regulatory grids and boundaries, and accordingly reflect strategies assumed by women to survive or subvert them. These routes and pathways, and the musical practices that reinforce them in memory, represent not only the products of social and economic relations but also spatialities of contentious politics (Leitner et al. 2008; Massey 1999), which are dynamically adjusted to resist the hegemonic strictures of the state.

Song routes not only elucidate spatial information; their greater value perhaps is that they offer visceral testimony to the experiences of women at the time, to emotional states, connections, and disrupted senses of place.

These expressions became deeply political during this period and, as will be noted, expose a generalized temper of anxiety and dislocation. Many of the song routes represented on map 2 make reference to the intersections between demarcations of power and routes of escape and to women's mobilities that necessarily took advantage of any gaps and openings in the restrictive practices of the state.

When the families were removed from Ndumo Game Reserve, most settled on land on its immediate periphery that either belonged to extended kin or was allocated to them by local *izinduna* (elected chiefs). While the game reserve was being systematically swept clean of all traces of human habitation and the landscape restored to a pristine, timeless space in nature, the lives of the displaced families entered a period of considerable turmoil. The economic rupture caused by loss of land and natural resources effected new patterns of mobilities and immobilities that cut across gender, forcing men to migrate to the cities to seek wage labor and confining women to substantially reduced tracts of land upon which the survival of their families became increasingly dependent.

For the first decade after the Ndumo Game Reserve fences were erected, inhabitants were permitted to walk across the reserve to access their fields, relatives, and the trading town of Catuane in Mozambique. It was only at the end of the 1960s, when new species were introduced to the reserve, that people's traversing rights were rescinded, obliging them to construct new routes across the border that circumvented its western boundary. The distances made regular cross-border journeying prohibitive, and many consequently gave up their fields in Mozambique. Relatives divided by the game reserve either relocated permanently to the other side of the state line or lost contact with one another altogether.

The pathways on this map reveal women's spatialities as no longer predominantly northward bound, but oriented toward the west and the south. They focus strongly on the trading stores in Ndumo and KwaMatata in Swaziland, on the Traditional Authority in Emanyiseni, and the magistracy of Ingwavuma in the south, each destination reflective of the socioeconomic changes of the time. The significance of the trading stores related to the women's growing dependency on the cash economy (via remittances) and on store-bought commodities; the town of Emanyiseni signals increasing implication in territorial politics, and Ingwavuma—perhaps the most prominently featured—identifies the legislative imposition of the state. It is here where the women were obliged to obtain their identity books (*dompas*) and where many of them were imprisoned for distilling alcohol.

The dotted lines on the map denote the two *uTeba* roads that were built

by the mine recruitment agency to transport male labor to the mines in the Witwatersrand. Upgraded during this period to be permanently navigable, one road is directed southward to the town of Pongola and the other, which commences at the intersection of the borders of the three countries at Abercorn Drift, proceeds north through the town of Stegi (Siteki) in Swaziland. These roads not only represent the material infrastructure of a gendered, racially based extractive economy; they also facilitated the flow into western Maputaland of new ideas and commodities, whose roots were in capitalist modernity, a world well beyond the spatial parameters of most women. Contrary to pathways, which were referred to locally as *indlela yesiZulu* (the routes of Zulu people) and which laid claim to an internally defined sociospatial organization, roads—*umgwaqo*—were wide, impersonal, and designed to transport people to economic spaces outside. Associated with feet and not with wheels—as it was described to me by the women—paths were configured through an entirely different sensory, political, and economic order than roads, which reflected regulation imposed from outside (Impey 2007). Dimitris Dalakoglou and Penny Harvey (2012) corroborate: "Roads are materially embedded in local particularities, but they also speak to a more general sense of promise and uncertainty associated with the idiom and materiality of (auto)mobility—and its association with issues of modernisation, connectivity, growth, displacement, circulation, etc." (460).

Roads, like state barriers and the fences of the game reserve, cut across families and fields, delivering new people and experiences, and accordingly generating new expressive responses. The songs of emplacement that characterized much of the repertoire prior to this period were supplemented with songs that conveyed a combination of disruption, longing, dislocation, and avoidance. Most were either composed by the women with whom I worked or circulated in the general repertoire known to their generation.

The song that appeared to activate the intense emotions of the time is one that describes the final removal of families from the Ndumo Game Reserve (see chapter 1). Though stripped of all detail, its short repetitive phrases most vividly conjure the distress experienced in that final encounter:

> *Balekani nonke, kukhona ukuzayo! Gijimani nonke, kukhona ukuzayo!*
> (Run away, everyone, something is coming! Run away, everyone, something is coming!)

MaFambile Khumalo explained the song through the memory of her own family's eviction. Her description of events is chillingly resonant with that of the game ranger Tony Pooley, as noted in the previous chapter:

> We sang that song because we were running away from the white man from KwaNyamazane [the place of the antelope] called umThanathana [the one who speaks contemptuously and we shut our ears]. We were not removed at once. My father had two homesteads. They started by moving the cattle to this side. Then we moved to another homestead. Others were left on that side. They were later arrested and forced out. They were arrested if they were found with an antelope. If you were found fishing in the river, they would arrest you. They chased everyone then. They said they didn't need them there. They chased us from our land. We were drinking from the big water they called uBanzi. They chased us and we took our belongings and ran!

A dominant experience that shaped the lives and mobilities of the Eziphosheni and Usuthu Gorge women during this period was labor migration. Unsurprisingly, a great number of songs lament the departure and extended absence of lovers and husbands, as demonstrated in the following examples, each line representing a discreet song:

*Ujaha lami uhamba no uTeba* (My lover has left on the Teba bus)
*O-Diye Diye wami* (Oh dear, my dear)
*Woza lapha dali-wami* (Come to me, my darling)
*Bayosala bekhala ubaba nomama* (They will be left crying, mother and father)
*Yabaleka indoda* (The man has left)
*Kubuhlungu inhliziyo* (My heart is painful)

These lamentations were countered by songs that celebrated the annual return of their men, which would be accompanied by trunks full of food, clothing, and novel commodities. These songs reveal the contradictory effects of the migrant labor system on the lives of the communities at home. Indeed, if a man did not find work elsewhere, his sense of familial responsibility and his very masculinity would be questioned in a song (see chapter 6):

*Joyina kwelakithi eSwazini!*
(Join up, relatives from our place in Swaziland!)

The disruption that characterized this period is further exemplified in songs that describe increasing economic uncertainty and familial fragility due to migrancy. For instance, a song such as *Sala kahle ntaka baba* (Goodbye, child of my father), though truncated and seemingly unremarkable,

embraces within it the manifold risks imposed on families when their men went away to work, as Manoni explains:

> This is an old song that was played by my mother. She was saying goodbye to her man, my father, when he went to *esilungwini* (the place of the white people). I don't know when this was. I don't know the years because I am not educated. But I know that he left when I was young, and when he came back, he was sick and died. It was difficult for those who worked in the mines. Sometimes they came back and sometimes they didn't. Sometimes they were injured by the rocks in the [gold] mines. My own husband was damaged this way.

The acceleration of labor migrancy in the 1960s led to rising levels of poverty for women, children, and the elderly at home. Their vulnerability was exacerbated by their increasing dependency on cash remittances from husbands and fathers, and on an economy that tied them to the trading stores. Some men made lives for themselves in the cities and never returned, as Manoni described in her song:

> *Ayibosala bekhala ubaba nomama, Yabaleka indoda*
> (The in-laws will be left crying, mother and father. The man has run away)

The increasing pressure placed on women to provide for domestic consumption from smaller allocations of land forced women into whatever cash-generating activities they could identify to survive. Many began to distill alcoholic spirits, and others took up prostitution, rendering them vulnerable to police harassment, imprisonment, and forced labor. These activities—prostitution in particular—generated tensions among women within the communities, the overriding patriarchal hegemony offering little space for an understanding of prostitution as an oppressive economic necessity. The circumstances accordingly stimulated the composition of songs that openly criticized those who engaged in it:

> *Gqezu zintombi, kunuka usende. Nayi ingwadla elala esitolo*
> (Hey, girls, the perfume is smelling. There is "the offensive one" [prostitute] who sleeps at the store)

Similarly, the following song compares what is deemed the morally spurious work of prostitution with the more honorable disposition of a wife, who receives remittances from her husband:

*Ishende Liyahola liholile. Holalaphi namhlanje. Bathi Hola lapha kaMazambane*
("Boyfriend" [of prostitute] is getting paid. Where are you getting paid today? I'm getting paid at Mazambane [collecting remittances at the trading store])

Changing economic practices also produced discord within families, which was represented in many of the songs in this repertoire. The following describes how a wife is made to sleep outside when her husband brings home a young woman who he has encountered elsewhere. When I enquired about its context, the Eziphosheni women explained that if a husband had paid *lobola*, he could do whatever he wished in his own home. This practice was intensified when he had money. The wife had no option but to remain silent.

*Ngalala emaweni ngezindaba zakho ntombazana*
(It was because of you, girl, that I slept in the wild)

Much domestic strife occurred as a result of alcohol, which was often consumed to excess by both men and women:

*Uphuzisa abafazi bamanye amadoda, ufuna ukubenzani? Phuz'ushiye!*
(You give beer to the women of other men. What do you want to do to them? Drink, but don't finish it!)

and

*Ngophelela otshwaleni. Bathi phelela otshwaleni!*
(I will die from drinking alcohol. They say you will die from alcohol!)

The illegal distilling of alcohol rendered women vulnerable to frequent raids on their homes, and the following song describes how they were often made to pay bribes to the police to avoid imprisonment:

*Imali yami ayaqedwa amasotsha*
(My money was finished by the police [soldier])

Similarly, an *ingadla* song from this period refers to the death of a policeman who had attempted to extort a bribe from a member of the community, suggesting that encounters of this nature were sometimes violently confrontational:

*Uyadela Babo! Babulal'iphoyisa* (You are happy! They killed a policeman)
*Ngoba imali bayifaka ebhokisini* (They put [hid] the money in the box)
*Jabulala iphoyisa* (Killed a policeman)
*Imali bayefaka ebhokisini* (Put [hid] the money in a box)

As Landeg White (1982) noted in his research on oral poetry in southeast Africa, the transitory nature of power in this region meant that those in positions of power were more aware of the obligations of patronage than were the Zulu kings and leaders in the south. Consequently, ordinary citizens had sanction to speak to customary power and to demand accountability, as the following song denotes (see chapter 2):

*Induna, wayishaya inkomo, ubalekelani?*
(Leader [chief], you beat the cow, why are you running?)

In contrast, songs that comment on state power were often more abstruse. While the precise meanings of the following song may have been lost over time, the song remains vivid in the collective memory of the women, its appeal arguably located in its spirit of defiance:

SOLO: *Mabopha' ubopha abanye* (The one who arrests others)
CHORUS: *Uyeheni mayebabo, shii!* (Statement of shock)
SOLO: *Uzwile ulayikile* (You got a taste of your own medicine / I told you so)
CHORUS: *Uyeheni mayebabo shii!* (Statement of shock)
SOLO: *Isandla sengwenya* (The hand of the crocodile)
CHORUS: *Uzwile ulayikile* (You got a taste of your own medicine)

The escalation of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and the civil war in Mozambique in the late 1970s led to the extreme militarization of the border region. As noted by Kloppers (2005), the war encouraged many people in southern Mozambique to migrate to South Africa to escape the violence. Although the residents of the western border regions such as Usuthu Gorge remained relatively unaffected by the cross-border skirmishes between FRELIMO and the South African Defense Force, they were geographically close enough to hear the exchanges of artillery and automatic gunfire. As Old Makete from Usuthu Gorge once told me: "We used to hear the guns in Mozambique. *Ka-Kaaa! Ka-Kaaa!* Hha! We were very scared!" Accordingly, she composed a song to memorialize her experience:

*Kwakhal'ingolovane* (I heard the sound of the truck/tank)
*Kwakhal'inganono* (I heard the sound of gunfire)

At the end of the 1970s, the South African government erected a border fence with Swaziland, splitting the Mathenjwa community in two and imposing heavy restrictions on them and their movements across the frontier. As one Mathenjwa elder told me:

> We were disturbed. The Mathenjwas had land in Ncandweni, which is 30 kilometers away, but when the border was made in 1978, this land became part of Swaziland. People's lives were disrupted. Some decided to take their cows and live in Swaziland. They didn't want to be separated from their families. But Pretoria [seat of South African government] didn't even talk to the chiefs about this. The soldiers came and looked after the border. People were imprisoned for crossing over. We used to buy [food] from KwaMatata in Swaziland, but [when you crossed over the state boundaries] you would be beaten and wouldn't be able to sit for two weeks because your wounds were so bad. Some people had to climb *umkhaya* [thorn trees] to escape the soldiers. (Interview with Mathenjwa leaders, 14 July 2004)

As discussed in chapter 4, the western boundary with Swaziland was fortified in the aftermath of the failed Ingwavuma Land Deal, which had been fabricated by the South African and Swaziland governments in 1982 to cede western Maputaland to Swaziland. Successfully contested by Buthelezi, then president of the KwaZulu Homeland Government, who reinforced his claim to the border region by investing in various infrastructural developments. Amongst these were several schools, whose promotion of Zulu language, history, and cultural practices is reflected in the song repertoire from this period. Though the women with whom I worked were too old at this time to attend school, the following borrowed song demonstrates how their repertoire nonetheless absorbed songs from the Zulu canon. It describes a young Zulu man (*insizwa*) who is summoned by his chief to enroll in a military regiment, a practice that is foreign to the cultures of western Maputaland:

*Nang'unogwaja engikhomba phambili shi-ha!* (The rabbit is showing me the way)
*Alikashoni* (The sun has not yet set)
*Alikashoni phezu kwentaba shi-hha*! (The sun has not set on the mountain)
*Sekusile* (It is morning)
*Vuka nogwaja sekusile shi-hha!* (Wake up, rabbit, it is morning)

The enforced "Zulu-ization" of the Maputaland population did not go uncontested. The following song describes how borderland residents attempted to resist incorporation into the KwaZulu Homeland by petitioning the Swazi seat of government at Lobamba:

*Thina sambamba uZulu* (We do not know Zulu)
*Asesabi ukuboshwa* (We are not afraid to be arrested)
*Isikhulu sakaNgwane* (Leader of the Ngwane [Swaziland])
*Thina kasimazi uZulu* (We do not know Zulu)
*Uthi manyumanyu ushis'umbango* (He [Buthelezi] is double tongued, he wreaks havoc)[15]
*Thina kasimazi uZulu lo asesabi ukukhuluma* (We don't know Zulu, we are not afraid to say so)
*Sasikhuluma kwaLobamba* (We told them at Lobamba)

The practice of walking songs came to an end sometime between the end of the 1970s and the start of the 1980s. Radios and cassette players introduced into homes by husbands and relatives returning from the cities had assumed increasing importance in the cultural lives of the people. Schoolteachers limited the daytime agricultural activities of young girls and prohibited the long-distance walking that had taken place at night to attend the youthful *isigcawu* gatherings. New fences cut across old pathways and inhibited border crossings. Life changed, and the songs and their courses in the landscape lost their social and spatial moorings.

## Women's Mobilities in Western Maputaland, 2009

In 1986, the South African government erected an electric fence along the entire border in an attempt to curb the movement of ANC operatives into Mozambique, and raised the current to lethal levels (McGregor 1994, 556). The region was placed under military surveillance, and the adjacent game parks were used as buffer zones to control all border crossings. Although peace in Mozambique in 1992 and the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 brought an end to the extreme militarization of the border, the supervision of the border region by the military police continued amidst concerns about illicit cross-border activities. In 1997, the Peace Parks Foundation launched its transboundary conservation concept with the dual agenda of biodiversity conservation and rural economic development. Three years later, western Maputaland was incorporated into one of five TFCAs within the broader Lubombo Conservation Area, drawing on a

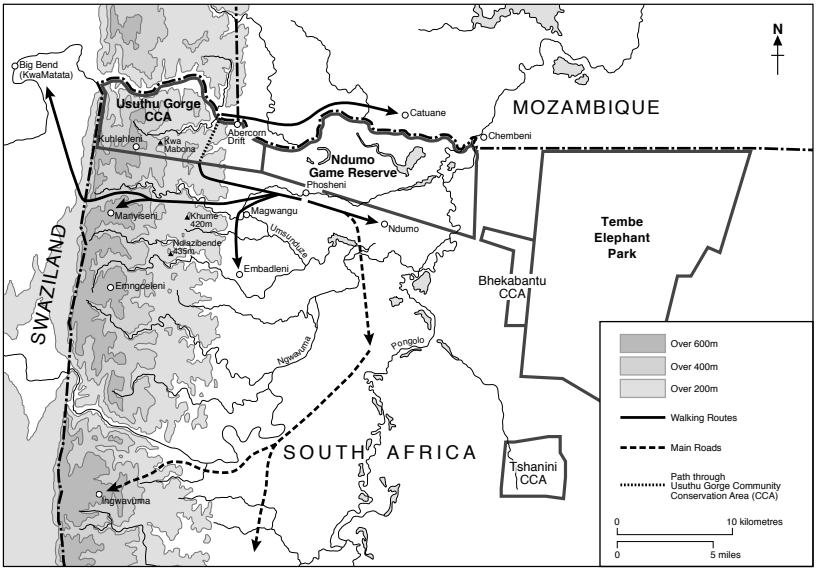


Figure 8.3. Women's mobilities in western Maputaland, 2009

protocol agreement between the governments of Swaziland, Mozambique, and South Africa.

The final map depicts mobilities in western Maputaland in 2009, marking a point at which the Usuthu-Tembi-Futi TFCA had been fully consolidated. The Usuthu Gorge Community Conservation Area (CCA), which had originally been conceived as a narrow corridor linking the Ndumo Game Reserve to the Swaziland border to facilitate ongoing cultivation of arable land adjacent to the Usuthu River, had been expanded to incorporate the entire expanse of the western frontier. The map also features prominently the Tembe Elephant Park (proclaimed in 1983) and the Mbangweni Corridor, the narrow strip of land situated between the two game reserves and the last remaining residential area on the frontier between South Africa and Mozambique.

Despite the rhetoric of integrated development, these new demarcations make evident the extent to which livelihood mobilities have been surrendered to the grand design of the TFCA, thus representing simply yet another phase in the long contest between macrolevel spatial development and local dwelling practices in the borderlands.

Consented to by male leaders and heads of households for the sake of the alleged economic benefits of nature-based tourism, the women's relegation to precisely apportioned "gardens" represented the cessation of long-

established ecologies of land, customary rights, and familial alliances. The new spatial arrangement also disrupted supplementary routes to food security by prohibiting resource harvesting within the CCA and by obstructing women's traversing rights across the area to conduct trade in the town of Catuane in Mozambique.

Where the first map indicates that mobility offered a lifeline to borderland communities in this challenging and changeable environment, and defined the identities and socialities of residents as across and in between, the last map demonstrates the extent to which these practices have been elided by transboundary conservation expansion. The maps make clear that one set of fences has simply been replaced by another, and that the utopian vision of prosperity, as promulgated by the architects of the TFCA, today functions as the very paradigm that constrains the movement and livelihood opportunities of the communities residing within these spaces. Recognizing the association between past experiences of injustice and the current TFCA agenda, Induna Ngwenya declared:

> What has prevented that wound [the forced removals of the 60s] from healing is that I am an old man and still I haven't received even half a cent from that [land claim agreement]. Not even an antelope has been caught for [the benefit of] this community. We have gained nothing. That's what we have been complaining about. We were living with them [animals], so in reality, they belong to us. The black rhino, giraffe, warthog, and wildebeest were imported by the white people, but the impala, nyala, gray duiker, monkey, buffalo, and crocodile came from Mozambique. So they belong to us. When they sell them, they sell to other game reserves and we get no share of the sales. Why do they say that we are now "integrated" when we are not? If you have a big family and you buy a packet of sugar, everyone must eat from that sugar.

## "Talk" 2: Ambiguous Speech and Eloquent Silence

In the introduction to this chapter, I described the women's disillusionment upon realizing that the promises of the land claim agreement would not be forthcoming. In Usuthu Gorge, the women's despondency was intensified by the loss of their most productive fields and by the recognition that the benefits from the CCA and the larger TFCA that encompasses it would never compensate for food produced from subsistence farming. For eight years, I had worked with the same two groups of women, who had participated in our musical reminiscences with much laughter and dancing, but this year they were not in the mood to sing. With little to rationalize the ongoing

exploration of songs and landscape histories, our work together came to an end.

If speech is the authorized medium of power in the global North (C. Jackson 2012; Glenn 2004), and writing is inscribed as the "proper form of listening" (Ochoa Gautier 2014), the question remains how we proceed as ethnomusicologists when even non-speech/text-based modalities fall short of their communicative force. Indeed, if we consider sound the preeminent signifier of self-representation and citizenship, how then do we translate silence as a rhetorical intervention and to whom do we mediate its propositions?

The outsider commonly interprets silence as a void, as lack of opinion. In patriarchal societies, such as those in Maputaland, women's silence is readily subjected to the binary that associates speech with male power and silence with female submission. However, as Foucault (1990) cautions, more often than not, silence suggests the presence of something hidden but unspeakable. Silence may be a "deliberative, positive choice" (Glenn 2004, 172), a means of protecting personal interests, an expression of anger or rebellion, a survival strategy. Indeed, as N. Kabeer (2010) and J. Parpart (2010) contend, silence can be more eloquent even than speech, and the refusal to speak can be an effective method to deal with challenging circumstances. Yet silence is strategically effective only when "whatever is hidden is hidden in such a way that its absence is amply felt" (Foucault 1990, 27), when its manipulation is culturally recognized and politically understood.

For years, I had listened to and walked and interacted with the women, and I had witnessed significant changes in their lives. However, while I may have learned how to attach meanings to their sound world, I was ill equipped to interpret their silence. Besides, in many ways, I was implicated in it: I had encouraged the women to remember their songs and to tell their stories. I had assured them of the value of their knowledge and its significance within the broader historical narrative of the borderlands. The women had become actively engaged in the research process, not only in wresting songs, images, and experiences from their pasts, but in producing new knowledge. In my mind, I had framed this as both empirical research and "action research," linking their memories and knowledge to the broader development concerns in the region. For the women, this has raised expectations of greater representation in the new schemes on offer. When the reality dawned that these schemes were unlikely to materialize, however, there was little I could do to prevent the women from associating our work with the more encompassing scenario of great hopes and broken promises.

Given this, I was particularly uneasy about the politics of intermediation,

mindful of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's (1988) caution that in speaking on others' behalf, one may (unwittingly) becoming complicit in the task of imperialism. Yet equally, I was aware that while the women's silence may have carried agency within their immediate cultural milieu, it was doubtful that it would be understood by foreign decision-makers, whose rules of engagement are premised on very different norms and communication practices. My concern was that the women's silence would further exclude them from civic participation and that their needs and interests would recede all the more from policymakers, leaders, development practitioners, and even researchers. The removal of their voices from public decision-making would mean that the knowledge gap would simply increase between those devising and implementing policies and those subject to their interventions. Even if we credit Spivak's radical untranslatability of silence, therefore, the question remains how one might bring this untranslatability into the political arena with the hope that it may make some impression on the systems of power to which it responds. As Martin Stokes (2010) insightfully probes:

> Who draws the lines across what spaces and how? When are they tied to forms of privilege and exploitation . . . and for what stakes? These are social, historical and political questions. Neo-liberal politics, which displaces issues of social welfare with insistent appeals to *right feeling*, has ensured that such questions are globally pressing. (190)

In their ruminations on silence as a rhetorical intervention, Cheryl Glenn and Krista Ratcliffe (2011) suggest that the other side of silence is listening, claiming that witnessing alone provides a context for the enactment of silence. Silence is temporally bounded; it emerges out of sound and ultimately reverts to sound. While silence itself may not necessitate translation, at some stage someone will have something to say.

# POSTSCRIPT

*Izindaba zophela eMalawini*
(All stories end in the home)

## "Talk" 3: Listening In, Sounding Out

In my concluding "talk," I return to the final statement in Mduduzi's email as profiled in the Introduction, which calls into question our reach as ethnomusicologists, particularly when working in contexts of extreme inequality and injustice:

> I think you should write about this [conservation-based displacement]. I agree that you should quit your research in the area now. These are times when you wish you could make a difference in the lives of these people, but you can't; you have nothing.

As Donna J. Haraway (2016) cautions, in the increasingly contested world in which we live, there is a temptation to cynicism, avoidance, and denial. While conceding the limitations of our structural and material influence, Mduduzi's recognition of our capacity to draw attention to the circumstances that we witness hints at one way forward. Yet the challenge remains how we can do more than merely contribute to resistant discourse within our own communities of practice. How can we ensure that the stories with which we are entrusted, the songs that we record, and the lines that we draw on our cultural maps make a demonstrable impression on the far more commanding worlds of "sound science" and big money? How do we as researchers and academic citizens contribute toward policy design and practice? Indeed, how can musical knowledge affect real change?

In this book, I have argued that ethnography has the possibility—sometimes the obligation—to hold open spaces to allow for other stories to emerge, to promote new ways of thinking, and to make known alternative forms of communication. We have something almost unheard of in the public sector: the privilege of protracted contact and the purpose to listen deeply and to listen across. The brief ruminations that follow, though arguably too late to influence circumstances in western Maputaland, draw from the challenges and missed opportunities of that experience to advocate for more constructive research outcomes in the future. They build on the more pragmatic recognition that despite Haraway's (1988) assurances that "science—the real game in town—is rhetoric, a series of efforts to persuade relevant social actors that one's manufactured knowledge is a route to a desired form of very objective power" (577), there is no getting away from the reality that the arts and humanities, and particularly those subject areas that privilege non-speech/text-based knowledge, hold little currency in the technocratic world of land development. This is made particularly explicit in an interview conducted by one of my graduate students with the chief program officer and policy advisor for social development at the British Overseas Development Institute (ODI),[1] who stated:

> When we are making policy recommendations, the stakeholders want to see hard evidence, and they want to see value for money. When we talk about arts and culture, it can seem wishy-washy. Social welfare response mechanisms are based on a professionalization of language, policy and practice, [which are] not conducive with words like "arts." [Currently] there is no delineation [in the development sector] between arts for art sake and arts that have real impact within development models.[2]

If I were given the opportunity to rewind to pension day in Usuthu Gorge, January 2002, my research would take a somewhat different route. Rather than simply acknowledging the ideological barriers between me as a performance ethnographer and those engaged in transboundary conservation expansion in western Maputaland, I would seek an active place in the conversation about these developments from the outset of the project. I would work far more vigorously at establishing strategic partnerships, actively listening and giving feedback to and debating issues with a wide range of voices as we proceed. This reconsidered strategy emanates from the realization, gained from hindsight, that there is little practical advantage to delivering critical research as a packaged afterword to a governing sector that

is resistant to accommodating noneconomistic evidence in policy design and implementation. I would attempt to more judiciously put in practice the core conviction of this book, which argues that to explore constructive routes toward transformative thinking, we need to transcend our fixed disciplinary grooves (V. Brown and Harris 2014), to actively seek overlapping terrain in order to engage in epistemic dialogue.

In order to talk *with* rather than *at,* I would, of necessity, first have to bring clarity to the politics and parameters of my own advocacy agenda and interrogate the effects that the existing disciplinary/sectoral hegemonies have on my own confidence to articulate convincingly, and in the brittle language of that world, insights gleaned from sensory and performative registers.

This critical positionality would seek rationalization from emerging discourses in transdisciplinarity, more recently encountered, and from discussions in the environmental sustainability sector about policy processes based on multi-epistemological research partnerships (Chilisa et al. 2016; Asabere-Ameyaw et al. 2014). Transdisciplinarity represents a significant departure from conventional research and is premised on a commitment to the democratization and decolonization of the research and policy landscape. Its key aim is for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to co-evolve understandings of social-ecological issues, to reconcile diverse perspectives and languages, and to co-produce knowledge in the service of a common goal (Roux et al. 2017).

Within this framework, existing hierarchies between different "specialist" knowledges and organizational and local knowledge are dismantled in favor of a systems approach based on social learning and collaborative engagement (V. Brown n.d.; Chilisa et al. 2016). Such an approach does not necessarily presume the rejection of former modes and tools, but accommodates, by way of a distributed or rhizomatic framework, an understanding of knowledge systems as multiple, mutually valuable, and based in application (V. Brown n.d.; Haraway 1988). As elucidated by Valerie Brown, John A. Harris, and Jacqueline Y. Russell (2010) in *Tackling Wicked Problems through Transdisciplinary Imagination*:

> The task is to draw on all our intellectual resources, valuing the contributions of all the academic disciplines as well as other ways in which we construct our knowledge. And that brings the challenge of developing open transdisciplinary modes of inquiry capable of meeting the needs of the individual, the community, the specialist traditions, and influential organizations, and allows for a holistic leap of the imagination. (4)

Although public policy and ethnography may appear incommensurate in magnitude, depth, purpose, and content—policy aims at generating action derived from crisp, abstracted, and quantifiable data; academic research seeks understanding based on detail, nuance, and multiplicity—both build on information that is grounded in empirical research. While the nature of this knowledge-policy interface has long been debated by think tanks and development agencies in an effort to systematize the relationship between knowledge production, translation, and use, "proper" knowledge, whether research-based, practice-based, or based on the opinions and cultural understandings of affected citizens, remains premised on expectations of speech. Yet as Cecile Jackson (2012) points out, while the appraisal of *who* speaks and *what* is said may be essential to a political critique of policy, what is almost entirely omitted from these debates is consideration of *how* knowledge is communicated. It is in this capacity—the *how* of communication—that ethnomusicology, with its focus on sound, orality, and embodied experience, has the potential to make an invaluable contribution. As Nicola Jones, Ajoy Datta, and Harry Jones (2009) advocate,

> Moving from an analysis of 'research' or 'evidence' . . . to 'knowledge' more broadly allows an examination of the political and epistemological dynamics in the production and use of such knowledge, while still including (but also reframing) the insights gained into evidence and research. Seeing the value of incorporating different types of knowledge (from evaluations to participatory research, moral principles to programmatic knowledge), and the practicalities of doing so is crucial to understanding and improving the knowledge-policy interface.

Applying a transdisciplinary research perspective to environmental developments in western Maputaland would challenge many of the fundamental socio-ecological values that authorize the TFCA's expansionist agenda. It would make it more evident that much of the rhetoric of "sustainability," "empowerment," "participation," and "mutual beneficiation" is a smokescreen applied by the neoliberal conservation agenda to secure economic globalization at the expense of environmental justice (Clapp and Dauvergne 2011; Cooke and Kothari 2001). It would reveal the biases involved in pursuing an almost exclusively male-centered consultation process to seek local buy-in, and would lend authority to women's practical knowledge about land and livelihood needs, as conveyed through a variety of rhetorical practices, including sound, body, motion, and silence. More broadly, therefore,

investing in a multivocal, multi-epistemological research process would make evident the intersectionality of history, race, culture, and gender in the long struggle for land and life in the borderlands, and would legitimize the participation of the least vocal members of these communities in shaping the contours of their own environmental justice struggles.

For us as performance ethnographers and academic citizens, the task of witnessing, gathering, and testifying has become increasingly exigent in light of neoliberalism's growing "self-serving racket" (Monbiot 2016) and its attendant abandonment of the value of "voice." More alarming, as Nick Couldry (2010) argues, is its erasure of the very principle that "people's abilities to give an account of their lives is an irreducible part of what must be taken into account in any form of social, political or economic organization" (580). All people need to have the opportunity to communicate their interests, concerns, and aspirations, and all people need to know that their voices matter.

This book is an appeal for listening: listening across time and across cultural, racial, and linguistic differences, across gender positionalities and beyond speech. It is an appeal for reflexive listening as a mode of engagement and a strategy for political intervention. It is built on the narratives of the same group of women in Ezophosheni and Usuthu Gorge, and on listening to the walking songs that breathed life into their landscape memories and produced the backdrop to the cavernous silence that arose with their realization of the imminent loss of their lands. It has given a hearing to the personal memoirs and bureaucratic chronicles that have inscribed the dominant histories of the borderlands, and sounded out the resonances and disjunctures across narrative strands as a strategy to prize open discursive possibilities and challenge the political and epistemological dynamics in the production and use of previous frameworks of knowledge. In listening to the multiple qualities of the western Maputaland borderlands, the book has sought to summon the imagination and raise awareness in ways that more conventional historiographies of land and conservation in Africa seldom do, and in so doing, has sought to bring the all too often hidden voices into view.

## Last Night in Maputaland

The moon sits big on the horizon.

On my shortwave radio, I hear the comings and goings of guitar-heavy

*marrabenta* beaming in from somewhere deep in Mozambique. When the melodies become overwhelmed by the hiss and crackle of soundwave distortion, I switch off to listen to the night.

Far off in the pans a hippo grunts, triggering a quick-tempered reaction from other members of the pod. Jostling for space in the shallows, they blow and beat at the water. As abruptly, they settle down.

From the deep shadows, a fiery-necked nightjar (Z. *uZavolo*, Sw. *Malwelwe*) calls out, its sweeping melodic ascent hovering momentarily on an uncertain note before starting again, up and over, over and over again. It is a chilling though compelling song, a seemingly persistent announcement of optimistic anticipation.

And then for a long while, all is quiet, attentive, waiting.

# APPENDIX 1

Frederick Courteney Selous, the British explorer and hunter-turned-conservationist who had become famous for his exploits in southeast Africa in the 1880s and 1890s, documented Von Wissell's ("Wissels") commercial exploits on the Maputa (Usuthu) River in some detail. In the following diary excerpt, he describes Von Wissell's intrepid lifestyle in AmaTongaland, which he witnesses when sailing with him from Delagoa Bay to Ndumo. The diary offers an evocative description of the landscape and the people:

> It had long been my ambition to add the head of an inyala, shot by myself, to my collection of hunting trophies, but year after year had rolled by, without my having been able to spare the time to undertake a special journey to the country near Delagoa Bay in search of it, until I recognised that, unless I made a determined effort, my large collection of South African antelope heads would for ever remain incomplete and unsatisfactory, ungraced as it would have been by the spoils of one of the handsomest species. There I was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of Messrs. Gould and Edixhoven . . . [who] introduced me at once to a trader from Amatongaland, who had lately come down to Delagoa Bay, and who was just about to return to his station near the junction of the Pongolo and Usutu rivers. Mr. Wissels (the gentleman in question), a Cape colonist of German extraction, I found was about to return to his station by boat on the following day; and when he heard that I wished to shoot an inyala, he told me that these animals were plentiful in the neighbourhood of his station. . . . I had but very little preparation to make for the journey before me, but before I could leave Delagoa Bay it was necessary for me to get a passport from the authorities to travel in Portuguese territory, and also to obtain a license to carry arms. . . . The same evening, after a good dinner at a small hotel on the opposite side of the bay, we ran out to sea

with the tide, by the light of a most glorious full moon, and after passing a reef of rocks which projects into the sea from the southern shore of the bay immediately opposite Reuben Point . . . , we anchored about midnight in quite shallow water to wait for the morning breeze, by the help of which Mr. Wissels expected we would be able to run right into the mouth of the Maputa river, in time to catch the inflowing tide. After a not too comfortable night . . . [we] found that a strong breeze had sprung up, before which we ran right into the mouth of the Maputa river in a very short space of time. The Maputa is the name given to the united streams of the Pongolo and Usutu, below their confluence, and carries to the sea the muddy water of the former commingled with the clear stream of the latter, which takes its rise amongst the far-off hills of Swaziland. As the height of the country above sea-level at the junction of these rivers is, I believe, under 400 feet, it follows that the Maputa runs through a very level tract of country. Like all rivers flowing into the Indian Ocean, on the east coast of Africa, it is a tidal stream fringed on both banks along its lower course by monotonous, dismal-looking mangrove swamps. The country between the Maputa and the Tembe which latter is the river flowing into the southern portion of Delagoa Bay—is reputed to be very fruitful, and to carry a large native population, who, however, have suffered terribly of late years owing to the depredations of locusts. The district is called Maputa. To the south the land does not appear to be so rich, and must be more sparsely populated, as elephants are said to still maintain a precarious footing there. . . . About eleven o'clock we reached the Portuguese military station of Bella Vista, in charge of an officer, who, after he had inspected my papers and found them all in order, was very civil, and invited us to join him at the late breakfast. . . . After bidding adieu to our host and resuming our journey, we continued to make very good progress, with the help of wind and tide, and although we now and then lost a little time by sticking on a sandbank, we had done so well by sundown that Mr. Wissels expected to make a record run up to his station. . . . Our luck, however, was not to last, for during the hour which intervened between the setting of the sun and the rising of the moon . . . the wind veered right round, and commenced to blow fresh and cool from the south. We soon found it impossible to make any further progress . . . for the strength of the wind blew us in under the bank. So, yielding to necessity, we made our heavy craft fast to a tree for the night. . . . On the following morning . . . [the] weather had now completely changed, the sky being overcast with an unbroken sheet of cloud, whilst the temperature had become quite cool and pleasant, with a strong breeze blowing from the south. . . . However, all progress by boat being impossible as long as the southerly wind lasted, my companion, knowing that my time was limited, advised me to get some carriers and push

on at once on foot to his station, which was about thirty miles distant, and in the vicinity of which inyala were to be found. This proposition entirely coinciding with my own wishes, one of our two Zulu boatmen, an excellent fellow named Longman, was sent off to engage four carriers, and soon after midday returned with four Amatonga women; for, in this part of the country, the women act almost exclusively as porters. Of the ladies who, after a considerable amount of haggling, at length agreed to carry my baggage to the junction of the Usutu and Pongolo rivers, three were already in the afternoon of life gaunt, bony, wrinkled, hideous hags. The fourth was a younger and pleasanter-looking woman, who, in addition to her load, which weighed about forty pounds, carried a two-year-old child, slung in a goatskin, at her back. It took some time to arrange the price which was to be paid for their services, but at last, after testing the weight of the loads, they agreed to carry them to Mr. Wissels's store for a certain price. This, however, had to be paid in advance, in accordance with a custom which is general throughout every portion of the Portuguese dominions in South-East Africa, a custom which is most humiliating to the pride of an Englishman, as it seems to say, "By bitter experience we black people have learnt that white men will cheat us if they can, and therefore we do not trust them." The Amatonga about here seem to live in families rather than in large communities, as we passed several kraals, none of which contained more than half-a-dozen huts. . . . At the time of my visit to Amatongaland the people were very badly off for food, as for several successive years their crops had more or less been destroyed by a wing of that mighty army of locusts by which the whole of South-Eastern and South Central Africa has been devastated continually ever since 1890. On waking the following morning, I found that the weather looked very threatening, as the clouds had become quite thick, and rain was evidently near at hand. However, after a good deal of opposition on the part of my lady porters had been overcome, we made a fairly early start, and soon reached the Maputa river at the place where we had to cross it in a native ferry boat, which proved to be merely a very disreputable-looking old dug-out canoe. (Selous 1908, 228–34)

# APPENDIX 2

**Table 1. Birds and Their Cultural Associations in Western Maputaland**

| Local name | English/scientific name | Songs and cultural associations |
|---|---|---|
| *Malwelwe* (Sw) | Fiery-necked nightjar (*Caprimulgus pectoralis*) | *Phindu umgithole!* (Phindu, you'll never get me!) |
| *iHophe* (Z) | Red-eyed dove (*Streptopelia semitorquata*) | *Tshelebotwi kuku! tshelebotwi kuku! Usam-hhehhe; usam-hhehhe* (Song based on onomatopoeic sounds) |
| *uSamdokwe* (Z) | Cape turtle dove (*Streptopelia capicola*) | *Awungisikele juba ngimuke Awungisikale juba ngimuke* (Please can you cut (the reeds or thatching grass) for me, my dove; I want to go home)<br>Explanation: "This is a wedding song that describes the ritual entry of the young bride into the home of her husband. The experience is considered traumatic for the bride as it means that she has to formally abandon her own family":<br>*Sangena, ijuba, sangena sukwesaba* (We are entering (the homestead), little dove, we are entering. Don't be afraid!)<br>Explanation: "This song is about a dove that is found in a tree overhanging the river. The tail of the dove is concealed. The women consider themselves doves that are in hiding before they are invited to enter the husband's home."<br>"When the dove is happy to see its wife, it will dance, doo-doo-doo" (imitates the puffed up movement of the male dove when it is approaching its mate). |

| Local name | English/scientific name | Songs and cultural associations |
|---|---|---|
| *uKhonzane* (Z)<br>*Lituba* (Sw) | Laughing dove<br>(*Streptopelia senegalensis*) | *Singabakwa Magagula* (We are from the Magagula clan)<br>*Gugu dlel'ebothweni* (Gugu is eating from the pot) |
| *Sigulugwane* (Sw)<br>*isiKhombazane-sehlanze* (Z) | Green-spotted dove<br>(*Turtur chalcospilos*) | *Phela mena kungiqondile enhliziyweni yami, do-do-do*<br>(I am always suffering in my heart, do-do-do)<br>Explanation: The song is inspired by the sentiment evoked by the call: "Can you not hear that he is crying?" |
| *iNkankane* (Z)<br>*Lingangane* (Sw) | Hadeda ibis<br>(*Bostrychia hagedash*) | *Nga nga hamba! Nga nga hamba!*<br>(We are going! We are going!)<br>Explanation: "It calls when it is returning home at sunset." |
| *uThekwane* (Z)<br>*Tsekwane* (Sw) | Hammerhead stork/ hamerkop<br>(*Scopus umbretta)* | *Wamuhle thekwane inyoni yamanzi*<br>(You are beautiful, hammerhead stork, bird of the water)<br>*Nanguya uthekwane ezibuka emfuleni, ezitshela ukuthi muhle kanti cha, woniwa yileli qhuzu elisemva kwakhe.*<br>(There is the hammerhead stork looking at herself on the river. She thinks she is beautiful but she is not; the bump on her head spoils her beauty)<br>Explanation: The bird is believed to have an exceptional ability to create fire, and is highly respected by hunters and fishermen. If a person dares to destroy the hammerhead stork nest, which is large and exceedingly messy, their own home will burn down. |
| *Umkluwe* (Z, Sw) | Gray turaco (go-away bird)<br>(*Corythaixoides concolor*) | Onomatopoeic: *Umkluweee! Umkluweee!* |
| *Malolotja, Mlawula* (Sw) | Black-backed puffback<br>(*Dryoscopus cubla*) | Onomatopoeic: *Nqivo! Nqivo!* |
| *Inconcodzi* (Sw) | Cardinal woodpecker<br>(*Dendropicos fuscescens*) | Explanation: "When it cries 'inci,' it gives you the message that you will have meat at home. We call it *inconcodzi* (onomatopoeic); it pecks against the wood and makes its nest inside the tree." |
| *uPhezukomkhono* (Z)<br>*Phezukwemkhono* (Sw) | Red-chested cuckoo<br>(*Cuculus solitaries*) | *"Vuka!* (Wake up! Go to your mother's fields!)[1]<br>(The call comprises three consecutive descending pitches.) |

| Local name | English/scientific name | Songs and cultural associations |
|---|---|---|
| *iNdodosibona* (Z) | Black cuckoo (*Cuculus clamosus*) | *Makudo? We!*<br>Explanation: This is a duet call where one bird calls 'Makudo?' and a second answers 'Yes!' The interaction is imagined as communication between a husband and wife. |
| *uNongobotsha* (Z) | Brown-hooded kingfisher (*Halcyon albiventris*) | Explanation: "This is the bird that tells us when there will be rain." |
| *iGwababa* (Z) | Pied crow (*Corvus albus*) | Explanation: "This bird eats chicken's eggs and likes *amacimbi* [wild fruit]." |
| *iMpangele* (Z)<br>*iMphangele* (Sw) | Helmeted guinea-fowl (*Numida meleagris*) | Explanation: "The black and white spotted bird that looks like a chicken. It always stays close to the homestead and calls to the children." |
| *umTshwelezane* (Z) (also known locally as *Sipheleba*, Malolotja, and Mlawula) | White-browed robin-chat (*Cossypha heuglini*) | *Kusile bomama* (It is morning, mother)<br>*Kusile, ubugigagiga* (It is morning, you have to face the day)<br>*Siya khona koMdada* (We are going to Mdada)<br>*Tshwele-tshwele! Tshwele-tshwele!*<br>Explanation: Onomatopoeic reference to the dawn call of the white-browed robin-chat, referred to by the generic denotation *umTshwelezane*, which is also used to refer to a chicken. The term literally means to twitter loudly or chatter confusedly. |
| *uMtjelele* | White-throated robin-chat (*Cossypha humeralis*) | Onomatopoeic "*Che che chelele!*"<br>Explanation: "This bird sings on top of termite heaps. It is nice to watch. It dances as if it is happy. It dances for its wife. When you look at these birds, you see that they are happy for each other. When I return home, I will also be happy. If I find that my husband is drunk and angry, I will forget all about our problems." |
| *iNgqungqulu* | Bateleur eagle (*Terathopius ecaudatus*) | Explanation: "It brings bad luck and lightning. To protect your family from it, the *sangoma* [healer] has to sing the following special song: *iNgqungqulu, inyoni eyadlula emzini kwaphela abantu. Sizophela ekhaya!* (Bateleur eagle, the bird that passed over the homestead and people died. We will all die at home!)" |

| Local name | English/scientific name | Songs and cultural associations |
|---|---|---|
| *Sikhova* (Sw)<br>*isiKhovampondo* (Z) | Spotted eagle owl<br>(*Bubo africanus*) | Explanation: "If there is an owl near your home, it is a sign that someone is going to die. There are many owls. Some are very small and others have big ears. The one that brings bad messages is the big one that catches chickens [imitates deep, resonant call, hoo-huuu]. It doesn't sit in the trees. It simply flies over your home and calls to you. You can feel it. You don't feel comfortable when it passes over your home. When you hear it at night you become frightened because you know that in the morning you will receive a message that someone is sick or has died. [To protect against this] you take a piece of burning wood and throw it away from your homestead, and tell it that all evil must leave." |

[1] The motto *Phezu komkhono,* which literally means "let's go back to our land and plow," was used as a campaign slogan by the South African Department of Agriculture to encourage small-scale farming.

# NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

1. *Tshwele-tshwele* is onomatopoeic of the chattering dawn call of the white-browed robin chat. The term *umTshweleswali* is also used to refer to a chicken.
2. The mouth harp is most often referred to as "Jew's harp." However, this is a misnomer as the instrument has no connection to Jewish musical culture or history. I have chosen, therefore, to use the generic term "mouth harp" and, where appropriate, the local denotation, *isitweletwele.* See chapter 2 for a more detailed description of the instrument and its historical derivation.
3. Email received from Mduduzi Mcambi, 25 September 2009.
4. There is a vast literature on southern African transboundary conservation. See, for instance, Cumming and Biodiversity Support Program 1999; Katerere, Hill, and Moyo 2001; Hanks 2003; Ramutsindela 2007; Villiers 2008; Adams and Hutton 2007; Arsel and Büscher 2012.
5. See detailed biodiversity maps of Maputaland in Smith, Easton, Nhancale, et al. 2008; and Smith and Leader-Williams 2006.
6. "New Community Game Reserve Created," Tuesday, 2 July 2002, ANC Daily News Briefing http://www.anc.org.za/anc/newsbrief/2002/news0702.txt (accessed 10 December 2008).
7. Personal communication with women, Usuthu Gorge, June 2003.
8. Permaculture is an organic farming method aimed at establishing maximum food potential from minimum land. It is used widely in agricultural development in Africa and is often linked with more inclusive development objectives.

## CHAPTER 1

1. In early literature, the town and game reserve were referred to as "Ndumu."
2. Chicken feet are a popular fast food in the townships of Durban and Johannesburg, where they are referred to as either "walkie talkies" (when sold together with the head) or "chicken dust" (feet only), evidently so named to invoke the image of chickens kicking up the dust when scratching in the dirt (Dlamini 2004).
3. The inhabitants of the border towns of Ingwavuma, Ndumo, and KwaNgwanase are known to most southerners as *amaZingili*: a mixed people of whom some claim to be Swazi, others descendants of the Mabudu-Tembe, and some still claim lineage from

the more distant Shangaan/Tsonga people of south central Mozambique (Ngema 2007, 36; Tracey 1952).

4. See "Ecosystem Profile. Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Biodiversity Hotspot," 23 April 2010, paper prepared by Conservation International Southern African Hotspots Programme, South African National Biodiversity Institute. See also Tinley and van Riet 1981.
5. Ndumo Game Reserve was proclaimed in 1924 and Tembe Elephant Park in 1983.
6. The invisibility of people and identities at state borders is corroborated by Donnan and Wilson (1999): "Although scholars in a variety of fields have recognized the role of culture in the creation and maintenance of borders and borderlands, few have directly tied culture to their analyses of statecraft at, across, and as the result of borders" (11). See also Flynn 1997.
7. She may also have used the term *hohoza* (*rhorhoza* [new orthography]) based on the onomatopoeic word *hhohho* to describe wavelength distortion. *Cacile* (to be clear) can be used also to describe visual clarity.
8. The pinafore was introduced into the Maputaland area by young men who worked as migrant laborers in Johannesburg and on the sugar estates in Zululand. It would be presented as a gift to the mothers and aunts of their intended brides, together with head cloths and blankets. Essentially intended as a protective outer garment to be worn when cooking, it has become emblematic of marital status and today will often be bought by mothers for their daughters following the exchange of *lobola* (marriage dowry) to confirm that she will be respectful in her husband's home.
9. Ingold (2004, 2011a, 2011b) and Ingold and Vergunst (2008) draw on Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, which focuses on the body's "practical mastery of everyday tasks involving characteristic postures and gestures, or a particular body *hexis*" (Bourdieu 1977, 87). Their perspectives form part of a broad scholarship on place, space, and embodiment, which builds on the work of Heidegger (1971), M. Jackson (1995), and Gray (2000).
10. It is important to note that sound is projected by water surfaces, which enables instruments that resonate at low frequencies, such as drums, to travel great distances.
11. A land claim was also lodged by members of the Mbangweni community who reside in the corridor between Ndumo Game Reserve and the Tembe Elephant Park and awarded in 2000.
12. See also Peace Parks Foundation http://www.peaceparks.org (last accessed 12 October 2010).
13. TFCAs are supported by numerous international donors, amongst which are the World Bank, the European Union, and the Dutch and Swedish Postcode Lottery funds.
14. The discourse of CBNRM developed in the late 1980s in tandem with the concept of "sustainable development," drawing on both bioethical and utilitarian landscape perspectives and recognizing human development and environmental protection as "two sides of the same coin" (Quinlan 1991). In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development ("Earth Summit") in Rio de Janeiro vigorously endorsed the shift from environmentalism to development. However, as with the concept "environment," both CBNRM and "sustainable development" lack clear definition and remain open to multiple interpretations (Ngobese and Cock 1995).
15. See also the African Borderlands Research network: http://www.aborne.org.
16. The Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF) was established to service the

interests of South African NGOs and community-based organizations on matters concerning environmental justice and sustainable development.

17. Most of the women were not certain of their exact ages, and the birth dates listed in their national identity books were approximate at best.
18. See also Polli 2012.
19. In *Cultural Memory Studies* (2008), Erll and Nünning clarify that sites of memory are not only points of reference for those who survived historic events, but for generations that follow. The word "memory" thus becomes a metaphor for the fashioning of narratives about the past when those with direct experience of events are no longer present. Therefore, sites of "second-order memory" are sites where people remember the memories of others. Communicative memories, on the other hand, are shared and negotiated in the everyday and circulate among the living.
20. See also Trigg 2012, 2009.

CHAPTER 2

1. The instrument is most commonly referred to as the "Jew's harp," a term whose etymology is widely debated. What is undisputed is that the instrument has no reference to Jewish people (other than possibly as traders) or to any known musical practices associated with Jewish culture. Some suggest that the denotation is a corruption of a term commonly used in Europe during the latter part of the fifteenth century, namely, "Jue Harpe" or "Jue Trumpe." Others postulate that the name is derived from the Old English term "gewgaw," a later term "jewes trump," or to the French word *jouer* (to play). Many, like myself, choose to avoid the misnomer altogether, preferring to simply use "mouth harp" or "trump." For a more elaborate discussion on the etymology of the instrument and its manifestations worldwide, see Dournon-Taurelleand Wright 1978; Morgan 2008.
2. Archeological evidence suggests that Asian mouth harps predate European varieties by several centuries and links them to medieval Europe via several possible trade routes. Norwegian archaeologist Gjermund Kolltveit has excavated hundreds of mouth harp sites across Europe, which provides evidence of their dramatic expansion in the thirteenth century. His work also reveals an association between mass metal production in the sixteenth century and the global spread of the instrument, reflecting a high period of European economic expansion (Kolltveit 2006, 2009). Archaeological remnants of idioglots (instrument with vibrating tongue cut from or into a nonvibrating frame) date back some 2000 to 2,400 years (Wright 2015).
3. There are some exceptions. For instance, the reed of the bamboo mouth harp of the Ainu people of northern Japan is not struck but attached to a string, which is pulled sideways and away from the player's head.
4. In southern Mozambique, the instrument goes by the names *shijororo* or *phiane*. See Duarte and Macie 1980.
5. Herzog (1934) uses the term "speech-melody" to describe what linguists would refer to as tones. In this context, however, I prefer to use the term "melody" to designate the musical interplay of pitch and contour, and reserve the term "tone" for the linguistic interplay, which is an essential aspect of *isitweletwele* practice.
6. As MaFambile explained: "The melody starts with the woman's voice and answers with a male voice" (personal communication, 22 April 2004).
7. For further discussion about gendered identities and song in SiSwati music, see Dlamini 2009 and Ndlangamandla 2010.

8. The drum, which is played sideways, is called *ikhumbula* (they remember), though it may also be referred to as *isighubu*, *idilamu*, and *isigonso.* It is made from a twenty-liter metal drum that has been subdivided into three segments, each covered on both sides with cowhide.
9. Perhaps because it was too inconsequential to be recorded in formal communications, its distribution as a knickknack or gift can be more easily traced in personal letters. An example of this is the letter written on the 4 January 1879 by Scottish missionaries in Blantyre, Nyasaland (Malawi) and published in the *Glasgow Herald*: "Christmas was a happy day with us. We all determined to give the school children and all the natives employed on the station a treat. So we got a tree . . . and had it placed in the schoolroom. We then labelled and hung on the tree a number of articles with the names of the children, such articles as knives, scissors, dolls, trumpets, toy guns, whistles, harmonicas, *jews harps* [my italics], boxes of various sorts, buckles, plates, Noah's arks, looking-glasses, beads, &c., &c. Some of those were the gifts of the Glasgow Foundry Boy's Religious Society. Could these same boys and girls have seen the delight and pleasure with which their gifts were received, and how they were immediately put to use, especially the musical portion of them, I am sure they would have been greatly delighted, and would have considered that there was no better way to spend a penny." *Glasgow Herald,* Wednesday, 5 March 1879.
10. Balfour cites research by a Peter Kolbe, a German who traveled in the region some two centuries earlier than himself, in which he compares the *gom gom* (*goura*) with the European "jews-harp": "One of the Hottentot Instruments of musick is common to several Negro nations, and is call'd both by Negroes and Hottentots, *gom gom*. But whether the Negroes owe it to the Hottentots, or the Hottentots to the Negroes, I cannot say. The *Gom Gom* is a bow, of Iron- or Olive wood, strung with twisted Sheep-Gut or Sinews. On the String, quite up at one End of the Bow they fix, when they play, the barrel of a Quill slit, by putting the String into the Slit, so that it runs quite through the Barrel. This Quill, so fixed on the String, they apply, when they play on this Instrument, to their Mouths, much in the same manner as is done to play on the *Jews-Harp*; and the various Notes of the Gom Gom are owing, as are the Notes of the *Jews-Harp*, to the various modulations of the Breath." Kolbe 1731, 271, qtd. in Balfour 1902, 158.
11. Email correspondence between Franz Wimmer and music researcher Christoph Wagner, 10 January 2005.
12. The most important musical instrument distributors in these cities were Mackay, McMahon and Fyfe; Vause, Slatter and Co.; and Jackson Bros., Ltd. (West Street, Durban). The American Book Store, in addition to selling instruments, advertised the sale of "Edison's latest Perfected Phonographs (A Marvel of Marvels)."
13. Jackson Bros., Ltd., were particularly renowned for their sale of Steinway, Renisch, Thurmer, and Stronmenger pianos and organs, which they imported from the American manufacturer Mason and Hamlin.
14. His Master's Voice (HMV) was founded in 1897 to manufacture gramophones and produce recordings for the machine.
15. Some of the more significant commerce in "Tongaland" and southern Mozambique in the late nineteenth century was conducted by Gujarati "free migrants" (Vahed 2005). The commercial efficacy of these urban wholesalers was founded largely on their establishment of regional trade networks that linked Durban and Lourenço Marques and often extended back to India (Bastos 2005). The success of their trading activities in the deep rural regions depended on the establishment of relations

with African retainers, whose homesteads were used as supply depots from which the regional distribution of goods would be managed (Vahed 2005).

16. Interview by Yvonne Winters, 24 November 1982, Killie Campbell Africana Library, Durban [KCAV 451].
17. South African jazz trumpeter Hugh Masekela remembers the role played by concession stores in the promotion of a new cosmopolitan musical imaginary: "All across [central], southern and East Africa, box guitars were available, along with gramophones and records by cowboys (like Gene Autry and Tex Ritter] at [the] concession stores that were always adjacent to mining hostels and barracks. Migrant laborers would purchase boots, cowboy hats, box guitars, buckle belts and khaki pants and shirts that they would adorn with multi-coloured patches and beads" (*Two-Tone magazine* [11 (2)] 1995, 7, qtd. Ansdell 2004, 39). See also Sherman 2000.
18. See chapter 6 for further information on the laws prohibiting women from participating in the migrant labor system.
19. Kennedy (1991) writes: "Royal women, especially chiefs' wives, wore solid brass balls (*izindondo*, sing. *indondo*), each with a hole pierced through the center . . . which were threaded and worn around the neck. . . . Small cast-brass buttons or studs (*iqhosha*, pl. *amaqhosha*) decorated skin garments, such as the waistband of the leather skirt worn by the king's wives and senior women in the early nineteenth century. . . . During Cetshwayo's reign in the latter part of the nineteenth century, flexible rings of twisted or plaited brass wire (*ubusenga*) for the wrist, the upper arm, and the calf of the leg became popular" (50).
20. All the photographs were taken in a crude studio simulation that corresponded with European-style portraiture of the time (Webb 1992, 51), and all images are based on a standardized compositional formula comprising a frontal portrait-type image, in which subjects either stand or sit facing the camera.
21. Prior to the latter half of the nineteenth century, such an adornment was a distinguishing feature of Zulu royalty and would have been worn specifically to mark political and economic status.
22. On the culture of colonial postcards by European and African photographers, see Greary and Webb 1998.
23. In an article on "Bushman" music, Kirby (1936) identified what he considered to be a rudimentary "Jews harp" made from a species of grass called *_//ku //kx?a¯si* (Kirby 1931, 375). The player would place the main portion of the grass stalk across the mouth and, applying a loose, "graceful" wrist movement, would pluck the loose end forward or backward while breathing in and out. The instrument produced a "rapid whirring" sound, which was used "for suggesting the movements of various animals" (ibid.). David Dargie is the only scholar to claim an indigenous African "idioglot" mouth harp, which he encountered in the Kavango region of northern Namibia. Played by young boys, who referred to it as *ruwenge,* it comprises a stalk of sorghum 10–12 centimeters long cut in such a way that the tongue or lamella projects beyond the main body of the instrument (Dargie 2008, 123). Unlike the frameless instrument described by Kirby (1936)—and again by Norborg in 1987—the *ruwenge* has a frame and lamella made from the same material, much like bamboo mouth harps from Asia. Unlike them however, the *ruwenge* is played purely as a percussive instrument, used specifically to emulate the pitched drums of the Kavango region.
24. The photograph also reveals that the instrument is an "English 'Baroque' model," identifiable by the four downturned metal arms welded onto its outer frame and first manufactured in the early 1800s by the Troman family in the British West Midlands.

The same instrument can be found in the trade catalogue of Rudolph Wurlitzer, Cincinnati and Chicago (1913–30), where it is listed as "No. 3078: 2¾ inch iron fancy lyra model, lacquered, with tempered tuning plate, shipping weight, 3 oz. Price $0.10—1913 (cost in 1920—$0.15; 1922—$0.25; 1930—$0.20)." See Catalog of the F. Crane Trump Collection: Part 1, no.129.

25. In Maputaland, many of the technical features of the instrument are explained via radio metaphors: Pitch manipulation is referred to as *ukusetha*, to "set" or tune the string, or *ushintsha*, to "change" the pitch, invoking tuning into a radio station. The mouth, which is used to amplify the sound of the string, is referred to as *uspika* (speaker).
26. While this bow was not as widely documented by Kirby as the "simple" mouth-bow, he did note similar versions of it amongst the "Transvaal Thonga" (*isizambi*), the Venda (*tshizambi*), the Chopi, Tswa, and Ndau in Mozambique (*chivelani*), and the Ju/'hoansi in Botswana (*nxonxoro*) (Kirby 1968, 235; Johnston 1970).
27. Kirby (1968) suggests that a rattle stick was used by the Shangaan/Tsonga to create additional percussive effect when rasping. However, I found no evidence of this in Maputaland.
28. Although much *maskanda* today is performed in commercial venues with a contemporary band lineup, the link between instrument and the moving body continues to be essential to the efficacy and vitality of its performance. It also needs to be said that *maskanda* is not exclusively a male performance practice today. There are numerous celebrated women *maskandi* who perform either solo or in women's groups. Most of them are singers, however, and are supported by male instrumentalists.
29. *Maskanda* is customarily performed on the guitar (*isiginci, isigwinci, ukhatali, isigitali*); concertina (*inkonsitini*), harmonica or mouth organ (*imfiliji, ubhelebane*), and *violin* (*ivayolini*).
30. In her research in central KwaZulu Natal, Zondi (2008, 11) identifies *izigiyo* as a generic term for songs that are performed by women in the presence of other woman. Included in this denotation is the genre *ukushoza* or *ukujoqa* (literally meaning "to kill with one blow"), in which women articulate explicit social concerns. Occasionally these songs will be performed at family ceremonies where it is permitted for women to express their concerns openly to men.
31. The cultural weight attributed to Zulu *maskanda*, on the other hand, is linked to the inclusion of *izibongo* or *izihasho* praises, which are delivered with great technical dexterity between sung verses and regarded as the highest form of Zulu literary expression. *Izibongo* are believed to have developed during the rule of Shaka (1800–1828), when they were used both to bolster political power and as a form of political critique. See Mathenjwa 1995; Kresse 1998; Gunner 1976; and Gunner and Gwala (1991).
32. Sw. *qhubushela* (see Krige 1936, 122).
33. Another such song played by the women is *Uyaya, uyawakhetha isipoqo!* (Uyaya, you have chosen a thin wife!).
34. The gramophone can also be referred to as *igilamhlola* meaning "the gramophone that does wonders."

CHAPTER 3

1. *Schotia brachypetala* (Palmer and Pitman 1972)
2. See also French 2012.
3. *Acacia nigrescens*. "*uFenisi*" is derived from the English word "fence." The tree is more

broadly known as *umKhaya* (Z., Sw.). This is not to be confused with *Caesalpinia decapetala*, also known in Zulu as *uFenisi*, which is a noxious invader from Asia and typically found in southern Africa in agricultural areas and on forest margins. See "Global Invasive Species Database" http://www.issg.org/database/species/search.asp?sts=tss&st=tss&fr=1&li=7&tn=Caesalpinia%20decapetala (last accessed 25 July 2012).

4. *Gardenia volkensii*. A similar species, recorded by Gerstner (1939) as *umkwakwane omkhulu* (*Gardenia Jovis*), is used in Maputaland as an emetic against malaria ("the sister-plant of the Quinine-tree").
5. *Ozoroa obovata* (*oliv.*) (common name: currant resin tree) (Palmer and Pitman 1972; E. Pooley 1993).
6. The thickened solution is used as a laxative.
7. *Vangueria infausta* (common name: wild medlar). This tree is also associated with bad luck, and branches are smeared with fat to protect against lightning.
8. *Ormocarpum trichocarpum* (common name: caterpillar pod).
9. *Strychnos madagascariensis* (common name: black monkey-orange). The pulp is collected and stamped into a powder that can be stored for up to five years. It is often bartered or sold at markets in Maputaland (E. Pooley 1993, 418).
10. *Zizyphus mucranata* (common name: buffalo thorn) is widely revered amongst the Zulu and Swazi for its ancestral and magical properties. In this instance, the branch of the tree is used to fetch the spirit of a deceased relative to be reunited with the family. The leaves, roots, and bark of the tree also have a range of medicinal uses, such as chest complaints, boils, wounds, pain relief, skin infections, toothache, and syphilis.
11. *Sclerocarya birrea* (common name: marula).
12. For a detailed study of the social, economic, and ecological impacts of fences in southern Africa with reference to conservation, see Kloppers 2005; 2010.
13. Home-brewed alcohol is known as *umcomboti* (Z.), *umcombotsi* (Sw.), or *injemane* (Th.). In Usuthu Gorge it is often referred to colloquially as *idizi* (dizzy). Further east, the name *lualantine* is used, which is borrowed from the name of the commercial beer in Mozambique, *laurentina*. See Claude 1999.
14. Taylor (1988, 479) notes that in eastern Maputaland there was an older, and now redundant, work system known as *isinenene* where people would assist an individual with plowing and planting on the understanding that when the crop was harvested, a party would be held and some of the produce would be distributed amongst them.
15. In her descriptions of dietary habits in Swaziland in the 1930s, Beemer (1939) notes a similar cultivation practice by women, which involved several gardens: "the first on the marshy land to provide the green corn, and the other, usually of red soil, and planted later (up to February) to provide corn for storage. In addition, each household should have one garden for corn" (214).
16. *Kentucky Fried Chicken* (KFC) is an American fried chicken fast food chain that is widely distributed across southeast Africa.
17. *Trichilia emetica* (Natal mahogany).
18. *Ficus sycomorus* (wild fig).
19. See also P. J. Stewart and Strathern 2003.
20. Induna Ngwenya is referring to Louis von Wissell, the original owner of the Ndumo store, who moved to Swaziland, where he established the KwaMatata store.
21. Between 2001 and 2002, some 83 percent of all households in Kloppers's (2006, 162) study area on the Maputaland border were dependent on at least one form of monthly government grant.
22. This style is also referred to as Shangaan or Tsonga "trad" or pop.

23. For a discussion on the relationship between language and melody in Nguni bow songs, see Rycroft 1967; 1975.
24. One of the main differences between Swazi and Zulu is the use of *t* or *ts* in Swazi instead of *s* or *z* in Zulu. For instance: Sw. *itolo* (yesterday) and Z. *izolo*.
25. This feeling of inferiority is likely to have had its roots in the eighteenth century when the dominant lineages of the Gaza and Zulu are believed to have utilized the term "Thonga" to refer to all other groups living in the region (Felgate 1982, 9). This distinction was later reinforced by the goldmine recruitment agencies (WNELA and later TEBA), who labeled all African men as "tropical natives" based on their classification as "less civilized" than their Zulu neighbors (see chapter 4).
26. Makete's use of the word "i-over" invokes the language of the two-way radio that is used by field rangers in the Ndumo Game Reserve: "over and out."
27. Dual dancing is referred to as *ingadlela yezintombi*.
28. The song comments on cultural change, implying that education is of no value if one cannot produce cows for marriage.

CHAPTER 4

1. McGregor (1998) notes that people living in the borderlands of Mozambique are often considered to live outside the influence of the state, where loyalties are particularly fluid and opportunistic. On the contrary, Englund (2002) argues that for residents on the Malawi-Mozambique border, the state remains central to local ideas about power and local politics. For a more developed discussion about African borderlands, see Nugent and Asiwaju 1996b and Zeller 2013.
2. See also J. Wright and Hamilton 1989.
3. See also Bryant 1964; A. Smith 1969.
4. The precolonial identity of the Tembe has been a source of considerable discussion over the years. Some scholars suggested that the Tembe comprised a fragmented collection of agnatic groups who had been settled along the low-lying, clement regions of southern Mozambique for centuries (Bruton and Cooper 1980; Webster 1991). Others, while recognizing their common ethnolinguistic descent, argued that their classification as a unified group—"Thonga"—by missionaries and colonial administrators was purely for the purpose of administrative control (Byrant 1929; Junod 1927; Harries 1981; Kloppers 2003). Others still suggested that "Thonga" was a pejorative designation used to identify all people living on the east coast who did not belong to the more dominant Sotho- or Nguni-speaking groups. For a more developed argument, see Kloppers 2003;; Bryant 1929; and Junod 1927.
5. *Mfecane*, meaning "crushing" or "forced dispersal," was a term used by the Nguni to describe the violent wars that raged across southern Africa between 1815 and 1840. The movement is thought to have developed as a result of population pressure, drought, and resource depletion. Many scholars now believe that European expansion and slave trading may have had a much larger impact on the upheaval of the region in the first quarter of the nineteenth century than was previously thought, arguing that the historiographic emphasis on the regional influence of King Shaka has been exaggerated (Harries 2013).
6. Ballard (1986) argues that climatic stresses may have been the catalyst for the consolidation of the Zulu Empire under Shaka. Likewise, Guy (1980) suggests a causal link between the deterioration in climate and pasturage and the formation of a centralized Zulu polity and notes that this period marked also the consolidation of other powerful chiefdoms in the region, most notably the Ndwandwe.

7. The Union of South Africa was founded as a dominion of the British Empire, and in 1961 the country became the Republic of South Africa.
8. See also "International Boundary Study No. 133—April 16, 1973 Mozambique–South Africa Boundary," Office of the Geographer Bureau of Intelligence and Research http://www.law.fsu.edu/library/collection/limitsinseas/ibs133.pdf (last accessed 14 July 2012).
9. Matsebula (1972, 133) argues that while the Mathenjwa history has not been scrutinized, some would claim that they, together with Nyawo and Mngomezulu, are descendants of the Ngwane (Swazi). This was not the opinion of the Mathenjwa elders, however, who were adamant that while they owed political allegiance to the Ngwane, their ancestral origins were in Malawi. In this regard, they considered themselves distinct from the neighboring Nyawo and Mngomezulu clans (personal interview with Mathenjwa elders, Emanyiseni Tribal Authority, 14 July 2004).
10. *Cussonia natalensis*, known also as *umSenge umbudzi* (goat tree) in reference to the goat, which is the totem of the Mathenjwa clan (Loffler and Loffler 2005, 34).
11. According to Gumbi (2005), some 99 percent of the people living in Emanyiseni today speak "pure" Swati, although some also speak a dialect common to the Ingwavuma area. However, younger members of the community are increasingly using Zulu in order to seek work in other areas of KwaZulu Natal.
12. The ANC was founded as the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) in 1912 to defend the rights of black South Africans who were being coerced off their land and forced into labor migration. The organization was renamed the African National Congress in 1923. Following several decades of mass action within the country, the organization was forced into exile in the 1960s and developed its military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK), meaning "Spear of the Nation."
13. The two opposing forces finally signed a peace accord in Rome in October 1992.
14. Headmaster Mthethwa claimed that the South African Defense Force (SADF) would inspect the vaccination marks on the arms of local residents. Those who had different scars from the South African markings would be considered illegal immigrants and immediately returned to Mozambique (personal interview, Ndumo, 6 August 2009).
15. The "native reserves," which had been created under the British government in the nineteenth century, were transformed into autonomous or semi-autonomous "homelands" (Bantustans) in the 1970s.
16. The magistracy included the entire Maputaland borderlands from the town of Ingwavuma on the eastern frontier to Kosi Bay on the Indian Ocean.
17. KaNgwane, a semi-independent Swazi homeland in South Africa, was also offered as part of the deal. It comprised two separate sections, the larger of which was located on the northern and western borders of Swaziland.
18. Nobamba is the seat of government in Swaziland.
19. In KwaZulu this land fell under the Ingonyama Trust, a corporate statutory body established under the trusteeship of the Zulu king Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu. All other "homelands" agreed to return title of communal land to the South African state.
20. In Swaziland, the king holds all land in trust for the nation, while in Mozambique communal land is state-owned.
21. According to Cousins (2007), concerns have been raised that the assimilation of customary land rights into contemporary agreements would jeopardize the progressive nature of land reform, as traditional rights privilege heredity, class, and masculinity and would further marginalize groups such as women.

22. The main laws invoked were the Black Land Act 27 of 1913; the Black Administration Act 38 of 1927; the Development Trust and Land Act 18 of 1936 and the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act 51 of 1952.
23. See "Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, KwaZulu-Natal, Submission in Terms of Section 42D of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994 (Act No. 22 of 1994) for finalising the matter of Usuthu Claimant Community Concerning Ndumu Game Reserve." According to this commission, a total sum of ZAR 24,192,720, inclusive of the restitution grants, was to be paid by the government to the claimants. However, at the time of writing, restitution grants had only partially been paid out, and no co-management agreement had yet been developed.
24. The Mathenjwa Traditional Authority (TA) began to be paid a percentage of the gross revenue from Ndumo Game Reserve in the late 1980s, which was aimed at the social uplift of the surrounding communities (Curry 2001, 103). Unfortunately, much of the revenue remained within the TA and few people in the community were even aware of the fund.

CHAPTER 5

1. For detailed studies on the vernacular architecture of the Maputaland coastal plains, see Cunningham (1985) and Cunningham and Gwala (1986). For information about wood use for building construction in Maputaland, see Gaugris and van Rooyen 2009.
2. Claude (1999) points out that one of the main differences between homes in Maputaland and those in Zululand is that the cattle enclosure (Z. *isibayi*) is located not at the center of the homestead but to the side.
3. In her research with woman craft workers in eastern Maputaland, Van Wyk (2003a, 139) argues that despite a distinct separation between the activities of men and women, the relationship between the two "worlds" is more entangled than is generally recognized. She thus argues against the emphasis placed on the feminization of poverty by the development sector, which supports the assumption of universal female subordination.
4. Unemployment rates in the uMkhanyakude District Municipality are extremely high. Torquebiau et al. (2010) maintain that some 48 percent of households in the Mathenjwa Tribal Authority have an annual income of less than USD 660, and 75 percent of the adult population is not economically active. Most families in this region are dependent on government social grants (Kloppers 2006).
5. About 35 percent of the overall population of the uMkhanyakude District Municipality and some 40 percent of pregnant women are HIV positive, a statistic that places the area at the epicenter of the pandemic in South Africa. Yet despite high HIV prevalence and the constant and visible presence of illness and death, people still find it extremely difficult to talk about the disease. Although at the time of this research, HIV prevalence had plateaued, the rate of new infections still significantly outstripped current prevention efforts (Banks and Raab 2008; Meintjes 2010).
6. The road, which is located in the southwestern region of Ndumo Game Reserve, may have been named Phaphukulu after the *Euphorbia ingens* (Z. *uPhaphu*) that is widespread in the subtropical bush and Mahemene thicket. This is a large tree succulent that has a poisonous latex, but has several medical properties, including "anti-HIV activities" http://tropical.theferns.info/viewtropical.php?id=Euphorbia+ingens (last accessed 3 August 2017). See also Watt and Breyer-Brandwijk 1962.

7. The town of Ingwavuma is believed to have been named after the *iNgwavuma* tree (Transvaal saffron tree or *Cassine transvaalensis*), which proliferates in the mountains.
8. http://www.servidimaria.org/en/storia/miscellanea/quaderni/kinch_Ingwavuma.htm. This blog is no longer active, but Fr. Edwin Kinch's papers are housed in the University of KwaZulu Natal Killie Campbell Africana Library: KCAL351776.
9. The 1952 Pass Laws Act made it compulsory for all black South Africans over the age of sixteen years to carry a "pass book" (locally referred to as *dompas*), its objective being to regulate the movement, employment, and domicile of all black citizens. The book would include the individual's fingerprints, photographs, and address, as well as employment status and an evaluation of his/her conduct.
10. MaFambile is referring to the fencing of the Ndumo Game Reserve in the 1960s and the subsequent importation of large mammals.
11. MaFambile is referring to Thomas Elphick, who was the first game ranger of Ndumo Game Reserve (see chapter 4). However, it is unlikely that the road she was referring to, which was some way from the game reserve, was constructed under his supervision.
12. uShungolo was the nickname given to Buddy Moolman, a bus driver employed by Ndumu Ltd. who had suffered polio as a child (Rutherfoord 1985, 58).
13. One bus route departed from Ingwavuma and traversed via Pongola to Piet Retief. A second route ran from Abercorn Drift on the opposite side of the Usuthu River, where a small NRC campsite had been built to accommodate recruits. This route meandered through southern Swaziland, passing though Hluti (Shiselweni) and Mahamba, at which point it crossed the South African border to Piet Retief. Recruits from Ndumo could also proceed north from Abercorn Drift to Siteki (Stegi), where they would join Swazi and Mozambican workers and continue to Bredarsdorp (later called Manzini) and Piet Retief. Finally, a road intended specifically to "capture" labor from Mozambique and Swaziland was built by the NRC through northwestern Swaziland, crossing from Mozambique at Goba (Mhlumeni in Swaziland) and heading south to Siteki.
14. The Marula (*Sclerocarya birrea*) is an important fruit-bearing tree and is considered to harbor ancestral powers.
15. In the idiom, firewood is a metaphor for a woman or wife, whose role it is to collect wood, cook, and guard the hearth of the home. In western Maputaland, the objective of marrying outside of one's immediate area would have been to establish wide kinship networks across the region, thus ensuring places of temporary refuge during periods of extreme flooding or drought.
16. See chapter 6 for a description of the Christmas celebrations at the Ndumo Trading Store.
17. Jive or "bump jive" was a popular dance form in Johannesburg in the 1950s and early 1960s.
18. Education was often associated with the loss of respect for tradition.
19. SMS: "short message service" (text message) on mobile phone.
20. MaFambile corroborated this perspective: "*Isigcawu* stopped when the schools came and soccer was introduced. The teachers were advising the kids to do one thing at a time. If they went to *esigcawini*, they would be too tired to go to school and do their work. While we remember these things [dances and songs] very well, the young ones don't know them at all." (Personal communication, 14 February 2004.)
21. KwaMazambane Forests are near Kosi Bay, east of Ndumo.
22. The following "journeying [trade] song," translated by Junod (1927, 2: 144), reveals

that trade caravans and porters included women, indicated in the song by the image of a female elephant. *Oho! Oho! Thou who leadest us as a mother! Oho! Oho! Break the platter and let us go home! The female elephant never forsakes her young!* It also confirms the historical genesis of walking songs in the region; as with their more contemporary formation, they were structured as discursive fragments, linking ordinary practical activities to more emotive ruminations about self, sociality, and senses of belonging.

23. Zion Christian Church (ZCC) is one of the largest "independent" African churches in southern Africa, and fuses African values with teachings from the Old Testament.
24. The FRELIMO forces did occasionally cross the border into South Africa, but there is no evidence to suggest that the women in western Maputaland were victimized by them. The images invoked here are more likely to have been used by the South African Defense Force as propaganda against FRELIMO, who they referred to as "communists." Images of women with cut breasts and lips were commonly printed in government-controlled newspapers in South Africa to propagandize against liberation movements in both Mozambique and Zimbabwe.
25. Cattle egrets are a species of heron that is white with buff plumes and yellow beak and legs. They often accompany cattle or other large mammals (especially elephants and buffaloes), catching insects and small vertebrate prey that is disturbed by these animals.

CHAPTER 6

1. Although I use the first names of the women who participated in the research in other sections of the book, I have chosen to keep individuals anonymous in this context to respect the privacy of their families, who were not necessarily part of our study.
2. Goa served as the administrative capital of Mozambique until 1752, but it was only in 1951 that Mozambique (Portuguese East Africa) was classified as an overseas province and regarded by the Portuguese government as an integral part of Portugal. Mozambique was redesignated an independent state by an amendment to the Portuguese constitution in December 1972 (McGregor 1994).
3. The name Delagoa Bay comes from the Portuguese Baía da Lagoa (Bay of the Lagoon). It is situated at the northern terminus of the series of lagoons that line the coast from St. Lucia Bay in the south, and had all the advantages necessary for the development of a harbor accessible by large vessels throughout the year.
4. For a similar discussion about trade expeditions in western Tanzania and the songs of salt "caravaners" and long-distance porters, see Gunderson 2010. See also Rockel (1997), who writes about songs as oral histories of Yao porters and traders in northern Mozambique.
5. Commonly known as *umKhanyakude* (*Acacia xanthophloea*).
6. Von Wissell is spelled differently in different publications, including von Wissel and von Wissels. I have elected to use the spelling that is used in his personal memoir.
7. *Convolvulus sagittatus*.
8. The rivers did not only support trade, they were an economic resource in themselves. One way that Von Wissell survived the vicissitudes of trade during his twenty-year tenancy in Ndumo was by hunting crocodiles. Because they were classified as vermin by the Union Government (Noxious Animal Law of 1866), he profited on the per capita fee received from the Ingwavuma Magistracy upon delivery of each carcass (Ellis 1994).
9. See also appendix 1 for an extended excerpt of a description of a trip down the Maputo River with Von Wissell by the famous hunter-naturalist Frederick C. Selous.

10. Despite their hardiness, vehicles still had to be ferried across the many rivers on a pont that was secured by means of thick rope tied to the roots of large fig trees on either side of the bank (T. Pooley 1992, 152) The pont across the Pongola River was managed by Ndumu Ltd. and was operated for many years by a legendary figure known as Nkunzi Mbomvu (Red Bull), whose skill and eccentricity guaranteed him a place in numerous travelogues and memoirs of the time.
11. According to the *Natal Directory* (812), the white residents in Ndumo in 1910 comprised J. Fick (mechanic), K. Hahn (mechanic), H. A. Hellerle (Natal Police), H. Kampmann (clerk), Mrs. J. Lehmann (postmistress), Mr. J. Lehmann (partner in Wissell and Finetti's), C. R. Muscatt (Natal Police), and Wissell and Finetti (farmers and traders).
12. The continuity between women's beading traditions and their envelope drawings reveals a relationship between tradition and modernity similar to that described in chapter 2 of the *isitweletwele*. Women beaded bracelets for their boyfriends, using colors and designs to convey encoded messages of love and admiration. It follows that their illustrations on envelopes represented a new outlet for these encryptions, demonstrating the accommodation of established practices to new circumstances and opportunities.
13. See in chapter 3 a discussion about local responses in western Maputaland to locust infestations via the song *Nono no sijibela nono! Famba nono!* (Locusts, we are chasing away the locusts! Go away, locusts!).
14. In 1874 an estimated 50,000–80,000 Mozambican worked in the diamond mines in Kimberley (Crush Williams, and Peberdy 2005). This number was increased substantially with the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1896.
15. The system of forced labor (*shibalo*) continued to operate in Mozambique until independence in 1975. See Harries 1994 and Kanyenze 2004.
16. *uTeba* is not to be confused with The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA) which is the name given to the central recruitment organization in 1977 when the Native Recruitment Corporation (NRC) was amalgamated with WNLA.
17. This is a misspelling of *indlela*, meaning path or way (see chapter 2).
18. In western Maputaland, the piped water is supplied by the Shemula Water Scheme, which is managed by the Amanzi Development Trust (Still and Nash 2002).

CHAPTER 7

1. Red-billed ox-pecker. Zulu: *iHlalankomo*.
2. The first legislation for the preservation of game in southern Africa was drafted in the Cape by the Dutch East India Company as early as 1657 (MacKenzie 1988, 202). More far-reaching legislation was passed some centuries later by the governor of the Cape Colony, Lord Charles Somerset, precipitated by concern about the impact that rapid population growth was having on the indigenous fauna and flora (ibid., 203). This legislation introduced hunting seasons to allow for the replenishment of herds and further regulated killing through the allocation of hunting licenses. By the 1890s, these principles had been extended to other colonial states such as Natal, where additional legislation was passed to prohibit Africans from hunting with nets, spears, traps, and sticks (ibid.). In spite of these regulations, the combination of excessive hunting (intensified by the widespread distribution of firearms), the increasingly lucrative trade in animal products, and a rinderpest pandemic reduced game numbers to such an extent that a more concerted conservation effort was put into place (McCracken 2008b, 142). Pressure groups advocated for the creation of reserves and

the establishment of "societies" dedicated to game preservation (MacKenzie 1988, 201). Since these groups comprised the political and social elite—governors, senior colonial officials, and aristocratic "sporting" hunters-turned-conservationists—the legislative and administrative infrastructure was readily provided. This led to the delineation of the first geographic areas for the protection of wild animals.

3. The current boundaries of the reserve were reduced in 1970 when it was formally proclaimed a national park and renamed Maputo Special Reserve (Langa 2000; De Boer and Baquete 1998).
4. For analysis of conflicts between conservation and development in Swaziland, see Hackel 1993 and 2001.
5. In the mid-nineteenth century, the utilization of wildlife products was linked to cultural change and to the adoption of new dress codes by Zulu, Swazi, and Gaza Ngoni (Shangaan/Tsonga) men (Harries 1994; Hedges 1978). Plaited palm leaf coverings were replaced with ox or antelope skins, and on special occasions men wore skirts of up to sixty strips of monkey, genet, or civet cat skins (Harries 1994, 13). Soldiers hung genet tails from their military and dancing shields, wore blue monkey strips over the sides of their faces, and made leopard and other skin headbands, which they decorated with ostrich, crane, and other bird feathers (ibid.).
6. Harries (1994, 15) argues that by the end of the 1860s, 1,200 hunters were operating out of the port city of Delagoa Bay alone, and the slaughter of elephants had reached such proportions that it was feared that the entire population would be annihilated. However, the interdependence between the network of ivory hunters and traders was such that when the Gaza king, Mawewe, attempted to limit elephant hunting by imposing heavy taxes on hunting, there was a vicious outcry from both merchants in Delagoa Bay and their associates inland. Hunting was one of the most important contributors to Natal's economy, and many early settlers relied on a combination of hunting and trading, which was considered easier and less capital intensive than farming (Ballard 1981, 6–7).
7. Competition among foreign traders, settlers, and local communities over land and natural resources led to a general decline in the importance of hunting at the end of the nineteenth century, and the authoritative hold by settlers over African labor and economic production ensured that any attempt to utilize or regulate the environment became deeply racialized (Beinart 1989, 47).
8. *Trypanosome brucei rhodesiense*.
9. *Tsetse palpalis*.
10. The disease was eradicated by the insecticide DDT (*Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane*).
11. Local newspapers published graphic descriptions of the effects of the eradication campaign, for example: "The vast herds of wildebeest and game of every sort which at one time roamed in countless thousands over the hills and plains of Tongaland have to-day been virtually shot and trapped out of existence. . . . The policy of exterminating game to achieve . . . the elimination of Nagana, has swept some 70, 000 head of game ruthlessly out of existence. From Hluhluwe to Gollel [Swaziland] . . . the country is typical bush veld but they saw no sign of game. . . . Entry into Tongaland with its Native population of more than 65,000, is strictly under permit for Europeans. There are still about 50 elephants in the territory and these, with a few remaining larger buck, are confined to a narrow belt about 10 to 15 miles wide, stretching from the Pongolo River, to the Portuguese border. Hippo and crocodiles abound in all dams and rivers but the bird life is disappointing. Locust poisons and bait spread in previous years had killed large numbers of guinea fowl and birds, and biltong [dried

meat] hunters and poachers had made severe depredations into the herds of buck and wildebeest. *Natal Mercury*, 28 June 1947.

12. Numerous scholars have written about the predatory nature of British hunting (see MacKenzie 1988; Beinart and Hughes 2007). However, in the Victorian imagination, hunting was invested with images of courage and heroism and was nurtured in popular travelogues such as W. C. Harris's 1839 publication *The Wild Sports of Southern Africa* and W. C. Baldwin's 1863 *African Hunting and Adventures from Natal to Zambesi, including Lake Ngami and the Kalahari Desert etc. from 1852–1860* (Franey 2003). Possibly the most famous of these hunter-writers was Frederick Selous, who embarked on several meticulously documented hunting trips to southeast Africa from 1871, published in *A Hunter's Wanderings in Africa*. See appendix 1 for a lengthy excerpt describing his trip down the Usuthu River with Ndumo storeowner Von Wissell.
13. Reitz (1882–1944) had a fractured relationship with Britain. He fought against the British in the South African War and went into exile in Madagascar in 1902 when Britain assumed power over the Republics. He later returned to South Africa on the invitation of General Smuts, then prime minister of the Union of South Africa, to take up office in his government. He subsequently fought on the side of the British in World War I and became commander of the First Royal Scots Fusiliers, one of the oldest regiments in the British Army, and the battalion to which my grandfather belonged (see preface).
14. See also Knoepflmacher and Tennyson 1977.
15. One of Reitz's diary entries describes a subsequent trip taken to Tongaland and reflects on the changes that had taken place as a result of his interventions: "For once I was restless in Sandringham, and having heard that the natives were burning down valuable forests in northern Zululand we went thither. . . . Towards sunset on the first day the sky grew overcast. We were in thick bush country near the Swaziland frontier and as we halted to discuss our plans there arose a curious soughing noise like that of a distant waterfall; and then a terrific hailstorm burst upon us with a roar. We got the cars under cover of trees but this did not suffice. Stones the size of hen's eggs drummed down on us like shrapnel and we spent a miserable night. Next day we slithered along the muddy track to Stegi, a little village on the Ubombo range from where, after a good night, we travelled along the crest of the Berg by a newly constructed route that led to the gorge of the Usuthu River. Here, after much delay, we worked our cars across the pontoon and swung east by a path that had been cut by the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines for the recruiting of natives. By dark we reached N'Indumu close to Inyameti Lake where I had shot a hippo years before. . . . Times had changed in northern Zululand. When first I came up here in 1922, we rode fly-bitten horses through unknown country. Now it was possible to take a car up to Kosi Bay and Lake Sibaya and at N'Indumu there was a police station with a sergeant in command. He made us comfortable and the following morning I went to see how the hippo had fared since I had turned their lake and the surrounding country into a sanctuary. More than sixty of them were disporting themselves in peace and safety and the sergeant told me that many troops of Nyala antelope were to be seen at dawn as they returned from grazing. Previously they had been nearly exterminated." Reitz 1999, 504.
16. The lawlessness of the area is often described through the exploits of a renegade Scot named Robert McNab, who was renowned for his excessive hunting practices. In the iconic chronicle *Jock of the Bushveld*, Sir Percy Fitzpatrick (1907) describes Maputa-

land (Tongaland) as a place where Bob McNab and "his merry comrades ran free of Governments and were a law unto themselves" (409). In a rather lengthy entry in one of Reitz's (1999) hunting diaries, he writes: "During the process of dissection [of a hippo], one of the natives held out an old-fashioned leaded bullet of unusual shape which he had prised from the dead hippo's shoulder blade. From the look of it, it must have lain imbedded for many years. An ancient Tonga hunter standing near took the bullet and holding it on his open palm, declared that it had been fired by Sjali, the *Umlungu umkulu* [large white man] who alone in former days carried a weapon of this calibre. He was speaking of Charles du Port of whom on our way up I had heard frequent mention as well as his fellow venturer, Robert MacNab" (382).

17. The Natal Parks, Game, and Fish Preservation Board was subsequently reconstituted as the Natal Parks Board. In 1972, the KwaZulu Directorate of Nature Conservation was established to manage nature conservation in the "homeland" of KwaZulu. Following the first democratic elections in 1994, and the consequent cessation of the homeland system, the two agencies were merged as Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.
18. By the time the ruse used to clear the reserve of its people became evident to the people themselves, they had already been moved. As Induna Ngwenya explained: "Thomas was the name of the man who pressured people to remove their cows and put up the fences. He told them that there was a disease that came from the Portuguese (Mozambique) so they had to remove their cattle. We only realized much later that this was just a plan" (personal communication, 15 July 2004).
19. Sw. *Tsekwane* (hammerhead stork [*Scopus umbretta*]).
20. See also Beidelman 1966 and Howard 2003.
21. Sw. *liGwalagwala* (*Tauraco porphyreolophus*). This is the national bird of Swaziland.
22. Sw. *iNgududu* (*Bucorvus leadbeateri*).
23. Morris (2014) argues that understanding such intersections between symbolism and taxonomy is a cornerstone of new conservation thinking. Framed by more global consideration of the Anthropocene, he advocates that we shift attention toward a humanity that is distributed through other species and entities (see also Aisher and Damodaran 2016).
24. The unique mutually dependent relationship that exists between humans and the greater honeyguide (*Indicator indicator*) is elaborated in the work of evolutionary biologists Claire Spottiswoode and Keith and Colleen Begg (2016), which analyzes adaptation by this free-living wild animal to specialized signals by people seeking their collaboration.
25. *Mashesha* was the nickname given to Pooley at Ndumo and means "he who hurries and takes" in reference to his tireless pursuit of "poachers."
26. The following excerpt from a magazine article by Paul Dutton (2008), senior ranger of Ndumo Game Reserve from 1965 to 1972, serves as an example: "I was privileged to work with game guards like Sigodhlo Mbazine and Sigiya Gumede, whose knowledge of the area's ecology was beyond any textbook. Nights were filled with hippo snorts, haunting calls of Pel's Fishing-owl, and rhythms of *izigubhu* drums and reverberating *ingulule* reed drums. . . . On patrol, game guards carried a single string bow, the *umakweyana*—for making music!"
27. Ian Player was later to become internationally celebrated for his work on rhino breeding in the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve and for the establishment of the Wilderness Foundation Africa in 1972: http://www.wildernessfoundation.co.za.
28. For a more detailed critical analysis of the relationships between white game rangers and African game guards, see Draper, Spierenburg, and Wels 2004.

29. Player attributed his "conversion" also to his lifelong relationship with a fellow Zulu ranger called Magqubu Ntombela. He was quoted as saying: "I was steeped in the racial prejudice of my country. . . . . Magqubu transformed me." http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/11275956/Ian-Player-obituary.html (accessed 2 June 2016).
30. Tambuti/Tamboti (*Spirostachys africana*). The underbark of this tree exudes a white, poisonous latex. When burned, the wood gives off noxious fumes that contaminates food. In Maputaland, the sap is used as a fish poison and a purgative for humans. See Watt and Breyer-Brandwijk 1962.

CHAPTER 8

1. This chapter is loosely based on an article published in *Interventions: Journal of Postcolonial Studies* (Impey 2013). This special edition on indigeneity and performance was edited by Helen Gilbert and was one of several outputs funded by the European Research Council "Indigeneity in the contemporary world: Performance, politics and belonging" and the British Arts and Humanities Research Council "Interdisciplinary perspectives on indigeneity and performance."
2. Some of the families in the Mbangweni Corridor had been forcibly removed from the Ndumo Game Reserve in the 1950s and were part of the "Usuthu Gorge" group that was formally awarded the return of rights to the reserve in 2000. However, as Naguran (2002) notes, "The problem with the settlement was that although the community had been given title to the land on paper, the agreement in effect granted them only operational level rights—namely, access and withdrawal—and it restricted their collective-choice rights of management, exclusion and alienation" (9).
3. Following this incident, the Mbangweni/Bhekabantu agricultural livelihood project was launched by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Rural Development, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, and the Peace Parks Foundation aimed at supporting crop production and water provision to the corridor. A five-year strategic intervention project was also launched to restore the conservation integrity of Ndumo Game Reserve, and the fence on the eastern boundary was re-erected. http://www.peaceparks.org/programme.php?pid=25&mid=1110 (accessed 15 August 2015).
4. The justification for employing game guards from elsewhere was based on the assumption that individuals from the community would not be able to assert authority over their own people to prevent poaching.
5. The Maputaland Community Radio outreach program is called *Isixaxa* (pulling together). In 2007 the station won the national award for Best South African Community Radio, and in 2008 it received similar commendation for the best community health programming amongst all community radio stations in South Africa.
6. For more detailed information about the community projects in Usuthu Gorge, see Hanekom n.d.
7. Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) was introduced in the 1970s by development studies scholar and practitioner Robert Chambers. Although laudable in principle, both RRA and PRA have been criticized for remaining a fundamentally extractive and externally driven process; while aiming to achieve civil society participation, social accountability, and local empowerment, their methodologies are often no more than "a checklist of activities applied in order to appease the demands of project donors, or a 'quick and dirty' substitute for 'proper' research and engagement" (Cornwall and Pratt 2010, 264).

8. It is worth noting that ethnomusicologist Alan Merriam promoted mapping as an analytical tool as far back as 1958. See Collaer and Merriam 1958.
9. This notion, which engaged with embodiment and movement as modes of place making, resonates with Ingold's (2011a; 2011b) notion of "wayfaring" and with "dwelling" as detailed by phenomenologists Heidegger (1971) and Merleau-Ponty (1962).
10. See also Sletto 2009.
11. See discussion of archival photographs in chapter 2 and the embodied signifiers of marital status.
12. See chapter 2 for a more detailed explanation of the song.
13. The cattle egret does most of its foraging on the ground or perched on the back of cattle and other large mammals. It feeds off parasites and insects that the animal disturbs when moving around.
14. Zulu royalty is associated with white cattle.
15. The reference here is to Mangosuthu Buthelezi, president of KwaZulu Natal Homeland as well as founder of the Inkatha Freedom Party.

POSTSCRIPT

1. The ODI is Britain's leading independent think tank on international development and humanitarian issues and is responsible for shaping the government's policies on aid to developing countries.
2. Harrison 2014.

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