

African centring: A de-colonizing approach to museum representations of African peoples' pasts in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2022

Department of Anthropology

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

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Abstract

Museums are sites of representation and contestation; especially in South Africa, where the representation of African peoples' pasts are often found in Eurocentric oriented museums. Museums, as retainers of material culture could present alternative understandings of African peoples' pasts, one not subject to a Eurocentric valorisation of the written word as the blueprint of development and complexity. To this point, the practice of archaeology and its potential contribution to public understandings of African peoples' pasts become critical to African centring. Framed within a larger discussion of coloniality, I use qualitative methods to assess museum display themes across KwaZulu-Natal, colonial and apartheid narratives and reframing opportunities at the KwaZulu-Natal Museum, and the museum as a teaching resource. In this dissertation, I discuss de-linking strategies, such as the use of orality and museum educator orientation, which hold potential to create a humanism that expands African peoples' contributions to the stories of humanity.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Fowler family for your friendliness, cheer, and support along the way. In particular, I want to thank Dr. Kent Fowler, who went beyond the duties of a supervisor. Kent, you helped make the Ph.D. program and life in a new country exciting and feasible. Beyond my *lekker* supervisor, I had a great team. Supportive, reassuring, and challenging are the characteristics that describe my committee members, Benjamin Collins, Joy Chadya, and Kathleen Buddle. Also, thank you Madeline Hoskins for always being a friendly voice during challenging administrative situations.

Thank you also to those who made this research possible. The KwaZulu-Natal Museum director for allowing this research and the staff for sharing their time and resources. Also, Len van Schalkwyk and his family for opening your home to Gerhard and I and sharing your knowledge and time while we were in KZN. This thesis was completed through the aid of the University of Manitoba Graduate Fellowship, Anthony Arnhold Graduate Fellowship in Anthropology, the University of Manitoba Institute for the Humanities Award, JG Fletcher Award, the Dr. Bonnie C. Hallman Graduate Student Bursary, and the William E. Harrison Bursary.

Thank you to my friends and family for supporting me over this period of my life. I appreciate the challenging and stimulating conversations amongst peers, specifically Sardana and Liz. I also appreciate the non-PhD conversations and times over this period with friends and family: the tri-continental calls, debates, zoom parties, plant discussions, tea parties, wonderful meals, zoom yoga, thirtieth birthdays, family trips, and the birth of my daughter. I particularly love the words of wisdom and humour from my in-laws ('let go of the perfectionism'), sister-in-law ('would you like some tea?'), brother-in-law ('how about some wine instead?'), father ('what are you doing?'), brother ('it is what it is'), and my mother ('sources are in the fridge'). Lastly, as this thesis highlights, stories are important. And my story has been shaped by my partner and child. Evalyn, I did not realise how much you would make me grow. Gerhard, it was all nonsense till I found you.

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List of Acronyms

ACTAG- Arts and Culture Task Group

Amafa- An abbreviation for Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali, the provincial heritage resources authority for KwaZulu-Natal (currently known as the KwaZulu-Natal Amafa and Research Institute [The Institute])

ANC- African National Congress

ASAPA- Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists

BLM- The Black Lives Matter movement

CAPS- National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

COSATU- Congress of the South African Trade Unions

DA- Discourse analysis

DAC- Department of Arts and Culture (formerly DACST)

DACST- Department of Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology

DSA- Dialectical social analysis

DSAC- Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture (formerly DAC)

FET- Further Education and Training phase (learner grades 10-12)

FMF- Fees Must Fall movement

IFP- Inkatha Freedom Party

KZN- KwaZulu-Natal province

KZN Museum- the KwaZulu-Natal Museum (formerly the Natal Museum [NMSA])

RMF- Rhodes Must Fall movement

SAMA- South African Museum Association

SOPHISA- Story of Peoples' History in Southern Africa display

SMF- Science Must Fall movement

UCT- University of Cape Town

UDF- United Democratic Front

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I am the sole author of this thesis and of each manuscript. Chapter 2, 3, and 4 are manuscripts that are currently under review and are reproduced here with minor modifications.

Positionality Statement

My interpretations have been shaped by my position as a White English-speaking woman, who received an early post-Apartheid South African education, which lacked content on deep African histories. African centring occurred late in my education, when I attended an archaeology class at university, a privilege not destined for most South Africans. Furthermore, my training as an archaeologist in South Africa has shaped my approach to this research; this thesis follows an approach more like British Social Anthropology. While this approach does not allow for the development of local epistemologies through community-based research, it does allow for a regional assessment of coloniality, primarily through symbolic and discursive analysis.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Globally people are coming together to decry race-related injustice, discrimination, and violence. George Floyd's death at the knee of a police officer in early June 2020 led to mass protests across the United States of America (USA). During a global Covid-19 pandemic, Floyd's death, one of numerous deaths of African American people in the USA due to police brutality, has become a rallying call for people to socially and physically come together, contra pandemic measures, across the world to say "Racism has no place" and "Black Lives Matter" (Mahbubani, 2020). The term "Black Lives Matter" encapsulates more than a sentiment; the term became popular in 2013, when it was used as a social media hashtag in response to state violence and injustice to Black people (Ransby, 2018). The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has birthed a network of local and national organizations (such as Black Live Matter Global Network and other organizations under the Movement for Black Lives umbrella) focused on undoing systems of injustice that impact oppressed groups through the call for reforms and fundamental changes of society (Ransby, 2018). I first came across the BLM in 2015, when throughout North American tertiary institutions students, under the BLM banner, acted on representation concerns. Students at Ivy League institutions, such as Princeton and Yale, protested the memorialisation on campus of individuals who contributed to a legacy of racial discrimination (Phelps, 2016). These memorialisation and representation concerns were recently re-ignited across North American tertiary institutions in the wake of the mass global BLM protests of 2020 (Vedder, 2020).

In 2015, South Africa experienced a similar movement, the Rhodes Must Fall movement (RMF). This movement is part of the greater Fallism movement, and raises issues surrounding education, representation, and inequality. Similar to what is currently occurring in North America and the UK, the debate over memorialisation and representation reached a fervour in the face of further statue removals and defacing (Raborife, 2020; Serekoane & Petersen, 2020). These movements, RMF and BLM, often articulated in the media along identity, cultural, and emotional frames (for a further discussion of framing, see Entman, 1993) call for reform and fundamental changes to deep-rooted structural racism.

The RMF movement rocked South Africa and other parts of the globe (specifically, the United Kingdom) by highlighting issues of African¹ representation in society and

¹ While African in this thesis refers to Black South Africans, it also used to identify a shared gap in histories or understandings due to historical and ongoing legacies configured along the lines of race, among other variables.

education structures, calling for the decolonization of education institutions and society-at-large (Ahmed, 2019; Gibson, 2017; Holmes & Loehwing, 2016; Knudsen & Andersen, 2019; Mangcu, 2016; Nyamnjoh, 2016). The movement was initiated following an act of defiance and frustration by Chumani Maxwele, a student at University of Cape Town (UCT). Taking faeces from the township, Maxwele threw it at the Cecil John Rhode's statue located prominently on UCT campus. Cecil John Rhode's (1853–1902) is a British born imperialist and colonial politician whose administration enacted the foundation for racial segregation in South Africa, amongst other discriminatory legacies (Worden, 2007). The movement argued that Rhodes was a symbol of White domination and that its prominent place in the university grounds reflected ongoing racial inequality and White privilege. The RMF also stimulated the Science Must Fall (SMF) movement, which presented science and knowledge as Eurocentric, which coalesced with the Fees Must Fall (FMF) movement at the University of Witwatersrand. The FMF movement highlighted racial inequality and the Eurocentric nature of education institutions (Cerimaj, 2018).

Together these acts of protest became the largest cohesive protest movement since the end of apartheid (Heffernan, 2018). While the Fallism movement was critiqued for its patriarchal and heterosexual power structure (Mthonti, 2016) and for its degeneration into a right to violence discourse (Mbembe, 2015), the movement was able to bring attention to and challenge normalised relations and structures within South Africa, and globally.

The Fallism movement represented dissatisfaction with the promises, or what Mignolo (2007) terms the rhetoric, of modernity², a future rational, social, and capitalist utopia (Sanjinés, 2007). The movement represented the voices of the born free generation, youth born around 1994, when the first free and full election occurred following the end of apartheid in South Africa (Gibson, 2017). They grew up with the promise that after apartheid, life in a democratic, capitalist, 'rainbow' nation, would be 'better' for all (Mbembe, 2015). South Africa's relatively peaceful transition from Apartheid to democracy, a rare accomplishment in the twentieth century, was in part due to the logics of neoliberalism. Former White oppressors, multinational capital, and the emergent Black elite (largely represented in the ranks of the African National Congress [ANC]) addressed the legacies of colonialism and Apartheid through Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment

² While I refer to modernity here as a vision or orientation to the world regarding progress and improvement (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012), the local fashionings of this vision are better described in the plural, modernities.

policies and social grants strategies and allowed for the internationalization of (White) capital (through neoliberal logics of self-enclaving and off-shoring) that did not fundamentally undermine or challenge the dominant power structure (Gibson, 2017; Mbembe, 2015; Plaatjie, 2013; Sithole, 2013). As one of the RMF leaders, Kgotsi Chikane, (in Boroughs, 2015, para. 9) stated, the “idea that the 1994 political and economic compromise worked out best for all South Africans, we should be able to question that”. Two decades following the end of Apartheid, the reality is that the conditions for life have worsened in South Africa, with people living in a highly unequal society with the majority (Black) experiencing limited access to essential services (Gibson, 2017; Plaatjie, 2013). This reality is not isolated to South Africa; indeed, Mignolo (2007) argues that this is the darker side of modernity and global imperial capitalism. Modernity’s rhetoric goes hand in hand with the logic and practice of oppression, the racially based asymmetric power structures of the modern-world, or as de-colonizing thinkers’ call it, coloniality (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2007).

At the heart of the Fallism movement was an outcry against coloniality, a colonial power matrix configured on racial/ethnic hierarchies (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). This perspective recognises that most colonial entities are now independent nation-states, but the colonial hierarchies of European versus non-Europeans remain in place and are entangled with understandings of power, knowledges, and ways of being (Grosfoguel, 2007). Central to this understanding is that these asymmetries of power are enacted, supported, and sustained by select pedagogies, epistemologies, and ontologies that socialize and alienate. This was characterised in the Fallism movement, where students voiced their deep sense of alienation (Gibson, 2017). This alienation was physical, where Black students felt alien in places that were previously White-only but are now promoted as ‘post-racial’ or ‘deracialized’ (Mangu, 2015). However, the physicality of alienation is part of a greater psychological and socio-political oppression revolving around power, knowledges, and ways of being, as argued by Fanon (1968). As one of the RMF leaders, Mahapa, stated, “We, as black students, as African students, need to be able to identify with the institution [...]. Whose heritage are we preserving?” (in Associated Press, 2015, para. 4). These movements brought to the fore questions surrounding: the nature of knowledge(s), what is the value of different knowledge(s), who generates and produces knowledge, how is knowledge shared, who is it shared with? Thus, this research investigates the sharing, or lack thereof, of African peoples’ pasts.

Motivations and Objectives

The Fallism movement struck a personal chord, it brought attention to something I had felt and encountered. I am a White South African of European descent trained in Southern African Archaeology, specifically; my research focus was on African towns and settlements in the north-west region of South Africa, prior to White settler expansion into the area. From my research in this field, I was aware of the magnitude, complexity, and diversity of these Southern African settlements and peoples. For instance, at Molokwane, an African town, people built a vast stone walled settlement that housed thousands of people spanning a century (Anderson, 2013; Pistorius, 1994). Yet, these histories and archaeological findings are generally unknown by the public. Often, when discussing my research with other people, I encountered a general lack of awareness concerning Southern Africa's rich histories, or what may be termed as heritage. This lack of awareness was sometimes accompanied by prejudice, some people felt African histories to be insignificant to that of 'Western history'³. Furthermore, this prejudice (a perceived lack of African histories) was often extended into a justification for asymmetrical racial relations (for an elaboration of this relationship, see de Sousa Santos, 2012; Grosfoguel, 2007).

In South Africa, history is seen in the singular and is often demarcated by the arrival of people of European descent to the region (Witz et al., 2017). This Eurocentric divide reveals a failure to incorporate understandings, such as oral traditions or archaeological findings, which highlight Africa's significance in the *longue durée*⁴ of humanity's histories (Shepherd, 2002, 2003; Zeleza, 2007). This divide between history and other understandings is stressed further in South Africa, where the government has embraced a cosmopolitan and neoliberal conception of a past through the framework of heritage (Cobley, 2001; Comaroff, 2005; Meskell, 2012; Meskell & Scheermeyer, 2008).

Heritage, in general terms, is used to refer to the objects, texts, practices, knowledge, memories, and environments of cultural production with significance beyond themselves (Geismar, 2015; Kuutma, 2012). In South Africa, heritage refers to the history and culture of peoples and is often derided by scholars as a false remembering or account serving the means of national or commercial interests (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009; Coombe & Weiss, 2015;

³ A product of Western historicism that projects Western history as a progressive linear evolution by which other societies' 'history' are measured (Stewart, 2016, p.84).

⁴ In this thesis I refer to a deep or long histories or the *longue durée* to refer to histories beyond the written record.

Delius & Marks, 2012; Marschall, 2009). Others argue that heritage creates a platform to counter dominant narratives and power structures (Beardslee, 2016; Giblin, 2014; Witz et al., 2017). However, a heritage narrative has not met the public's 'marked appetite' for African histories (Hamilton, 2017, p. 339).

The Fallism movement highlighted this and how a lack of valuing and sharing of African histories at the institutional level can lead to direct and indirect violence reflective of the modern-world order, aka the 'coloniality of power' (Grosfoguel, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2007). Coloniality is a concept that highlights the legacies of colonial power (colonial power matrix) and the realities of global imperial capitalism (world-order system) as packaged in the form of modernities (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). These 'packages' were born of the entangled ideals of a European, capitalist, imperial, Christian, patriarchal, White, heterosexual, male that affected all dimensions of social existence such as sexuality, authority, subjectivity, and labour (Grosfoguel, 2007; Quijano, 2007). Through increased global relations and entanglements, these 'packages' became an intersectionality "of multiple and heterogeneous global hierarchies ('heterarchies') of sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic, and racial forms of domination and exploitation where the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the European/non-European divide transversally reconfigures all of the other global power structures" (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 217).

However, coloniality is not derivative of, or antecedent to, modernity or modernities⁵, they are interconnected (Mignolo, 2007). Modernity's rhetoric of nation-state 'independence', 'development', and 'progress' through universalisms such as democracy, equality, and capitalism disguise the colonial power matrix, where the Global South and the Global North are confined to relations of exploitation, domination, and the production of subjectivities and knowledge (Grosfoguel, 2007). Furthermore, the rhetoric or rationality underlying modernity is exclusionary and totalitarian. Mignolo, (2007, p. 451) terms this rationality the 'Totality' where the Totality "negates, exclude, occlude the difference and the possibilities of other totalities". Therefore, recognizing and altering these entangled 'heterarchies' of coloniality and modernity, requires a programmatic of de-coloniality through de-linking (Mignolo, 2007), what I term 'a de-colonizing' approach.

⁵ The use of the term modernities acknowledges that while European, capitalist, imperial, Christian, patriarchal, White, heterosexual, male ideals are ingredients, they do not result in the same confection. Thus, the term aims to counter the idea that local or particular modernities are a counterfeit of or subject to a universal or Western modernity (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012).

A de-colonizing approach differs from broader postcolonial theory, which has been viewed with scepticism amongst African scholars (Gikandi, 2003; Korang, 2006; Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Chambati, 2013; Zeleza, 2006). Broadly, it is argued that postcolonial theory remains Eurocentric in epistemology and ideology, which leads to the decentring of African history and the subjection of African humanity. The positioning of postcolonial theory denies Africa's temporal depth by reinstating colonialism "as the pivot around which African history spins" (Zeleza, 2006, p. 128). African histories become categorised according to a Eurocentric historiography where history is characterised by its relation to colonialism (pre, during, or post) with a focus largely placed on the colonial period and thereafter (McClintock, 1995). The privileging of a cosmopolitan view of identity, reduces the spatial breadth of African histories, as all history leads back to Europe (Zeleza, 2006). Furthermore, while Mbembe (2006) embraces the postcolonial turn to transnational subjectivities (see 'Afropolitanism' in Mbembe, 2017), other African scholars decry this 'turn' arguing that to embrace this perspective is to concede to a Eurocentric epistemic and linear civilizational conceit (Korang, 2006; Zeleza, 2006). Therefore, African scholars view postcolonial theory, and the deconstruction approach of the 'posts', as a decentring force of the African subject through the critique "of notions such as history, nation, and consciousness" (Gikandi, 2003, p. 176). Furthermore, this critique or deconstruction of these notions have caused a disconnect, an alienation, between these notions and the subject of these notions. This disconnect was articulated by the Fallism movement in South Africa (Gibson, 2017), which expressed material concerns of coloniality within a discourse on the notions of history, nation, and consciousness. These concerns with postcolonial theory have led African scholars to call for perspectives that stress ideological and ethical priorities congruent with African political concerns within a humanistic framework, termed African centring (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ndhlovu, 2013; Sithole, 2013; Zeleza, 2006, 2007).

A de-colonizing approach is powerful, like the RMF and BMF movements, such approaches can alter society and individuals' sense, relations, and structure. The Fallism movement altered my research course. As a White English-speaking archaeologist focused on Southern African peoples' pasts, I recognized how my knowledge production was not accountable to the youth as represented in the RMF movement. Thus, my new research course led me to explore the ways in which knowledge and its production creates, complies, supports, or counters the valuing of African peoples' pasts. I wanted to review how the 'colonial library' (a term after a body of works by Mudimbe [1988, 1991, 1994]), distorted

the way in which the African continent and peoples were viewed and presented and how this continues to affect representations of African peoples at the continental, national, and local level. But also, how this ‘colonial library’ could be or is challenged (Sonderegger, 2015).

An individual and peoples that remain at the heart of the colonial library on Africa are “the Zulu”, their king, Shaka, and the establishment of the Zulu Kingdom from 1816. As Wright (2016, p. 185) states:

Discourses about ‘Zulu’ history and culture have had powerful resonances in South Africa and the wider world since at least the late nineteenth century and, nearly two centuries after his death, images of the first Zulu king, Shaka, still loom large in the imaginations of many people.

Zulu identities and the making of a homogenous “identity”, the colonial practices associated with this making and the strategic adoption of this identity-making process by Zulu elites for factional and national interests, has been discussed by scholars (Carton, 2009; Coombes, 2006; Hall, 1984; Hamilton, 1998; Hamilton & Hall, 2012; Laband, 2009; Marschall, 2008; Piper, 2009; Wright, 2007; Wright & Mazel, 1991). Furthermore, the use of this constructed identity for commercial interests have been interrogated by several scholars (Carton & Draper, 2009; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009; Coombe & Weiss, 2015; Ndlovu, 2013; Plaatjie, 2013). However, African peoples’ identities in the region of KwaZulu-Natal, the historic homeland of the Zulu Kingdom; represent longer, diverse histories and cultures.

KwaZulu-Natal is in the north-eastern region of South Africa and is a post-1994 construction of the homeland of the Zulu and the province of Natal. Often historical accounts of KwaZulu-Natal begin with the arrival of the British in the region in 1835; however, KwaZulu-Natal has a long and varied past (Duminy & Guest, 1989). Archaeological records show that hominins were living in the region around 1.7 million years ago (ya) and that modern human beings were found in the region at least 200,000 ya (Wadley et al., 2020; van Schalkwyk, 1996). From at least 10 000 ya, hunter-gatherer communities occupied parts of the region with increasing population growth over 7000-2000 ya (Mazel, 1989). Hunter-gatherer communities also left a visible record of their presence across the region, in the form of rock art, with rock art in the uKhahlamba-Drakensberg mountains dating to 2500-3000 ya (Mazel, 2013, p.52).

Around 2,000 ya, agropastoral communities migrated into the region (Mitchell, 2002). This period became known archaeologically as the ‘Iron Age’, due to some of these

agropastoral communities' ability to work metal (Huffman, 1982; Maggs, 1980; Whitelaw, 2009). Over the last 500 ya, based on material-cultural and linguistic evidence of similarities, these communities are marked as the ancestors to current African communities in KwaZulu-Natal and Southern Africa (Huffman, 2004; Whitelaw, 2012, 2013). These communities, often characterised as chiefdoms, would undergo social and political change from 250 ya, likely because of African and European interaction stemming from East coast trade (Whitelaw, 2009). By 200 ya, ecological and economic concerns heightened regional tensions between African chiefdoms, with the Zulu state becoming the dominant force in the region by 1820 (Whitelaw, 2009).

This sequence of peoples' histories in the region, while helpful for a chronological understanding, does not highlight the rich histories of these communities and the layered landscape of identities. These entangled and layered histories have been investigated along the lines of varied interactions between agropastoral, hunter-gatherer, as well as trader and settler communities; migrations and diffusion amongst the agropastoral communities; and complex socio-political reconfigurations of these agropastoral communities (see Chewins, 2016; Fowler, 2002, 2015; Hall, 1990; Hamilton & Liebhammer, 2017; Huffman, 2014; Mitchell & Lane, 2013; Whitelaw, 2009). Understanding these rich histories relies on a combination of sources, such as oral traditions, material culture, architecture, foreigner's written records, and archaeology. The discipline of archaeology can be defined as interpretations based on spaces where presents and pasts meet and interact in the study of material evidence (Kane, 2003). Archaeology, especially in creating a space for stories not evidenced by written text, could expand African peoples' contributions to the stories of humanity (Zezeza, 2007).

However, archaeology in Southern Africa has yet to live up to these expectations (Esterhuysen, 2006a; Ndlovu & Smith, 2019; Shepherd, 2012). With democracy in South Africa, archaeology aligned with transformation objectives that sought to reclaim African peoples' pasts and promote other forms of heritage to history (see, White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage [DACST, 1996]). Nevertheless, as part of Western epistemologies, archaeology was at the same time criticised for scientific racism (Esterhuysen, 2012; Shepherd, 2019). Specifically, archaeology as science and truth can subordinate other local epistemologies, as seen in the Prestwich Street burial ground controversy, where the value of archaeology as a science led to the devaluing of communities' histories and ways of dealing with trauma and pain (Shepherd, 2007). Not only did archaeology and anthropology

knowledge support colonial and Apartheid racial ideologies and injustices through the presentation of African peoples as ‘inferior’ technologically, morally, and biologically, but also in practice through the objectification of non-Whites (Esterhuysen, 2012; Shepherd, 2003).

While some archaeology practitioners used their knowledge to challenge the Apartheid state’s histories (Hall, 1988; Mazel and Stewart 1987), most were unable or chose not to (Hall, 1990; Shepherd, 2019). As explained by Hall (1990), most archaeology practitioners in South Africa were White and, due to segregation laws, this created difficulty in reaching more diverse audiences. Furthermore, when knowledge was produced that could challenge settler ideologies, practitioners could avoid challenging the state and settler sensibilities by using and reporting their results through extremely technical language and formations (Hall 1990). Furthermore, as Shepherd (2019) argues, public accountability was further limited with the advent of contract archaeology in the late 1980s⁶. These legacies ‘of unaccountable practice’ continue to alienate communities and peoples from archaeological knowledge (Shepherd 2019, p. 20) and shape South African archaeology (Phillipson, 2015). However, with more diverse practitioners and calls for relevance there is still hope for a more socially accountable and engaged archaeology that addresses past representations (Ndlovu & Smith, 2019). Representations that are often presented and shared to various local, regional, and international audiences through museums.

Museums are premier sites of contestation and representation (Silverman, 2011); especially in South Africa, where the representation of African peoples’ pasts are often found in Eurocentric oriented museums (Apter, 1999; Coombes, 1994, 2006; Hall, 1984, 2004; Hart & Winter, 2001; Kusimba & Klehm, 2013). Museums, as retainers of material culture (the results of archaeological and anthropological endeavours), could present alternative understandings of these pasts, not subject to a Eurocentric valorisation of the written word, or linear time marking, as the blueprint of development (Andah, 1995; Gunner, 2004; Schmidt & Walz, 2007). To this point, archaeology has the potential to provide further knowledge on African peoples’ pasts (Esterhuysen, 2006; Esterhuysen & Lane, 2013; Kusimba, 2016; Ogundiran, 2016).

These motivations have led me to the following objectives of this dissertation: (1) to

⁶ When archaeologists are paid a professional fee to provide an archaeological service on behalf of private or public entities (Hall 1989; also, for a more recent appraisal of South African contract archaeology, see Ndlovu, 2014; Shepherd, 2015).

evaluate coloniality through museum representations of African peoples' pasts across KwaZulu-Natal; (2) to evaluate the coloniality of consciousness by evaluating the role of nationalism in ongoing conceptions of group identities and histories; (3) to evaluate the coloniality of being by identifying the possibilities of these representations and narratives to alienate or dehumanize; (4) to evaluate the coloniality of knowledge by assessing the role of museum staff in sharing and educating the public and learners on African peoples' pasts; (5) to highlight opportunities where a de-colonizing approach leads to African centring.

To meet these objectives, this dissertation, in the form of five chapters (three of which are individual manuscripts), explores coloniality through representations of African peoples' pasts as shown through museums across KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Methods and case studies overview

This research was approved by the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board (REB). From a de-colonizing approach, this research uses a range of qualitative methods to assess coloniality across three case studies. The qualitative methods include observation, interview, questionnaire, and a thematic matrix. These methods are commonly used in museum studies (Tucker, 2014), including discourse analysis (Grek, 2009). Underlying this study, discourse analysis (DA) writes 'a history of the present' (Carroll, 2004, p. 228).

DA, the study and analysis of language through text and visual forms across three dimensions: the textual level (form and content), the discursive practice (interpretive themes), and social practice (the socio-historical context) (Grek, 2009, p. 203). This strategy focuses on how social reality is constructed, but critical approaches to discourse analysis focus explicitly on "dynamics of power, knowledge, and ideology as they surround and partially constitute discursive practices" (Carroll, 2004, p. 226). Written texts, displays, and narratives were analysed using discourse analysis (DA), including the use of a thematic matrix.

While DA may be commonly associated with deconstructive analysis, the aim is to reconstruct, more specifically, to allow for the 'humanism of reconstruction' in African studies (Chapman, 2005, p. 117). Therefore, this research, through each case study, seeks to connect "fragments to wholes, deconstruction to construction, the discursive to the material, (non-Eurocentric) mininarratives to grand narratives" (Coronil in Agnani et al., 2007, p. 645). This is the project of de-linking, which is the recognition, promotion, and the re-centring of other epistemes, and consequently, other economies, politics, and ethics (Mignolo, 2007, p. 453).

A de-colonizing approach is distinguished from broader postcolonial theory and embraces a perspective that stresses ideological and ethical priorities of non-European cultures (the Global South). While the term Global South here is used to distinguish between nation-states echoing the boundaries of colonized and colonizer, or first world and third world, or core and periphery (Wallerstein, 1974), it is best viewed as a term expressing ‘metageographies of subalternity’ (Kleinschmidt, 2018). Or as de Sousa Santos (2012, p. 51), explains:

The South is here rather a metaphor of the human suffering caused by capitalism and colonialism at the global level, and a metaphor as well of the resistance to overcome or minimise such suffering. It is, therefore, an anticapitalist, anti-colonialist, and anti-imperialist South. It is a South that also exists in the global North, in the form of excluded, silenced and marginalised populations, such as undocumented immigrants, the unemployed, ethnic or religious minorities, and victims of sexism, homophobia and racism.

Adopting an epistemology drawn from movements and scholars of the Global South, the de-colonizing approach privileges an understanding that considers both the cultural and material realities of coloniality and modernity.

This thesis consists of three case studies that reflect different points of interest and applications of the above methods. The first case study (Chapter 2) uses a thematic matrix to review museum display and exhibit themes across the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The second case study (Chapter 3) uses questionnaire feedback to address narrative reframing opportunities. The third case study (Chapter 4) uses observation, interviews, and teacher feedback to evaluate school learner museum education on African peoples’ pasts. Furthermore, the case studies can be divided according to research site. The first case study provides a regional analysis of museums in KwaZulu-Natal. The second and third case studies are situated in Pietermaritzburg, at the national museum, the KwaZulu-Natal Museum (formerly the Natal Museum [NMSA]).

Dissertation framework

This dissertation includes five chapters. Chapters 2-4 are the manuscripts of individual case studies that have been submitted to peer-reviewed journals. Chapter 5 is a summary of key points and highlights the significance and applicability of this research as

well as potential avenues of action. The following section provides a summary of chapters 2-4:

Chapter 2- Case Study 1

Scholars have called attention to colonial racial and ethnic hierarchies that are entangled with understandings of power, knowledges, and ways of being. From a heritage frame, previous studies have highlighted the Eurocentric nature of these understandings but also how African selective and active appropriations have redirected, reshaped, and repurposed these understandings. This research contributes to this important work using a thematic matrix to review museum display themes across the province of KwaZulu-Natal. This approach incorporates issues of inclusivity through language, fees, location, and availability. While displays on African peoples' pasts have increased since the 1980s, they are still underrepresented in the region. Coloniality is apparent through a privileging of Eurocentric perspectives, a catering to English speaking audiences, and a narrow representation of themes on African histories, which are predominantly confined to Zulu nationalism. I argue that countering these dominant themes, humanism perspectives combined with the use of orality in heritage and museum spaces provides possibilities for African centring.

Chapter 3- Case Study 2

In South Africa, the inclusive and reconciliatory agenda of transformation initiatives has led to a superficial inclusion of African narratives in pre-democratic era museums and monuments with residual colonial and Apartheid narratives. This results in conflicting narratives that detract from the goals of transformation. Consequently, the reframing of past museum exhibits and displays remains a concern. Using the KwaZulu-Natal Museum as a case-study, I argue that by prioritizing visitor feedback (through questionnaire responses) and African centring it is possible to reframe exhibits and displays to better meet transformation aims. Furthermore, beyond colonial and Apartheid narratives, this study suggests that possible nationalistic undertones in African centred exhibits and displays, as seen in the presentation of Zulu culture and identity, can be better moderated by measures such as a visitor orientation resource and increased use of orality.

Chapter 4- Case study 3

Transformation agendas in post-Apartheid South Africa focused on the role of education in reconciling differences and creating an inclusive society. Specifically, the role of history education was emphasized as means to address those whose pasts were silenced, misrepresented, or neglected as well as to provide a space for deliberation and critical thinking. Thus, the inclusion of archaeology as an account of deep histories in the region can help to meet these transformation agendas. Museums as spaces of education, and specifically for education about long pasts, may be a key resource for schoolteachers in addressing the demands of the history curriculum and African centring. Through the observation of learner tours, teacher feedback, staff interviews, and tour competency evaluations, this paper argues that museums need to be sensitive to whether, and in what ways, their resources support teachers. Specifically, museum educators need to be oriented to their pivotal role in engaging and guiding learners in challenging and stimulating conversations on matters of African peoples' pasts.

Significance of research

A de-colonizing approach follows the priorities of African scholars (Kusimba, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Ogundiran, 2012). This approach draws on a fellow community of Global South scholars that stress ideological and ethical priorities of non-European cultures (Mignolo, 2012; de Sousa Santos, 2012). Differing from other postcolonial positions, this approach seeks to reconstruct what has been deconstructed. As Mignolo, (2007, p. 453) states de-coloniality is the “re-construction and the restitution of silenced histories, repressed subjectivities, subalternized knowledges and languages”. This approach recognises that ideas such as humanism, nationalism, and nativism, while tainted by violence and abuse, may yet have value in the restoration of power, knowledges, and ways of being for the oppressed (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Ndhlovu, 2013).

A privileging of African epistemes in understanding peoples' pasts, changes how people might see themselves and their place in the world (Zezeza, 2007). In South Africa, history encompasses a positivist approach (Witz et al., 2017), embracing a linear progression of time and an objective epistemology, where history provides a singular and 'true' account of 'the past' (Lowenthal, 1998). However, critiques of the ontological and epistemological foundations of history have stimulated broader understandings of peoples' pasts, a celebration of heritage rather than history (Witz et al., 2017). Yet, even when heritage is privileged over

history at the national level, often it remains a Western form of heritage commemoration.

At the national level, the ANC regime has shown a marked preference for heritage, or as Comaroff (2005, p.2) terms “history-as-lived”, specifically in the form of public memorialisation. Marschall (2012) argues that a government preference for a Eurocentric form of memory-making over local traditions alienates African audiences from an understanding of their pasts. Furthermore, state heritage narratives are not “designed to foster a public debate and democratic exchange about the meaning of the past” (Marschall, 2012, p. 202). The national driven heritage narratives are shaped in opposition to the coloniser; however, it does so rather by the valorisation and simplification of what is African, than by presenting a complex and interrelated understanding African peoples’ pasts (Comaroff, 2005). In this regard, Esterhuysen (2012) argues that it is the responsibility of heritage production and communication bodies, such as museums and academics, to provide a space to foster public debate and a complex, interrelated understanding of the past.

Museums, as spaces where varied disciplines and understandings come together in representations of peoples’ pasts, hold much potential in the re-centring of diverse forms of powers, knowledges, and ways of being. Specifically, archaeology holds much potential to create a humanism that expands African peoples’ contributions to the stories of humanity. After all, as Zeleza (2007, p. 20) states:

Africa is at the heart of human history, the continent where humans have lived longest, where they underwent and made many of the fundamental transformations and innovations that characterise modern humans and social life.

Thus, archaeological knowledge can support a de-colonizing approach.

A de-colonizing approach interrogates the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being and opens a space for reconstruction and restitution (Chapman, 2005; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). A de-colonizing approach in its privileging of other epistemes and ontologies provide a chance to feel and sense the world differently (after Fanon’s ‘liturgical act’). As was displayed with the BLM and RMF movements, a ‘liturgical act’ is when people came together to share and discuss their needs and hopes:

They are privileged occasions given to a human being to listen and to speak. At each meeting, the brain increases its means of participation and the eye discovers a landscape more and more in keeping with human dignity.
(Fanon, 1968, p. 195)

This research assesses museums and their displays as such potential spaces, where engagement in representations of a past allows for the ‘humanism of reconstruction’.

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Preface to Chapter 2

The second chapter of this thesis evaluates coloniality from a regional frame using a thematic matrix to assess display and exhibit themes across museums in KwaZulu-Natal. African histories remain underrepresented with representation often shaped along the lines of ethnic nationalism. Humanism perspectives combined with the use of orality provides possibilities for African centring and a countering of ethnic nationalism across regional museum displays. This chapter is a manuscript submitted to the *International Journal of Heritage Studies (IJHS)* and is under review. The manuscript follows the IJHS citation style, which is after Chicago Author-Date.

Coloniality and African Centring: A Regional Assessment of Museum Themes in South Africa

Abstract:

Scholars have called attention to colonial racial and ethnic hierarchies that are entangled with understandings of power, knowledges, and ways of being. From a heritage frame, previous studies have highlighted the Eurocentric nature of these understandings but also how African selective and active appropriations have redirected, reshaped, and repurposed these understandings. This research contributes to this important work using a thematic matrix to review museum display and exhibit themes across the province of KwaZulu-Natal. This approach incorporates issues of inclusivity through language, fees, location, and availability. While displays on African peoples' pasts have increased since the 1980s, they are still underrepresented in the region. Coloniality is apparent through a privileging of Eurocentric perspectives, a catering to English speaking audiences, and a narrow representation of themes on African histories, which are predominantly confined to Zulu nationalism. I argue that countering these dominant themes, humanism perspectives combined with the use of orality in heritage and museum spaces provides possibilities for African centring.

Keywords:

museums, heritage, Afromodernity, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), thematic matrix

Chapter 2. Coloniality and African Centring: A Regional Assessment of Museum Themes in South Africa

Coloniality, a term specific to colonial entities that are now independent nation-states, can be described as colonial racial and ethnic hierarchies that are entangled with understandings of power, knowledge, and being (Grosfoguel 2007; Maldonado-Torres 2007; Mignolo and Walsh, 2018). In democratic South Africa, these hierarchies result in physical and psychological alienation of African peoples, the decentring of African histories, and the subjection of African peoples' humanity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Chambati 2013; Sithole 2013; Zeleza 2006). However, it is not simply a matter of Black and White.

Coloniality can be seen through heritage. Heritage, as a modern construct, can privilege a Western representation of past entities unless reconfigured. In British colonial Natal people were categorised according to fixed binaries of civilised versus barbaric, traditional versus modern, native versus foreigner (Martens 2009); representations that led to 'a paralysis of perspective' (after Mamdani 1996). But these binaries mask African peoples' selective and active appropriations in redirecting, reshaping, and repurposing heritage constructs for access to taxonomies of power, knowledge, and being, as shown in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa.

KZN is a province in the northeast of South Africa and is a post-1994 construction of the homeland of the Zulu and the province of Natal. The region is a merging of a layered landscape with a long past prior to colonial and later Apartheid rule. Predominantly, this past is delineated according to the history and culture of the Zulu. Over the twentieth century, Zulu became a tribal and later ethnic category (see, Hamilton and Liebhammer 2017). Various scholars have detailed this process of identity-making as well as the selective adoption of this identity making process by Zulu elites for factional and national interests, termed 'Zuluness' (Carton 2009; Hamilton 1998; Sithole 2009). Notably, this process of Zuluness has been grounded in heritage spaces.

In this study, I will turn to museums, premier Western heritage regime spaces, as sites of contestation and representation (Silverman 2011). Drawing on first-hand research, I use a thematic matrix to assess the differing themes displayed across museums in the region. Additionally, I consider issues of inclusivity through language, fees, location, and availability. In documenting these regional narratives through museum spaces and themes, this article makes two contributions to de-colonial and museum studies: 1) I document the prevailing Eurocentric themed displays across museums and 2) I document how African

centring leads to museum spaces that can be a force to entrench, but also counter, coloniality. Highlighting the moments where displays and spaces countered coloniality, echoes the arguments made by several scholars for change based on African centring (Marzagora 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Ndhlovu 2013; Zeleza 2007). African centring relies on approaches that stress ideological and ethical priorities corresponding to African political concerns but within a humanistic framework (Zeleza 2006).

Background

Heritage and Modernity

Broadly, heritage is the objects, practices, knowledge, and environments of cultural production with significance beyond themselves (Geismar 2015; Kuutma 2012). It is an umbrella term for broader understandings of the past that transgress a Eurocentric divide of pre-history versus history by the inclusion of intangible culture (Ruggles and Silverman 2009). However, in a neoliberal capitalist world order, heritage is a ‘commodity’ via its ability to lend authenticity and authority to a place, space, or thing (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009). It is a construct of the past for the present; whereby, value (material and ideological) is added to the past through constructs of heritage (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). Thus, heritage constructs are intimately tied to past and present negotiations for political and material resources.

Heritage constructs were and still are used to mark and elevate imperial and Western land, civilisation, order, and values- the sharing of ‘modernity⁷’ to the world. The terra nullius myth, the claim of ‘empty land’, became a longstanding justification, after the fact, for colonial settling and expansion (Marks 1980). This myth relied on discrediting African and Indigenous understandings of the past and thus claims to land. History was defined solely as the review of the past based on written records; this relegated African peoples’ pasts to the category of pre-historic (Schmidt and Walz 2007). This distinction justified colonial regimes, as it validated the European presence aboard in places with ‘no history’, and with Native development only possible through interaction with enlightened, rational Europeans (Derricourt 2011). Furthermore, Europeans and colonists began classifying and ordering

⁷ Modernity refers here to a particular vision of history that is characterised as a Western linear progression of development and power. However, this is one version of modernity. Modernities are local fashionings that paint this vision differently (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012). This is developed further in the paper.

Africans according to static tribal groups (Mafeje 1971). In democratic South Africa, these legacies of modernity continue to shape heritage constructs.

Modernity's 'package' was born of the entangled ideals of a European, capitalist, imperial, Christian, patriarchal, White, heterosexual, male that affected all dimensions of social existence such as sexuality, authority, subjectivity, and labour (Grosfoguel 2007; Quijano 2007). These ideals marked not only understandings of self but also of the other (see, Comaroff and Comaroff 1991). Yet, while race often intersected these ideals, there were accommodations between African and European authorities (see, Guy 2018). Adapting colonial structures, the Apartheid state entrenched racial and ethnic boundaries. The *Bantu Authorities Act* of 1951 and the *Bantu Self-Government Act* of 1959 established 'independent' areas for ethnic groups under the direction of traditional authorities and customary law, which are referred to as the reserves or homelands. The KwaZulu homeland was comprised of areas across the region and was interspersed with White areas. The homeland areas were mostly rural but included peri-urban zones around White urban centres (Beinart 2012). These homelands were an attempt to manifest the Apartheid state's policy of 'retribalization', whereby 'tradition' would become a counterforce to a nationally unified African peoples (Lester, Nel, and Binns 2000).

However, it was not the only the state, as seen in the use of heritage constructs for ethnic mobilisation in KwaZulu. In 1975, endorsed by the KwaZulu government, Mangosuthu Buthelezi found the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). The IFP drew on political and cultural symbolism, as seen by the choice of party name and colours (Marks 1978; Piper 2002). Also, the IFP was aligned with the Zulu royal leadership through Buthelezi's connections to the family, but also by King Zwelithini's association with the party from the early 1980s (Waetjen and Mare 2009). However, the IFP and Buthelezi, as Chief minister of the 'self-ruled' KwaZulu, fluctuated in approach from: consenting Apartheid state actor, radical resistance entity and ally, and Zulu nationalist organisation (Piper 2002). In the 1980s, tensions between ANC allied parties, the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of the South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the IFP rose and by 1985 this resulted in an apartheid-state sponsored violent territory struggle; by the early 1990s, this violence was characterised as an ANC versus IFP regional power struggle (Sithole 2009).

These tensions and violence were fuelled by the Apartheid-state but also by a militant Zulu nationalism in KwaZulu, under the direction of Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the IFP. Drawing from the myths surrounding Shaka and the Zulu Kingdom, the IFP used cultural and

historical symbols to create a vision of a Zulu nation, to mobilise Zulu-speakers by embracing Zuluness (Waetjen and Mare 2009). Counter to ethnic nationalism and the IFP, the ANC further pursued an African nationalism, a recognition of multiculturalism under non-racial nationalism (Chipkin 2016). The ANC's cosmopolitanism primarily aligned with urban dwellers who did not identify with the IFP's rural ethnic base, which has led to characterisations of this divide as rural versus urban (see Piper 2002, 2009). From 1992, it became clear that the ANC would lead the negotiations to end Apartheid, which further heightened tensions. By 1994, in the run-up to the first democratic election, a call for Zulu self-determination coupled with the IFP militancy, made civil war a possibility (Piper 2002). However, the IFP eventually consented to the 1994 elections and became a part of the new democratic South Africa. Piper (2009) argues that this was the end of Zulu nationalism. Rather, as argued by Ngqulunga (2020), it was not the end of Zulu nationalism, but the transformation of Zulu nationalism. Zulu nationalism may not be as apparent as it was prior to the 1994 elections; however, it is encountered in heritage constructs.

Post-1994, heritage constructs become a tool for political and material gain across the national and provincial levels. At the national level, the ANC heritage discourse has served as a trumpet for the triumph of the liberation struggle and the reconciliation of a multiracial nation (Murray 2013). At the provincial level, the ANC overtook the IFP as the custodian of heritage in KZN and has embraced Zulu traditional leadership and traditions (Ngqulunga 2020). However, the ANC has increasingly relied on a KZN support base, with Chipkin (2016) arguing that it is becoming a regional ethnic party. This reliance may explain the ANC's approval of 'customary law' legislation that gives rights to traditional authorities to govern and claim ownership of past homeland areas; as a result, entrenching colonial and apartheid classifications, systems, and boundaries and preventing many rural South Africans from constitutional rights and land ownership (Claassens 2014; Beall 2006). Traditional authority relies on the promotion of a homogeneous Zulu nation as expressed through shared language, customs, and heritage. Thus, there are material and political stakes surrounding the right to be custodians of the past.

There is contestation surrounding Zulu-speakers group identity and a call for African histories prior to the establishment of the Zulu kingdom (Buthelezi 2012). Highlighting tensions between custodianship and productions of the past, McNulty (2013) shares how Zuluness remains a construct for material and political mobilisation. Specifically, 'fixed' productions, in form and matter, created by the ANC or Zulu-speaking archivists become a

source of tension in the region. ANC African nationalism and support of factionalism as well as traditional leadership that privileges African systems which entrench colonial and apartheid structures, has led to a regional recognition and constructions of a Zulu, not African, past. This fashioning and shaping of modernity to African conditions and identities is, what Comaroff and Comaroff (2012) term Afromodernity, a localised modernity not counterfeit or subject to other modernities. Afromodernity, African modernities, may have some ingredients in common: European, capitalist, imperial, Christian, patriarchal, White, heterosexual, male ideals, but result in different confections.

Colonial and White Settler legacies in Natal Museums

As a Western product of modernity, museums in South Africa can be alienating spaces. Museums are steeped in colonial and Apartheid legacies. Museums were established under the British colony with the first museum legislation, the Museum Incorporation Act, passed by the Cape Colony government in 1857. The Durban Natural History Museum was established in 1887 and the Natal Museum (later to become the KZN Museum) was established in 1904 (for a history of the museum, see Brooks 1988 and Guest 2006). Since the establishment of museums in Natal, these spaces were testaments of European settler interests. Through the collection of natural specimens and ethnographic type artefacts, colonial museums primarily focused on the display of local nature and people. The acts of collection, classification, and ranking in the colonial museum setting, reinforced a narrative of difference between settlers and original inhabitants; and cultural and technological superiority of settler over non-White populations (MacKenzie 2009:79). Furthermore, the imitating of metropolitan ‘Cathedrals of Science’- the colonial museum architecture style- reaffirmed ties to British tradition, confirmed the political might of the colony, and alienated others from these spaces (Sheets-Pyenson 1988).

In Natal, museums reflected ideological enclaves across White settler communities, primarily Afrikaners and British settlers. With the British colony centenary there was a call for more displays of settler history in the region (Dlamuka 2003). This marked a move to more culture-history oriented museums. However, prior to this, Afrikaners had already established a culture-history museum in the region, the Voortrekker Museum (established in Pietermaritzburg in 1912), commemorating the defeat of the Zulu with the promised ‘Church of the Vow’. Voortrekker heritage sites became a central site for Afrikaner nationalism (Coombes 2003). Furthermore, museums became more tied to the jurisdiction of the state

through the State-aided Institution Act 23 of 1931, falling under the Minister of the Interior and during apartheid, the Minister of Education. However, museums retained connections to the British empire, as seen in the Museum Association of Britain's 1932 report by Miers and Markham on museums of the empire in British Africa and Mediterranean.

The report by Miers and Markham provides a glimpse of the Eurocentric nature of museums and the alienation of African audiences in museums outside of the Cape; these legacies continue to shape issues of museum inclusivity today, such as museum locations and language. Specifically, the report highlights certain modernity ideals, with 'civilisation' marked by proximity to British cultural standards and expectations. The report held that museums should be in areas of high intellectual standards, like urban centres, as they 'would only thrive where there was a large White or other literate population' (quoted in Grobler and Pretorius 2009, 32). Understandings of intelligence and museum values were closely tied to the English language and an individual's ability to comprehend this language. This valuing of British sensibilities left most Africans, as well as Afrikaners, on the side lines. Also, Grobler and Pretorius (2009) note that the report mentions that most South African museums were open to Africans; although, racial discrimination was likely to occur in museums outside the Cape. Both the Natal Museum and Durban Museum did not openly discriminate against race; however, as urban centres became more segregated, it was clear that the true audiences for museums were assemblages of the White public (Dlamuka 2003).

With Apartheid, museums served a state agenda of ethnic separateness (e.g., Afrikaner, British, or Zulu) and, from the 1960s onward, Afrikaner Nationalism (Tomaselli and Mpofu 1997). From the 1960s, with South Africa becoming a republic, and in the face of rising cultural and political resistance there was an increase in the establishment of museums and the expansion of existing museums. This increase was both an expression of Afrikaner nationalism, but also a reaction and counter to this imperative, especially in Natal, which remained a British settler stronghold (Rodéhn 2008, 2011). Newly established museums such as Old Court House, Umvoti-Greytown, Fort Dunford, Himeville, and the Zululand Historical Museum (Fort Nongqayi) focused on local settler history and conflicts as an extension of the British empire. To manage this increase in museums, the Natal Museum Services was established in 1974. Within the first ten years of the museum service, 25 museums became affiliated; however, many were "Ghost museums"- a museum in name only, they had no museum building, collection, or staff (Ridley 1997, 51). Continuing this theme, the KwaZulu Museum Council was established in 1980 and developed the KwaZulu Cultural Museum and

Ondini Historical Reserve in 1984; an interpretive centre and a partial reconstruction of King Cetshwayo's royal residence (Dlamini 2009).

African representation in Natal and KwaZulu museums

With the establishment of museum services, the matter of museum themes was brought to the forefront in Natal. The Pringle Report (1976) deals with the issue of museum themes across affiliated museums in KZN. Pringle advocated that each museum should have a unique primary theme with two or three secondary themes (in Ridley 1997, 36). Already in 1977, some of the advisory board members expressed their concern about the lack of non-White representation across these museum themes (Advisory Board Minutes 14/9/77, in Ridley 1997, 37). It was noted that this subject was covered in the Durban Natural History Museum and in the Natal Museum. However, a solution was to display this theme in all affiliated museums, under the heading 'Prehistory of the Region' (Advisory Board Minutes 14/9/77, in Ridley 1997, 37). Regardless of intent, after a decade these displays had yet to materialize. Ridley (1997, 117) suggested that the reason for this discrepancy was 'due mainly to a lack of sufficient original objects'. Yet, excavations of 'prehistory' sites had been conducted in the region, with research and 'original objects' sufficient for a display on this history in the region (such research as Maggs and Michael 1976; Goodwin 1930; Davies 1971). This issue was more widely publicised at the 1987 South African Museum Association (SAMA) conference, where speakers argued that museums were Eurocentric White spaces (Stuckenberg 1987).

Echoing these sentiments, Wright and Mazel (1991) illustrated a lack of African history and representation across museums in KwaZulu and Natal. Wright and Mazel (1991, 63-4) highlight that there is sufficient research and evidence in the region for archaeologists and museum practitioners to discuss at least 5 precolonial themes: 1) human evolution in southern Africa; 2) the history of hunter-gatherer communities; 3) the significance of rock art 4) the history of the African farming communities from the 3rd century onwards; and 5) the history of African complex states. Nonetheless, these themes were neglected or omitted across displays in both KwaZulu and Natal. Highlighting the ideology underlying the Apartheid and Bantustan states, they argued that displays across museums in KwaZulu and Natal serve to sustain relations of domination and segregation. In Natal, the displays asserted the place and story of settlers in the region and subject Africans as curiosities or bystanders to this story and place. The displays in KwaZulu, meanwhile, assert the legitimacy of the

African traditional authorities, structure, and independence, without considering the social, political, and historical forces that contest or underpin these constructions. As South Africa was approaching a change in leadership and representation, to remain relevant and inclusive, museums needed to reconsider issues of representation.

Transformation in KZN museums

In 1992, a museum committee was established to address the transformation of the museum sector, resulting in the Museums for South Africa (MUSA): Inter-sectorial investigation for national policy report (1994). The committee and eventual report, conveyed as independent, were contested as a product of the Apartheid state (Pauw 1994). The ANC presented a set of responses to the MUSA report as well as their own report stemming from the ANC's Culture and Development Conference in 1993. In 1994 the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) was established by the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), a new department of the ANC led government. Seen as an amalgamation of the ANC and MUSA reports, the ACTAG report (1995) provided a framework for future arts and culture policies (Corsane 2004). The report stressed the pivotal role of museums for transformation in the new democratic South Africa: museums as places of nation-building, reconciliation, equality, and education.

Guided by the constitution of the New Republic of South Africa (1996), several further heritage acts were passed that aimed to transform the heritage and museum landscape in South Africa, as seen in broader the definition of heritage to create a more inclusive understanding and a move to a more centralised management of heritage bodies, such as museums. The DACST (1996) White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage: All Our Legacies, Our Common remains the base outline for the post-1994 heritage sector. The White paper acknowledged the current state of the museum sector, primarily a lack of national museum policy, coordination between museum services, distributed resources, representative cultural collections, and accessible museums for communities. Moreover, the White paper aimed to transform the museum sector through the management and regulation of national museum bodies. This was to be aided by the Cultural Institutions Act 119 of 1998 that declared national institutions would work under a framework autonomy and be funded by the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC, formerly DACST). Revision of the White paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage is underway, with the fourth draft (2017) open for discussion. While currently no enacted national museum policy is in place, there is the draft Policy

Framework for National Museums (DAC 2014). The draft National Museum policy aims to coordinate and standardise museum practice and management and align sustainable funding programs to an accreditation system (for a review of South African museum policy proposals, see Vollgraaff 2015).

With the combining of KwaZulu Bantustan with Natal province to form the new borders of KZN, new and old museum jurisdiction bodies were consolidated. National museums in the region, KZN Museum and Msunduzi (incorporating the Voortrekker complex) museum, came under the jurisdiction of the then Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (and the now Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture). Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali (Amafa) as KZN's provincial heritage resources authority was established in the KZN Heritage Act 10 of 1997, inheriting the role of the KwaZulu Museum Council and the National Monuments Council. Beyond heritage objects and sites, compared to other provincial heritage authorities, Amafa is uniquely responsible for the management of several museums. The eThekweni municipality manages a collection of Local History museums in Durban and the surrounding region. Lastly, museum services and SAMA continue to provide support to municipal and affiliated museums in the region.

The regional heritage is dominated by tourism themed initiatives such as the Battlefield Route, the Zululand Heritage Route 66, and part of the National Heritage Council's Resistance and Liberation Heritage Route; these routes include museums, monuments, and historical sites. The ANC's 'nationalism' focused on unity and inclusivity- 'transforming the political economy of institutions so that they would no longer serve White domination and would serve the "people" instead' (Chipkin 2016, 223). Post-1994, several museums were established that centred African representation, such as the Vukani Zulu Cultural Museum, the KwaMuhle museum, the Ncome museum, the Phansi museum, and the uMgungundlovu multi-media centre. However, has African representation become a dominant theme across a previously Eurocentric dominated museum-scape? And do representations of the African past extend solely to the Zulu past and apartheid resistance?

Method

I reviewed the following variables to ensure a representative survey sample of KZN museums: number of museums in the region, the museum managing bodies,⁸ and museum location. Following this review, I conducted a survey of 28 museums found across KZN in 2018. Following Wright and Mazel (1991), a thematic matrix was used to organize and synthesize the different themes across the surveyed museums. Beyond what was considered in Wright and Mazel's (1991) study, inclusivity concerns such as language of museum text and access were considered when assessing the intended museum audience. Regarding language of museum text, in addition to the consistent use of a language across museum text, I also noted whether a language was used inconsistently (such as only for display headings, certain displays, or parts of a display within a museum). Furthermore, by access I mean whether the museum was in a primarily vehicle dependant location (i.e., located outside of a town), charged entrance fees, and was open over the weekend.

For analysis purposes, my field notes of displays and exhibits across these museums were coded using holistic coding (see Saldaña 2009), which was then parred down to 15 themes which were further sub-categorized under six 'group histories'. The group histories are Hunter-Gatherers, African Farming Communities, Zulu Societies, Indian Societies, Settler Societies, and National (post-1994 nation). These categories broadly follow a chronological history of groups in the region of KZN, although the Indian immigration into the region occurs after European settlement in the region and is entwined with the British empire and settler demands for labour in the Natal colony (Brain 1989). These sub-categories do not imply a sequence of development or civilisation or that these groups were static entities living in isolation in the region or that these groups were the authors of the content, rather these categories reflect theme topics.

Results

There are different records of the total number of museums in KZN. A KZN Museum Services and SAMA booklet (n.d.) listed the number of museums in KZN at 74. A report on the state of South African Museums states there are 59 museums in KZN (south african cultural observatory 2019), but they have not shared a list of these museums. SAMA (n.d.) listed a

⁸ While managing bodies is used to identify these entities, the Department of Arts and Culture works within a framework autonomy with National museums overseen by a board of trustees. Nonetheless, these museums still need to meet Department of Arts and Culture funding requirements.

membership of 33 museums in KZN. The KZN museum services (n.d.) listed 43 affiliated museums throughout the province (including art galleries). Amafa (n.d.) listed seven museums under their jurisdiction. Collating all the different listings provides an estimate of 83 museums (including five art galleries) in KZN (see Appendix A).

A third of the region's museums were surveyed. While this allows for a fair sample of what histories are represented across the region, some group history, person, or theme specific museums, such as Border Cave Interpretive Centre, East Griqualand Museum, and Luthuli Museum, were not covered in this sample. While these exclusions may affect theme frequency, it is not likely to a significant degree, as these types of museums, beyond those focussed on settler histories, are in the minority. Furthermore, only 24 of the 28 museums surveyed could be accessed (see, Figure 1- the map only includes museums where access was gained). The four museums surveyed but not accessed are: the Dukuza Museum- KwaDukuza (which was closed during visitor hours); the uMkhumbane Cultural and Heritage Museum (which was not open to the public); the Weenen Museum (which was access dependent through the library, but the librarian had lost the keys); and the Emnambithi Cultural Centre (which could not be found, the museum address led to a fenced off unmarked building). All museums were located near to or in town centres, except Blood River Heritage Site and Museum, Ncome Museum, and uMgungundlovu multi-Media Centre. These museums are in places of historical significance and are accessed primarily by vehicle.

Notably, English is the primary language of museums across KZN (see, Figure 2). Most museums only presented information in one language consistently throughout their displays. English was the primary language across KZN museums, except at the Phansi museum (which had no text accompanying displays) and at the Blood River Heritage Site and Museum, where Afrikaans was the primary language over English. The Ncome Museum is the only museum to use all three languages consistently. The use of English and Afrikaans consistently in museum displays occurred in 17% (n=4) of the accessed museums. The use of English and Zulu consistently in museum displays occurred in 21% (n=5) of the accessed museums. In some instances, museums used more than one language but inconsistently. Afrikaans was presented inconsistently in 21% (n=5) and Zulu in 29% (n=7) of the accessed museums. Thus, only half of the accessed museums catered to a Zulu speaking audience. This is striking when 2011 census data shows that the majority (78%) of the provincial population list Zulu as their home language (Firth, n.d.). The location of the museums that consistently include Afrikaans or Zulu in addition to English follow historical boundaries of these different language speaking groups

(see, Colenbrander 1989). From the colonial period, the dominant population in these areas were Zulu-speakers to the North, Afrikaans-speakers to the West (interior), and English-speakers to the East (coast and interior).

Most museums did not charge entrance fees and were open on the weekend. Out of the 10 museums that charged entrance fees, the Blood River Heritage Site and Museum charged the highest entrance fee per adult and in addition charged a vehicle entrance fee (see Table 4). The museums with entrance fees occurred across managing authority bodies. Most museums were open at least half day on Saturday or Sunday. Three museums did not open on the weekend, of which two were municipal (Umvoti-Greytown Museum and Nuwe Republiek) and one was affiliated (the Old Prison Museum), yet the Old Prison Museum can be accessed on the weekend by appointment.

Across museums in KZN, the colonial period is prominently presented with the displays of European settler societies history and battles (see, Figure 3). The precolonial period was prominently represented by displays of Zulu culture, followed by Stone Age and hunter-gatherers as well as early farming communities' displays. Conversely, the theme least represented across KZN museums is early African complex societies, followed by displays on early African and European contact and human evolution. There was a marked difference in the distribution of themes, as collected under group histories. Displays on European settler societies were found across KZN museums, followed by displays on Zulu societies and Indian societies. National (post-1994 society) themes were the least distributed displays followed by farming communities and hunter-gatherers.

The museum managing bodies in the most populous regions, tended to be DAC, Amafa, and eThekweni municipality (see, Figure 4). Most themes were represented across the museum bodies, except for Indian displays in the Amafa museums in the Zululand District. Overall, municipal museums are less likely to represent Farming community and national themed displays.

Discussion

African alienation, decentring, and subjection

Across KZN, museums cater to an English European Settler audience. This is most strongly demonstrated by the consistent use of English as a primary language and the distribution and number of settler history displays. The primacy of English literacy, settler history, and the location of museums in urban centres are colonial legacies that continue to alienate African

museum audiences. Furthermore, the themes that are least represented- African complex societies, African and European contact, and human evolution- across KZN museums are those that could potentially counter African decentring and subjection.

This continuing coloniality is due to several related reasons. Heritage in the guise of industry, captures the close relation between the preservation of the past and the present economic benefits to be derived from this act (Hewison 1987). In 2015, at least 16% of domestic and 19% of foreign (African air departure) tourists to KZN visited heritage related sites comprising of arts galleries, historical buildings, and museums (Schalkwijk et al. 2017, 40). Significantly, from 1998 to 2005, more than half of tourists to heritage related sites were foreign and primarily from countries where English is the national language (Schalkwijk et al. 2017, 41-43). Specifically, KZN tourism catered to a UK tourist market, with heritage sites that commemorated the Anglo history in the region and Zulu culture and history, with the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authority (1998) promoting tourism to the province under the theme of the 'Zulu Kingdom'. Tourism KZN continues to promote the province as the 'Zulu Kingdom', but from 2006 to 2017 the tourist profile has changed, with 81% or more of the tourists to heritage related sites being domestic (Schalkwijk et al. 2017, 41). Yet, as shown by the primary language distribution and the focus on Settler and Zulu society themed displays across museums in KZN, the heritage industry still caters predominantly for English speaking tourists wanting an authentic experience of the 'Zulu Kingdom'.

Contributing to coloniality at the museum level are issues concerning a lack of standardisation, funding, and curatorial support. This was shown by a majority of KZN municipal museums' absence of African farming communities and national themed displays. As argued by Vollgraaff (2015), qualified curators as well as national and provincial policy development that regulate museum practices and standards are needed. These concerns are apparent through municipal museums' displays that have not been significantly updated since the 1980s. For instance, the Nieuwe Republiek /Lukas Meijer Museum had displays primarily from the museum's establishment in 1987. The museum - located in the town centre, a space primarily traversed and inhabited by Africans- is dedicated to the colonial period Afrikaner/Boer state. Thus, these museums are themselves artefacts of colonial perspectives, creating awkward and alienating spaces.

Overall, while displays on African peoples' pasts have increased since the 1980s, they are still underrepresented in the region. Furthermore, outside of the eThekweni municipality museums, the more African themed museums tend to be museums that charge entrance fees.

In a province where 57 % of the population, with the majority being African, live below the poverty line of R620 a month (Province of Kwazulu-Natal 2014), an entrance fee can be an insurmountable barrier. Beyond access, African themed displays tend to serve Zulu nationalistic interests. For instance, at KwaZulu Cultural Museum, there is a timeline that presents Zulu people as the only descendants of farming communities in the region, this reduces a complex and diverse period into a misleading implication that all farming community people became Zulu, and that Zulu is a consensual and homogenous grouping. Thus, Wright and Mazel's (1991) regional museum thematic assessment remain relevant: museums, as spaces that authorise understandings of the past, are entwined with colonial and nationalistic ideologies.

Countering nationalistic narratives: archaeology and deconstruction

However, there are spaces that challenge the Eurocentric and nationalistic themes dominant in the region. Archaeology, especially in creating a complex understanding of the African past, could potentially allow for the re-centring of Africa's place in the stories of humanity (Zezeza 2007). Particularly, the Bergtheil museum displayed a noteworthy Farming community exhibit. The exhibit tied archaeological findings and methods (evidence) to a discussion of farming community history in the region. This is one of the few museums to integrate a discussion on archaeological evidence and a deep history, the others being the KwaZulu-Natal Museum, the Pinetown Museum (with a display created by KwaZulu-Natal Museum staff from the 1980s), the KwaZulu Cultural Museum, and the uMgungundlovu multi-media centre. Archaeological evidence could be used to counter the predominance of European settler history; however, archaeology in Southern Africa has yet to live up to these expectations (see, Esterhuysen 2006, 2012; Ndlovu and Smith 2019; Shepherd 2012).

Furthermore, deconstruction, as a tool for change, has been used in the past to de-centre nationalistic narratives in the region, such as the Sisonke display. The KwaZulu-Natal Museum in 1997, recognizing the need to counter an overwhelming Zuluness narrative, launched the Sisonke ('We are together') display (Dlamini 2016). Through collections of material culture, the display aimed to show how ethnic identity was shaped and reshaped according to the socio-political and economic interests of an African elite, sometimes in collaboration with the Apartheid state. However, the display proved unpopular with the public for several reasons, such as a lack of a clear narrative and not conforming to Zulu 'tourism heritage constructs' (Dlamini 2016, 479). Some African scholars decry the use of deconstruction to centre Africans,

as the act of undermining decentres the subject at the very moment that subjectivity is claimed by the marginalized (Agnani et al. 2007; Zeleza 2006). Rather, they argue for African centring through reconstruction.

African centring

Countering a Eurocentric perspective that subjects, African centring approaches stress humanism through reconstruction (Marzagora 2016). This approach connects ‘fragments to wholes, deconstruction to construction, the discursive to the material, (non-Eurocentric) mininarratives to grand narratives’ (Agnani et al. 2007, 645). Glimpses of these grand narratives were seen in select displays across KZN museums.

African centring occurred through the prioritising of African worldviews and narratives that had been silenced. The KwaZulu Cultural Museum and the Ncome Museum were the only institutions with exhibits that discussed African views of land versus Western views of land ownership, a perspective that underlies colonial expansion and justification. Furthermore, both the Ncome and KwaMuhle museums brought silenced African narratives to the fore. The KwaMuhle’s museum’s main display provides a glimpse into the pass system and its effects on everyday African life in the greater Durban region. The Ncome museum plays a pivotal role in providing an African (Zulu) perspective to the Ncome (Blood River) Battle and history in the region. Nonetheless, the Ncome Museum has been criticized as a space of Zuluness that silences non-Zulu contestations over the territory and participants in the battle (Dlamini 2009).

Notably, the use of orality was significant to creating African humanising and centring spaces. I use the term orality to give prominence to a spoken form of communication in addition or in place of literacy. Orality can prove a pivotal tool in reorientating and communicating displays to African audiences and perspectives. The Phanzi and Vukani museums both used verbal communication platforms, through guided tours, to contextualise displays and in so doing promote African ceramics and textiles as art and craft and prioritise these producers as both crafters and artists. Also, orality increases the potential for inclusivity as was seen at Ondini, KwaZulu-Natal, and Ncome museums, where tours were given in Zulu or English. Furthermore, orality, as a less fixed record of the past, may be subject to less socio-political scrutiny (see, McNulty 2013). The Phanzi museum solely relies on orality to provide context to the displays, tailoring the context to address topics such as collective memory, histories, traditions, power, and loss. Through art and orality, the museum prioritises a humanistic perspective. Yet the use of orality does not guarantee a humanising or inclusive perspective.

The nuances of African centring are exemplified in the use of orality through multi-media technology. At the uMgungundlovu multi-media centre, a line of platformed screens shared a series of brief videos on the succession and achievements of the Zulu Royal line as heralded by excerpts of recorded praise poetry. Notably, disputes and contestations are silenced using technology and tradition. The audience members, in this setting, are subject to a nationalistic narrative. In contrast, multi-media technology and orality is used at the Old Prison/Project Gateway to humanise African leadership through the dramatization of King Dinizulu's responses to British colonial accusations of treason. Beyond narrative differences, the Old Prison/Project Gateway's use of an actor to performatively commemorate a significant cultural figure provided a powerful sense of humanism, where facial expression and body language added substance and depth to the multi-media format.

Conclusion

Coloniality remains prevalent in museums across KZN, privileging a Eurocentric understanding of the past and with little attention to the diversity of prospective audiences. While African themed displays have increased since the 1980s, they are still underrepresented in the region. Furthermore, the themes that are least represented across KZN museums - African complex societies, African and European contact, and human evolution- are those that could potentially counter African decentring and subjection. Furthermore, displays about Zulu culture and the Zulu Kingdom tend to serve nationalistic perspectives and subject the audience to Zuluness. However, there are spaces that challenge the Eurocentric and nationalistic themes dominant in the region. Humanism perspectives combined with the use of orality may provide possibilities for African centring in museum displays and spaces.

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Table 1 Theme key

Theme Key	
A	Evolution
B	Stone Age and Hunter-Gatherers
C	Rock Art
D	Early Farming Communities or Iron Age peoples
E	Early African Complex Societies
F	Early African and European Contact
G	African Art and Music
H	Zulu Kingdom
I	Zulu Peoples' Culture
J	Indian Communities' History and Culture
K	European Settler History
L	Military and Battle History: World Wars, Anglo Boer War, and Anglo Zulu War, and Voortrekker (Boer) and Zulu Battles
M	Apartheid/ Resistance
N	Democracy
O	Current Issues

Table 2 Museum Thematic Matrix

Museum Thematic Matrix															
Group Histories	Hunter-Gatherers (HG)			African Farming Communities (FC)				Zulu Society		Indian Society		Settler Societies		National	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
Dundee															
Blood River								x	x		x	x			
Ncome								x	x		x	x		x	x
Talana			x					x	x	x	x	x			
Durban															
Bergtheil		x	x	x						x	x				
KwaMuhle												x	x	x	x
Natural Science	x	x													
Old Courthouse											x	x			x
Phansi							x		x						
Pinetown	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x		x	
Eshowe															
Vukani							x		x						
Fort Nongqayi									x		x	x			
Estcourt															
Fort Dunford		x		x						x	x	x			
Greytown															
Umvoti-Greytown		x		x				x	x	x	x	x	x		
Himeville															
Himeville			x				x				x	x			
Howick															
Howick			x	x		x				x	x	x		x	x
Ladysmith															
Siege										x	x	x			
Newcastle															
Fort Amiel		x	x						x		x	x			
Pietermaritzburg															
KwaZulu-Natal	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x
Voortrekker/ Msunduzi		x		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Old Prison								x		x	x		x	x	x
Ulundi															
KwaZulu Cultural		x		x			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
uMgungundlovu				x			x	x	x		x	x			
Vryheid															
Nieuwe Republiek											x	x			
Winterton															
Winterton		x	x	x					x	x	x	x			
Total	3	10	8	10	1	3	8	8	14	11	20	18	6	8	7

Table 3 Museums with inconsistent use of other languages

Museum	Inconsistent use of other Languages
Blood River Museum	Zulu
Fort Amiel Museum	Afrikaans
Himeville Museum	Zulu
KwaZulu-Natal Museum	Afrikaans and Zulu
Voortrekker/ Msunduzi Museum	Afrikaans and Zulu
Ladysmith Siege Museum	Zulu
Umvoti-Greytown Museum	Afrikaans and Zulu
Winterton Museum	Afrikaans and Zulu

Table 4 Entrance and vehicle fees per museum. The fees are presented in local currency, South African Rand. Vukani Zulu Cultural Museum and Fort Nongqayi are part of the same complex, so one access fee is charged.

Museum	Entrance Fee	Vehicle Fee
Blood River Museum	R45	R20
KwaZulu Cultural Museum and Ondini Historical Reserve	R35	n/a
Talana Museum	R35	n/a
uMgungundlovu multi-Media Centre	R35	n/a
Old Prison/Project Gateway	R20	n/a
Vukani Zulu Cultural Museum and Fort Nongqayi	R20	n/a
KwaZulu-Natal Museum	R15	n/a
Voortrekker/Msunduzi Museum	R15	n/a
Ladysmith Siege Museum	R11	n/a

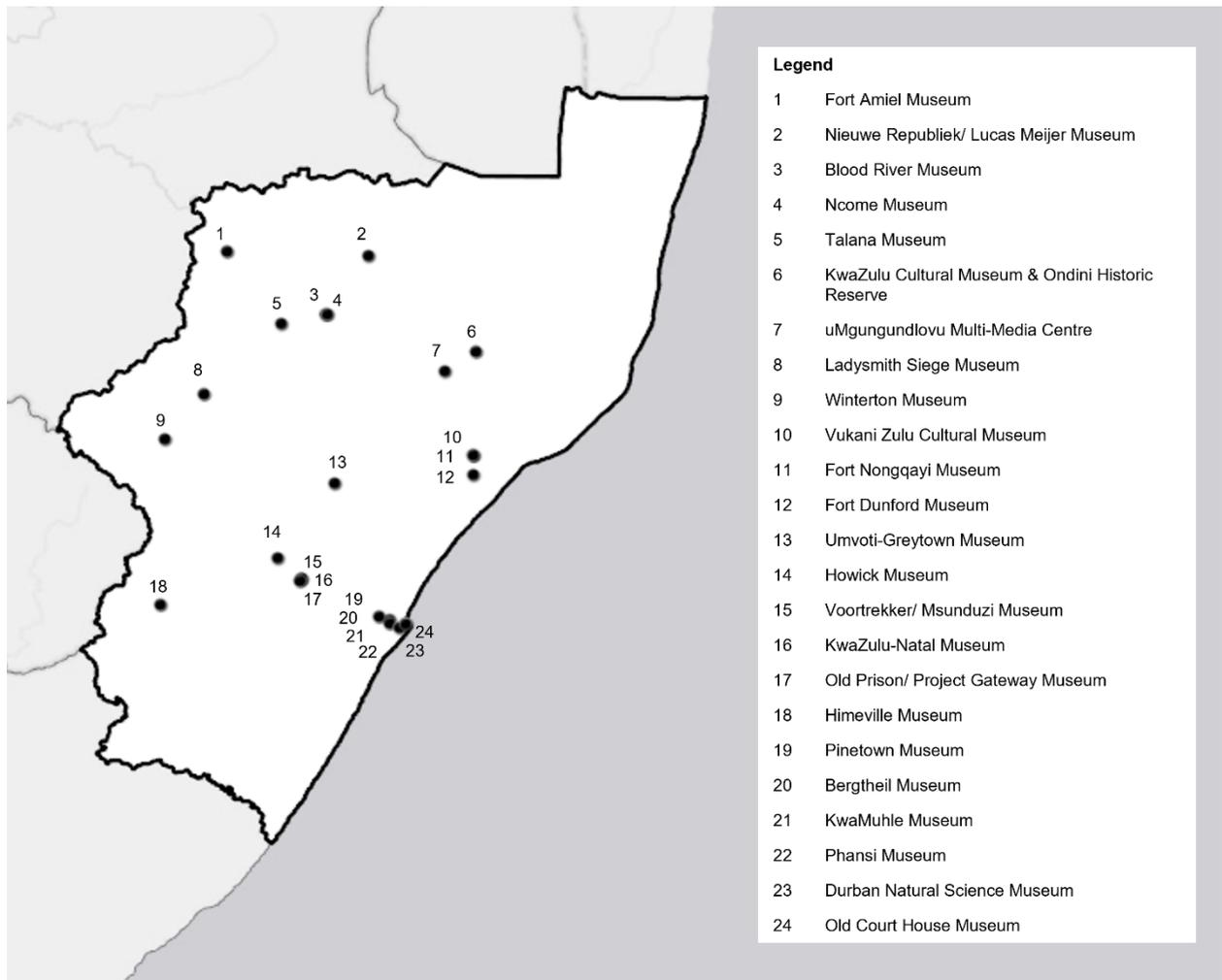


Figure 1 Map of accessed museums

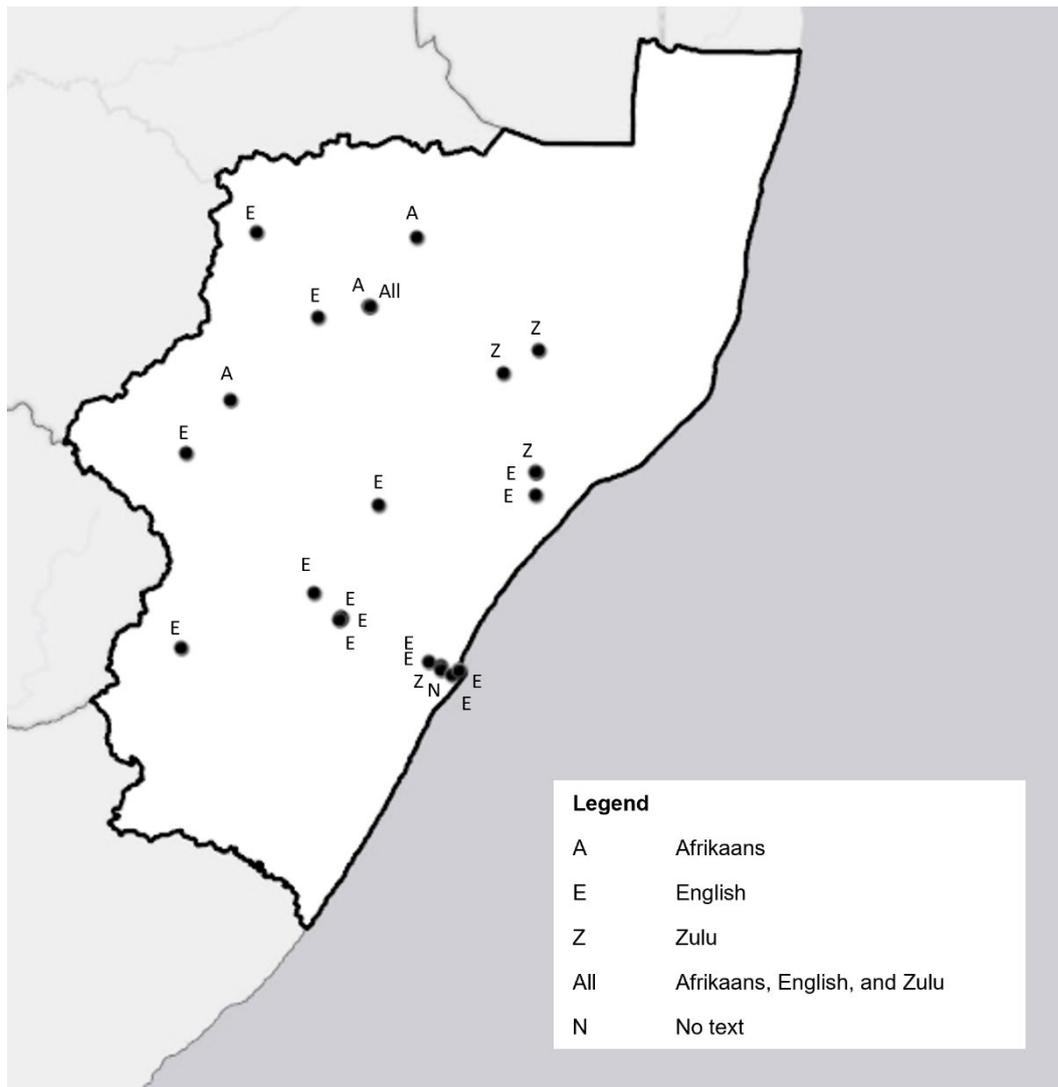


Figure 2 Distribution of languages used for museum text: 'E' for museums using only English consistently, 'Z' for museums using Zulu consistently (in addition to English), 'A' for museums using Afrikaans consistently (in addition to English), 'All' for a museum using Afrikaans, English, and Zulu consistently, and 'N' for a museum with no text.

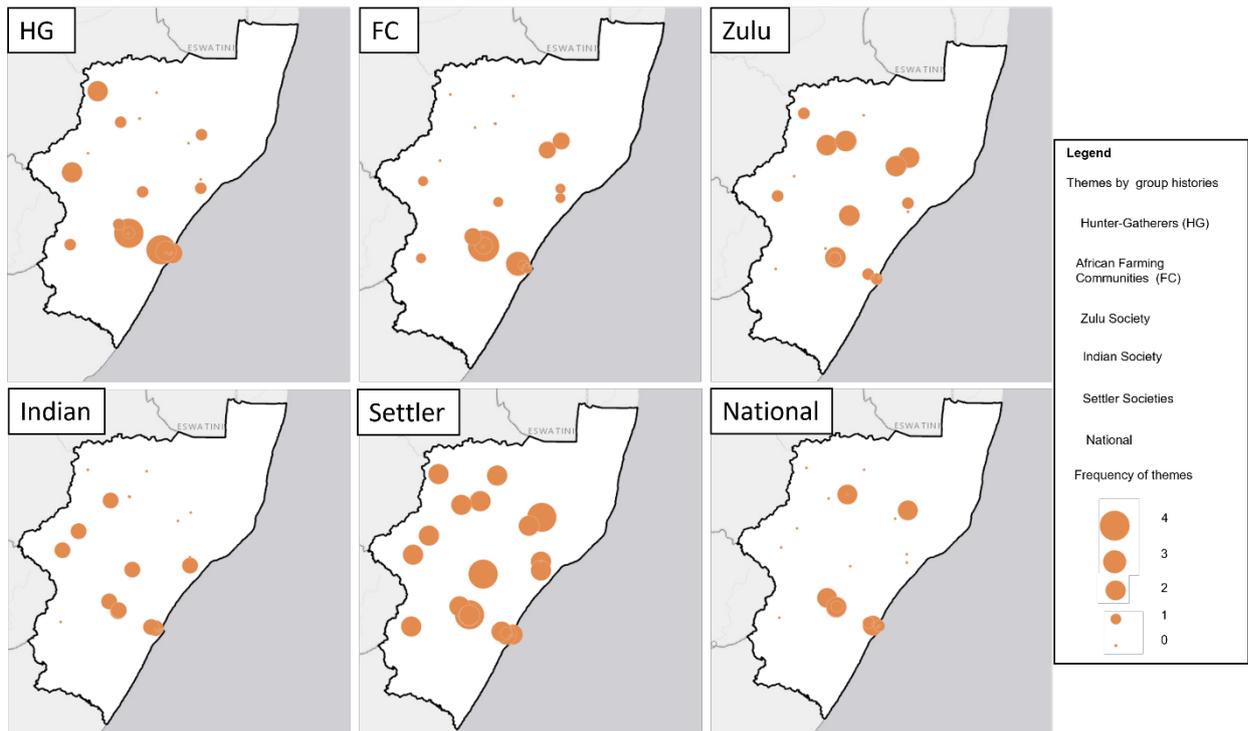


Figure 3 Distribution and frequency of themes (as categorised under group histories)

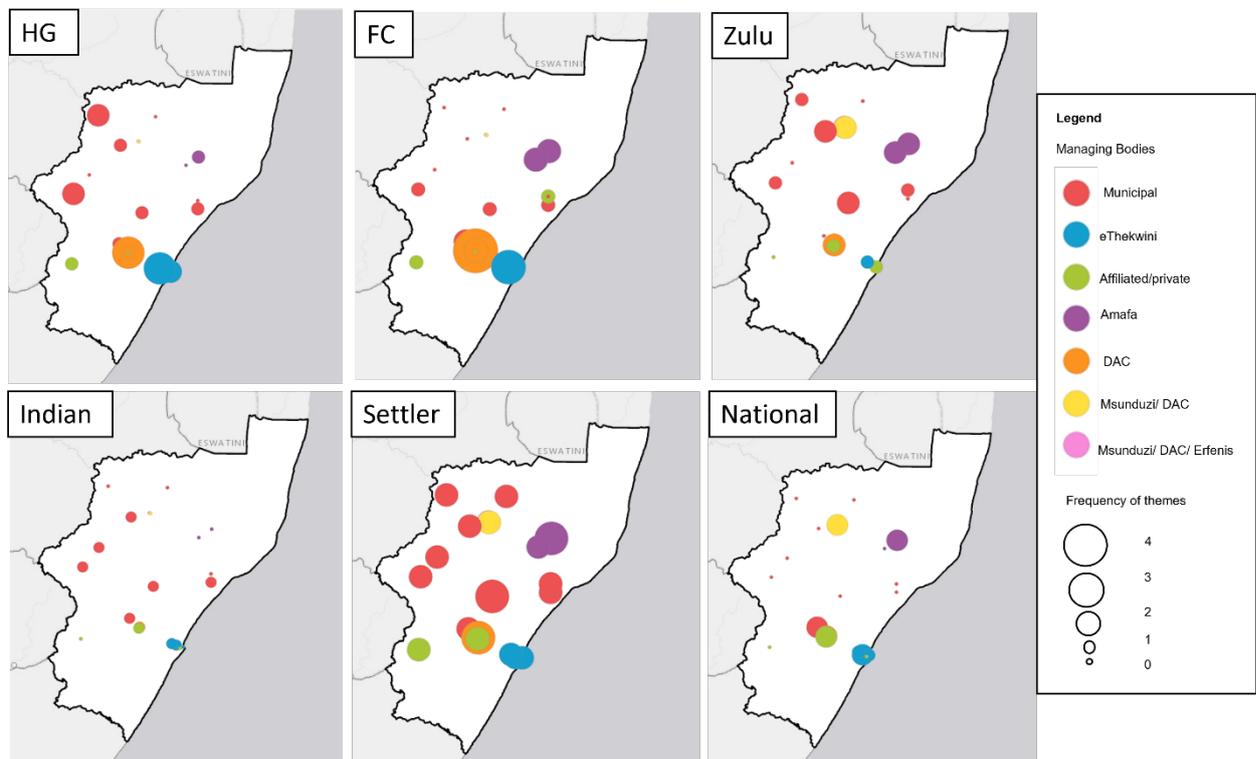


Figure 4 Distribution and frequency of themes across managing bodies (as categorised under group histories)

Appendix A

Museums and art galleries listed across various sources		Notes
1	1860 Heritage Centre	
2	African Spirituality Museum Centre	
3	Baynesfield Estate Museum	
4	Bergtheil House Museum	
5	Blockhouse Museum	
6	Border Cave Interpretive Centre	
7	Buthelezi Museum	
8	Campbell Collection at University of KwaZulu-Natal	
9	Carnegie Art Gallery	
10	Cato Manor Heritage Centre	
11	Clifton School Museum	
12	Comrades House	
13	DCO Matiwane Museum	
14	Dukuza Museum	
15	Durban Art Gallery	
16	Durban Holocaust Centre	
17	Durban Natural Science Museum	
18	East Griqualand Museum	
19	Emnambithi Cultural Centre	
20	Empangeni Art Gallery	
21	Endumeni Isandlwana Shellhole	
22	Epworth School Museum	
23	Fort Amiel Museum	
24	Fort Durnford Museum	
25	Gerhard Bhengu	

26	Greytown Museum	
27	Hilton College Museum	
28	Himeville Museum	
29	Howick Museum	
30	Inanda Seminary Museum	
31	Inchanga Railway Museum	
32	Isandlwana Battlefield	
33	Izwi Labesifazane Museum	
34	King Shaka Visitor Centre	
35	KwaMuhle Museum	
36	KwaZulu Cultural Museum	
37	KwaZulu-Natal Museum	
38	Local History Museum	
39	Luthuli Museum	
40	Macrorie House Museum	Museum closed and collection moved to Baynesfield Estate Museum
41	Margate Art Gallery	
42	Maritzburg College Museum	
43	Mazisi Kunene Museum	
44	Mgungundlovu Multimedia Centre	
45	Minerva Museum	
46	Mission House Museum	
47	Memorable Order of Tin Hats (M.O.T.H.) Warriors Gate Museum of Militaria	
48	Mphopomeni Eco Museum	
49	Mpumalanga Heritage Museum	
50	Msunduzi (incorporating the Voortrekker complex) Museum	

51	Mtonjaneni Zulu Historical Museum	Museum closed and collection moved to Talana Museum
52	Nuwe Republiek / Lukas Meijer Museum Vryheid	
53	Old Court House Museum	
54	Old Parsonage Museum	
55	Old Prison /Project Gateway Museum	
56	Phansi Museum	
57	Pietermaritzburg Girls High School Museum	
58	Pinetown Museum	
59	Port Natal Maritime	
60	Port Shepstone Cultural Historical Museum	
61	Prince Imperial Site	
62	Qhudeni Museum	
63	Qudeni Museum	
64	R.E Stevenson Museum	
65	Richmond Byrne and District Museum	
66	Rohde House Museum	
67	Royal Natal Carbineers Trust Museum	
68	Siege Museum	
69	Shiyane / Rorkes Drift Battlefield	
70	Siegetown Shellhole Museum	
71	Spioenkop Battlefield	
72	St. Dominic's Academy Museum	
73	Talana Museum	
74	Tatham Art Gallery	
75	The Science and Technology Education Centre at University of KwaZulu-Natal	

76	Tollhouse Museum	
77	uMkhumbane Cultural and Heritage Museum	
78	University of KwaZulu-Natal Alan Paton Centre & the Struggle Archive	
79	Vukani Museum	
80	Weenen Museum	
81	Western Agricultural College Museum	
82	Winterton Museum	
83	Zululand Historical Museum	

Preface to Chapter 3

The third chapter of this thesis evaluates coloniality through an assessment of display narratives at the KwaZulu-Natal Museum, a national museum in the region. Using visitor feedback, this chapter discusses possible reframing opportunities across the museum displays, whereby colonial, Apartheid, and ethnic nationalistic narratives can be better moderated by measures such as a visitor orientation resource and increased use of orality. This chapter is a manuscript submitted to the *South African Museums Association Bulletin (SAMAB)* and is under review. The manuscript follows the *SAMAB* citation style.

African Centring and Visitor feedback of the African Past: Reframing opportunities at the KwaZulu-Natal Museum, South Africa

Abstract:

In South Africa, the inclusive and reconciliatory agenda of transformation initiatives has led to a superficial inclusion of African narratives in pre-democratic era museums and monuments with residual colonial and Apartheid narratives. This results in conflicting narratives that detract from the goals of transformation. Consequently, the reframing of past museum exhibits and displays remains a concern. Using the KwaZulu-Natal Museum as a case-study, I argue that by prioritizing visitor feedback (through questionnaire responses) and African centring it is possible to reframe exhibits and displays to better meet transformation aims. Furthermore, beyond colonial and Apartheid narratives, this study suggests that possible nationalistic undertones in African centred exhibits and displays, as seen in the presentation of Zulu culture and identity, can be better moderated by measures such as a visitor orientation resource and increased use of orality.

Keywords:

coloniality, African centring, Zuluness, KwaZulu-Natal, Museums, transformation

Chapter 3. African Centring and Visitor feedback: Reframing opportunities at the KwaZulu-Natal Museum, South Africa

Coloniality within South African museums is an ongoing concern (Gibson 2019; Hoffmann 2019). Coloniality refers to the underlying racial and ethnic hierarchies that continue to influence understandings of power, knowledge, and being (Grosfoguel 2007; Maldonado-Torres 2007; Mignolo & Walsh 2018). As colonial settler institutions, museums constructed knowledge according to an evolutionary paradigm led by European civilisation ideals (MacKenzie 2009:79). Underlying museum displays and exhibits were colonial narratives of Africans as primitive and without history (Gore 2004:31). During Apartheid, most museums further contributed to subject and static representations of Africans (Mazel 2013; Wright & Mazel 1991). Beyond colonial and Apartheid narratives, segregation laws ensured that museums remained predominantly White spaces (Coombes 2003; Dominy 2017). Following the demise of the Apartheid state and the creation of a democratic state, museums were seen potentially as a place for redress and nation building and a space for inclusive and reconciliatory narratives (Corsane 2004:6-7). Yet, after a series of transformations from the late 1970s, past museum narratives continue to shape museum visitors' understandings of African histories.

Led by the new African National Congress (ANC) government, the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) report (1995) provided a foundational framework for transformation policies. Specifically, it called for museums to recognise and emphasize intangible culture as heritage and to address neglected African themes and topics. While further museum transformation policies followed ACTAG, such as the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (DACST 1996), the Cultural Institutions Act 119 of 1998, and more recently the draft Policy Framework for National Museums (DAC 2014), many museum transformation recommendations have yet to be successfully and universally implemented (Vollgraaff 2015). Consequently, the reframing of past museum exhibits and displays remains a concern (Rall 2018; Rankin 2013).

As argued by Mdanda (2016:55), the inclusive and reconciliatory agenda of transformation initiatives has led to a superficial inclusion of African narratives in pre-democratic era museums and monuments. Nonetheless, new museums and monuments without conflicting narratives may not be a solution (such as Freedom Park, see Ngcebetsha 2016). As Marshall (2019:1099) explains, post-Apartheid museums and monuments “are without doubt well-

intentioned, but in their attempt at producing consensus history invariably foster one-dimensional and ‘politically correct’ modes of remembrance.” Furthermore, considering the material needs of the vast majority in South Africa, reframing may be a more socially responsible strategy. To that point, pre-democratic era museums generally contain a wealth of African material culture collections and are, thus, key spaces for reframing opportunities (such as MuseumAfrica, see Byala 2013).

Reframing museum exhibits and displays on African peoples’ pasts requires ‘African centring’. African centring prioritizes ideological and ethical imperatives congruent with African political concerns and humanistic imperatives (Zezeza 2006). African centring elevates African histories to the standing of Western history and art and distinguishes the *longue durée* of African histories. African centring has been a key aim of transformation agendas, but a superficial application can reinforce rather than counter perceptions. And African centring can easily become a force for ethnic nationalism. In KwaZulu-Natal, Zulu culture and identity have been used as a socio-political tool to devastating effects (see Sithole 2009). Termed ‘Zuluness’, this is a construct that draws from cultural symbols to fashion and mobilize a homogenous cultural identity bloc (McNulty 2013:3-5).

Using the KwaZulu-Natal Museum as a case-study, in this paper I argue that by prioritizing visitor feedback and understandings in relation to past curatorial design and performance it is possible to undertake reframing measures of African themed exhibits and displays with residual colonial and Apartheid narratives. These suggested measures are based upon visitor questionnaire responses that gauged visitor experience and understanding of African historical exhibits and displays. Significantly, this study suggests that nationalistic undertones in African centred displays and exhibits can be better moderated by measures such as a visitor orientation resource (booklet or board with explanation of key terms, dates, timelines, and glossary) and increased use of orality.

Methodology

Drawing from a qualitative regional study conducted in 2018, this research uses discourse analysis and visitor questionnaires to assess the presentation of African histories in museums across KwaZulu-Natal. Specifically, this paper focuses on the presentation of African peoples’ pasts through exhibits and displays at KwaZulu-Natal Museum and visitor feedback and understanding of these presentations. While the displays and exhibits are analysed for

underlying narratives, this paper discusses possible reframing measures as guided by visitor feedback rather than providing a detailed account of past curatorial design and performance at the KwaZulu-Natal Museum (for that, see Rodéhn 2011, 2013, 2015).

Increasingly, museums are coming to value visitor feedback for providing insight into audience understanding, experience, and participation (Macdonald 2015; Noy 2020). Visitor feedback can be gained through various forms, such as comment books. The KwaZulu-Natal Museum had a general comment book which was underutilised by visitors, possibly due to its low visibility. Thus, this paper analyses questionnaire feedback in relation to the discourse analysis of exhibits and displays.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit a sample of the museum audience's experience of a themed selection of displays and exhibits and to gauge their understandings of African histories (for a sample of the English questionnaire, see Figure 17). To obtain feedback, a paper printed questionnaire was given to adult museum visitors (age 18 and older) over a 5-month period on selected Saturdays, Sundays, or public holidays, as these days had higher adult visitor numbers than weekdays. The questionnaire station was set-up at the reception desk, which is located at the museum's only public entry and exit way. Visitors were informed about the questionnaire and oriented to the exhibits and displays of interest following their entrance fee payment. Only the culture-history exhibits and displays pertaining to the recent past, excluding post-national themed displays and exhibits, were of interest (see Table 5). Once their tour of the museum was complete, visitors could choose to fill in the questionnaire.

To mitigate respondent satisficing (Krosnick 1999:546), a short questionnaire with varying question types and difficulty was created. The questionnaire comprised of 8 questions, including block check, open-ended, and ranking questions. The first 4 questions of the questionnaire collected demographic data: gender, age, culture, and location. The subsequent open-ended and ranking questions collected visitor responses on the displays and exhibits. Museum visitors were asked to chronologically rank the displays and exhibits according to period. Additionally, visitors were asked to share their three favourite and least favourite displays and exhibits. Lastly, to address the public's reception of the museum's engagement with Zulu culture, visitors were asked their views on the displays and exhibits that were related to this theme. Feedback from the initial questionnaire pretesting led to a rephrasing of questions, the creation of the questionnaire in two other local languages (Zulu and

Afrikaans), as well as the creation of a visitor orientation folder that provided printed images of the exhibits and displays of interest. In analysing visitor feedback, responses to open-ended questions were coded as critical, positive, or both.

KwaZulu Natal Museum and transformation

The KwaZulu-Natal Museum, formerly termed Natal Museum, is a national museum located in Pietermaritzburg, the provincial capital of KwaZulu-Natal. The museum was founded by British settlers and became a state institution in 1904 (Guest 2006). From its establishment, the focus of the museum was natural history (Brooks 1988, 2005), but the museum continued to house a range of material culture, with the material culture of Africans primarily represented in the ethnographic and archaeological collections (Rodéhn 2008:173). Over time, parts of these collections became features of permanent and temporary museum exhibits and displays. Significantly, these exhibits and displays present not only different periods of southern African history but also exhibit varying curatorial practice and narratives over the last century.

In 1970, the museum opened the 'History Hall', which compromised displays of Natal settler life in the 1870s. Specifically, a display of Victorian rooms and a reconstructed colonial Pietermaritzburg Street scene. Affirming the British settler heritage and culture in Natal, these displays not only reflect a colonial narrative of Anglo superiority over Afrikaners and Africans but also an Apartheid racial narrative, as reflected by the lack of non-White representation (Rodéhn 2011:283). Furthermore, the terming of this space as the 'History Hall' combined with the presentation of a single racial group, reinforces an Apartheid and colonial narrative of non-White groups as being without history. In 2013, the "Freedom" exhibit was opened in the 'History Hall'. This exhibit acts as a foil to the ideals and acts of 'civilised' settlers as staged in the Natal settler life displays. Yet, the exhibit continues to reflect a history divide; as defined by its theme, it primarily focuses on African histories following the arrival of White settlers into the region. Nonetheless, already in the late 1970s, the museum curators envisioned a way to correct this history divide and began conceptualising the Story of Peoples' History in Southern Africa (SOPHISA) displays and exhibits.

From the late 1970s to 1980s, an ongoing series of transformation changes began at KwaZulu-Natal Museum, starting with the plans for the SOPHISA displays and exhibits. The

presentation of Africans without history supported the terra nullius (meaning “land belonging to no one”) myth. The terra nullius myth was propagated by White settlers and then the Apartheid government to justify White rule and the appropriation of African land (Guy 2016:217-218). For example, the Apartheid state shaped historical narratives to hide or diminish the long *durée* and standing of African peoples’ pasts in South Africa, as shown by Mazel and Stewart (1987) in a review of school history textbooks. Many of the history textbooks suggested that Africans arrived at the same time as Europeans in South Africa, ignoring more recent archaeological and historical research which showed that African settlement in South Africa was significantly earlier and more extensive. Thus, to counter Apartheid endorsed historical narratives, museum curators began planning the SOPHISA displays and exhibits in 1979 (Rodéhn 2008:194). SOPHISA is a series of themed displays and exhibits in chronological order that present the long *durée* of Indigenous and African histories in the region.

In the 1980s, the museum further addressed issues of Eurocentric classification and ethnographic collection biases through the “African Art” (1984) exhibit. At the 1987 South African Museums Association (SAMA) conference, the Eurocentric nature and content of South African museums was stressed (Stuckenberg 1987; Wright & Mazel 1991). As argued by Stuckenberg (1987:293 & 297), the director of Natal Museum at the time, museums were White spaces and that Africans, if represented, were done so through Eurocentric displays of the other through White collected and classified ethnographic objects. Addressing this classification and collection bias, the KwaZulu-Natal Museum launched the temporary exhibit “African Art”. The “African Art” exhibit was a reframing of ethnographic collections as art. Exhibits based on ethnographic collections often present Africans as timeless and static (Rankin 2013:78). Thus, it was not simply a reframing of craft as art, but an acknowledgement and counter to a colonial power structure that dictates what is categorised as ‘civilised’ versus ‘primitive.’ Therefore, this reclassification of material culture was essentially an ideological attempt to dislodge a Eurocentric devaluing of African peoples’ cultures. However, the “African Art” exhibit may rather serve than counter coloniality. As Rodéhn (2015:176) states, the limited artist and contextual information for the material culture may lead to an ongoing classification of African art as less than Western art.

With the end of Apartheid in 1994, the KwaZulu-Natal Museum continued to address how to centre African material culture. Following government pressure to create a culturally relevant

ethnic display to KwaZulu-Natal (Dlamini 2016:478), the “Sisonke” temporary exhibit was launched in 1997. Wary of a Zulu nationalism agenda and the replication of Eurocentric stereotypes, the exhibit’s purpose was to present a complex perspective on ‘Zuluness’ aimed at unsettling Zulu homogeneity and highlighting the constructed nature of ethnic identities (Dlamini 2016; Rodéhn 2015). Yet, initial audience feedback suggests that this complex counter narrative was alienating (Dlamini 2016:479). Furthermore, over time, this exhibit has been gutted, leaving material and narrative gaps (empty spaces where items or information boards once were displayed).

Yet, this refrain from ‘Zuluness’ is not consistent throughout the museum. The Nguni Indigenous Knowledge (2014) display located in the “Mammal Hall”, presents Nguni-speakers’ culture and traditions through animals associated with royalty; traditional wear; traditional healing, and worldview. Nguni is a parent language group, under which Zulu falls along with Ndebele, Xhosa, and Swati (Van Warmelo 1974). In contrast to a more recent Zulu identity, Nguni identity have a long history in the region, and peoples associated with this linguistic identity date back to at least a 1000 years ago (Huffman 2004). The display intends to recognise and create appreciation for African Indigenous knowledge, a key transformation aim, but the placement of the display in the “Mammal Hall” is problematic by echoing colonial classifications of Africans as uncivilised. Furthermore, the Indigenous knowledge narrative is subject to a dominant Eurocentric conservation ideology found in the space. While this display attempts to showcase the culture of a broader identity, Nguni-speakers, aspects such as a prominent portrait of the Zulu King may blur the distinction between Nguni-speakers and Zulu-speakers (see Figure 16). This blurring of distinction allows for the classification of Nguni to become synonymous with Zulu and ‘Zuluness’.

Questionnaire themes and museum displays and exhibits

All the culture-history displays and exhibits, except for the Nguni Indigenous Knowledge display are found on the first floor of the museum (for maps of each floor, see Figure 5 and Figure 6). The following section presents the displays and exhibits as presented in the questionnaire, as themes and chronological periods in South African history (San hunter-gatherers, African Iron Age, Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe, Portuguese East African coastal trade, Zulu Culture, Pietermaritzburg Settlers). The “Human Origins” exhibit was not included in the questionnaire, as the exhibit was likely to detract visitor feedback from the study’s focus due to the exhibit’s evolution and religious relativism narrative.

San hunter-gatherers

The San hunter-gatherers' theme is represented by the "San hunter-gatherers in Natal 2000 years ago" (1994) and "Drakensberg Cave" (1992) exhibits. The exhibits showcase Indigenous hunter-gatherer lifeways and cater specifically for young learners through tactile and visual displays. Both exhibits showcase material of an archaeological nature: the San hunter-gatherers exhibit presents Stone Age artefacts and their use and function in hunting-gathering communities and the Drakensberg Cave exhibit is a life-size model of a cave with rock art.

African Iron Age

The African Iron Age, an archaeological term for the migration and settling of African peoples into Southern Africa from the last 2000 years ago (Huffman 2007), is presented in the "The New Way of Life" (1994) exhibit. This exhibit opens with a model of an Iron Age village at night, with the 'sounds of village life' in the background. Following this model, the rest of the exhibit is sectioned into glass case displays that contain artefacts with textual information on the following topics: settlement, food, technology, worldview, linguistics, and ceramic style.

Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe

The Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe displays are part of the "African Towns and Trade" (2006) exhibit. These settlements are pre-colonial African towns, though cities may be a more appropriate term for these settlements, that became more widely known through archaeological research. The displays are a mix of visual and textual components, but the built environment of the displays incorporate key archaeological features of these settlements, such as the signature stonework used to build walls and enclosures at Great Zimbabwe. These displays highlight Africa's connections to global trade networks and the development of regional powers prior to European settlement in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Portuguese East African coastal trade

This is a display that presents African relations with the early Portuguese traders and settlers along the East African coast. Significantly, this display highlights global expansion in the 16th century from an Afrocentric perspective. The display is modelled after a ship deck with

incorporated glass display cases. The original display was installed in 1988 but was reworked in 2005 (Rodéhn 2008:20 & 232).

Zulu culture

The exhibit and displays which contribute to this theme are the “African Art” exhibit, the “Sisonke” exhibit, and the Nguni Indigenous Knowledge display. The “African Art” exhibit is a collection of striking ethnographic artefacts of Asante (denoting people of a West African language group) or Nguni origin, including clay, grass, textile, beads, wood, and metal artefacts. Across from the “African Art” exhibit is a separate exhibit, titled “Sisonke” (meaning “We are Together”), displaying material culture often thought of as traditional in Zulu culture, such as beadwork, weapons, and more recent objects and more recent artefacts associated with local ethnic and resistance struggles. On a different level of the museum, the Nguni Indigenous Knowledge display is located in the “Mammal Hall” exhibit.

Pietermaritzburg settlers

Located in the “History Hall” exhibit, the Pietermaritzburg settlers’ theme is represented by the Victorian Rooms and Colonial Pietermaritzburg Street displays (both opened in 1970). These displays recreate the life of White colonial settlers in Natal through a reconstructed street scene of colonial Pietermaritzburg and a showcase of a White settler home and artefacts characteristic of the late Victorian period

Questionnaire Results

On average, 18 per cent of adult visitors filled in the questionnaire per day. The questionnaire was completed by 67 adult visitors, with a visitor population of at least 221 adults over the questionnaire period (see Table 6). The visitors on these dates were predominantly groups of adults with children (generally, young families); usually, one adult would fill in the questionnaire on behalf of their group. The number of children visitors is generally half or more than half of the number of adult visitors. Visitors primarily used the English questionnaire, no one used an Afrikaans questionnaire, and one visitor used a Zulu questionnaire (which was later translated to English for analysis).

There were some correlations between demographic data and responses (see Table 7, Table 8 Figure 5, and Figure 6). There was a higher number of females (n=36) than males (n=29) who filled-in the questionnaire (with 2 no responses). Males were more likely than females to

leave critical comments (2:1 ratio) with nearly the inverse true for positive comments. This could reflect regional cultural and gender dynamics. Most respondents were between the age of 29-49 years (n=43). Regarding culture, there was a range of responses, from Christian, Hindu, Zulu, English, Indian, African, European, White, traditional, Tswana, Congolese, to South African. Notably, people defined culture by religion, race, ethnicity, or region. Most respondents were South Africans living in KwaZulu-Natal, with more than half of the respondents living in Pietermaritzburg (n=37). This follows regional tourism data, which shows that from 2006 to 2017 most tourists are domestic (Schalkwijk, Tifflin, & Kohler 2017:41). No further correlations between the demographic data and responses were found.

The public's reception of these displays was gathered by a ranking of the three most and least favoured displays and a comment section regarding displays on Zulu culture (see Figure 7). Respondents favoured the following themes, exhibits, and displays: Zulu culture, Pietermaritzburg settlers, and San hunter-gatherers. Paradoxically, the Zulu culture exhibits and displays were also the least favoured. Thus, the Zulu culture display had a mixed reception. The Portuguese East African coastal trade and the Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe displays were some of the least favoured following Zulu culture.

Out of those who shared their thoughts on the Zulu themed displays and exhibits, 52 per cent were positive. Positive comments ranged from those who were proud to have their heritage on display and found it informative: "It makes me happy to see my culture's material culture displayed and shown prominence and respect;" "It is so attractive because it shows us the way Zulu people were [to] survive and they were so creative;" "It is so important to me as I learnt about my roots;" "Beadwork is very good, I like it, some of the these beads are still weaved in SA especially for ceremonial purposes and for cultural preservation". Nonetheless, one visitor shared how one of these displays triggered traumatic memories, as they state the "Sisonke display, it reminds me of the political violence we once had in this province, I like the beadwork displayed, I hate the home made weapons". Another set of displays that triggered unease were the Pietermaritzburg settlers displays; some visitors stated that the displays were their least favourite as "it brought bad memories" and "too many painful memories of the country we now live in".

Critical comments on the Zulu themed displays and exhibits highlighted the static nature and lack of topic depth. These comments ranged from: "It is very interesting but could be more in depth;" "should include Zulu achievement and [...] should include female roles of the era;"

“More could be done, not enough information;” “Needs to be more interactive;” and “Wasn’t overly impressed as they are just in a case. No context from images”. Similar comments about a lack of information occur with the Portuguese East African coastal trade display, another display that attempted an African centred discourse. As one visitor states on the Portuguese East African coastal trade display, “there is lesser information on the displays so some people find it hard to understand the gallery”. Overall, these comments highlight that a curatorial decision to avoid a standard presentation of Zulu culture and history has left some visitors feeling they are missing information about the Zulu past, as one visitor states: “The displays are good and informative but there is a lack of Zulu history, especially the Zulu kingdom”.

Lastly, the questionnaire attempted to gauge the visitor’s understanding of the African past, through a chronological ordering or ranking of the historical periods these displays and exhibits represent. The response rate for this section was low, with 42 per cent of respondents leaving this section of the questionnaire blank. Nonetheless, out of all the respondents, only 4 per cent of respondents managed the correct chronology. The low response rate for this question suggests that visitors did not wish to expand effort on this question or may not have understood how the periods or themes related to the museum displays and exhibits. However, as shown by the low correct rate for those who answered this question, it is more likely that visitors did not have a clear understanding of the sequence of groups or periods in the region.

Understanding of African peoples’ pasts

The reframing of the “African Art” exhibit highlights the significance of contextual information. Contextual information can provide a socio-complexity and significance frame for visitors. A lack of this framing was noted in visitor comments who called for more specific information. Nonetheless, when contextual information was provided the reclassification objective was well received by visitors, as seen by their comments on the Zulu beadwork display within the “African Art” exhibit. This display presents Zulu culture as dynamic, relatable, and innovative by comparing beadwork to modern forms of communication. Whereby, the display uses relatable terms to explain socio-cultural dynamics (i.e., by explaining how beadwork functioned like a “text message”). While there may be debate surrounding the accuracy of such a comparison (see Wickler & Seibt 1992), past Zulu beadwork could communicate highly specific and contextualized messages for the receiver (Winters 2009).

Furthermore, 'Zuluness' remains a counter to a more complex understanding of African peoples' pasts. An avoidance of 'Zuluness' may act to reinforce perceptions or leave visitors unsatisfied regarding their expectations. The "Sisonke" exhibit was the museum's only engagement with 'Zuluness' and was not a clear statement but rather a deconstructed view of African ethnic history and identity in the region. Nonetheless, the exhibit no longer functioned on this ideological level. And visitor feedback, from its initial unveiling, may argue that it never did (see Dlamini 2016). De-construction without reconstruction can confuse understandings of the past and lead to the gap being filled by popular understandings, such as 'Zuluness'. Furthermore, the unintentional blurring of distinction between Nguni and Zulu can present a counter construction of Zulu identity as stretching back to the last 500 years ago. Without a clear statement on this potential misunderstanding, all African peoples' pasts are relegated to the Zulu past with no distinction.

Lastly, the response, or lack thereof, to the chronological ranking of periods question suggests a poor visitor understanding of the sequence of the region's history. This is surprising as this is one of the only museums in the region to provide an in-depth view of the region's history and African histories, prior to the Zulu Kingdom. Additionally, the SOPHISA displays and exhibits are presented in a chronological sequence. Thus, future directions need to consider how best to orientate visitors to the region's African histories, prior to the Zulu kingdom.

Future directions

The KwaZulu-Natal Museum is an eclectic combination of past and contemporary exhibits and displays in a limited space, resulting in the lack of a unified narrative. This lack of a unified narrative can create awkward, exciting, and mystifying spaces. However, it can also lead to misrepresentation and audience dissatisfaction, confusion, or lack of understanding.

Nonetheless, there are some reframing steps that the museum can consider, such as prioritizing African centring as well as audience understanding and experience. Moving in the right direction, the museum dismantled the 'temporary' "Sisonke" exhibit in February 2020 (KwaZulu-Natal Museum 2020). Further steps include providing an orientation space as the visitors enter the museum, where key terms and a timeline are provided. For instance, the context for the term 'Southern African Bantu language groups' and who it refers to is not explained in the museum displays or exhibits (the exception was a board in the temporary

“Road to Democracy” exhibit, which is now closed). This explanation alongside a timeline could dispel possible misunderstandings related to Nguni-speakers and Zulu identity constructions. Furthermore, to aid visitor’s chronological understanding of the displays, a consistent date style should be used throughout the museum. Throughout the museum varying date styles were used, i.e., 1200 ya, 11th century AD, 1050 AD, and 1300s, which may be confusing and alienating to museum visitors.

Furthermore, a more unified narrative can be created through orality, with in-person tours or audio recordings. Contextual information, in the form of orality, provides a more current narrative without the need to update exhibits or displays, many of which were temporary in design but remained in place due to time and resource constraints. For instance, the discussion on the African Iron Age and past African farming communities could be framed within a current appreciation of technology and science. This reframing would update the display or exhibit and challenge stereotypes. Furthermore, orality can increase accessibility and inclusivity by delivering a narrative of the content in more than one language.

Conclusion

This study suggests that accessing the audience’s perspectives to museum displays reveals concerns as well as successes in curatorial and design decisions. African histories are valued by the museum public, but museums can do more to increase the audience’s overall understanding of these histories. Furthermore, African centring within museum displays and exhibits can be better navigated by creating orientation spaces and increasing the use of orality.

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Appendix 1

Table 5 Theme and corresponding displays

Theme	Displays with opening year of exhibition
Pietermaritzburg Settlers	<i>The Victorian rooms and Colonial Pietermaritzburg</i> (1970)
San Hunter Gathers	<i>The San Hunter-gathers in Natal 2000 years ago</i> (1994) and <i>Drakensberg Cave</i> (1992), part of the SOPHISA display
Great Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe	<i>Towns and Trades</i> (2006), part of the SOPHISA display
African Iron Age	<i>New Way of life</i> (1994), part of the SOPHISA display
Portuguese East African Coastal Trade	<i>Gold, Spices, and Portuguese trade</i> (2005- a redesign/stripping of the 1988 installation), part of the SOPHISA display
Zulu Culture	<i>African Art</i> exhibit (1984), <i>Sisonke</i> exhibit (1997), and the <i>Indigenous Knowledge</i> display (2014)

Table 6 Visitor and filled-in questionnaire numbers for corresponding dates

Date	Visitors (adult)	Visitors (children)	Filled questionnaires	Percentage of adult visitors filling in questionnaires
18/03/18	35	23	12	34
21/03/18	45	38	6	13
25/03/18	21	13	2	10
19/05/18	-	-	16	-
20/05/18	-	-	4	-
26/05/18	11	26	2	18
09/06/18	-	-	8	-
14/07/18	69	77	10	14
28/07/18	40	56	7	18

* All percentages are rounded off to the nearest number.

**The visitor numbers for 19/05/18 and 20/05/18 were not separated according to adult and children on these days, as the museum had free admission in honour of international museum day, May 18th. The total number of visitors for the 19th and 20th were 249 and 85, respectively. Additionally, I was unable to collect the visitor numbers for 09/06/18.

Table 7 Locality of respondents

Region	Further details	Respondents
KwaZulu-Natal	Pietermaritzburg	37
	Coastal region, Durban, and surrounding areas	9
	Midlands	4
	South Drakensberg	2
	Ladysmith	1
	Non-specific	5
South Africa	Non-specific	2
International	Non-specific	3
Respondent did not fill in		4

Table 8 Respondents' reception of Zulu display including gender

	Number of respondents	Male	Female	No response
Respondent did not fill in	8	-	8	-
Comments on another topic	4	2	2	-
Positive and critical	4	3	1	-
Positive	35	12	22	1
Critical	16	10	5	1

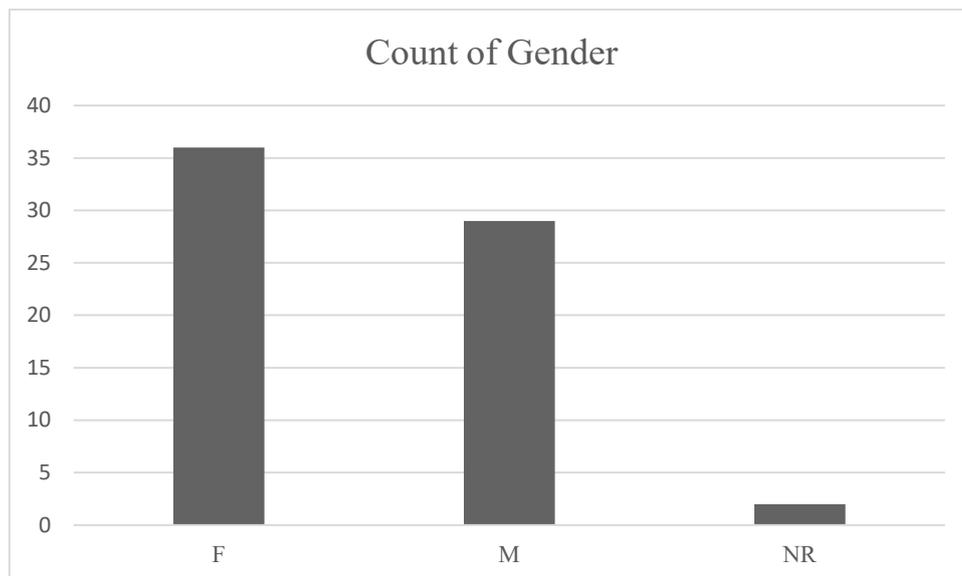


Figure 5 Gender of Respondents (F=Female, M=Male, NR=no response)

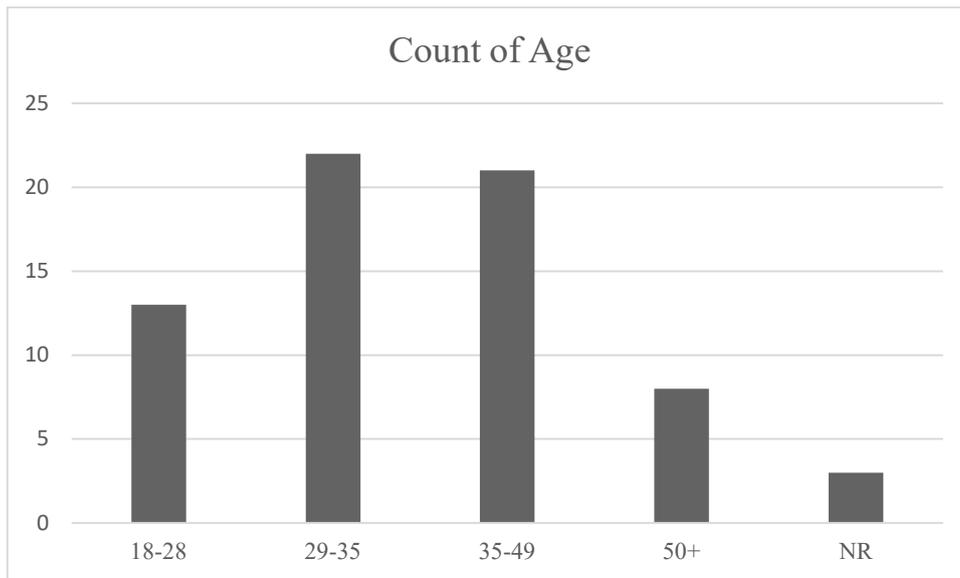


Figure 6 Age of Respondents (NR=no response)

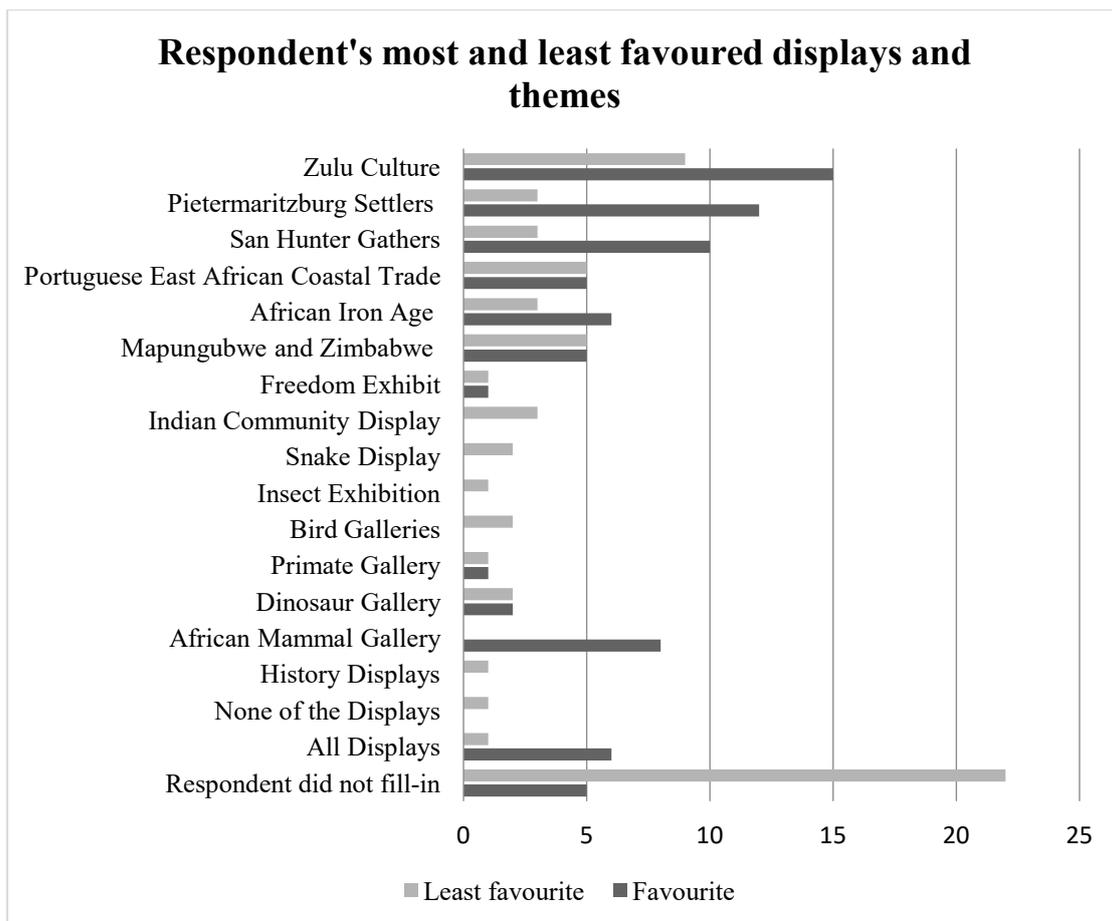


Figure 7 Respondents' most and least favoured displays and themes

Appendix 2

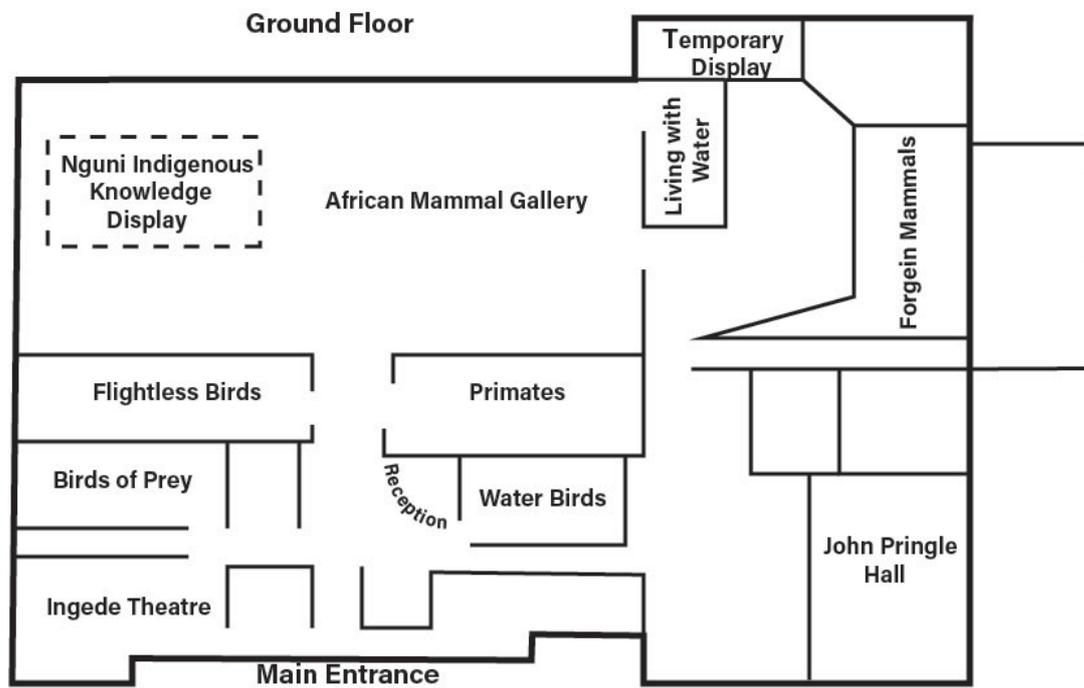


Figure 8 Ground floor

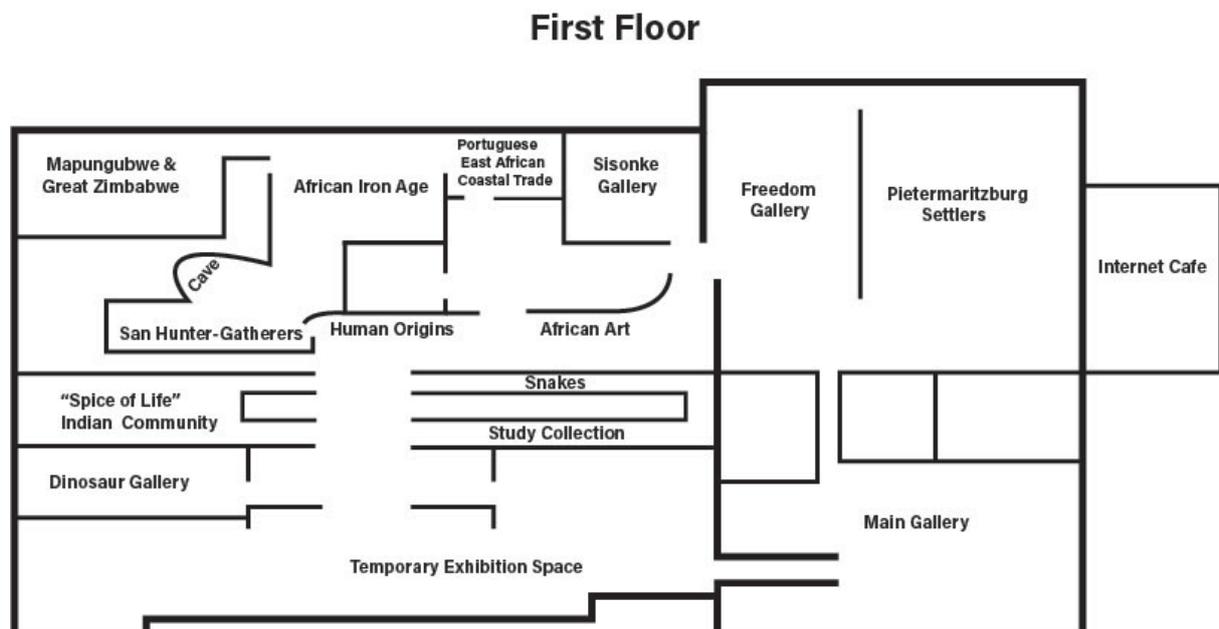


Figure 9 First floor



Figure 10 'History Hall', photograph by author.



Figure 11 The Victorian Rooms display, photograph by author.



Figure 12 San Hunter Gathers in Natal 2000 years ago display, photograph by author.

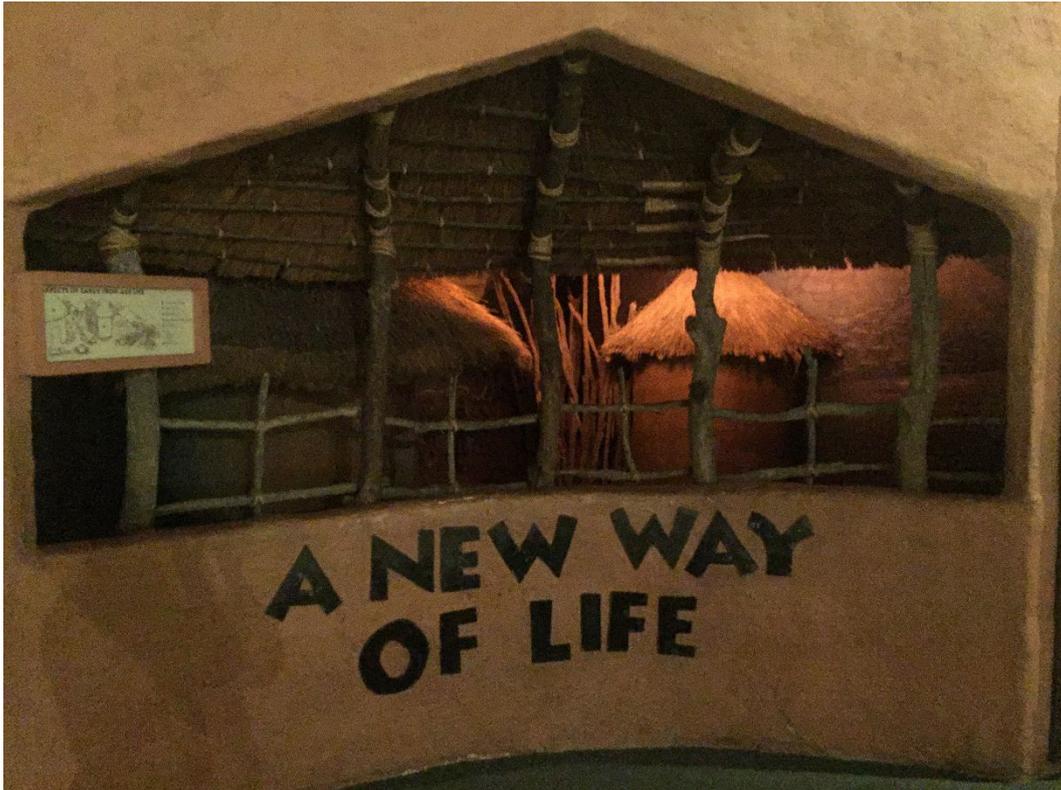


Figure 13 A New Way of Life display, photograph by author.



Figure 14 Towns and Trades display, photograph by author.



Figure 15 Gold, Spices, and Portuguese trade display, photograph by author.



Figure 16 African Art exhibit, photograph by author.

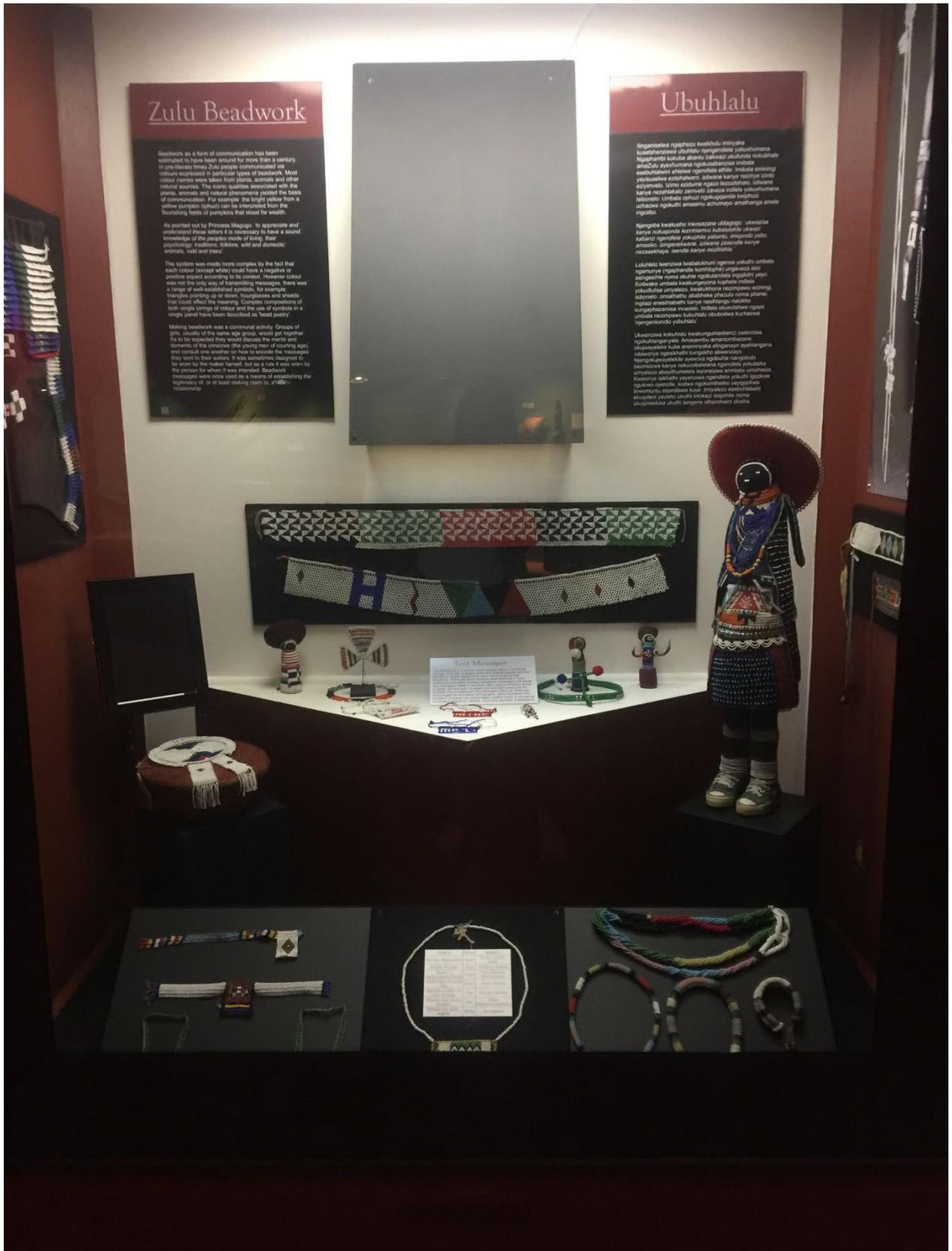


Figure 17 'Zulu Beadwork' display within the African Art exhibit, photograph by author.

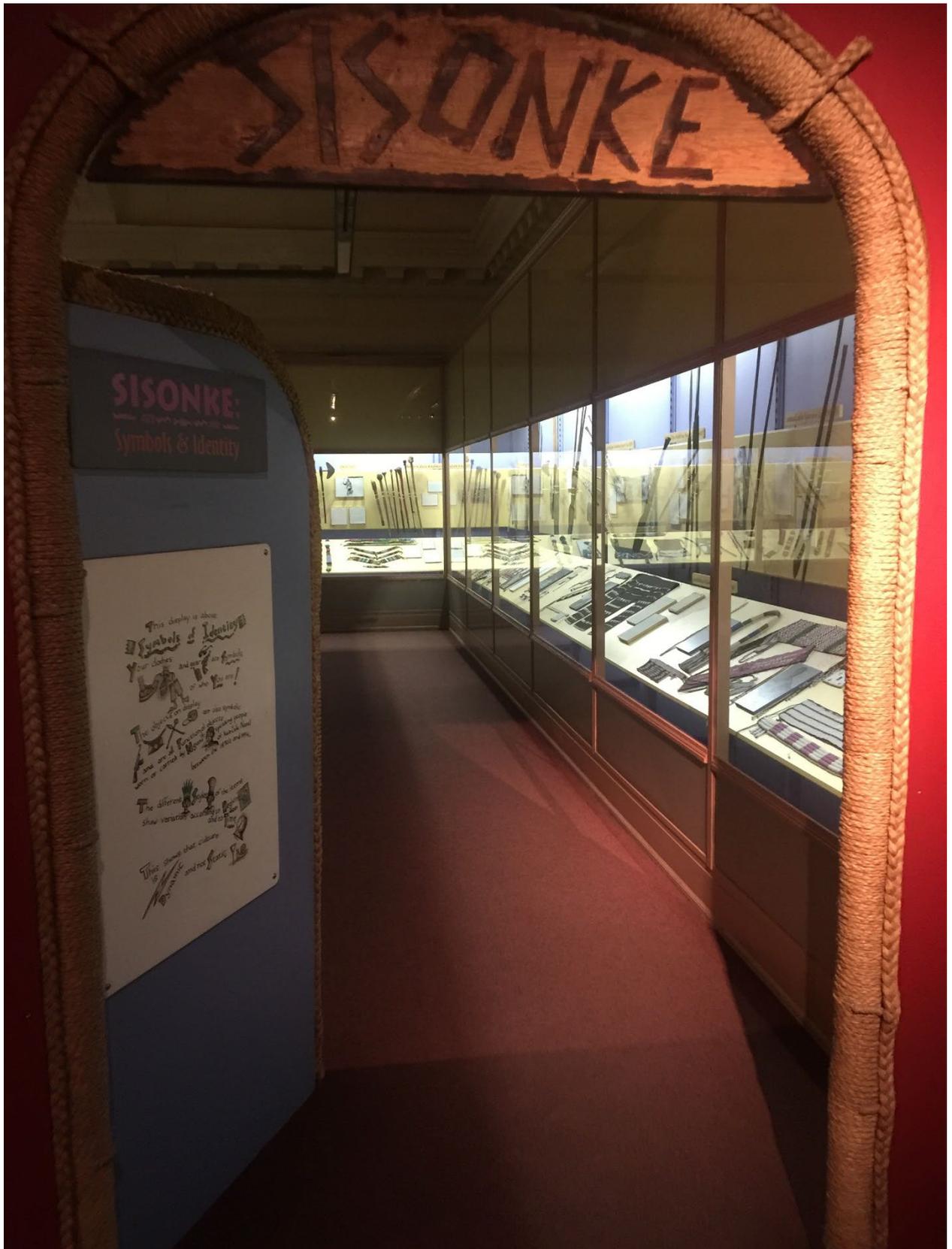


Figure 18 Sisonke exhibit, photograph by author.



Figure 19 Indigenous Knowledge display, photograph by author.

1. What is your gender?

- Male Female
 Other

2. What is your age?

- 18-28 29-35
 35-49 50-onward

3. What is your culture? _____

4. Where do you live?

- In KwaZulu-Natal, if so, where? _____
 In South Africa, but not KwaZulu-Natal
 Outside of South Africa

5. Number the following displays/themes in chronological order, starting from oldest to most recent:

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| ___ Great Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe | ___ Zulu Culture |
| ___ Portuguese East African Coastal Trade | ___ African Iron Age |
| ___ San Hunter Gathers | ___ PMB Settlers |

6. Out of the above displays, which was your favourite and why?

7. Out of the above displays, which was your least favourite and why?

8. What did you think of the displays on Zulu culture (*Sisonke* and Zulu craft in upstairs gallery, and Zulu indigenous knowledge in the mammal hall)?

Figure 20 English Questionnaire Sample

Preface to Chapter 4

The fourth chapter of this thesis evaluates coloniality through an assessment of education on African histories as observed in museum learner tours at the KwaZulu-Natal Museum. These observations are further supported and contextualised using tour competency evaluations, teacher tour feedback, and staff interviews. This chapter argues that museum education programs should be sensitive to how their resources can be used to support teachers in the teaching of African histories. Furthermore, museum educators need to be oriented and better supported to their pivotal role in African centring, where Eurocentric perspectives can be countered by archaeological reconstructions. This chapter is a manuscript that is yet to be submitted. The manuscript follows the American Psychological Association (APA) citation style.

Museum resources, teacher curriculum support, and teaching of the African past

Abstract:

Transformation agendas in post-Apartheid South Africa focused on the role of education in reconciling differences and creating an inclusive society. Specifically, the role of history education was emphasized as means to address those whose pasts were silenced, misrepresented, or neglected as well as to provide a space for deliberation and critical thinking. Thus, the inclusion of archaeology as an account of deep African histories in the region is necessary to meet these transformation agendas. Museums as spaces of education may be a key resource for teachers in addressing the demands of the history curriculum and African centring. Through the observation of learner tours, teacher feedback, staff interviews, and tour competency evaluations, this paper argues that museums need to be sensitive to whether, and in what ways, their resources support teachers. Specifically, museum educators need to be oriented to their pivotal role in engaging and guiding learners in challenging and stimulating conversations on matters of African histories.

Keywords: KwaZulu-Natal Museum, African centring, curriculum aid, curriculum supplement, and archaeology.

Chapter 4. Museum resources, teacher curriculum support, and the teaching of African histories

Transformation agendas in post-Apartheid South Africa focused on the role of education in reconciling differences and creating an inclusive society (Engelbrecht et al., 2016). Specifically, the role of history education was emphasized as means to address those whose pasts were silenced, misrepresented, or neglected as well as to provide a space for deliberation and critical thinking (Tibbitts & Weldon, 2017). Aligning with this imperative was the need for African centring in education (Ramose, 2004). African centring stresses ideological and ethical priorities corresponding to African political concerns, but within a humanistic framework (Zezeza, 2006), whereby historical silences or misrepresentations are challenged by prioritizing more inclusive histories that emphasizes African agency and perspectives (Schmidt & Walz, 2007). African centring relies on, among other critical interventions, the inclusion of archaeology in school history education, as archaeology allows for deep, complex, and diverse perspectives of African peoples' pasts.

Education programs and curriculums tend to present history only as the past documented by written records (Stone, 1994). This distinction served the Apartheid state's ideological and political agenda by emphasizing a history that begins with the arrival of people of European descent to the region (Witz et al., 2017). It neglects the deep African histories in the region, often termed the pre-colonial past⁹, which is primarily documented through oral histories and archaeological research (Ogundiran, 2013; Zezeza, 2007). Thus, post-Apartheid curriculum changes show an increased focus on South African as well as African histories through the inclusion of archaeological research of long pasts (see national curriculum statements, 2002 and 2012). Nonetheless, teachers may not have sufficient support to navigate these curriculum demands.

The burden of transformation has largely fallen on teachers. Apartheid created a racially segregated school system where differential access, provision, teaching training and qualifications, as well as learning experiences and outcomes were normalised and promoted (Christie, 2016). Following Apartheid, the government attempted to address this unequal education system through a conflicting mix of equity and market-driven approaches, which has led to a marked division of resource rich versus resource poor schools along racial, class,

⁹ The term pre-colonial, while delineating a time before European expansion into a region, subjects the African past to an Imperial understanding by which colonialism is "the pivot around which African history spins" (Zezeza 2006:128). For a further discussion of this point, see Hamilton (2017).

and geographic boundaries (Christie, 2016; Spaul, 2012). Thus, Tibbitts and Weldon (2017) argue that to implement the new history curriculum, teachers require further training and upskilling. Specifically, the teaching of topics with an archaeological nature may be difficult as this frame of reference may be foreign to resource poor school learners as well as teachers (Esterhuysen & Lane, 2013). Thus, museums as spaces of education and archaeology may be a key resource for teachers in addressing the demands of the history curriculum and African centring.

Heeding an audit culture of accountability and calls for social relevance, museums today define their purpose as institutions of education (Corsane, 2004; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007; Kusimba & Klehm, 2013). Museum education programs range in approach and audience (Rall, 2016), but there is a public demand for museums to tailor their education programs to the national curriculum, catering for teachers and school learners (Esterhuysen & Lane, 2013). Marcus et al. (2012) categorize museum resources into three categories: physical, human, and online. The physical resources are the museums store and display of material culture and built environment; these resources provide an opportunity for learners to have a sensory experience of the past. The human resources are the museum staff, specifically the specialist (across natural and human sciences) and education staff (from tour guides to outreach specialists); working with teachers, museum staff develop learner comprehension and awareness of the significance of curriculum topics through education programs and tours. Online resources can range from website content and virtual museum tours to open access 3D material culture databases; these resources increase access to the museum. Accordingly, museum resources can complement and enhance curriculum learning.

Using the KwaZulu-Natal Museum (KZN Museum) as a case study, I assess the use of museum resources in supporting teachers in meeting the curriculum demands. The KZN Museum is well situated for this case study as it is one of the only museums in the region with substantial physical and human resources on long pasts, providing deep histories of African peoples' pasts (see Chapter 2). Through the observation of learner tours, teacher feedback, staff interviews, and tour competency evaluations, this paper argues that museums need to be sensitive to whether, and in what ways, their resources support teachers. Specifically, museums must consider how to adapt museum resources to meet the differential demands of teachers from resource rich versus poor schools, such as large group sizes and multilingual learners, without further entrenching this divide. Furthermore, increased training

of tour guides as well as interaction between specialists and education staff may improve the integration of archaeology and African centring in museum education programs.

School divisions, the national curriculum, and archaeology

Race, class, and geography often correlate to the division between resource rich and resource poor schools in post-Apartheid South Africa. Previous White schools, predominantly located in urban regions, are fees based, have more resources (such as more teachers and reduced class sizes), and serve a more diverse set of learners. Whereas, previous Black schools, predominately located in former township (semi-urban) or rural locations, do not charge learner fees, have less resources, and serve primarily Black learners (Christie, 2016). While these schools differ according to resources, all schools are expected to adhere to the national Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for each learner phase.

The CAPS document for each learner phase differs in its approach to history and archaeology. The African past, specifically the long past, is covered in the Intermediate (grades 4-6) and Senior phase (grades 7-9). Whereas the colonial past to present is covered in Further Education and Training (FET) phase (grades 10-12). From the Intermediate and Senior phases, the learning of the past is subsumed under the Social Sciences. While the learning of the past at the FET phase is dependent on students selecting History as a subject.

Archaeology is incorporated into the Social Sciences CAPS document for Intermediate and Senior phase learners (grades 4-9). The CAPS document for grades 4-6 introduces archaeology as a source of history and emphasizes the significance of archaeology in providing “a history for the majority of present-day southern African and South African citizens” (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 39). The CAPS document for grades 7-9 is not as explicit as the CAPS grades 4-6 document on the role of archaeology in history but uses archaeological evidence to support the accounts of written sources (see, Department of Basic Education, 2011b, p.36). History, at the FET phase, discusses local and world events from the 17th century to present (Department of Basic Education, 2011a). However, the FET History CAPS document does not include archaeological evidence or refer to archaeology as a source of history. Thus, the national curriculum at the FET phase replicates a written record as history divide. Teachers looking to correct this curriculum inconsistency may incorporate other non-written records of the past, such as archaeology.

However, specifically for resource poor schools, teachers and learners may not have a frame of reference for archaeological knowledge (Esterhuysen & Lane, 2013). Educational

archaeology, aka the educational role of archaeology, has been recognised in South Africa but has not been integrated consistently (Esterhuysen & Lane, 2013). Beyond the logistics of application, colonial and Apartheid legacies affect public engagement with archaeological knowledge and practice (see, Ndlovu & Smith, 2019; Shepherd, 2019). Furthermore, the continued privileging of history as written record further alienates archaeology as a source of learning about the past. Thus, museum education programs that combine archaeological knowledge with curriculum support are a key resource for all teachers across school divisions, but particularly for teachers and learners from resource poor schools.

The KZN Museum

The KZN Museum (formerly the Natal Museum [NMSA]) is a national museum located in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. KwaZulu-Natal province is a post-1994 construction of the homeland of the Zulu, KwaZulu, and the province of Natal. From its opening in 1904, the KZN Museum did not openly discriminate against race but as areas became more segregated, the museum predominantly served a White English-speaking public (Dlamuka, 2003). Nonetheless, the KZN Museum led the call for a change across South African museums and the need for museum displays to represent a diverse audience (Stuckenberg, 1987; Wright & Mazel, 1991).

Starting in the 1970s, the museum began to address issues of social inclusivity by attending to the needs of diverse audiences. The establishment of an archaeology department at the KZN Museum played a pivotal role in uncovering and sharing knowledge of African histories to a wider audience (Ndlovu & Smith, 2019). Particularly, the collaborative nature between the archaeology department and the education department led to the development of teaching material for learners about the long past of peoples in Southern Africa and to build an archaeological frame of reference for understanding the past (Mazel, 2014; Mazel & Mtshali, 1994). The education department also expanded its service by providing lectures on local cultures and histories, delivering lectures in the local dialect of Zulu and hiring a multilingual education officer (Dlamuka, 2003). Currently, the museum's education department is almost fully staffed by Black South African multilingual speakers with proficiency in Zulu and English.

Beyond human resources, the museum has a range of physical resources for the teaching of the long past. The museum houses and displays a range of material culture, with African material culture primarily coming from ethnographic and archaeological collections

(Rodéhn, 2008). The museum has a diverse range of displays that cover the cultures and histories of peoples found in the region, termed culture-history displays. These are arranged thematically and cover human origins, hunter-gatherer lifeways and rock art, African Iron Age, African complex societies (such as Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe), Portuguese East African coastal trade, African societies (with a focus on Zulu culture), Settler societies, Indian societies, and the struggle for freedom. A more in-depth discussion on the museum exhibits and displays can be found in Chapter 2. The education department uses these displays and material culture to deliver tours and lectures on a wide range of curriculum topics.

Method

The assessment of museum resources at KZN Museum was based on two complementary studies. The first involved an observation of six learner tours followed by semi-structured interviews with teachers at the end of the tours. The second involved semi-structured interviews with museum staff. These tours are contextualised in a broader discussion of how museum resources are adapted to meet the demands of teachers and learners from resource poor vs resource rich schools. Furthermore, this research pertains to in-house museum tours and not the outreach museum education program.

Adapting a simplified version of Schep et al.'s (2018) competency guide for art and history museum tour guides, the presenters of these learner tours were evaluated according to three competency areas: (1) group handling within the museum environment, (2) communication skills, (3) and knowledge and pedagogy. While Schep et al.'s (2018) competency guide for art and history museum tour guides covers four competency areas, the fourth being professionalism, and a wider range of evaluation points per competency area, in this study professionalism was not evaluated, as most of the evaluation points in this area were not relevant or could not be consistently assessed, and only five of the most context appropriate evaluation points were selected per competency area. This simplified version allows for ease of comparison across competency areas and presenters. The lecture and tour for each learner group is referred to as tour followed by the corresponding number (i.e., tour 1).

Additionally, teacher feedback regarding the tour and museum resources were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted at the end of the tour. Teachers were asked to share feedback on their tour experience, specifically on the use of museum resources, the ability of the presenter, and the content. To protect the anonymity of teachers, the school names are not provided, and the teachers are referred to by the letter 'T' and the corresponding tour

number (i.e., T1). If feedback is collected from multiple teachers per learner group than the affix a and b, etc. will be assigned in addition to 'T' and the corresponding tour number.

Lastly, museum staff were interviewed. Museum staff interviews were predominantly conducted with staff that engaged with the public or were involved in the presentation of culture-history displays. All permanent staff from the Education and Human Sciences department were interviewed, with a focus on their roles and responsibilities to the museum and public. To protect the anonymity of staff, staff are referred to by the letter 'S' and a number (i.e., S1) and the date of the interview.

All interviews were semi-structured and conducted with consent of the participant. This research forms part of a larger regional study conducted in 2018, over a 5-month period, and this study received Research Ethics Board approval from the University of Manitoba.

Author positionality

My interpretations have been shaped by my position as a White English-speaking woman, who received a post-Apartheid South African education, which lacked content on long African histories. African centring occurred late in my education, when I attended an archaeology class at university, a privilege not destined for most South Africans. I must acknowledge that I am not a Zulu speaker, which may limit the breadth of this research, but my complementary research methods allow for some key observations across language boundaries.

Results

Tours of learner groups from resource rich schools were evaluated; specifically, English language schools from the surrounding area with sufficient resources to bring a class or subject specific grade group (approximately 10 to 35 learners) to the museum. Most of these learner groups were gender, race, and culturally integrated, except for learner group 6, which was from a male-only school primarily comprised of white learners. The learner groups were from grades 4, 5, 6, and 10 (see Table 9). The grade 4-6 tours were delivered by staff from the education department, whereas the grade 10 tours were delivered by staff from the Human Sciences department. Generally, tour guides were competent in communication skills and less so in knowledge and pedagogy (see Table 10 for tour competency evaluations). The least competent presentations, where presenters performed poorly across all competency areas, were conducted by education staff with limited experience.

The higher the guide's competency across the three evaluated competency areas the higher the teacher's satisfaction with the tour and experience (see Table 11 for a summary of teacher feedback). In half the tours, teachers were satisfied and provided positive feedback. Teacher feedback reflected the importance of competency in the area of knowledge and pedagogy; both satisfied and unsatisfied teacher feedback highlighted this area of competency to support their feedback. Feedback from unsatisfactory tour experiences stated the lack of original content and museum resource use as problems.

Resource poor schools and language and group size differences

As an English-speaker, I only evaluated English language tours. However, I observed that museum resources were used differently for high versus low number learner tours, which corresponded along the lines of learner language and resource poor vs resource rich schools. These observed divisions were acknowledged in staff interviews.

In embracing multilingualism for education, the museum has been able to create a more inclusive environment by catering to African learners whose primary language is not English (Dlamuka, 2003). Predominately, learners from resource poor schools would be given a tour in Zulu, as S8 states 'the audience guides which language is used, if the class is mixed then the staff use English, if they all are African then the staff use Zulu' (February 27, 2018). For tours in Zulu, learners are likely to be more reliant on the presenter for information, as many of the museum displays are only in English.

This is problematic, as resource poor schools often came to the museum with a high number of learners. As S11 (March 7, 2018) states, resource poor schools:

[W]hen they come to the museum it is with 200 kids, it is the whole school or grade at once, because the school doesn't have the resources to hire an individual bus per class. This affects the size and length of the tour. Resources affect everything.

Thus, to serve this influx of learners, these large groups were divided into smaller groups often led by Zulu-speaking in-service museum training students with limited experience. Furthermore, unless addressed as one large group, these learners were less likely to have access to a specialist (who are also not Zulu speakers). Whereas resource rich schools came to the museum with a low number of learners, usually grade or class specific, and received tours in English. Thus, these schools were able to bring learners to the museum in small numbers for specific content and be led by more experienced education staff, if not a specialist. The

compounding of language differences with high group sizes generally limits resource poor school learner's access to museum resources, such as experienced staff with increased competency in the area of knowledge and pedagogy.

Another difference between resource rich and poor schools, as highlighted through the interviews was the role museum educators should play in supporting teachers in meeting the curriculum demands. The museum supports teachers from resource poor schools by being curriculum teachers or a curriculum aid, as shared in several interviews (S8, February 20, 2018; July 30, 2018; & S11, March 7, 2018). However, teachers from resource rich schools did not want curriculum teachers but rather access to museum resources.

The curriculum and learning of the African past

Should [the museum] be an additional curriculum aid or a place for critical studies and learning? The audience is heavily divided, with the museum trying to accommodate both ends of the spectrum (S17, April 25, 2018).

This tension between critical learning or curriculum aid is not unique to KZN Museum or the South African context (Burchenal & Grohe, 2007; Felton & Kuhn, 2007; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007; Tran & King, 2007). I argue that the museum can be a source of critical learning and dialogue as well as a curriculum aid. An education curriculum is embedded with social and cultural beliefs and values, and certain interpretations and histories are privileged over others (Lindauer, 2006). It is possible to provide a tour that includes curriculum content as well as a space for reflection and re-interpretation of this content. Yet, how can the education department create learner lectures and tours that more readily engage with the vast resource differences across schools and the complexities surrounding the teaching and learning of African histories?

Both tour 1 and 6 were older learner tours that used the museum resources to supplement and correct inconsistencies in the curriculum. Tour 6 was an optional part of the curriculum that the teachers thought a worthwhile topic, as it countered the (curriculum's) Eurocentric presentation of Art. Interestingly, through a discussion of art the teachers were also able to create a space for critical dialogue of historical narratives and societal beliefs. As commented by T6a (March 27, 2018):

We have discussions that question development stereotypes of past societies, for instance, when we discuss the complexity of the paintings or the lifestyle of the San.

[Learners compared] hunting for each meal to our current mass meat market, it raised questions about humane practice, ethics, and sustainability.

Tour 1 was a requested grade 10 tour on southern African complexity. Noting the lack of southern African comparative material on the topic of African civilisations in the grade 10 curriculum, the school's history department decided to include a South African archaeologically evidenced example (T1, February 16, 2018). Furthermore, T1 (February 16, 2018) stated that:

[Learners are aware of] oral sources and films but do not have detailed knowledge about archaeological evidence or primary sources. So, I think that is what was interesting about today, by working up from primary sources, archaeological evidence, for settlements.

Additionally, the focus on archaeology and on southern African complexity was the teacher's manner of countering historical and curricular content and biases, such as Africans as subjects of history and the privileging of text as a source of historical knowledge (Schmidt & Walz, 2007). As T1 (February 16, 2018) states:

[O]ur lens of colonialism is too strong. It shapes the before and the after, we don't take African history in its own right, and understand it in its own right. We don't see African agency and tend to see Africans in reaction to whites. We also tend to see the whole of our history in South Africa through the spectacles of colonialism, and I really think that needs to change. We need to find more information about places like Mapungubwe and Khami, so that we can better understand the Independence of African agency, but also its interrelations to the rest of the world.

As demonstrated by these teachers (T1 and T6a) the inclusion of archaeology in understandings of long pasts was and continues to be critical to providing a space for African centring and education transformation agendas.

Nonetheless, a lack of competency in the area of knowledge and pedagogy predominantly occurred in displays about the long past and of an archaeological nature. Most tour guides were comfortable with the presentation of African art and culture (a series of displays primarily focused on artefacts associated with Zulu culture, such as beadwork). However, displays on African peoples' pasts- such as Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe, which are examples of Early Southern African complex societies- were not included in

general learner tours. Furthermore, these tours were not advertised, they had to be specially requested (S11, March 7, 2018). This hesitancy in the education department to present on African histories, in particular African complex societies, was confirmed in an interview with S11 (March 7, 2018), who stated “staff do not feel comfortable on this topic [as] they do not understand it”.

And, even when education staff did feel comfortable to deliver tours on this topic, they may not have been able to adapt this content to support teachers from resource rich schools. This is shown in tour 4, a social science tour for grade 5 learners on Southern African complexity presented by an education staff member. The teacher was dissatisfied with the tour, as T4 (March 7, 2018) states:

Much of the content had already been covered in school, the PowerPoint was text heavy, which affects the children’s attention as they are still young, and long. ... Our school has good resources, so the students are familiar with the content and have access to videos and online content.

Rather, T4 wanted a learner lecture and tour that was grounded in museum resources: physical and human. Some teachers navigated this demand for museum resources by requesting school tours directly through specialist staff from the Human Sciences department. This was how T1 and T6b accessed their specialist led tours. As T6b (March 7, 2018) stated:

I understand that by the time we get to the museum, we have quite an in-depth knowledge on the topic, and that the museum [education] staff have a wide range of topics that they have knowledge on, but not in-depth knowledge on one topic. That is why we organised a tour with [a specialist].

Thus, staff with an in-depth knowledge on African peoples’ pasts are a key resource for supporting teachers in meeting the curriculum demands and addressing a transformation agenda.

Building knowledge competency and orientating museum staff

Museum educators play a pivotal role in engaging with a complex South African learner audience; however, the less experienced staff may not be trained or oriented to engage with this audience. As highlighted by this research, museum staff were not consistently competent in the area of knowledge and pedagogy. Specialists need to meet research and curatorial

objectives and have limited availability to deliver learner presentations, though they may count to the Human Sciences department's strategic objective of dissemination of research knowledge through popular presentation. Thus, in regard to African histories, education staff could benefit from a closer working relationship with museum specialists, as occurred in the past (Mazel, 2014). This can be done by making archaeological education mandatory for all education staff training. Archaeological education 'emphasizes skills such as excavation, laboratory analysis, and interpretation both to build knowledge and to create a conceptual space in which to debate the past' (King, 2012, p. 87). The sharing of such knowledge and experience from specialist to educator, extends museum resources to the benefit of teachers and learners.

Museum educators need to understand "the full range of institutional resources available and to craft them into [learner] experiences" (Munley & Roberts, 2006, p. 37). The teacher feedback highlighted a desire for learner lectures and tours to fully use museum resources. By bringing back the focus to museum resources, such as artefacts, displays, and specialist knowledge, learners, are able to share a unique museum learning experience beyond school resources and language (German & Harris, 2017).

German and Harris (2017) present an object-based museum program and argue that 'all objects are fundamentally agile and capable of interrogation from any number of disciplinary standpoints.' Although they discuss this approach in regard to university museum collections in cross-disciplinary teaching, the idea has applicability across museum settings, such as the KZN Museum. Therefore, while a tour can be organized around an object, the discussion can include various standpoints depending on the subject priorities, i.e., science, geography, art, history, etc. For instance, a focus on a single beadwork object could also include the intricacies and interactions involved in the acquirement, trade, industry, manufacture, distribution, and use of the object, thereby presenting different facets of the object.

An object-based tour can provide a different lens to the past and provide a greater engagement with the past, as show in tour 5. Within a general tour (tour 5) the tour guide highlighted how Zulu beadwork worked as a form of communication between members of the society who could 'read' meaning depending on the placement, style, and colours of beads used (for further discussion on beadwork communication, see Wickler & Seibt, 1992; Winters, 2009). T5 (March 9, 2018) was highly satisfied with the tour and commented, "I don't like history, but I learnt a lot about it. ... I learnt more about my own culture, I'm Zulu and I didn't even know those things about my culture." Beyond the museum, an object-based approach has significant potential in an outreach setting.

Another unique learning experience can be created through thematic museum tours (Hubard, 2014). A themed tour shapes the audience's perception of the tour content; while this can render multi-thematic content flat, it can also promote exploration, reflection, and re-interpretations of curriculum content. For instance, the education department could create a tour on settlement, a theme found in the social science CAPS document for grade 4-6 and in the history and geography CAPS documents for grade 10-12 (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Tailored to the grade level, the museum tour would incorporate curriculum content but also unique museum content, such as built environments and artefacts. Framing the same displays used for a general tour under the theme of settlement disrupts the conventional interpretation of these displays. Such a tour would highlight past complexity and dynamism; and although possibly interpreted along evolutionary paradigms, the narrative could counter such interpretations by highlighting the intricacies and contradictions of sedentary lifestyles, such as unequal economic relations or environmental damage and emphasising the diversity and social and cultural complexity of forager lifeways. Furthermore, with a higher-grade level, this discussion of settlement easily translates to a discussion on apartheid-segregated settlement and legacies of inequality based on geographies of settlement. Thus, thematic tours may provide a space for critical thinking and discussion.

Conclusion

The KZN Museum currently caters to a wide spectrum of multilingual learners from resource rich and resource poor schools; however, learners had different access to museum resources. Feedback from teachers from resource rich schools suggest that museum resources: physical and human are a key resource in supporting teachers meeting the curriculum demands. However, inadequate competency in knowledge and pedagogy, especially on the topic of the African histories, counters a transformation agenda. Specifically, further training and collaboration between the education department and specialists can lead to increased competency in knowledge of the long past as well as better use of the museum's unique physical resources, such as artefacts and displays. Museum educators need to be oriented to their pivotal role in teacher support and African centring, where educators can engage and guide learners in challenging and stimulating conversations on matters of history and African peoples' pasts.

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Table 9 Tour details

Tour	Learner Grade	Topic	Displays visited
1	10	Early Southern African complex societies	A new way of life, Towns and Trades
2	4	General tour	San hunter-gather and rock art cave, Victorian rooms and colonial Pietermaritzburg, African art and culture
3	4	General tour	San hunter-gather and rock art cave, Victorian rooms and colonial Pietermaritzburg, African art and culture
4	5	Early Southern African complex societies	Towns and Trades
5	5	General tour	San hunter-gather and rock art cave, Victorian rooms and colonial Pietermaritzburg, African art and culture, mammal hall, freedom gallery
6	10	African art	San hunter-gather and rock art (including cave and mammal hall), a new way of life

Table 10 Tour evaluations

Area	Competency	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
1	Open attitude	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
1	Making an immediate rapport	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
1	Interest in the group	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y
1	Enthusiasm and energetic	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
1	Coping with resistance	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
2	Clear talk	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
2	Careful listening	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
2	Linguistic skills and use of language	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y
2	Conversation techniques	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
2	Nonverbal communication	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3	Use of knowledge	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
3	Use of curricular knowledge	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
3	Use of knowledge of the collection	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y
3	Storytelling	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
3	Asking questions	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y

Note: Selection of evaluation points as adapted from Schep et al.'s (2018) competency guide for art and history museum tour guides. The three evaluated competency areas are: (1) group handling within the museum environment, (2) communication skills, and (3) knowledge and pedagogy. The Y stands for yes and means the presenter met this evaluation point and the N stands for no and means the presenter could have better met this evaluation point.

Table 11 Summary of teacher feedback

Tour	Teacher response	Teacher feedback
1	Satisfied	Informative presenter, able to engage with learners on complex topics, and original content
2	Unsatisfied	Incorrect information, museum resources not fully used, and no original content
3	Unsatisfied	No orientation and not tailored to school group
4	Unsatisfied	Presentation too text heavy for learner grade, museum resources not fully used, and no original content
5	Satisfied	Informative presenter, great displays, and original content
6	Satisfied	Informative presenter, able to engage with learners on complex topics, and original content

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Coloniality remains prevalent in museums across KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), as discussed in chapter 2. Colonial hierarchies along European and non-European binaries continue to shape understandings and teachings of African histories. Regionally, African themed displays have increased, but Eurocentric themed displays are dominant across the region, with most museums catering exclusively to an English-speaking audience. A regional lack of museum standardisation, funding, and curatorial support contribute to and exacerbate this issue. For instance, the displays in most municipal museums have not been significantly updated since the 1980s and more commonly reflect colonial and Apartheid narratives. In this democratic era, a regional dominance of Eurocentric themed displays and residual colonial and apartheid narratives results in alienating museum spaces for most South Africans.

Some pre-democratic era museums, those established before 1994, have attempted to counter residual colonial and Apartheid narratives in displays, but a superficial inclusion of African narratives can reinforce rather than counter past narratives. Furthermore, superficial inclusions can easily become a force for ethnic nationalism. Yet, new museums without conflicting narratives are not necessarily the solution, as seen in the nationalist presentation of Zulu culture and history in some democratic era museums, e.g., uMgungundlovu multi-media centre.

Zulu nationalist displays can counter a more complex understanding of African peoples' pasts. As discussed in chapter 3, KwaZulu-Natal Museum curators recognised this concern and addressed it through the Sisonke exhibit, which aimed to deconstruct the cultural symbols and sense of homogeneity that underlines conceptions of Zulu nationalism. However, deconstruction without reconstruction can confuse understandings of the past and lead to the gap being filled by popular understandings, such as Zuluness. Furthermore, a lack of distinction between Nguni and Zulu culture and history can lead to a counter construction of Zulu identity as stretching back to the last 500 years ago. Additionally, a timeline display at the KwaZulu Cultural Museum implied that the only descendants of early farming communities in the region are the Zulu people. In both instances, African peoples' pasts becomes relegated to the Zulu past.

Boundaries along the lines of heritage, history, and archaeology tend to limit, rather than expand, understandings of the past. African appropriation of Western heritage constructs can be seen as an expression of Afromodernity. While the face of this modernity may differ, its flip side remains coloniality. A government preference for heritage, as an understanding

that transgresses a Eurocentric divide of history that elevates material and cultural forms to the status of the written record, masks an ongoing privileging of the written record as history, as seen in the FET phase of the national curriculum. Furthermore, due to colonial and Apartheid legacies, archaeological knowledge and evidence may be an alienating or foreign frame of reference to some communities. This was highlighted in a discussion of museum resources for teacher curriculum support and teaching of African histories, see chapter 4.

The burden of transformation has largely fallen on educators who may not have sufficient support to navigate these demands. Teachers, especially from resource poor schools, may need further training and upskilling to implement a transformative curriculum. Furthermore, some museum educators lacked competency in the area of knowledge and pedagogy of African histories. However, teachers from resource rich schools, particularly in supplementing the curriculum at the FET phase, drew on museum resources that were archaeological, such as specialists and displays of African histories.

African centring and de-linking strategies

African centring is proposed as a counter to coloniality. Regionally, an increase in African complex societies, African and European contact, and human evolution displays could potentially counter African decentring and subjection. However, human evolution remains a contentious theme, and may alienate audiences relative to their religious beliefs. Also, to moderate ethnic nationalism, it is important to present these African themes within a humanistic framework.

In this dissertation, I advocate for a range of de-linking strategies to support African centring. These de-linking strategies aim to highlight our shared humanity, be it through reframing opportunities, unique museum learning experiences, or orientation programs or resources. Especially, a shared humanity can be expressed through performance. For example, PAST Africa's Walking Tall educational theatre for school learner's project which focuses on archaeological education.

In particular, the increased use of orality or verbal forms of communication in museum tours and displays was seen as a cost-effective strategy that could increase access, reduce reliance on the written word, and navigate the complexity of diverse audience needs. Specifically, the increased delivery of content in Zulu will be beneficial. Additionally, orality may be a way to transgress a lived versus read divide in understandings of the past (see Comaroff, 2005). Like oral traditions, orality can break down ontological constructs (such as

a linear sense of time) by introducing more than one history and by authorising voices outside of the academy. Also, orality, as a less fixed record may be subject to less socio-political scrutiny; however, the recording and archiving of orality, can lead to political appropriation, and ‘the production of a particular history’ (McNulty, 2013, p.181). Lastly, orality is advocated as a necessary part of indigenous education models in Ecuador and could apply to other indigenous education program contexts (Rendon, 2013).

Yet, orality and a humanistic framework alone are not sufficient. These de-linking strategies require the support of specialists in guiding the building of competency in the area of knowledge and pedagogy of African peoples’ pasts. Thus, the integration of these different de-linking strategies hold potential to create a humanism that recognises Africa’s place in the stories of humanity.

Research limitations and future considerations

I acknowledge that it can be difficult to apply these strategies in the face of the complex constraints of coloniality. As seen in learner tour sizes and language differences across racial and economic lines, meeting the demands of teachers from rich versus resource poor schools can be difficult to navigate. Furthermore, constraints not explicitly discussed in this thesis, such as budget restrictions, increased staff demands without further resources or support, government directed funding criteria, problems in organization and management, and a focus on a Western episteme for education, affect the representation of the African peoples’ pasts at the museum level.

Beyond the de-linking strategies suggested in this thesis, there are further considerations for African centring. A humanising discourse calls for greater awareness of how we frame and speak of the past. Archaeological terminology can counter a public engagement with the past through the use of technical and loaded terms, such as prehistoric (Macdonald & Mazel, 2021). Furthermore, the technical and objective writing style of the American approach in Southern African archaeology can be alienating (Hall, 1984; Shepherd, 2019). While there have been calls to address these aspects of the discipline in Southern Africa (Hamilton, 2017; Swanepoel et al., 2008), it remains a space requiring further development. This is not an issue exclusive to archaeology or Southern Africa, which means there are examples of how these concerns can be approached. While reference works may already exist, such as *South African Key Words* (Boonzaier & Sharp, 1988) and *New South African Key Words* (Shepherd & Robins, 2008), the creation of a reference book or guide for

writing about the Southern African past that is written by Indigenous peoples, after *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing By and About Indigenous Peoples* by Gregory Younging (2018), could help to further address this issue.

While we may need to better frame and style our discussion of the past so that it is accountable and inviting to a wider and more diverse audience, we may also need to create further public outputs. This is not a novel suggestion. However, we need to consider the ways, both those substantial and what we may think as insubstantial, that we could contribute to this sharing of knowledge on peoples' pasts. It may be the generation of a public opinion piece or a blog post with some educator resources for the teaching of the Southern African past. These outputs can already be considered at the research design phase, so they are included in the project schedule and budget. For example, as part of the research design, funding can cover the creation of temporary exhibits, such as the Bergtheil Museum temporary Farming community exhibit. However, we also need to consider the unequal distribution of resources and how that may affect these contributions. Thus, a central body, perhaps a working group within South African Museums Association (SAMA), could guide and direct these public outputs while considering community resources, acting as a point of initial contact and as a public resource. Overall, transformation requires us to listen, respect, and prioritize a public demand for understandings of Southern African pasts.

Lastly, future research also needs to address how archaeological knowledge, as a fundamentally Eurocentric form of knowledge production, can subject local epistemologies. Thus, museums as well as archaeologists need to consider how to incorporate and collaborate with local peoples and epistemes at already the design stage of displays and exhibits. Community-based archaeology presents one-way to move in this direction (see Jameson & Musteață, 2019; and for a discussion of how this can work at an institutional level, see Atalay 2019). Nonetheless, community-based archaeology in Southern Africa remains a goal rather than a standard practice, due to contentious issues such as power and interest conflicts (Chirikure and Pwiti, 2008). However, beyond archaeology, museums need to consider how to incorporate and collaborate with local peoples and epistemes at already the design stage of displays and exhibits. Other strategies can be adopted from other indigenous rights and museum discourses, such as the Canadian Task Force on Museums and First Peoples document (1992) which was used to guide curatorial practices at the Canadian Human Rights Museum (Grafton & Peristerakis, 2016).

Significance of research

This research embraced a de-colonizing approach that focuses on African centring to reconstruct humanity that is lost through the binaries of modernity. A Western positivistic episteme in the academe continues to privilege a certain understanding of the past over others, an understanding infused with racial and ethnic hierarchies. Museums as spaces where history and archaeology come together in the stories of a past hold much potential in the re-centring of African power, knowledges, and ways of being.

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